

Usworth Colliery Primary School
Our Journey Through Mindfulness



At Usworth Colliery Primary School we have been on a journey of self-discovery, promoting a more mindful attitude within school where children feel grounded, positive and reflective. Between 2016 and 2019 we worked with 'Sunderland Culture' where we all were exposed to the power of the arts within school. Even our most **vulnerable** children were able to experience new, exciting ways of expressing their emotions through art forms they had no idea existed. They were immersed within arts and culture and it was clear this could support us on our journey to be more mindful. Through the themes explored in the 'Cultural Leadership in Education' course, I know the continued implementation of different art forms within school will be invaluable to ALL of our children.

Many of our children at Usworth Colliery Primary School are sadly not fortunate enough to experience the arts in their richest sense. An overwhelming number of children come from **deprived** families that cannot afford to take their children to music festivals, art galleries or theatres. As a result, our children are **blind** to many of the opportunities out there and have a very **closed mind set** when it comes to the arts. This lack of understanding has a negative impact on their ability to explore new forms of expression and try new things. Children need to have well rounded experiences in order to have high expectations of themselves and clear aspirations. By exposing our children to the arts, we are enabling them to have the same start in life as others from more fortunate economic backgrounds.

A shocking number of our children are on the SEN register for their social and emotional needs. This shows that from age 4-11 so many of our children **struggle** with expressing their feelings appropriately and regulating their emotions. The power of the arts for these children in particular will continue to have a positive impact on their mental health and teach them new ways to release their frustrations. As we continue to promote a more mindful and positive outlook within our children, the use of the arts will only strengthen this. We strive to prepare our children for the future and help shape well rounded young adults.



As a school we have the responsibility to expose our children to the range of **opportunities** available to them and show them there are **no limits**. It's important that our children know the value of **aspirations** and that they can do anything if they put their mind to it. The hope is that as a school we can continue to **inspire** our children through working with artists, actors, writers and all other sectors within the arts. We want them to develop new **skills** and experiment with their **creativity** and **imagination**. We believe ALL children can be whatever they choose and if we can plant the seed through their work in school, we will have done our job well.

Implementing the arts more regularly within the curriculum will allow ALL of our children to express how they are feeling, have a more **positive** outlook and generally have a healthier mental wellbeing. The implementation of more arts and culture projects will encourage children to explore new opportunities and have **high expectations** of themselves. Alongside our 'friends resilience' programme around positive mind set and finding more time for mindfulness and meditation within school, the hope is that our children's mental health will be much better and they will have a more positive outlook towards their future. From taking part in the 'Cultural Leadership in Education' course, the value of arts in relation to mental wellbeing is vital and as a school we will make this part of our shared vision for our children.



'Everyone should have the chance to experience culture, participate in it, create it and see their lives transformed by it'.