



Launching Killicomaine's 'Habits of Mind Day'

VIDEO PREVIEW - Launch Day of Habits of Mind in Killicomaine Junior High School

Introducing Habits of Mind to Students

Lorna Gardiner, Consultant meets with Gail Henderson, teacher and Drive Team member to hear about the creative whole school launch of the Habits of Mind in Killicomaine Junior High School, Portadown

Thinking Matters

[Take a short, sneak preview of this video that gives a insight into the breakdown, planning and execution of the day's events, full of inspired activities, learning and fun!!](#)
Full Video available to TSN Members via their Members Dashboard

We recently caught up with Gail Henderson, a history teacher and member of Killicomaine Junior High School's (KJHS) Drive Team in Portadown, Northern Ireland - who kindly shared with us the most inspiring way in which the school launched Habits of Mind.

For context, KJHS is a co-educational, Key Stage 3 setting for ages 11 to 14. They have been on their Thinking School journey for three years.

With the blessing of senior leadership, it was decided to dedicate a full day to launching KJHS's version of the Habits of Mind where each strand of the school motto: "Working Together," "Excellence," and "Caring Community" was assigned three appropriately worded Habits of Mind.

Once the date was pinned down, the Drive Team went into planning mode. A countdown was posted three weeks before the day on Facebook and information was sent to parents via the school app. This all contributed to a genuine sense of excitement in the lead up (as well as lots of cardboard being brought in for a marble run activity!). Crucially, a staff twilight session was held the day before the event, which allowed for a dress rehearsal of the top secret staff play and an explanation of the day's timetable which ensured all staff were familiarised with the activities and resources.



When the big day arrived, pupils were welcomed into the "World of Waverley Hall" through a series of newspaper front pages about Sid Branson (a jewel thief just released from prison) and subsequent robberies targeting country houses. The front pages had been posted all around the school during the twilight session the previous day and helped introduce pupils to characters they would meet later in the day during the surprise staff play.



Staff then facilitated a series of activities that sought to introduce and develop the KJHS Habits:

Persisting was introduced during morning assembly through a building a house of cards challenge between pupils and staff. Periods one and two were spent in form classes **'Working Together'** to build marble runs using the cardboard the pupils had brought in. This activity was a huge success and a standout favourite.

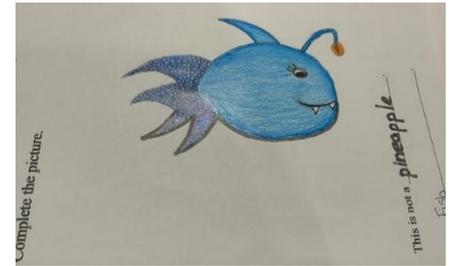
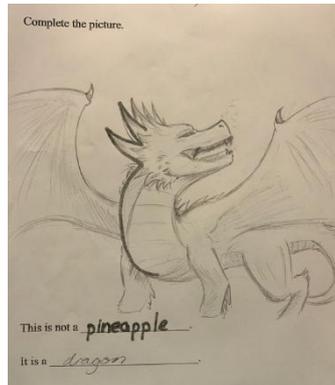


An escape room, linked to the Waverley Hall theme and the character Sid Branson, was set up to give focus to **'Applying Past Knowledge in New Situations'**. Groups of students worked to complete an escape room grid and deliver a message to a spy hiding in a secret location in school. There was the option to use Google searches, but if they did a penalty of five minutes was added to their time. Classes that finished early engaged in a group discussion called "King of a Room".



Striving for Accuracy tasks were photo challenges where pupils were asked to create an optical illusion or to pose for a photograph with everyone's feet off the ground.

The "Thinking Flexibly" lesson involved three parts: a Picture Completion - where pupils were asked to complete a picture of a half-pineapple from another angle, a 'Lateral Thinking Puzzle' again featuring Sid Branson, followed by a dingbats competition. Some of the ideas that emerged for the half-pineapple were just brilliant.



Pupils also learned about **Listening with Empathy and Understanding** via a workshop led by the school's Patron of Reading, author Joffre White.

Managing Impulsivity and Communicating with Clarity and Precision were introduced in the final class lessons of the day. **Managing Impulsivity** involved a worksheet where pupils were told to read all the instructions carefully, only to find instruction number ten was to ignore all previous instructions!! **Clarity and Precision** saw pupils engage in an activity where one student was given a picture and had to describe it to others for them to draw accurately.

The day ended with a staff play written especially for the day called "Mystery at Waverley Hall" which served as the **"Be Amazed"** activity, where Sid Branson himself appeared on stage and a clever twist left the audience awestruck.

Afterwards the pupils completed feedback forms on the day.

The whole day was a huge success. An inspirational and wonderfully imaginative way to give pupils an insight into the meaning and purpose of the Habits of Mind, whilst demonstrating what it means to be a meta-learner by engaging in meaningful problem-solving and creative tasks.

Congratulations to everyone at KJHS ... sorry ... Waverley Hall !!

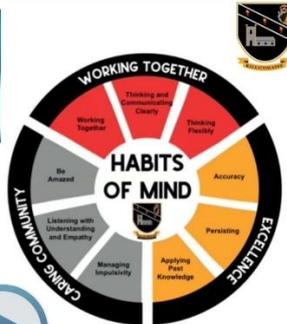
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The Habits of Mind wheel diagram consists of a central circle with 'HABITS OF MIND' and a school crest. Surrounding it are eight segments: 'Working Together' (top), 'Thinking and Communicating Clearly', 'Thinking Flexibly', 'Accuracy', 'Persisting', 'Applying Past Knowledge', 'Managing Impulsivity', and 'Listening with Understanding and Empathy' (bottom). The outer ring of the wheel is divided into three sections: 'WORKING TOGETHER' (top), 'CAREING COMMUNITY' (left), and 'EXCELLENCE' (right). A small school crest is also visible in the top right corner of the diagram area.