



# Hummingbird Project



**Impact Report  
2023-2024**









Based in central Manchester, MedEquip4Kids improves the health of babies and children in the UK by providing equipment and facilities not available from limited NHS resources. The charity was founded in 1985 and has raised over £25 million for children's healthcare.

As well as providing equipment for hospitals, we also support children's mental health by delivering the Hummingbird Project, a six-week Positive Psychology course offered free of charge to North West schools. Backed by university research, the topics we teach include mindfulness, character strengths, kindness, gratitude, hope and growth mindsets.

One in five children in the UK now has a probable mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, or an eating disorder. One of the keys to reducing the suffering and socio-economic cost of mental illness is by improving mental wellness in the population.

Since 75% of mental health problems develop before the age of 18, it is vital that young people are educated in preventative strategies.

The Hummingbird Project was launched in 2017. Every year we have seen significant and measurable improvements in young people's hope and wellbeing, as well as reductions in symptoms of anxiety and depression. In the report you can read more about the highlights from 2023-2024.

*Above: our Project Manager Ian Platt carries out the Hula Hoop Challenge with pupils at Cambridge Road Primary School, Ellesmere Port. This ever-popular activity encourages discussion about teamwork and resilience.*

*Previous page: a pupil at Cambridge Road Primary School has identified her character strengths.*





# Our story

## 2014-2015

MedEquip4Kids began supporting Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and became aware of the crisis in children's mental health and the need for better support in schools.

## 2015-2016

We decided to get involved in direct service provision in schools. To ensure our intervention was robust, we sought the advice of university psychologists. Professor Jerome Carson and Dr Chathurika Kannangara at the University of Bolton volunteered to assist with a scoping study.

## 2017-2018

The study revealed a severe lack of evidence-based interventions for schools. 70% of young people with mental health problems were not receiving sufficient early support. MedEquip4Kids recruited the postgraduate who carried out the research, Ian Platt, to develop a six-week Positive Psychology course. Ian launched the course in Greater Manchester and Cheshire. Initial data showed improvements in wellbeing and hope.

## 2019-2020

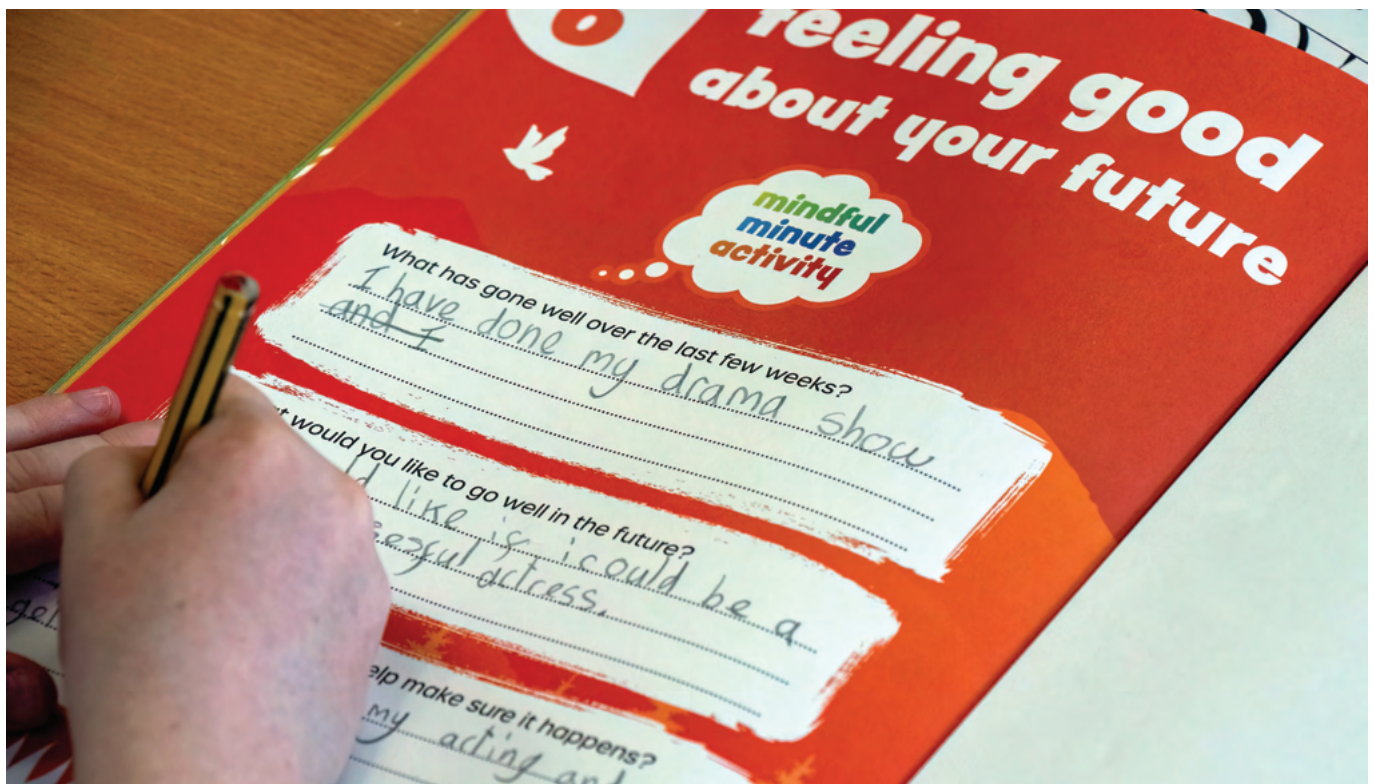
Claudine McFaul, a psychologist at the Open University, helped us develop a version for primary schools and piloted it in Manchester and Liverpool. Younger children were receptive to the concepts and enjoyed the fun activities. We began delivering the course to primary schools, and in Merseyside.

## 2020-2022

The pandemic disrupted our usual activities; however, we were able to offer online sessions. Children's mental health suffered during the lockdowns and our support was needed more than ever when schools reopened. Dr Kevin Hochard and Dr Michelle Tytherleigh from the University of Chester joined our research team.

## 2023-2024

The Hummingbird Project has now reached 6,426 students at 54 schools in the North West since it began. We have appointed a second project co-ordinator, Sonia Ebenezer-Bamigbayan, to work with Ian. The Hummingbird Research Team recently announced the publication of a major paper in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*.







# Schools visited in 2023-2024



School	Level	Region	Pupils
Blackley Academy	Primary	Manchester	111
Blackshaw Lane Primary School	Primary	Oldham	90
Broadfield Primary School	Primary	Oldham	60
Burnley Brow Primary School	Primary	Oldham	60
Cambridge Road Primary School	Primary	Ellesmere Port	64
Christleton High School	Secondary	Chester	235
Essa Academy	Secondary	Bolton	50
Kingsland School	Secondary	Oldham	23
Lyme Community Primary School	Primary	St Helens	60
Medlock Valley Primary School	Primary	Oldham	90
Oak View Academy	Primary	Winsford	64
Pikes Lane Primary School	Primary	Bolton	90
St Anne's Catholic Primary School	Primary	St Helens	77
St Bede's Academy	Primary	Bolton	90
St Bede's CE Primary School	Primary	Bolton	180
St Gabriel's CE Primary School	Primary	Rochdale	90
The Heys School	Secondary	Bury	109
Unsworth Academy	Secondary	Bury	63
Urmston Grammar School	Secondary	Trafford	138
Wardley CE Primary School	Primary	Salford	60
Washacre Primary School	Primary	Bolton	107
TOTAL			1,911







# Results and impact

Each summer we carry out a full evaluation of the project. Secondary school students complete pre- and post-course questionnaires from internationally recognised standards of psychology: the World Health Organisation Five Wellbeing Index (WHO-5), the Young Person's Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (YP-CORE) and the Children's Hope Scale (CHS)

The YP-CORE measures symptoms of anxiety and depression, so our objective is to see a lower number as a result of the intervention. The other two scales measure wellbeing and hope, so we would anticipate these scores increasing.

We delivered the course to 618 secondary school students across six schools during the year. The scores shown are for all students who completed both questionnaires. The results on all three scales are statistically significant, meaning the change is likely to have happened because of the intervention, rather than by chance.

In primary schools, teachers complete an evaluation form, and we ask pupils to draw

a poster about their experiences. In the 14 primary schools we visited this year, all the teachers surveyed stated that they believed the project had had a beneficial impact on their pupils' mental health.

*"The children now have more resilience and confidence. They have the ability to identify what makes them happy and hopefully they will have the ability to bounce back after challenges."* Year 3 Teacher, St Bede's CE Academy

*"The children have enjoyed learning about different strategies to help them stay positive. They have actively been using said strategies the past few weeks."* Year 4 Teacher, Lyme Community Primary School

*"It has improved the children's mindset and helped them to be happy within themselves."* Year 5 Teacher, Blackshaw Lane Primary School

Scale	Pupils	Start mean	End mean
YP-CORE	445	1.51	1.37
WHO-5	482	13.22	14.37
CHS	475	22.08	23.87







# Results and impact

## Using character strengths

Character strengths are the positive aspects of our personalities that affect how we think, feel and behave. Psychologists have identified 24 key character strengths that we have the capacity to express.

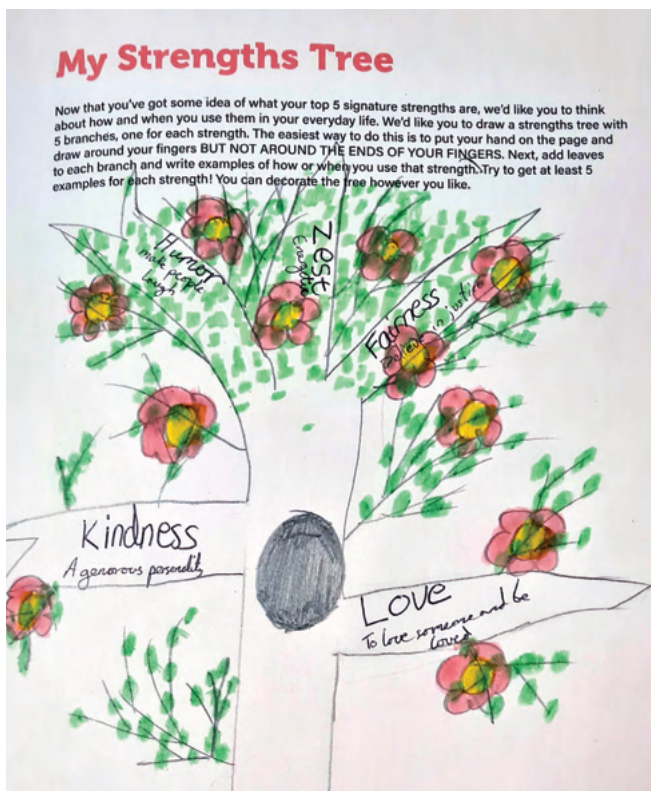
Recognising, celebrating and building on our strengths can really boost our self-esteem and happiness, as well as helping us to get through challenging times.

We use illustrated cards to help pupils to identify their top five strengths and record them in their workbooks. In secondary schools, the pupils draw beautiful “strength trees”. Each of the five tree branches represents a strength and how it is used.

*Left: a student at Christleton High School has identified their strengths as Kindness, Zest, Humour, Fairness and Love.*

## Resilient glow-worms

How do we bounce back when things go wrong? Pupils at Burnley Brow Community Primary School have filled in these “resilient glow-worms” with things they can do to help their resilient selves to shine.



- I learned how to stay positive and make sure the people around you feel the same way
- If you feel like you need to be more mindful and calm just close your eyes and focus on your breathing





# Results and impact

always have smile on your face.  
Set your goals.

## THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT

Stay happy. be kind. Supportive.

I enjoyed identifying my character strengths.

I understand everything in the Project.

We learn about thankfulness, we also learn about how to stay happy.

The project make me feel happy, calm, relaxed and confident.

That was really fun and I changed myself a lot now I do everything which makes me feel good.

my character strengths are creativity, forgiveness, honest, Bravery, kindness and lovely.

I really love it.

I would say that it was amazing time.

Respect each other.

Say thank-you to every-body.

help each other.

if you need any-thing say please.

### The mindful position

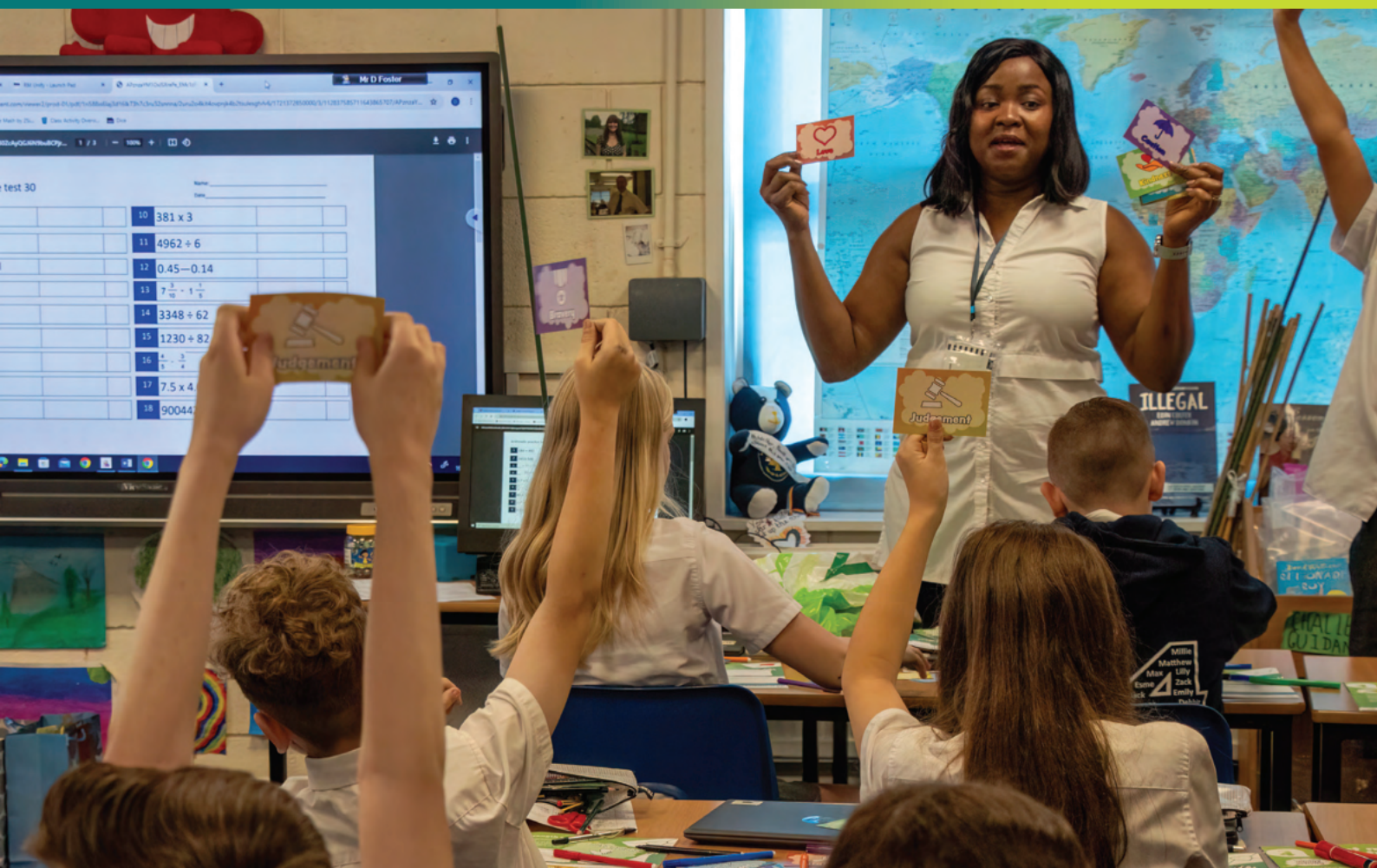
At the first few minutes of the lesson close your eyes and imagine you are at your happiest place with the things that make you happy

the sessions teach you skills like feeling your emotions when your sad go back to bubble and when your mad think about your character strengths and think about how you can improve them. It not just making you happy, happiness is contagious all you have to do is smile at someone and it can make the happy.

It can also help realise how all of your senses work even when your not aware of them working

The hummingbird project teaches you to thankful for what you have. Write a card for your favourite person and in the card write why you are happy to have them.

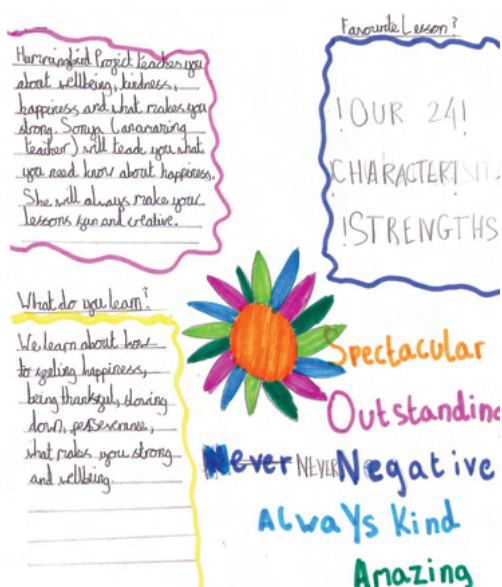




## New co-ordinator joins Hummingbird team

This year we were delighted to appoint Sonia Ebenezer-Bamigbayan to deliver the sessions alongside Ian. Sonia has extensive experience in teaching and counselling, and recently graduated with a Masters in Positive Psychology and Counselling.

Sonia has brought to our team not only a wealth of knowledge and experience, but also a real talent for inspiring and engaging with young people in the classroom. She has received outstanding feedback from teachers and pupils alike. Above she is pictured at Wardley CE Primary School in Salford.



## Project team at European conference

Our team were invited to take part in the 11th European Conference on Positive Psychology 2024 in Innsbruck. Ian gave a presentation on all the experience and learning he has gained from an incredible seven years of delivering the Hummingbird Project. Sonia presented an informative and engaging poster on the "Bounce Back" course that we offer to parents, which she taught and researched for her master's degree.





## Professor, age 67, makes epic journey

In July 2024, supporters gathered in front of the Slipper Chapel at the Catholic National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady, Walsingham to welcome Jerome Carson as he concluded his 185-mile journey from Manchester.

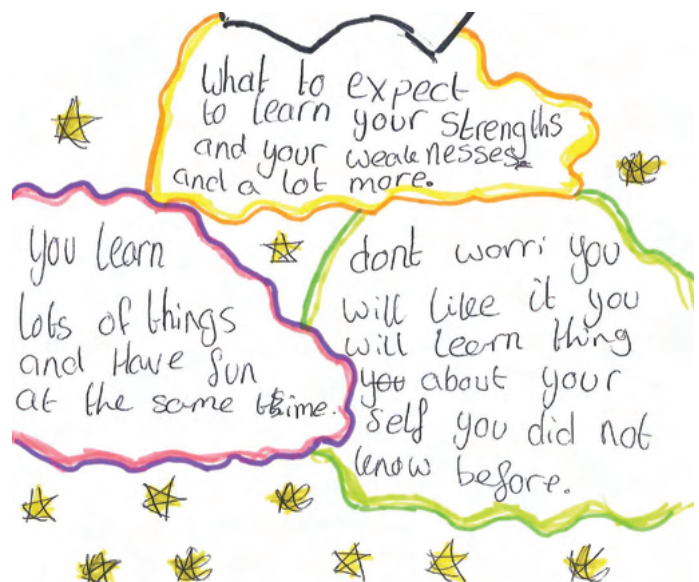
Jerome, who is Professor of Psychology at the University of Bolton, walked an amazing 65 miles in three days. Unfortunately he had to cut short the middle section of the walk due to medical complications, but after a rest he completed the final leg of the journey.

The walk raised a fabulous £26,454 for the Hummingbird Project.

## New research paper published

In March 2024, the Hummingbird Project Research Team were delighted to announce the publication of a paper in the academic journal Frontiers in Psychology. The team consists of MedEquip4Kids Hummingbird Project staff, researchers from the Universities of Bolton and Chester and the Open University. The findings in this paper are from the second year of the project.

Welcome to the hummingbird Project! Its all about ways to stay happy and have a good life! Oak class already did theirs and now its a final session of it. Well its by hosted from ian, that helps us stay happy. For the past weeks we have been making gratitude cards, smelling jars, hoola hoop challenge! Its Very Sun Thank you.







# Thank you

All of it is fun We  
Love this Thank you we couldn't  
ask for more!

You are



all amazing.

The Hummingbird Project costs over £100,000 each year to run, including all our overheads. We are so grateful to the numerous charitable trusts and individuals who have supported us with their contributions, which means we can keep the course completely free of charge to schools. We would particularly like to thank the following:

Bain Charitable Trust  
Camelia Trust  
David Riddell Memorial CIO  
Edward Gostling Foundation  
Eric Wright Charitable Trust

Leri Charitable Trust  
Jigsaw Foundation  
John Rayner Trust  
Pilkington Charities Fund  
Professor Jerome Carson

Rainford Trust  
Schreier Foundation  
Mr Branislav Trajkovski  
Westminster Foundation

## Keep in touch

For further information or to book the course at your school, please contact [ian.platt@medequip4kids.org.uk](mailto:ian.platt@medequip4kids.org.uk) or [sonia@medequip4kids.org.uk](mailto:sonia@medequip4kids.org.uk). If you can support us with a gift, please email [catherine@medequip4kids.org.uk](mailto:catherine@medequip4kids.org.uk). Thank you.

Follow us on our social channels at @HummingbirdMH





Registered address: Courtlets House, 38 King Street West, Manchester M3 2WZ  
0161 798 1600 [info@medequip4kids.org.uk](mailto:info@medequip4kids.org.uk) [www.medequip4kids.org.uk](http://www.medequip4kids.org.uk)

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