



MedEquip4KIDS



Hummingbird Project



Impact Report
2024-2025

Feeling Good About Your Future
@ St Edmund's RC Primary School, Salford





Introduction

For the last forty years, MedEquip4Kids has been dedicated to improving the health of babies and children in the UK by funding medical equipment and facilities not otherwise available through the NHS. Alongside this vital work in hospitals, we support children's mental health through the Hummingbird Project, our six-week Positive Psychology course for North West schools.

Developed in collaboration with leading university researchers at the University of Greater Manchester, the University of Chester and the Open University, the programme teaches practical skills in mindfulness, character strengths, gratitude, kindness, resilience and hope.

This year has been a milestone for the Hummingbird Project. A record 2,231 pupils across 29 schools took part, and we carried out our first controlled trial, which confirmed the programme's measurable impact on reducing emotional distress and boosting wellbeing and hope. In total the

project has now reached over 9,000 pupils since it began in 2017.

In July we hosted our first ever Hummingbird Project Conference, bringing together educators, academics, students and healthcare professionals to share knowledge and inspire new ideas. Another important step was the launch of a dedicated project to adapt the Hummingbird course for pupils with special educational needs. Over the next year we plan to expand the project, responding to growing demand from teachers, parents and young people themselves.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our funders, the hard work of our staff and volunteers, and the enthusiasm of the pupils and teachers who take part. Together, we are giving children and young people the chance to grow in self-esteem, resilience and hope for the future.



Completing the Sunflower with Project Manager Ian Platt
@ St Edmund's RC Primary School, Salford



Results and impact

This year 2,231 pupils in 29 North West primary and secondary schools took part in the six-week Hummingbird Project. To evaluate our impact, we surveyed 592 secondary school pupils with questionnaires before and after the course, using three established psychological scales:

- **WHO-5 Wellbeing Index** – measuring positive wellbeing
- **YP-CORE** – measuring emotional distress, including symptoms of anxiety and depression
- **Children’s Hope Scale (CHS)** – measuring hope for the future.

Pupils reported fewer signs of anxiety and depression after completing the programme, alongside increases in wellbeing and hope. As the table below shows, these improvements were statistically significant (a p-value of less than 0.05), meaning they are very unlikely to be due to chance.

Scale	Pre	Post	Change	t	p
YP-CORE	1.37	1.26	-0.11	3.94	<0.01
WHO-5	14.29	14.95	0.66	3.03	<0.01
CHS	23.06	24.43	1.37	4.67	<0.01

School	Type	Region	Pupils
Blackley Academy	Primary	Oldham	60
Cambridge Road Primary School	Primary	Cheshire	90
Christleton High School	Secondary	Cheshire	240
Essa Academy	Secondary	Bolton	90
Grosvenor Park Primary School	Primary	Chester	60
The Heys School	Secondary	Bury	98
Haslam Park Primary School	Primary	Bolton	60
Haslam Park Primary School	Primary	Bolton	60
Kingsland School	SEN	Oldham	14
Kingsland School	Secondary	Oldham	9
Lever Edge Primary School	Primary	Bolton	90
Lyme Community Primary School	Primary	St Helens	46
Markland Hill Primary School	Primary	Bolton	60
Medlock Valley Primary School	Primary	Oldham	90
Neston Primary School	Primary	Chester	83
Our Lady of Pity RC Primary School	Primary	Chester	51
Parish C of E Primary School	Primary	St Helens	60
Pikes Lane Primary School	Primary	Bolton	90
Robins Lane Primary School	Primary	St Helens	84
St Anne’s Catholic Primary School	Primary	St Helens	33
St Anne’s RC Primary School	Primary	Manchester	60
St Bede Academy	Primary	Bolton	90
St Edmund’s RC Primary School	Primary	Salford	90
St Mary’s Deane Primary School	Primary	Bolton	60
St Mary’s Deane Primary School	Primary	Bolton	70
Turning Point Academy	SEN	Lancashire	13
Unsworth Academy	Secondary	Bury	75
Urmston Grammar School	Secondary	Trafford	125
Wardley CE Primary School	Primary	Swinton	60
Washacre Primary School	Primary	Bolton	60
Westleigh High School	Secondary	Wigan	60
TOTAL			2,231





Results and impact

Controlled trial confirms positive effect

At Christleton High School in Chester, we carried out our first waitlist control trial with Year 7 students. Half of the year group took part in the Hummingbird Project during one half-term, while the other half completed the programme the following term.

All students filled in short questionnaires at three points: before the first group began, after they finished, and again two months later.

“It makes me happier by helping me to change my mindset and be more mindful of the world around me.” - Arik, Year 7 Christleton High School

Students in the first group showed improvements in wellbeing, hope and mental health compared to those still waiting. Two months later, their gains in wellbeing and hope had grown even further, and their reduced symptoms of distress had been maintained. When the second group took part, they too showed improvements across all measures, confirming the impact of the project.



Project Co-ordinator Sonia Ebenezer-Bamigbayan (right) and Mrs Ritson (left) at Christleton High School

These results give us strong evidence that the project is making a measurable difference to pupils' lives. By reducing emotional distress and building hope, the programme is equipping young people with the tools they need to thrive.

“Every week I learn something new about how to take care of myself and my mind.” - Merilees, Year 7 Christleton High School





Pupils at Blackley explore their sense of smell

This year we visited Blackley Academy in Manchester to deliver the Hummingbird Project. As part of our mindfulness lessons, we encourage pupils to engage with the world around them by tuning into all five senses.

Paying close attention to the present moment can help reduce anxiety and improve emotional wellbeing, and it can also be a lot of fun!

One sense that often gets overlooked is smell. Yet scent can be one of the most powerful ways we connect with our environment and our memories. At Blackley Academy, our Project Manager Ian Platt brought this to life with a hands-on activity.

Ten mysterious glass jars were passed around the class, each filled with a scented cotton wool ball. From fruity and floral to downright funky, the scents ranged from familiar food items to everyday household products. Pupils were warned that, just like in life, not every smell would be pleasant!

Laughter and suspense filled the room as each jar made its way around and pupils eagerly watched each other's reactions. In their workbooks, they rated how much they liked or disliked each scent and took a guess at what it might be.

After the giggles settled, the class took time to reflect. They discussed how noticing the scents in their daily lives, from fresh-cut grass to a home-cooked meal, can help them feel more grounded and present in the moment.



Rate That Smell
@ Blackley Academy, Manchester





HUMMING BIRD

THE HUMMING BIRD Project

WHAT CHANGE DO YOU DO IN THE FUTURE?

Treat everyone how I want to be treated. Work hard to achieve your dreams. Have a growth mindset.

HOW DID IT CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK?

It made me have more empathy for others and made me think about all the things I'm good at.

I am happy because

of the humming bird. The humming bird project is making you.

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

♥♥♥

♥♥♥

♥♥♥

THE HUMMING BIRD PROJECT

A route the humming bird project. I loved the humming bird project 10/10 I Hope more children like it as much as I do

Feeling Happy

Every person's life is filled with ups and downs. It is impossible to feel happy all the time. But you can always make yourself happy. Make a list of your top 3 favourite things. Look at your list and do those things.

THE HUMMING BIRD PROJECT

- 3 things
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Sensing Down
Go outside and listen to what you can hear. Use your sense of smell and your eyes to see what is around you. Touch your surroundings.



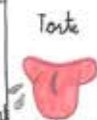
Sight
What can you see?



Hearing
What can you hear?



Touch
What can you feel?



Taste
What can you taste?



Smell
What can you smell?





The Hummingbird project is a great project to help you feel happier!



Growth mindsets

Having a growth mindset means believing that our abilities aren't fixed, but can improve with effort, practice, and learning. Instead of thinking "I'm just not good at this," we begin to understand that skills can be developed over time. This helps us see mistakes as part of the learning process, rather than something to be ashamed of.

"The Hummingbird Project has boosted their self-esteem and has encouraged them to be more mindful outside of sessions."
- Year 5 Teacher, Grosvenor Park CE Academy, Chester

As one of the Hummingbird challenges, we encourage pupils to try something they find difficult without giving up. We find that almost everyone reports back that they achieved more than they'd expected to!

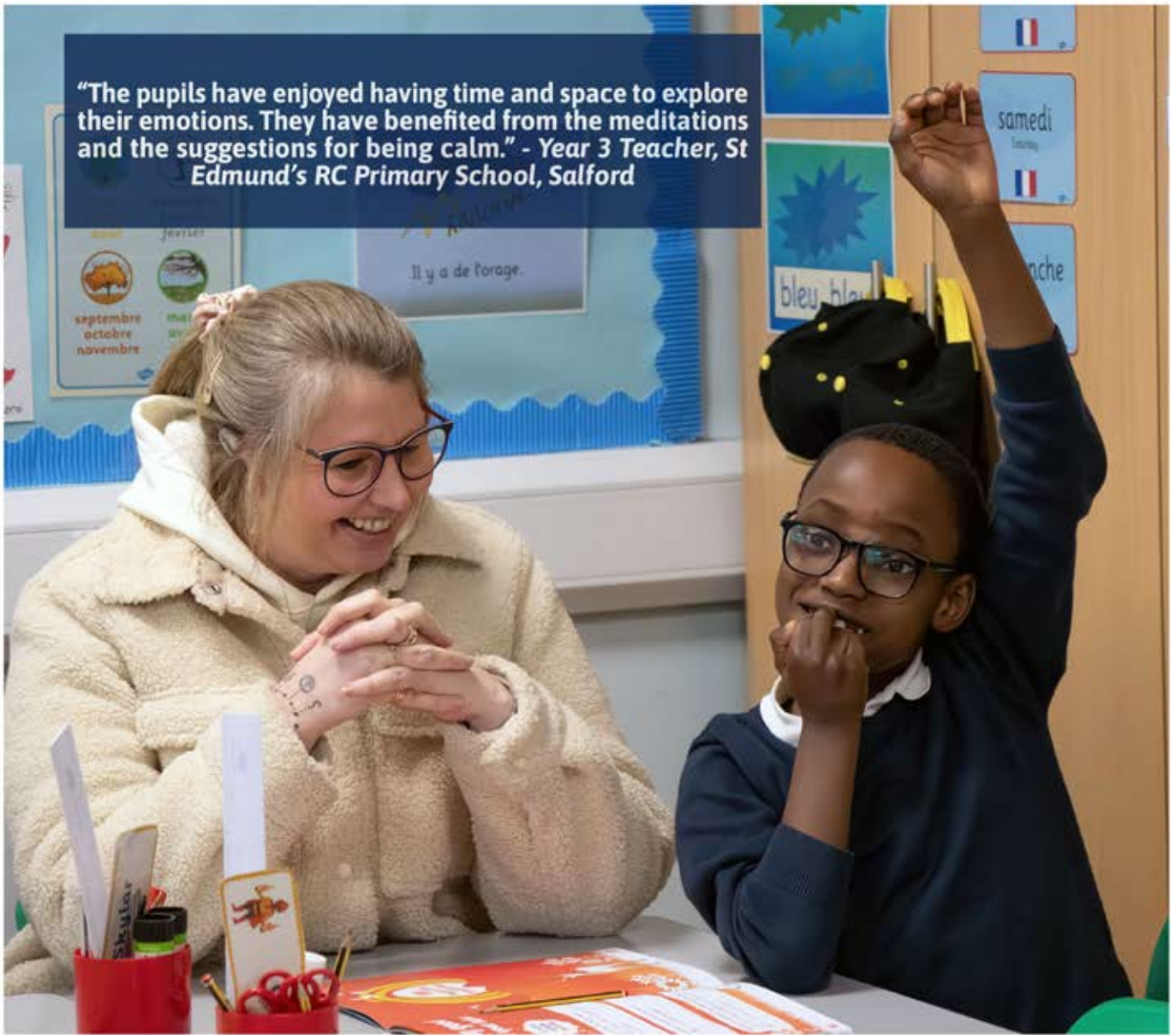
We love this fabulous drawing (right), in which a pupil at The Heys School in Prestwich has perfectly captured how our thoughts can influence our feelings, and how having a positive mindset can make all the difference to our mood.





Results and impact

“The pupils have enjoyed having time and space to explore their emotions. They have benefited from the meditations and the suggestions for being calm.” - Year 3 Teacher, St Edmund’s RC Primary School, Salford





Results and impact



The Hula Hoop Challenge
@ St Edmund's RC Primary School, Salford





Results and impact

Feedback from Year 3 Teacher, Lyme Community Primary School, St Helens

In what ways do you think the Hummingbird Project has helped your pupils?

They have an awareness of what mental health is now and the term mindfulness.
It has helped them to take more notice of the things around them. To appreciate what makes them happy.

What do you think your pupils have learned from the project?

They have learned to think of strategies to help them stay happy / feel happy.
- Develop / improve resilience.

Do you feel the project has improved pupils' mental health?

Yes! 100% it links perfectly to our PATHS curriculum (promoting alternative thinking strategies) and the high priority that children's wellbeing / pastoral needs have at our school.

What tools or skills do you think your students have learned from the project to improve their resilience?

Character strengths cards excellent idea - I have embedded these in my classroom practice - on my working walls.

Children know how to use strategies to help them stay calm and savour the world around ~~us~~ ^{them} using our senses.
Children can persevere using taught strategies.



The Hummingbird Project

About the Hummingbird Project

The Hummingbird Project is all about making you happy. You go through a series of sessions around the subject of being happy. This is a good project especially for year 7s, I personally really enjoyed it.

Effects?

At the start and the end of the project, you will fill in a set of questions. This will help you see the effects of the project.

THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT



What is it about? The Hummingbird Project is all about mental health and learning ways to feel happy!

How did the Hummingbird Project change the way you feel about the world?

The Project has made me think... as a exciting thing to look forward to!

Chloe's thoughts: I'm so glad that I did this project because it has helped me to feel better about myself and my school!

How did the Hummingbird Project change the way you think about your school?

I used to look back at my school and be sad about it, but now I feel happy about it because I had friends!

What did you enjoy about the Project? I just enjoyed like answering questions and being to learn things! I had fun!

Did my life change in a way that I didn't expect? Yes!

I don't think there are any changes to be made!

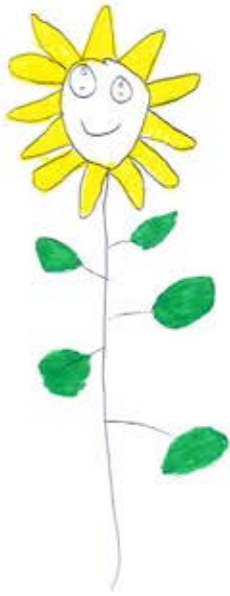
The Hummingbird Project!

The hummingbird Project is about things that makes happy in your lives times!

The hummingbird Project is that makes your life happy. if you have ideas and you make something and it makes you happy. I like the hummingbird project book because its so cool, all and beautiful!



Life is Amazing



HUMMING BIRD PROJECT

I LIKED med EQUIP
THE HUMMING 4KDS
'BIRD PROJET

BE YOURSELF

SIGHT, HEARING,
TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL



Feeling
happiness ✓
Being KIND
AND THANKFUL

CALM, DOWN
SLOW, DOWN

The things that make me happy are... making other people happy, being kind to others, giving attention to others, learning languages and traveling all around the world, having a very good job, being a doctor when I grow older. Helping people when they need it, learning a language (spanish and French) to help her because her english is not very good. And the hummingbird project makes me happy because we learnt about something helpful and about mindfulness.



Hummingbird Project Conference

The very first Hummingbird Project Conference took place on 11 July 2025 at the University of Greater Manchester. Attended by around 100 people, the event brought together educators, healthcare professionals, and academics with a shared interest in children's mental wellbeing. The conference was chaired with warmth and humour by Professor Jerome Carson, Professor of Psychology at the University of Greater Manchester, who was instrumental in helping us set up the project.



Catherine North – From the Beating of Tiny Wings: How the Hummingbird Took Flight

Catherine traced the project's origins at MedEquip4Kids. After a visit to a CAMHS inpatient unit, she and her colleague discussed helping to prevent mental health problems in young people before they escalated to crisis point. From this the Hummingbird Project was born, developed in collaboration with our university partners. Catherine now leads on development and funding.



Ian Platt – The Past, Present, and Potential of the Hummingbird Project

Project Manager Ian has been the driving force behind the project, guiding it from an ambitious pilot into a region-wide initiative. Ian explained the urgent need for school-based mental health support and how we offer a simple, scalable solution: a brief, evidence-based programme that boosts wellbeing, hope and resilience. Finally he outlined plans for expansion, including trials in new regions and broader evaluation.



Ifthakar Khaliq – From Intervention to Prevention: Aiding Minds

As a counsellor at Essa Academy, Ifthakar recognised that the mental health needs of many quiet or internalising students were going unnoticed. His innovative Aiding Minds online system introduces a whole-school check-in system, enabling staff to assess and respond to emotional needs before they escalate into crisis. The results are rising attendance, improved engagement, and more timely referrals.



Claudine McFaul – Creating New Pathways for Positive Psychology with Children & Families

With creativity and warmth, Claudine reflected on her pioneering work creating the Hummingbird Primary programme with children themselves, emphasising the power of giving young people a voice in shaping wellbeing interventions. Now a lecturer at The Open University, Claudine has co-developed the Bounce Back course for families and is working on a digital wellbeing game.



Hummingbird Project Conference

Ana-Cristina Tuluceanu – Preventing Crime Through Early Intervention: The EAGLES Programme

In a powerful and timely talk, Ana-Cristina Tuluceanu from the University of Greater Manchester explored how early school-based support can steer young people away from crime and gang involvement. The EAGLES Programme helps vulnerable Year 7 pupils develop positive identities and skills, steering them away from exclusion and risk.



Sonia and Ayo Ebenezer-Bamigbayan – Adapting the Hummingbird Project for Special Schools

Our Project Co-ordinator Sonia presented her research on adapting the Hummingbird Project for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Sonia has identified a need for tailored, inclusive approaches that accommodate sensory sensitivities, trauma histories, and neurodiversity. Sonia was joined by her daughter Ayo, who spoke about how volunteering for the project has boosted her own confidence and skills, showing its wider impact.



Kati-Anne Roughley – A Headteacher’s Perspective

In one of the most heartfelt moments of the day, headteacher Kati-Anne described the multiple challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils at Haslam Park Primary School in Bolton. She reported that nevertheless the Hummingbird Project has helped to give them a language of kindness and hope. One child summed it up beautifully: “Every school needs Sonia to visit and help them be happier.”



Dr Kevin Hochard – How Do We Know Educational Interventions Really Work?

In a brilliantly clear and accessible talk, Dr Kevin Hochard from the University of Chester demystified the science behind evaluating wellbeing interventions. He explained complex concepts like regression to the mean, placebo effects and control groups, and outlined how pragmatic trials can strike a balance between scientific rigour and real-world feasibility.





Hummingbird Project Conference



Sarah Hobson – The Hummingbird Project at St Bede Academy

Sarah shared some joyful feedback from children at St Bede Academy in Bolton. Pupils spoke warmly about how the Hummingbird Project helped them feel calmer, kinder, and more connected. Activities like the hula hoop challenge, mindfulness exercises, and scent-based savouring tasks left a lasting impression, with some children still using the techniques in everyday play.



Dr Michelle Tytherleigh – Positive Education: What It Is and Why It Matters

Dr Michelle Tytherleigh from the University of Chester offered a compelling overview of Positive Education, the philosophy underpinning the Hummingbird Project. Michelle showed how positive psychology can transform school cultures by nurturing wellbeing. She addressed the importance of inclusivity, sharing how VIA character strengths can be mapped to neurodiverse traits, and how frameworks like EMPATHICS can support SEN students.



Concluding remarks

The Mayor of Bolton, Councillor David Chadwick, joined the conference and said some kind words about the impact the Hummingbird Project is having in Bolton schools. The event concluded with remarks from Dr Ghazala Baig, CEO of MedEquip4Kids, who celebrated the charity's 40th anniversary and thanked the speakers, organisers, and volunteers.

Images © University of Greater Manchester





New Hummingbird course for pupils with special educational needs

As we reported in the conference presentations on page 15, Sonia Ebenezer-Bamigbayan has begun a dedicated research project into the mental health of pupils in special educational needs (SEN) settings.

We have already delivered the Hummingbird Project in several SEN settings and these pilots showed that students with learning disabilities respond especially well to kinaesthetic and sensory-based activities, rather than traditional classroom methods. Sonia will use her findings to create a bespoke Hummingbird course tailored for young people with additional needs.

Left: A poster by a pupil at Kingsland High School in Oldham, a school for pupils with a variety of complex needs who have experienced difficulty in accessing mainstream education.

Hummingbird inspires pupils at community event

In June this year we were excited to play a key role in the "Have a Go" event at Manchester Youth Zone: an enlightening day of hands-on activities for schools centred on wellbeing, nutrition, and physical fitness. The event, organised by Far East Consortium and Rebecca Kirkland, drew pupils from schools across Manchester.

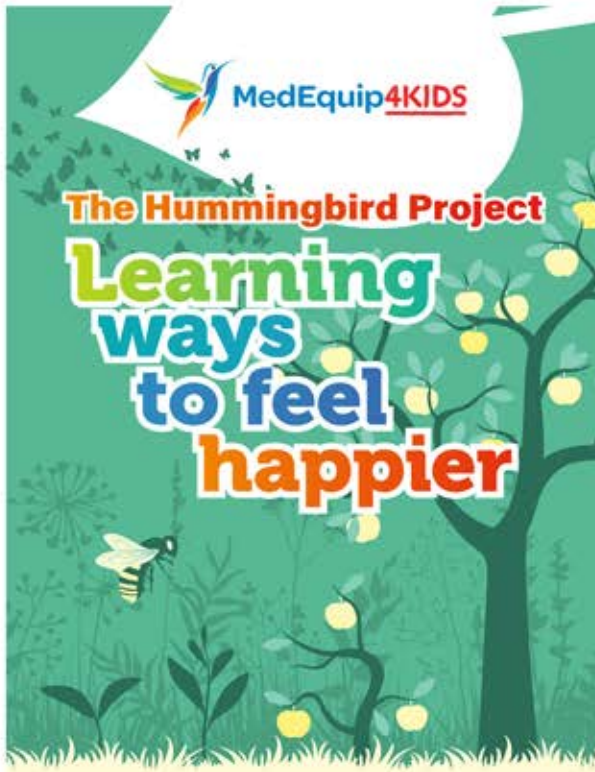
The festival aimed to inspire young people to discover imaginative ways to boost their mental health, nutrition awareness, and active lifestyles.



Project Manager Ian Platt hosted a stand focused on mental wellbeing and sensory awareness, particularly the power of scent.



Our course booklet for secondary schools got a beautiful new look this year, based on feedback from pupils. A huge thank you to Jason Hulme at Browns Print Limited, who did an amazing job at revamping the design with a colourful nature theme.



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Welcome to the Hummingbird Project!

Over the coming weeks, you will learn lots of exciting stuff about what we like to call Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology means all the things that make you happy, healthy, and able to take on the world! It also means learning some stuff that could help to make sure you never have to suffer from mental health problems and help you to take the positive steps you need to take to be whoever and whatever you want to be in the future. We think that the Hummingbird Project is a fun and exciting way for you to be the best you can be, and we hope you do too!

While you are taking part in the project, we hope you will feel confident and free to speak to our friendly session leaders about any of the things we discuss in the sessions so please do ask questions if you have them. There will be some challenges for you to complete at home but most of it should only take a couple of minutes out of your day and we hope it will be fun and informative just like the sessions.

We'll leave the introductions there and let you discuss the project with the session leaders, who will introduce all of the ideas you'll be covering in the next few weeks. We'll just wish you the best of luck and hope that you enjoy the project and learn lots of useful things!



Thank you

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported the Hummingbird Project this year. Your generosity means we can continue offering the programme free of charge to schools, ensuring that thousands of children benefit from tools that build confidence, resilience and hope. We would particularly like to thank the organisations and individuals below.

**Branislav Trajkovski
Camelia Trust
Casey Trust
Dagleish Trust
David Riddell Memorial CIO
Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust
Eric Wright Charitable Trust
Gail Armstrong
Jigsaw Foundation
John Rayner Charitable Trust
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Leri Charitable Trust**

**N Smith Charitable Settlement
Patricia Routledge Foundation
Pilkington Charities Fund
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Schreier Foundation
UKH Foundation
Urmston Grammar School
Worshipful Company of Innholders**



Keep in touch

Follow the Hummingbird Project on our social media channels @HummingbirdMH

Get involved

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Support us

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