



Tameside Children and Young Peoples  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
PROGRAMME

**Yoga in Schools  
Impact Evaluation Report  
May 2017**



## **Introduction**

In the last decade significant progress has been made in the scientific investigation of yoga and mindfulness as supporting a whole child approach to development, learning and wellbeing, as well as the classroom environment.

Research suggests that school-based yoga cultivates competencies in mind-body awareness, self-regulation, and physical fitness. And classroom teachers benefit as well. Taken together, these competencies may lead to improvements in students' behaviour, mental state, health, and performance, as well as teacher resilience, effectiveness and overall classroom climate.

Please see appendix A for evidence to support Yoga in the school setting.

## **Tameside Investment**

As an investment, Tameside Public Health and Tameside School Sports Partnership joint funded 75 places for school staff to attend yoga in schools training.

The training was provided by The Yoga Factory following several recommendations from schools in Tameside.

The main training elements of the programme included:

- Correct Breathing
- Flexibility
- Balance and Co-ordination
- Body Awareness
- Core Strength
- Relaxation

The programme was designed for use in schools across all key stages and is delivered using 2 CD's and supported by a teaching file.

The CD's contain four 30 minute routines, each of which contains a 5 minute relaxation. Both CD's have an original musical soundtrack together with detailed instructions of how to perform each movement.

The training was spread over 3 days (25 places each day – 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016) and took place at the Pavilion in Stamford Park.

## **Tameside Results**

Out of the 75 places available, 57 places were booked. As some of schools booked more than one place, this breaks down to:

- 32 out of the 76 Primary Schools
- 5 out of the 15 Secondary Schools
- 3 out of the 5 Special Schools

Therefore out of the 96 schools in Tameside, 42% attended the training.

### Tameside Training Evaluation

On completion of the training, the attendees were sent a survey to evaluate the training course but also the intentions to embed yoga in their school settings.

33 out of the 57 attendees completed the survey which results to 58% return.

The results outlined as following:

All schools strongly or agreed to the below statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Weighted Average
The course met my learning objectives	84.85% 28	15.15% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33	1.15
The course materials were effective and aided my learning	90.91% 30	9.09% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33	1.09
The trainer had the relevant skills and knowledge to deliver the course effectively	96.97% 32	3.03% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33	1.03
The course helped me to increase my knowledge and skills	90.91% 30	9.09% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33	1.09

When asked 'Please tell us at least one thing you have learned from this course' these are a handful of the comments made:

- How much yoga can benefit so many of our children;
- Advantages of breathing to aid calmness and readiness to learn;
- How to teach Yoga effectively in primary schools that is accessible for all children of different abilities;
- How to breathe properly, how to deliver the yoga we were taught to children, how it can be helpful;
- A different approach to teaching wellbeing for both staff and children;
- The course was brilliant from start to finish. I learned: - how to teach yoga to children -how to relax -how beneficial yoga is for both physical and mental wellbeing and for all ages -yoga can help with illnesses such as arthritis and many more;
- That yoga is beneficial for every child in every class for varying reasons;
- How yoga can be used to improve mindfulness/stress relief, mobility and toning. Routines of exercises;
- How yoga can help asthmatics with their breathing;

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- How yoga can be used to help calm and support children who have difficulties in their life;
  - The importance of mental health and how to breathe properly;
  - How to breathe, different yoga moves, how to relax;
  - Yoga's potential across a number of areas in my school for example, increased staff wellbeing, introduce to KS4 pre examinations as form of relaxation and a new alternative activity for PE curriculum.

When asked 'What did you most enjoy about the training?' here are a handful of the comments:

- Great to be on a practical course!
- Calm atmosphere, people who were similarly minded, professional attitude of the yoga teacher;
- Being given a file with instructions and all resources needed to teach immediately;
- Nice to be practical and try out the yoga routines;
- All of the resources so you can do it yourself at school;
- The relaxed and active way of learning. Sharing information on taking yoga back in to school;
- The whole day was most enjoyable;
- Learning yoga and meeting new people;
- Trying the activity and resources provided. Great instructor;
- A fully inclusive and supportive curriculum that can be accessed by all ages and abilities. Fun and informative;
- The tutor was very inspiring and engaging. The day was very practical and you really got a feel for how it works;
- I really enjoyed the fact that the course was 100% practical and the resources are excellent so feel fully prepared to take my new skills into the classroom.

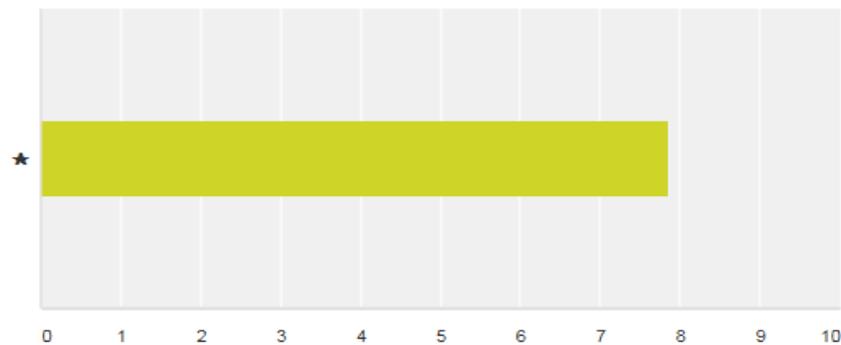
When asked 'How do you/ your school intend to use the yoga in your school?'. Here are a handful of responses:

- Golden time activity for children, after school club and relaxation for children with behavioural problems;
- With target groups of children with disabilities including concentration and behaviour;
- I will use the yoga training 4 times per week at lunchtimes;
- To target specific groups of children and parents;
- We intend to implement yoga into a KS4 lessons for those pupils aren't typically 'sporty'. We also may run some pre-exam yoga classes to help the Year 10 and 11 girls before their exams;
- Use before SATS to relaxation;
- I am going to start off by doing an after school club for the children, but then would like to do a session with all the children once a week, I would also like to do a session with all the staff;
- Introduce basic moves as part of PE to own music. Repeat regularly and build up to using routine when know moves. Also will use during Health Week for staff and parents;
- I will adapt the course and deliver it in lessons;
- Running an after school club and using the breathing techniques with children that need to take time out;
- Staff wellbeing sessions, pre exam relaxation sessions, breathing techniques for SEN / ASD pupils, own personal teaching and mindset and links to mindfulness sessions held in school assemblies;
- Breakfast club, morning breathers, afterschool sessions with children/parents.

On average schools marked themselves at 8 in confidence to deliver this in their school:

## How confident are you to deliver yoga with children and young people in your school?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



And finally, when asked, 'Any Other Comments':

- Really enjoyed the course and am looking forward to delivering it to the children.
- Thank you for such a wonderful course free of charge!
- I knew what some of the health benefits were of yoga but I didn't realise how beneficial yoga could be both physically and mentally, and the impact of breathing correctly can have on dealing with stress better. Would recommend that all schools have at least one person to go on this course as it's a good resource to have to help children deal with wellbeing. Fantastic facilitator.
- This was a fantastic course which I thoroughly enjoyed. I look forward to doing more yoga in the future both my professional and personal life.
- Excellent course - Well done Trish!
- Thank you for a really lovely day, I certainly felt very relaxed when I left. Thank you once again for being such a lovely tutor.
- Really enjoyed a completely refreshing and relaxing course. Hopefully there will be others in the near future. Thanks
- We already used a few yoga exercises at the beginning of some lessons. It helps calm the children and they seem to really enjoy it often asking to be taught more balances and breathing techniques.
- I really enjoyed the course. The course venue was excellent and Tricia was a positive and inspirational role model to encourage us to use Yoga to help our pupils.

### Yoga Training Part 2 – Yoga and Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Following the success and demand of the first yoga training above, Tameside Public Health commissioned a further 30 places for the second part of the training which focused on emotional health. The core elements of the training included:

- Increased flexibility
- Correct posture
- Greater sense of well-being
- Improved concentration
- Greater confidence



The 'part 2' training is also complemented with a further 4 routines and 4 new relaxations / meditations on top of that delivered in the 'part 1' training. The CD's contain powerful sound bites to build up children's confidence and self-esteem.

This training was offered to the 57 schools that attended part 1 and in total 30 schools attended the part 2 making a 51.7% uptake.

Following this training a survey was sent to the 57 schools that attended part 1 or both parts of the training to capture yoga activity in the school setting and what impact it has had.

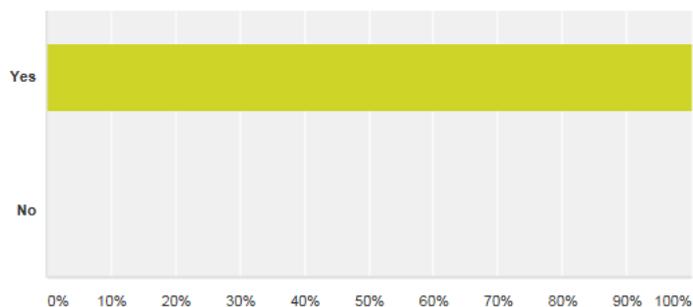
16 out of the 57 schools completed the survey, giving a 28% return.

Survey results as follows:

All schools completed the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the training

### Did you attend the Yoga Part 1 (October 2016)?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0

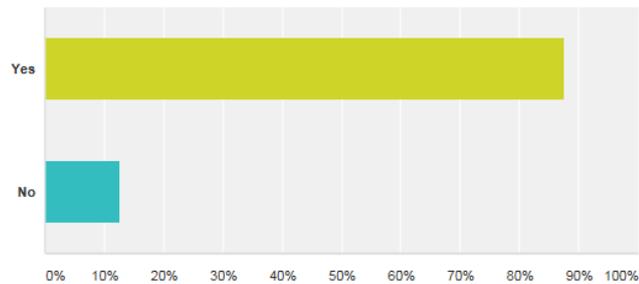


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	100.00% 16
No	0.00% 0
Total	16

14 out of 16 schools completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the training

### Did you attend the Yoga Part 2 (Emotional Health and Yoga - February 2017)

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0

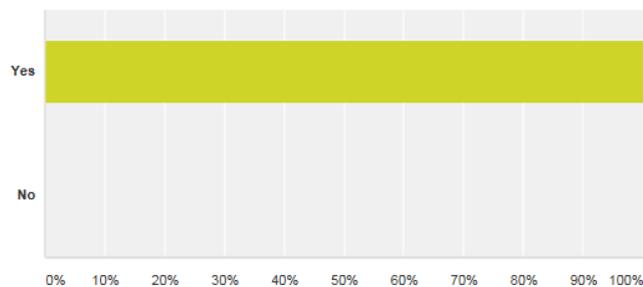


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	87.50%	14
No	12.50%	2
Total		16

All the 16 schools since the training has used Yoga in the school setting

### Since the training have you used yoga in the school setting?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	100.00%	16
No	0.00%	0
Total		16

For those whom answered 'yes', we asked 'If you answered yes, how have you used Yoga in the school setting?'

- I do a before school session with a group of Y6 children who thoroughly enjoy it. They do 30 mins then have breakfast before school. I also use the breathing and relaxation activities with other children.
- I do 2 dinnertime yoga clubs every week with Year 1 and 2 children as I am based in infants.
- I have used the Yoga with yr1 and yr6 as a health and wellbeing session.
- As part of a small interventions group and is to be rolled out soon to more targeted groups.
- After school club for a variety of year groups In class for PE lessons.

- As part on an intervention session with a selection of disengaged female students.
- A staff session on an inset day and small groups of selected children from yr 1 to yr6.
- I do an after school club, which is open to years 1 – 6.
- We have used the relaxation techniques to cool down at the end of PE lessons and next term we are starting a before school club.
- It has been delivered to every class from Y1 -Y6 I am using it for a class that needs to listen and be calm in situations throughout the school day. I am doing it in the run up to SAT's with Y6 I would like to do it as an after school activity for children and parents in the future moving forwards.
- Before school club and after school club. All staff training - employing simple breathing techniques and meditation throughout the day.
- After school club, breakfast club.
- Yoga is taught as a golden time activity once a week. Children choose which golden time activity they want as a reward for their behaviour. 12 children are chosen for a term & then every term the children re-pick different groups. Also been taught as an after school club.
- We run after school yoga clubs for key stage 1, and also a breakfast yoga club for years 5/6 which is targeted at lowering stress levels before SATs and several children with behavioural problems have also been targeted.
- In our sports club on a Tuesday after school.
- Before school club after school club Staff club twice daily 5 minute class sessions.

15 schools completed the following question 'Could you give an example of how yoga has impacted your school as a whole, as a class, a targeted group or an child/young person's? A mini case study.'

- The Y6 target group start the day relaxed and ready to learn. It has had a positive impact on their stress levels around SATs and many have commented that it allows them to switch off. They also enjoy being able to see how far they have progressed.
- I have 10 children per half term then another group of children are offered a place for the following half term. All the children are eager to join in and come to sessions,
- One yr1 child has low self-esteem loves yoga and has grown in confidence.
- It engages the pupils interest as a new scheme of work, they enjoy the practical side of it and like to chill out at the end to the music provided.
- It has given the children to experience yoga as they hasn't done this before. They have been able to practise the different positions and relax within the yoga sessions
- Not every student has access to yoga yet as there is just me. From the intervention the girls like the fact it doesn't seem 'physical' like PE and games and have enjoyed the meditation relaxation side of yoga to help them focus for the following lesson/day.
- The staff enjoyed the session I ran and were interested in including it in their class planning.
- I find that yoga after school helps the children to relax after a busy day and gives them a chance to feel their bodies working towards this.
- It has enhanced our curriculum and also our extra-curricular activities. Our Year 5 and Year 6 class have both had a lesson on Yoga and the perception and attitude of the class changed significantly over the course of the lesson.

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- We sit up in the hall as the children are aware of their posture. At lunchtime I deal with behaviour. Before we discuss the reason for the behaviour we discuss breathing and calming techniques to help our emotions. At the moment we are focusing on two classes that would benefit from the calm tranquil and listening skills needed to follow the routine.
  - Pupils can focus on their learning better. Pupils with concentration difficulties are able to re-focus easier. Older girls (KS2) seem to have more awareness of how yoga can improve their posture, improve strength and balance.
  - Calmer Mindset.
  - A number of children who would usually be quite agitated through the day have been noted as being more relaxed after doing 30 minutes of yoga in a morning before school.
  - Many children now enjoying this as part of before and after school clubs including children who normally avoid sports clubs or after school clubs.

And finally, when asked, 'Any Other Comments':

- Thanks for one of the best courses I have attended as a teacher! It has impacted on my own well-being as well as the children's!
- We have a sports week coming up in June and I have been asked to do a yoga session with each year group so they can see what it is about.
- Want to use the yoga as a lunchtime club.
- A great resource to have and if used and persisted with can improve the anxiety of some pupils. Would be great as a pre-SATS tool for next year's cohort.
- Very good resources and liked by the staff and children.
- Really enjoyed the training, was beneficial for myself to 'chill out'. Thank you for the course.
- It was a valuable course and very well planned. I enjoyed both parts of the yoga and it is useful in my work as a pastoral coordinator.
- I enjoy delivering the yoga club it is lovely to see the calm it brings to them , I feel this is very important in today's busy world.
- Thank you for making this opportunity open to Tameside schools.
- I thoroughly enjoyed both courses. Fantastic opportunity. If similar courses are run (meditation, mindfulness or improving mental health), I would be definitely interested. Thank you.
- Very well run course and would welcome more.



**Appendix**

figure outlines the benefits for youth adults):

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The below some of potential of yoga (and



Butzer, B., Bury, D., Telles, S., & Khalsa, S. B. S. (in press). Implementing yoga within the school curriculum: A scientific rationale for improving social-emotional learning & positive student outcomes. *Journal of Children's Services*.

The following list outlines some of the benefits of school-based yoga and meditation practices that address the whole child and therefore maximizing the development of **academic, social and emotional competence** in addition to benefits for teachers and classroom climate:

- Provides students with healthy ways to express, balance, and regulate their emotions and behaviour ([Bergen-Cico et al., 2015](#); [Daly et al., 2015](#); [Razza et al., 2013](#)).
- Promotes a more relaxed, comfortable state of being - the perfect state for teaching and learning ([Dai et al., 2015](#)).
- Has a positive impact on students' academic performance ([Butzer et al., 2015](#); [Kauts & Sharma, 2009](#)).
- Brings students into the present moment – the most basic requirement for learning ([Eastman-Mueller et al., 2013](#)).
- Encourages community and connectedness within the classroom ([Conboy et al., 2013](#); [Finnan, 2015](#)).

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- Provides opportunities for beneficial motor breaks throughout the day ([Fox, 1999](#); [Sibley & Etnier, 2003](#)).
  - Eases anxiety and tension (such as pre-test or performance jitters) ([Frank et al., 2014](#); [Noggle et al., 2012](#)).
  - Reduces anger, depression, and fatigue ([Felver et al., 2015](#)).
  - Cultivates balanced psychological and physiological responses to stress, such as improved stress management ([Miller et al., 2014](#)), reduced problematic stress responses ([Feagans Gould et al., 2012](#); [Mendelson et al., 2010](#)), and decreased cortisol concentrations ([Butzer et al., 2015](#)).
  - Enhances focus, attention, concentration, comprehension and memory ([Case-Smith et al., 2010](#); [Ehud et al., 2010](#); [Pradhan & Nagendra, 2010](#); [Napoli et al., 2005](#); [Manjunath & Telles, 2004](#); [Quach et al., 2015](#)).
  - Provides opportunities for reflection, patience and insight, thereby reducing impulsivity, hostility, and reactivity ([Fishbein et al., 2015](#); [Frank et al., 2014](#); [Parker et al., 2014](#)).
  - Supports social and emotional learning ([Gueldner & Feuerborn, 2015](#)).
  - Enhances flexibility, strength, and physical well-being ([Chen & Pauwels, 2014](#); [Verma et al., 2014](#)).
  - Improves mind/body awareness and self-awareness ([Conboy et al., 2013](#); [Ramadoss & Bose, 2010](#)).
  - Enhances executive function (i.e., processes required to select, organize, and properly initiate goal-directed actions) by combining the cognitive and neurological benefits of physical activity ([Best, 2010](#); [Diamond & Lee, 2011](#); [Fumoto et al., 2010](#); [Ratey, 2013](#)) with breathing exercises and mental focus techniques.
  - Enhances resilience and coping frequency, thereby helping students adapt and cope with negative life events ([Khalsa et al., 2012](#); [Ramadoss & Bose, 2010](#); [White, 2012](#)).
  - Improves confidence and self-esteem ([Bhardwaj & Agrawal, 2013](#); [Sethi et al., 2013](#)).
  - Encourages respect for oneself and others ([Dubey, 2011](#); [Fishbein et al., 2015](#)).
  - Improves physiological outcomes such as respiratory muscle strength ([D'Souza & Avadhany, 2014](#)), heart rate variability ([Bothe et al., 2014](#)), and stress reactivity ([Fishbein et al., 2015](#)).
  - Creates a calm, harmonious classroom ([Butzer et al., 2015](#)).
  - Has beneficial effects on outcomes for classroom teachers, including increases in calmness, mindfulness, well-being, and positive mood, improvements in classroom management, physical symptoms, blood pressure, and cortisol awakening response, and decreases in mind and body stress ([Harris et al., 2016](#); [Jennings et al., 2013](#); [Kemeny et al., 2012](#); [Nosaka & Okamura, 2015](#)), thereby supporting a positive classroom climate, teacher effectiveness and student outcomes ([Roeser et al., 2012](#)).



