

A Day of Mindfulness, Yoga and Relaxation

(part of Castle School's End of Year Creative)

Traditional lessons were abandoned at the end of term at Castle School when the whole school were invited to discover new skills or indulge in some of their favourite interests during a two day creative where pupils opted for different workshops run by staff who shared hobbies or activities they enjoy when not teaching their usual subject.



Some of the year 10 girls went to Outdoor School to learn about wellness and yoga. Mrs Roberts explained to them about chanting before demonstrating the different techniques. They discovered that chanting is a sound repeated in order to transmit a certain frequency. By repeating these seed syllables, or bija, they should eventually learn how to vibrate from the inside out, becoming quite literally their own tuning fork. They discovered the benefits are both physical - it helps to reduce stress, improve cognition, lower the heart-rate and help tune internally to become aware of distress in the physical body before it turns into an illness – and emotional, as it alleviates depression and reduces stress.

Later in the morning, they learnt some sun dances and yoga positions. The girls were taught about the benefits of some of the poses. It improves flexibility as the body gradually loosens until eventually, seemingly impossible poses become possible and aches and pains start to disappear. It builds muscle strength, helping to protect against conditions like arthritis and back pain and helping to prevent falls in elderly people. It perfects posture. The head is big and heavy but when it's balanced directly over an erect spine, the neck and back muscles need to work less to support it. It prevents cartilage and joint breakdown. By taking joints through their full range of motion it helps prevent degenerative arthritis or mitigate disability by "squeezing and soaking" areas of cartilage that normally aren't used. It protects the spine as lots of backbends, forward bends and twists will help keep discs supple.



For lunch, the girls learnt more about the vegan diet and helped prepare to a salad which they ate with a vegan chickpea dish and bread Mrs Roberts had made earlier. They tried tamarick tea which is also vegan. After lunch they drew some positivity illustrations and listened to some music whilst learning more about mindfulness. And just in case they weren't completely relaxed and de-stressed, they underwent a full body scan. Everyone agreed it had been the ideal location, away from everyone and everything, in the green, wide open space at Addlepitts, and that they had learnt lots. All in all, a very enjoyable day.