

INSPIRE

Spring 2021

Leading innovation in PE and school sport



Well
Schools
SPECIAL EDITION

The Road to Recovery



POWERED BY YST AND BUPA FOUNDATION

Well schools

06

Give children the building blocks for a brighter future.

Well prepared

18

After School Sport Club, keeping young people active online.

Well equipped

22

Can equal access on the playing field shape society?

Well led

30

How putting yourself first is the ultimate selfless act.



Online elite athlete mentor opportunities

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only
£135 +VAT
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Since 2003 the Youth Sport Trust has pioneered the inspirational use of elite Athletes developing a compelling evidence base for the impact of Athlete Mentors to change lives.

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We deploy some of Britain's most successful world class athletes into primary and secondary schools to deliver bespoke interventions through assemblies, workshops and masterclasses supporting outcomes including:

- Emotional wellbeing and resilience
- Raising aspirations
- Character development and life skills
- Leadership and employability
- Exam preparation
- Increasing physical activity (now includes option to purchase personalised YST After School Sport Club experiences) www.youthsporttrust.org/AfterSchoolSportClub



Jeanette Kwakye, British Champion & Olympic 100m finalist

Athletes can also be used to engage parents, support teacher CPD or for In-Service Training (INSET) Days.

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Find out more:

athletecoordinator@youthsporttrust.org 01509 226603

WELCOME

Welcome to this edition of INSPIRE magazine. At the time of going to press, we anticipated by the time this magazine lands with you, you would be welcoming back most, if not all, pupils. If that has been the case in your school, I hope this significant transition has started smoothly.

We know that this time is one of huge expectations and big challenges for everyone in education, importantly we want you to know that we are here to help.

In recent months we have seen growing public awareness and discussion about the impact of lockdown and remote learning on young people. Academics, paediatricians, psychologists and educators have all recognised the traumatic impact the consequences of COVID-19 on young lives. Ofsted too reported this summer on the loss of learning stamina, physical fitness and high levels of anxiety. The Youth Sport Trust has continued to champion the important role of play, sport and tailored physical education in a recovery curriculum and we have been privileged to share across our networks the brilliant and innovative ways schools have prioritised the wellbeing of their staff and students.

On page 8, we hear from the Children's Society about their call to action for a national holistic measure of young people's wellbeing – an ask the Youth Sport Trust is proud to support. And on page 10 you will find a summary of the findings of the most recent set of Active Lives data for Children and Young People from Sport England. This research shows an unsurprising decline in physical activity levels last academic year, however, these statistics represent just the tip of the iceberg of the inactivity issue given this data does not capture what happened during lockdown.

In readiness for all students to return to school we have been calling for a National Active Recovery programme characterised by fun,

movement throughout the school day, time outdoors and a greater focus on physical education and sport. It would be wonderful to see the summer term used to build back the foundations for learning, young people's confidence, belonging, independence and resilience. This would also demonstrate an important and profound commitment to young people, parents and carers – a statement that their wellbeing matters.

As Association for School and College Leaders General Secretary, Geoff Barton, writes in his article in this edition: "If there was ever a time to reclaim what educational values should be about, it's now. Let's do it."

Through the Well Schools movement (www.well-school.org) it has been great to see you coming forward to share ideas and best practice on putting wellbeing at the heart of the recovery curriculum. On page 12 Headteacher Ben Levinson writes about the need for us to prioritise our own mental health and wellbeing. We also share details of the support being offered by the Bupa Foundation, our Well Schools partner.

The story of Jude Aston on page 25 is one which reminds us of the important power of sport at this time to help young people overcome barriers and develop confidence, connections and a sense of hope which we know have been so lacking from young people's lives over the past year.

In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to you for the incredible job you have done in the last 12 months, being there for children and working tirelessly to give the very best education against all the odds. We are so proud to work with you. Until we can be together again, please take great care and stay safe.



ALI OLIVER
Chief Executive Officer
Youth Sport Trust

Contents

- 04** News
- 05** Impact Report
- 06** Using 2020 vision to give children the building blocks for a bright future
- 08** National measurement of children's wellbeing is key to improving childhood
- 10** Demonstrating and celebrating a Well School
- 12** A year on: Sport England Secondary Teacher Training programme
- 14** Preparing children physically and emotionally to learn - in an ever-changing world
- 16** Are working class boys and prepared for education?
- 18** After School Sport Club
- 19** Implications of COVID-19 on being active and well at home
- 21** Youth Voice: How my passion for sport has paved a road to opportunity
- 22** Can achieving equal access on the playing field help shape society?
- 24** Supporting young people to access high quality physical education lessons at home
- 26** The power of teaching and learning through human stories
- 28** Bupa Foundation support for teachers
- 29** Ensuring wellbeing is at the heart of school and governance
- 30** Me, me, me: how putting yourself first is the ultimate selfless act
- 32** PE Premium - Capitalising on your underspend
- 33** Sport England's 2020 Active Lives Survey
- 34** Should every Multi-Academy Trust have YST membership?

News

YST Annual Conference 2021

For the first time in 24 years we will sadly not be holding an annual conference. You have no idea how much motivation and inspiration we take from this gathering, and the role it plays in galvanising us all around our shared moral purpose. While we will be back in 2022, I do hope you were able to access our free-to-access 'Coronavirus Support Live' workshops at the end of February, but if not, throughout this term's edition of INSPIRE we have tried to provide the most useful insights, ideas and resources we hope will help you in facing the challenges ahead.

New funding to help schools open sports facilities

Sport England has announced it is investing £10.1 million of government money to help more schools open their facilities to the public after the pandemic.

The funding, which has been provided by the DfE, is intended to help schools deliver extra-curricular activities and open their facilities outside of the school day during evenings, weekends and school holidays. Schools will be able to invest in equipment to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Sport England will be working with Active Partnerships to distribute the funding.



More information here:
www.sportengland.org/news/new-funding-help-schools-open-their-sports-facilities

Campaigning for an 'active recovery term' and sport's place in young people's recovery

Ahead of the expected re-opening of schools to more pupils from 8 March we called for schools to be given clear guidance around the safe provisions of daily physical activity, physical education and after-school sport. We also led calls, supported by other sector partners, for a national 'active recovery term' on pupils' return, characterised by active schools, time outdoors and a greater focus on physical education and sport. Our chief executive Ali Oliver said:



Twelve weeks of concerted effort across our sector could be a wonderful way to demonstrate to children and young people, as well as parents and carers that their wellbeing matters and we recognise their need to reconnect, play and have fun again."

In the longer term we are urging government to set out a renewed strategy to tackle inactivity and recover young people's wellbeing, built around a national ambition for our young people to be the happiest and most active in the world. Ali is due to appear before the House of Lords committee on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation in March to continue our campaigning efforts on this front.

New Sport England strategy

Sport England launched a new 10-year strategy in January. The Uniting the Movement strategy aims to put sport and physical activity at the heart of the nation's recovery. One of the key strands of the strategy is a focus on putting enjoyment at the heart of the experiences of children and young people's involvement in sport and physical activity, recognising this as the foundation for a long and healthy life. Responding to the strategy we said:



The emphasis this strategy places on physical literacy and enjoyment is absolutely right if we are to build a love of moving and unlock the health and wider outcomes of being active for the millions of young people currently missing out."



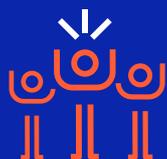
You can read more about the Sport England strategy here: www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement



Impact Report 2020

During an academic year like no other, the work we do with your support helped reach 300,000 young people through our targeted programmes and hundreds of thousands beyond this through our national programmes and broader advocacy work.

2019/20 highlights



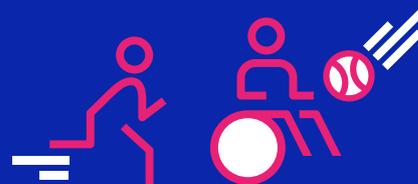
99,706

young people received training from our **athlete mentors, coaches and networks**, empowering them to lead and inspire their peers.



20,650

teachers, coaches and practitioners were trained by us to lead good quality inclusive sport and Physical Education.



309,115

young people were given the opportunity to enjoy the life-changing benefits of sport and play through our programmes.

The reach of communications in 2019/20

98,734

followers on social media

462,087

website visitors

1,605

mentions of our work, research and campaigning in the media, including:

2,100

listens of our four-part podcast series on the importance of COVID-19 for young people, PE and school sport

500,000

downloads of free activity resources

204

stories in national and broadcast media

2 million

reached through **National School Sport Week at Home**



See the full Impact Report here
www.youthsporttrust.org/our-impact

Using 2020 vision to give children the **building blocks for a brighter future**

Former English teacher and ASCL leader Geoff Barton encourages us to look at the past, the future and ourselves using what we learned in 2020.

GEOFF BARTON
ASCL General Secretary



 Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.

NEIL POSTMAN

Many of the children in your care will be on the planet when we are not. What are the skills, qualities, knowledge, attributes and values that you want them to take into the future that we will not see?

As school leaders, we are so locked into logistic questions about the here and now, that we don't even have time to think about what the next couple of months look like. The notion of educating young people who are going to be around for a long time beyond us is a crucial starting point.

Steven Johnson in his book *How We Got to Now* describes the discovery of glass as an innovation that changed the way we see the world.

I'm going to use glass in three forms to shape this article.

1. The microscope – what have the last few months shown us about ourselves, our education system, teachers, school and college leaders and particularly young people?

2. The telescope – what could life be like in the future? What have we learnt about things now that we would want to preserve and to change for the future?

3. The mirror – what is your role in moving us from the microscope to the telescope, from a pessimistic world to a more optimistic place where we recognise that the narrow way in which we currently perceive education, frankly, isn't good enough.

Let's take the microscope. In November I had an email from a headteacher, who said:

"It's a bit like being in an inspection from hell. You have all the adrenaline, stress, anxiety, you just have no control over the outcome. Just when you deal with one problem, another appears. After having to send home half a year group, with more COVID-19 cases in other year groups, we met as an SLT and made the difficult decision to close down Year 11. We've moved our mocks back a week and put them on a period of study leave. We've then received news of another member of staff testing positive, which led to another four members of staff now self-isolating, two of whom are teachers. It was only week three of the new half-term, we were on our knees and dreading the run up to Christmas."

Those Year 11s described above will, of course, be anxious to know how they will be assessed next year in their exams and we still have no answer to that, which I think is scandalous. Since March 2020 we've been asking questions that we still don't know the answer to.

Now, let's take the telescope. I think we've learned two things about our students. Firstly, they're extraordinarily resilient. I had a conversation with a leader last term who'd had a heart-breaking conversation with a child in the corridor who said, "I'm so pleased to be in school, please don't let it close again." Young people seem to be appreciating being back in school. In some schools, standards of behaviour are better than pre-COVID. The second thing is that children deserve better than people talking about education as endless catch-up. What are we doing to harness the attributes, skills, knowledge and values children need to cope with the world? That's where you come in.



Do we settle for the world as it is, or do we work for the world as we think it should be?"

BARACK OBAMA

What have we learned about teachers during this period?

We've seen a profession that always had a responsibility for education now being on the frontline for public health. Against a significant level of anxiety, a government that has criticised them for not providing online learning after giving them two days' notice and with unsuitable equipment and infrastructure to be able to do that, we can look at the extraordinary job teachers have done and say that they have done us proud. For the first time in seven years, the number of people applying to be a teacher has risen, and I think there is something profound in that.

What have we seen about leadership? If you are a leader yourself, you will know that one of the things you have to do, as Harold Wilson reminded us, is pretend to be confident even when your heart is filled with huge anxiety. Your staff look to you, but also at this time when faith in government has dwindled, communities have looked to you for reassurance.

We have also seen a narrow, exam-obsessed system in England. Not only has our government squeezed out the trust in teachers, but it has also squeezed out a sense of the things that really matter. We give too much attention to the head, and not enough to the hand and the heart and we desperately need to change that. Even before we came into this pandemic, there were children who, after 12 years of education, are being told by the system that they are not good enough. I once asked Minister of State for School Standards Nick Gibb, **"What does it feel like to come into school as a Year 11 in August to get your exam results and find out you've got a grade three in your GCSE English?"** He asked why I was fixated on a grade three, and I said **"Because you fixate on a grade four. If you call a grade four a standard pass, what can that young person call their grade three?"** He said, **"presumably it's a good fail."**

We are so exam obsessed that we aren't prepared to give that young person the dignity of being able to take their grade three and say, "Look what I can do."

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on education thanks to the results fiasco. The telescope I think takes us to a position where we start saying to our school leaders to remember the importance of legacy. What did you do in terms of the ethos? How did you convey the values of the older generation to set the younger generation up in that world of the future to be the ones to do better than our generation in improving the planet?

That brings me to you, the mirror. Whatever your job is in education, your role is to be a storyteller. The story we need to tell is what things could be like and what the benefits will be. People used to try to persuade me to take a kid out of PE to do extra maths to help them get better at maths. From experience, I knew that they would do better at maths if they did less of it. It's the quality of the thing that you're doing that matters. If you build their sense of belief, their leadership skills, then that will translate into them believing they can do better and then them doing better across the board.

If there was ever a time to reclaim what educational values should be about, it's now. Let's do it.



Join the Well Schools movement at www.well-school.org

Well schools

National measurement of children's wellbeing is **key to improving childhood**

It seems like everywhere we look people are talking about wellbeing – but what does that actually mean? Is it mental health? Does it involve doing self-care activities like yoga?

RICHARD CRELLIN
Policy and Research
Manager – Mental
Health and Wellbeing,
The Children's Society



Understanding what wellbeing is and how to measure it is essential if we are to support our children to live happy and fulfilled childhoods.

At The Children's Society, findings from our 15-year-old Good Childhood research programme into children's wellbeing tell us that the UK's young people are perfectly able to tell us what they need to improve their wellbeing.

Children are usually crystal clear on what it means to have a good life that leaves them feeling satisfied, happy and able to thrive, and what they need to achieve this. They need warm, loving, safe relationships and homes, choices and autonomy and to spend time with friends. They also want opportunities to learn and grow, and good physical and mental health. They want a future that excites them and fills them with ambition and optimism.

Too often our society fails to provide these things.

There is a saying among economists that "what matters is what's measured". We measure our children's height and weight, attendance at school, progress and attainment. We don't measure how they are feeling.

Our research¹ has found that in the last decade,



10-15-year-olds have become steadily less happy with their lives.



The proportion of children with low wellbeing has grown. Internationally, our 15-year-olds have the lowest life satisfaction and highest fear of failure, when compared to 23 other European nations.

It seems that children are increasingly less convinced that growing up in the UK makes for a good childhood.

If we are to turn these troubling trends around, we need to think differently about what matters in children's lives and start measuring what's important.

That's why The Children's Society is calling for regular national measurement of children's wellbeing.

It's not a novel idea – children's wellbeing is measured in many countries, including the Netherlands, South Australia and Dubai. If we were to do this for children in the UK, we could transform the way we think about, fund and deliver the services and support that are so crucial to a good childhood.

Imagine a social care service that has the time, resources and skills to deliver the long-term support that could help families thrive. Imagine a health service that does not just cure illnesses but empowers young people to live healthy lives. Finally, imagine an education system which can look beyond attainment and academic progress, where teachers genuinely have time to nurture a love of learning which would sustain children for life.

This may sound utopian, but already all over the country there are social workers, doctors and teachers working to make this a reality. Initiatives like Well Schools² are just the kind of grassroots approaches that help make the case for change in education.

However, these grassroots approaches could improve the situation at greater speed if they were properly supported by national government. That's why we've been calling on the government to introduce national measurement, so schools and other public services have the data and information they need to drive change.

This kind of change is going to take time and we cannot do it alone. If you're interested in joining our call for change you can join our campaign³.



Whatever you're doing to improve children's wellbeing, we want to thank you. Whether it's sport, school leadership, teaching or just being a brilliant role model, it's all of crucial importance.

1. www.childrensociety.org.uk/good-childhood
2. www.youthsporttrust.org/wellschool
3. www.childrensociety.org.uk/well-being



To find out how you might measure wellbeing in your own school email: wellbeing@childrensociety.org.uk

Well schools

Demonstrating and celebrating a Well School

Sam Davidson talks about how they use a wellbeing dashboard to monitor and celebrate their progress towards building a positive culture in their school.

SAM DAVIDSON
Headteacher, Carter
Community School



Whilst we strive for academic excellence at Carter and help our students gain the qualifications they need to pursue successful careers, this is not the be-all and end-all for us. Safeguarding the wellbeing of every student is equally important to us and we are determined to create a supportive and positive culture in which students can thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

We were delighted to be one of 30 Founding Schools across the UK to join the Well Schools movement. In doing so, we have pledged to demonstrate our commitment to student and staff wellbeing through all areas of school life including teaching and learning, sport, culture and enrichment. We have immediately embraced the three pillars of the Well Schools movement as a shared moral purpose.



Well led: our Senior Leadership Team leads by example championing wellbeing in everything they do so that it permeates across all areas of school life.



Well prepared: through a broad and stimulating curriculum as well as a wide-ranging enrichment programme, we seek to fully prepare students for the opportunities and challenges presented by school, society and life.



Well equipped: wherever possible we seek to deepen our students' understanding of the world around them and help them nurture the morals and character that will help them in all aspects of their lives.

But it is not just enough to say we embrace these three pillars; we have to demonstrate that they are at the cornerstone of our school community and that we positively promote wellbeing in all we do. As such, we have developed a dashboard to monitor and celebrate our progress in building a positive culture and climate of wellbeing.

The dashboard is split into eight themes: Staff Engagement, Student Voice, Physical Activity, Mental Health, Sleep, School Food, Curriculum and Enrichment. All eight themes are equally important, and it is vital we have a plan for promoting each one. Given the current challenges presented by the pandemic, it has never been more important to focus on student and staff wellbeing. Making sure they are eating and sleeping well, they are getting sufficient exercise and that they continue to receive an enriching and rewarding school experience despite the restrictions placed on their lives.

Within the dashboard, we have set out the ways we promote wellbeing against each theme and how we measure our success in doing so. Within the Mental Health theme, for example, we have introduced a collapsed timetable for Key Stage 4 students covering mental health, exam anxiety and signposting support, whilst within the Staff Engagement and Student Voice themes, we use the results of our student and staff surveys to track how well supported our staff and students feel as well as their overall attitudes to the school. Not only does the dashboard help us celebrate our progress, which in itself is very important, it also enables us to identify areas for improvement.

Whilst I am very proud of the many ways in which we promote wellbeing across the school, the job is never done. There are always new students to support and integrate, new changes to the curriculum and, as the past year has just demonstrated, new challenges to overcome. This is why we constantly track our progress and continually explore further opportunities for nurturing our students' and staff's wellbeing so that everyone within our school community has the support, encouragement and self-confidence they need to achieve their full potential.



Join the Well Schools
movement at
www.well-school.org



Active Generation

Let's work together to build a more

Young people's participation in sport is declining. Limitless* are committed to changing that — helping to build an active and confident generation. We've sponsored Youth Sport Trust to run a pioneering research project in independent schools to understand our pupils' views of sport and their response to exercise. We'd love every school to join — whether or not you are already a Limitless* partner school.

Please visit www.youthsporttrust.org/research-project-eoi or find more details at www.limitlesskit.com

Youth Sport Trust are an independent charity focussed on ensuring that every child enjoys the life-changing benefits that come from play and sport. Limitless* is the #1 sportswear brand in independent schools. Focussed on building an active and confident generation through kit which encourages confidence in every young person.



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School Orienteering & Cross-Curricular Outdoor Learning

Enrich Education provide a wide range of creative products, resources and services that engage, enthuse and motivate children to take part in physical activity both inside and outside the classroom.

SCAN with your smart phone camera to find out more and book an instant free consultation for your school



www.enricheducationuk.com



Well prepared

Every child has a foundation of physical and emotional literacy that will prepare them to be effective learners and cope with the pressures of life.

DANNY BURTON
Secondary School Lead/
YST STT Consultant



A year on: **Sport England Secondary Teacher Training programme**

Here we share some insight from this national programme on the link between physical activity and happiness levels.

In 2018, Sport England announced £13.5 million of National Lottery funding to support specialist physical education training for secondary school teachers. Working alongside the Association for Physical Education (AfPE) and Activity Alliance, The Youth Sport Trust has continued contributing to this programme as it now moves into its final phase.

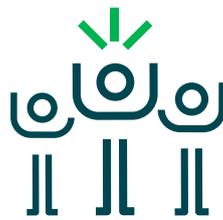
This programme has now recruited over 70% of state-funded secondary schools across the country. It provides additional funding and opportunities targeted at repositioning PE, creating more chances for the least active students and using the subject as a proactive tool to tackle whole-school priorities. This has included big issues such as:

- improving behaviour
- increasing attendance
- developments to the PE curriculum
- modernising school sport and enrichment opportunities
- complimenting staff subject knowledge
- tackling low levels of student wellbeing.

**Data taken from the research evaluation conducted by Sheffield Hallam University*

Emerging findings

So far, over 70,000 young people and 4,500 teachers have contributed to the findings*, which have started to evidence the impact that physical activity can have in schools. These findings include:



There is a clear link between a student's perceived competence and their confidence in PE.

Physical activity provides more social opportunities and enables students to connect with one another.

90%

of teachers believe that being more active improves students' behaviour and attainment.

78%

enjoy being physically active and those that are active report higher levels of happiness and self-worth.

59%

of students reported being active helps them make friends.

Case Study:

Evidencing the link between physical activity and student happiness

Redhill and Minster Teaching School Alliances, Nottinghamshire

Across Nottinghamshire 24 secondary schools joined The Redhill Academy and The Minster School in a commitment to transform the place of PE, school sport and physical activity to better meet the needs of *all* students.

WILL SWAITHES
YST STT Consultant



Intended outcomes of their project:

1. Raise the profile of the value of healthy active lifestyles among staff and students
2. Design a more engaging, personalised and transformational PE curriculum to meet the needs of all students
3. Target a group of inactive students and engage in a behaviour change intervention to inspire and support improved physical activity habits.

Research activity

Staff and students completed a survey to gain insight into attitudes, perceptions, and existing habits. 6,276 young people helped inform the design of the programme. PE subject leaders analysed and reported back to their senior leadership teams on their school's data and priorities for action.

I analysed the data to further explore the relationship between daily physical activity (DPA) and happiness. For a while now we have seen a decline in physical activity habits, with an alarming majority of young people failing to meet Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) guidelines of an average of 60-minutes per day. The Children's Society is reporting an all-time low in youth happiness and an overall decline in wellbeing.

As can be seen from the full report (available at <http://bit.ly/3bcLBej>) and summarised in the infographic, the data revealed four interesting findings:

1. The least active young people were almost always the least happy – 27%
2. An average happiness rating of 7/10 was achieved for young people hitting at least two days of physical activity (PA) per week and this stepped up to 8/10 for those who did five or more days of PA in the last week
3. Girls needed to do more PA to hit the same happiness ratings and, as all the research suggests that the majority of girls do very little PA beyond PE lessons, meaning the case for more timetabled opportunities to move could not be stronger
4. For those young people who were active five or more days a week, they were extremely unlikely to rate their happiness below a 4 on a Likert scale of 1-10.

While this insight doesn't prove causation, the correlation is clear to see for young people in our context and this evidence is supported from the larger dataset of 62,453 pupils shared by Sport England. My research concluded that there is a positive and symbiotic relationship between DPA and happiness whereby more active people are happier and happier

people choose to be more active.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has given PE leaders the time and opportunity to not only rethink but also to trial different approaches to curriculum design under the guise of a 'recovery PE curriculum'. And while we all long for the opportunity to integrate more 'normal' team games and extra-curricular opportunities back into the offer, there have certainly been some changes that are likely here to stay.

The next stage of the Redhill Academy project will see individual schools implement an intervention to support a specific group of inactive students to change their activity habits through a 12-week behaviour change programme.

Some reflective questions:

- Are you using student and staff voice to inform your priorities for change?
- Have you been forced to adapt and trial new activities, approaches and assessment in PE in response to COVID-19 that could improve your offer for all?
- How do you gather and use evidence to inform practice in your school?



If your school is part of this programme and you require advice and support, contact:

sportengland.teachertrainingscheme@sportengland.org

To find out how the Youth Sport Trust can support you within this project, contact: danny.burton@youthsporttrust.org

Well prepared

Preparing children physically and emotionally to learn – *in an ever-changing world*

Ensuring pupils from all backgrounds achieve a 'healthy body, healthy mind and promising future' through physical activity and wellbeing.

If there is one thing COVID-19 has enabled educationalists to do, it is to deeply consider their actions carefully. This opportunity for reflection, for better or worse, has given us time to gauge successes and acknowledge areas for development in a way we have never faced before.

Realising my academies vision of 'Healthy bodies, healthy minds: promising futures' has consistently required rigorous personal and professional reflection. It is necessary to continue leading the way for others in our approach to using physical activity, fitness and sport. It is essential in equipping every learner with the essential social capital that provides resilience in difficult times. It informs the mindset that embodies the three Well Schools pillars.

Although nobody could have foreseen the events of the last year, our sports and physical wellbeing vision ensured we were well prepared to address some of the issues thrown our way. Over the last five years, our school has had its strong, confident sprinting start and our ethos is set, but now we have entered the more challenging mid-section of our personal race. Our pupils, staff and wider school community will need to draw heavily on the ethos we have created. The intention is that it will provide the much-needed fortitude through the difficult times ahead, as we continue to face this global pandemic.

When faced with such insurmountable uncertainty in education, physical wellbeing, sports provision and the world as a whole, our success in implementing our ethos provides comfort. It serves to remind us that we once before started in a place that initially seemed impossible to move forward from.

Historically, there has always been a long tradition of sport and fitness at Blakenhale School. However, a drop in fitness and overall interest in sport and physical activity, perhaps reflected in the rise in disadvantaged children in the area, had taken hold during a financial downturn that will seem insignificant compared with the economic downturn ahead.

Located in south Birmingham, our academy is an integral part of our constituency – Stechford and Yardley North. While being serviced by a number of leisure centres, green spaces and other recreational areas, it performs poorly in statistical indicators of health outcomes. The academies reside in one of the top 10% of poorest constituencies in the UK. Based on recent data, our ward is 'significantly worse than the England average for children in poverty, excess weight in 10-11-year-olds, cardiovascular disease deaths preventable and mortality from causes considered preventable'.

CLARE HOODS-TRUMAN
Executive Principal, Oasis
Academy Blakenhale
Infants & Junior



These indicators can be combated with a healthy, active lifestyle, but the 'poverty' issue can severely limit access to opportunities – making our impact all the more important.

When I first took up my post as Executive Principal, my two schools were under-performing (in every sense of the word). I needed to focus on wellbeing first and create a healthy, positive mind set among staff and pupils. The implementation of my vision was immediate and fully formed from my very first day: 'Healthy bodies, healthy minds: promising futures'.

Development moved swiftly by liaising with sports specialists, who then became substantive staff due to our shared commitment and culture.



Staff were onboard and together we embedded a programme in daily school life that ensured learners engaged in purposeful physical activities that could be continued within the wider community. This meant that PE, fitness and sport started our school days. Very soon, the culture changed:

- **We saw a noticeable improvement in pupils' physical ability, behaviour and mental clarity (inside and outside of the classroom). Behaviour incidents were dramatically reduced.**
- **Attendance consistently sat at above 97% and PA below the national average.**
- **Standards gradually rose from being in the bottom 10% nationally, to the top 10% in writing and maths and the top 1% in reading.**
- **A curriculum where PE and physical activity are the heart of all that we do.**
- **A dedicated team of staff who have a love of teaching PE and sport.**
- **An embedded culture where physical and mental wellbeing are part of our DNA.**

While we must recognise and be grateful for the efforts of Joe Wicks and his daily PE lessons, we must learn from his example. We can't simply rely on his clips – as fun and engaging as they are! We must take his example: to engage with our children with a friendly enthusiastic face. We must mirror his determination to engaging with families. We must also address mental health, self-esteem and maintaining human relationships with the same parity as physical wellbeing.

We have built on this idea by providing worthwhile activities that connect our learners to the challenging and fun activities they're used to in school.

This was by no means a singular effort by a few key individuals. It required the efforts of a range of staff, pupils and other community stakeholders to realise our goal of improved outcomes for our young people. Within other areas of our home-learning provision,



'Healthy bodies, healthy minds: promising futures' remains a guiding ethos. When our teaching staff sign off from our virtual sessions, they model the essential mindset of working from home: Complete the independent learning activity, contact us if you need support, then have a drink of water and pop to the toilet, after that, do 20 star jumps or burpees in a safe place (modelled by staff), and we will see you at 10:30 for our next session!

Obviously, the concerns of even the most positive among us drift to the unfathomable long-term physical and mental impact of the pandemic. Our population, especially our young people will have to deal with the COVID-19 legacy for decades to come.

With a calming, deep breath, we are able to centre ourselves and take stock.

We were among the first schools to employ fitness testing on a scale and intensity seldom before seen. Our intent had inclusivity at its core: personal improvement for all. Not just the fastest or the strongest, but success based on a system of the merits of challenging oneself. The

impact on individual fitness levels was phenomenally high (an increase of 35% on average – 10% above our aspirational target set against a national average increase of 20%).

Having integrated our unique vision into all aspects of school and community-hub life, it remains the beating heart of all we do in school and for our wider locality. It informs our starting point through to providing the blueprint for how we will address the impact of the current climate.

As we approach a spring of warmer, brighter days coupled with rolling vaccinations for all, we can dare to imagine an easier downward slope in our current marathon effort. The broad and enriching learning experience we offer our children, whilst ensuring they maintain a sense of resilience and character developed within a framing of sporting and physical activity informing all other aspects of life, learning and promising futures. There will be bumps, missteps and setbacks just like any race. But we can take comfort that we are equipped, prepared and able to lead our pupils, staff and community to a brighter year in 2021.



Developing a whole school approach to physical activity? Find out more at www.activeschoolplanner.org

Well prepared

Are working class boys *physically and emotionally prepared for education?*

Read on for how one School Sport Partnership introduced a project to target disengaged boys.

Across our partnership areas a high proportion of boys are disengaging from school and, as such, falling behind. Staff report they get discouraged, lose motivation and 'play up' very easily. This issue is not isolated to Liverpool though, the OECD states that boys are 8% more likely than girls to say school is a 'waste of time' The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England suggests that white boys from deprived backgrounds are more likely to have anti-school attitudes when compared to other minority groups¹.

We facilitated a consultation group with 20 KS3 boys identified by student services as causing the most disruption at school and in class, which was daily in some cases. The majority of the group were also known for causing anti-social behaviour in the wider community. This behaviour has seen them particularly vulnerable to gang culture and involved with (as perpetrator and victim), or at risk of, serious youth violence. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), crime involving knives and bladed instruments has reached a record high in England and Wales (ONS, 2019)². The Angel of Knives sculpture, made from more than 100,000 confiscated knives and first displayed outside the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral in 2018, is a powerful reminder of the impact knife crime has on people's lives.

Due to a lack of trust of people perceived to be in authority, the boys from the insight group were initially reluctant to open up to discuss their issues – comments included, "what's the point of this", "are you grasses [sic]" "nothing changes anyway" and "no one ever listens". In order to break down barriers and build trust, we used Choice Theory as a framework to get the boys to focus on and discuss what was important to them³.

After some cajoling, 'banter' and honesty, the boys finally started opening up. They had feelings of frustration, depression, were worried about bullying, 'straighteners', stress, body image and money. However, the main issue that came up repeatedly was feelings of anger and not being able to control them, especially when feeling frustrated by school and austere teaching methods. This anger and frustration would often lead to confrontation with teachers and peers, with minor issues quickly becoming major issues that would often carry over into the community.

JIMMY MCGINN & ADELLA DANDO

Partnership Managers, Liverpool School Sports Partnership (LSSP)



We asked the boys: What could school do to help to alleviate these concerns?

Many of the boys said they could feel when their emotions were starting to get the better of them and asked if it would be possible to have immediate time out and go somewhere to calm down. The place they described was safe, non-judgemental and would enable them to gain control. The majority of the group stated this place would have opportunities to be physical, with combat sport activities being the most frequently requested activity.

It is well known that martial arts have a strong ethos of developing life characteristics such as, discipline, courtesy, resilience, self-motivation, perseverance, integrity, emotional regulation⁴. With an expressed desire from the boys for combat sports, we felt that martial arts could potentially provide the perfect fit.

Luckily, we had a link with Aspire Sports Combat Academy (ASCA), whose founders Dean Garnett and Phil Turner both truly believe and live by the martial arts values. They both expressed a real commitment to developing young people, with ASCA being the first MMA club in the country to support young aspiring athletes to remain in education while training to become professional athletes.

Working with Aspire, we designed a project brief and applied for funding from the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership. The aims of this project were to equip participants with a sense of self-worth, the importance of conducting themselves with integrity and respect and to understand the consequences violence can have on them as individuals and wider society.

We decided that the young athletes attending ASCA would make excellent role models and be best placed to get the messages across. These peer mentors, who also grew up in challenging circumstances, exhibit behaviours associated with reaching their full potential and we felt were perfectly placed to demonstrate the importance of making positive life choices and show an alternative life away from gang culture.

The first step to becoming peer mentors was attending the Youth Sport Trust Active in Mind Mentor Training that gave them an appreciation for the C.A.R.E system (Communication, Awareness, Respect and Empathy). They adopted this system to develop lesson plans for working with the young people. In addition, to give them a broader understanding of the issues the target group may be facing, they also completed a Mental Health Awareness course. They learnt basic yoga poses and principles of meditation and how to get young men to engage with it.

The newly trained peer mentors would deliver six 90-minute sessions in each school, focusing on:

- martial arts training and combat-based fitness (socially distanced if necessary)
- wellbeing and emotional regulation through yoga and meditation
- mentoring discussions that would focus on key themes such as:
 - self-care
 - positive communication
 - managing stress and conflict
 - goal setting
 - reflection
 - developing positive routines.

When the six sessions were complete, the young people could join a local club in their community. Funding would pay for one month and the clubs agreed to provide an additional month free.

To ensure maximum impact of the project, it was essential that school staff (SLT, PE, pastoral and student support services) committed to ensuring that:

- the right individuals from across school were targeted – not just a PE group
- they fully understood the outcomes of the project and agreed to follow up with individual participants when required
- they informed and engaged parents in the project.

The initial findings from schools are that the boys are more engaged at school because if they behave in school they can take part in the sessions. The Assistant Headteacher in one school commented, "These kids do not engage at all in anything but look at them now – amazing".

Another teacher from a PRU said that the meditation aspect is "helping to keep the boys calm... and having a positive impact on behaviour". After seeing the impact, this school intends to pay for it to carry on. Although, unfortunately, due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic the programme has been postponed and we are hoping to restart as soon as possible.

One young man was referred to the programme directly from the Violence Reduction Partnership. His perception of 'being safe' changed after learning self-defence skills. He no longer felt the need to carry a weapon and now aspires to become a peer mentor. Working with peer mentors shows that there are constructive pathways and opportunities available to the participants. By providing appropriate self-defence training, we hope to discourage the target group from feeling the need to carry, and subsequently use, a knife for protection.

Learning why young men disengaged to begin with and how to reengage them is essential and the reason for the initial successes of this project. We believe that taking a pro-social, task-orientated approach to boys' learning will improve their outcomes in school. Our early findings are that martial arts delivered in the right way, with the right people, truly does have a place within education.

1. blog.innerdrive.co.uk/underachieving-boys-what-educators-can-do
2. www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020#knife-or-sharp-instrument-offences
3. Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom. Glasser (1998)
4. www.budo-inochi.com/martial-arts-can-help-children-with-behavioural-emotional-and-social-difficulties/ Vlachos, 2015



Find out more about our work in this area:

www.youthsporttrust.org/news/boismove

Well prepared

After School Sport Club: Getting children and young people active during lockdown

The Youth Sport Trust After School Sport Club (ASSC) is a 30-minute online club that takes place every Tuesday and Thursday at 5pm for children and young people across the country to play sport, get active, develop skills, and have fun.

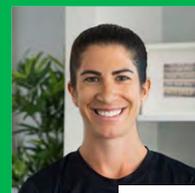
Mainly aimed at primary school children, the free to access club is led by the Youth Sport Trust's team of world-class Athlete Mentors, former Olympians, Paralympians and World Champions from a range of different sports, abilities, and backgrounds. Each week there is a different sport focus, with Tuesdays introducing the basic theme and Thursdays involving a sport specific session supported by a team of guest athletes from different National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport.

Each session includes a warm-up, some fun activities to develop new skills linked to specific sports and finishes with a cool down and a takeaway challenge. Some sessions require use of household items like socks or pegs. Themes include invasion games (eg, netball and football), core stability and balance (eg, cycling and athletics), striking and fielding (eg, cricket and rounders), and gymnastics, dance, combat, net and wall (eg, table tennis and badminton). Skills are linked to a whole range of different sports and can be practised during school closures and while sporting facilities are closed.

It is no surprise that, due to the current restrictions on sport and extra-curricular activities as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, physical activity levels have dropped in children and young people. During the first national lockdown almost half of all young people became less active (Sport England, 2020)¹, and new figures from Sport England (2021)² show almost a third of children are taking part in less than 30 minutes of physical activity a day and are therefore classed as 'inactive' as a result of lockdown restrictions. Over a third stated that school closures and sporting facilities being closed had the biggest impact on activity levels, with active play, team sports, and athletics being some of the most prevalent activities impacted by COVID-19.

However, evidence suggests that maintaining access to high quality physical activity is central to young people's health and wellbeing. The Youth Sport Trust didn't want children to miss out on grassroots sport and extra-curricular activities. ASSC was born in response to this, with an overriding aim to support children and mitigate the decline in their overall development and wellbeing.

JENNA DOWNING
YST Senior Athlete
Mentor



Much more than just physical fitness, the club helps children to develop their skills, physical literacy and confidence to try new sports. What's more, when schools are shut and youth sport is on hold, it helps children to connect through sport and facilitate physical activity in a fun and enjoyable manner. Any child of any age and any ability can get involved (parents and guardians too!). At a time when physical activity is more important than ever, ASSC allows young people to get active in the comfort of their own homes, helping to fill the ongoing sports void and supporting the nation's younger generation to get moving again.

Keep an eye on the Youth Sport Trust's social media channels to learn more about each week's theme and join in the conversation by using **#YSTAfterSchool** and tagging **@YouthSportTrust**. I look forward to seeing you and your young people there soon!

1. Sport England, 2020. Children's experience of physical activity in lockdown. Sport England. [Online]. <http://bit.ly/3tWrcCW>
2. Sport England, 2021. Active Lives Children and Young People Survey. Sport England [Online]. <http://bit.ly/37hdhxA>



Want to get involved? ASSC will run until Easter 2021 and children can take part live by visiting the Youth Sport Trust's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/YouthSportTrust where all previous sessions are also hosted.

Well prepared

Implications of COVID-19 on being active and well at home

Chris Wright talks about how preparing children physically and emotionally now will pay dividends when they return to school.

CHRIS WRIGHT
Head of Wellbeing, YST



The restrictions brought in to tackle COVID-19 have had an immediate and significant impact on nearly every aspect of life including children's physical, mental and social wellbeing. COVID-19 has presented a new set of challenges but magnified pre-existing issues and inequalities too. As we tentatively emerge from yet another lockdown and start to understand how to recover children's 'development deficit' we have moved to reignite being active and well at home.

The challenge we face is this time it's different! The first closure of schools led to a clamour for providing every type of video and resource for physical activity. There was an absolute focus on keeping children active and happy during the turbulence of a global pandemic while the education system got to grips with home schooling. There was even an acknowledgement that, during the summer months, active, happy children was paramount and more effective in helping them return to school as effective learners.

My fear is that we have forgotten the huge impact this mindset had on children being able to adapt to their new normal, deal with the social isolation and lack of human connection and maintain their wellbeing. Now it feels like this emphasis has dropped down the pecking order as we return to an old normal of reaching for academic catch-up facilitated by parents and carers. The active habits in the home are under threat with schools under even more pressure to cope with 30% school attendance, and home

schooling, track and trace, cancelled exams and SATS and uncertainty as to when all children will return to school.

Now is the time to maintain momentum and to ensure we support children being active during more disruption, providing children and their families with the tools to regulate emotions, stay connected and deal with yet more uncertainty. Now is the time to ensure we help children and their families fill the gaps in their physical, social and emotional development, particularly for those children suffering the greatest disadvantage where we know lockdown is having a disproportionate impact on their activity habits and wellbeing.

So, we are taking positive action, again, helping schools based on their feedback recently on what we can do to keep children well at home. It is about maintaining the basics and ensuring children are not sedentary with prolonged periods of sitting in front of screens. It is about maintaining the focus on physical activity in the home and its contribution to wellbeing and mindset.

Over

938,008*

downloads of our free resources in the last year.

That is why it was so enthusing to see over 50,000 downloads of our free resources through the Youth Sport Trust website in the first two weeks of January and an increase in traffic to the wellbeing at home and physical activity categories in the Well Schools community. Schools are keeping things fresh and exciting rather than rolling out the same activity challenges and it feels more about family not just children.

If we are to see a step change in the perception and use of PE, sport and physical activity to fill the development deficit, we need to continue to demonstrate what can be achieved when children need us the most.

*at the time of going to press



To find free resources and best practice check out:
www.youthsporttrust.org/coronavirus-support
www.well-school.org

Teach Active Case Study

Amazing things can happen when people think outside the box

Partnership working is one of the Youth Sport Trust's charitable values, which guides the way it fulfils its mission of all young people enjoying the life-changing benefits of sport and play.

Sport Impact, a former School Sport Partnership, is a not for profit organisation that inspires and empowers schools to use PE, physical activity and school sport to develop the whole child, school and community.

Through their close work and collaboration with schools, Sport Impact identified three key challenges that COVID-19 has presented to the education system:

1. Gaps in learning
2. Reduction in physical activity
3. Decline in wellbeing.

Teach Active's work to help teachers deliver the maths and English curriculum through physical activity is the driver behind its long-standing partnership with the Youth Sport Trust. Alan Watkinson, Partnership Director at Sport Impact, believed that Teach Active's multi-award-winning product could be a great solution for the challenges facing the 22 schools in his patch, while also enabling him to support the work of children's charity the Youth Sport Trust through Teach Active's donations for every licence sold.



Alan got in touch with Jon Smedley, Co-Founder at Teach Active, to collaborate and create a bespoke package of licences for 20 schools in Sport Impact's area. Each school was given 3500 high quality lesson plans and whole-school training through an online webinar. As a result, learning gaps are being filled in key catch-up subjects English and maths, physically active minutes are up and it's common knowledge that moving makes young people feel good, combatting all three challenges Alan had identified. The Sport Impact team even received training on Teach Active so that they can support schools with advice and delivery for years to come.

"Partnership work is a fundamental part of maximizing the opportunities and benefits that can be achieved through high quality delivery. Active learning is underplayed in many schools and through our partnership with Teach Active we hope to be able to address this. Creating fun and active ways for children to learn will support the recovery curriculum, help children develop strong foundation skills in Maths and English and can contribute to whole school improvement"

Alan Watkinson, Partnership Director, Sport Impact

It takes a special organisation to turn obstacles into opportunities, and it is great to see partnership building between organisations with a common goal. Thinking outside the box can make your money go further, which is essential when purse strings are tightening across the board. If you think your Multi-Academy Trust, School Sport Partnership or cluster of schools may benefit from a bespoke Teach Active package, get in touch to find out more.

There is no better time to introduce Teach Active!

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Every child is equipped with the human skills through a curriculum and enrichment programme that develops their social capital and helps them thrive in a modern world.

JUDE ASTON
Youth Sport Trust
School Games Activator
of the Year 2020

How my passion for sport has paved a road to opportunity

Jude Aston, recalls how his love of sport and media have created some incredible opportunities for him over the past four years.



In 2016 I joined Highfields School, Wolverhampton. Like every other child I had no idea what the next five years had in store for me. Little did I know I would find myself in an exhilarating movie that would shape the person I am today.

It wasn't the best of starts. I had held back because of an unconfident and fearful young mind. I knew I had a passion for sport and football, so I had to find a way to be involved in the exhilarating movie I'd missed out on for most of my life. I always knew there were ways around things. I couldn't let my Cerebral Palsy get in the way of something I enjoyed so much – I had to embrace it.

Anxiously, one morning I was sitting in assembly – this was the assembly that changed the way I think. My school announced they were launching their own TV media channel. I saw this as the perfect opportunity to combine my love for the beautiful game and media. Eager to get started, I went to ask the film studies teacher, Mr Cooper, about the club straight away. It was like signing for a Premier League football club as I'd finally found something I was good at. After an initial introduction, I started editing and reporting on my school football matches while also learning to operate the camera. Suddenly I had found my passion after all these years – the movie was becoming a reality.

Slowly but surely my confidence started to grow as I transferred my skills outside the classroom. I did things I thought I'd never do, addressing 250 people about my experiences and creating a YouTube channel which now documents my journey to becoming a sports journalist. I wanted to prove that no matter the barrier you can still do something you love. It's surreal what the last few years have been like.

Fast forward to 2021 and I can now call myself Youth Sport Trust School Games Activator of the year. Crazy! Among the turmoil that 2020 brought to the world, there were plenty of positives for me. When lockdown began it was challenging times for everyone, especially those who loved sport – I was determined to keep those engaged to prove no matter the circumstances physical activity should never be devalued.

How did I do that?

Well, we all adapted to the new surroundings, especially those in the media industry. At the beginning of lockdown, I took to my YouTube Channel *Jude's Journey* as I learnt how to conduct interviews over the virtual platform Zoom. As you can imagine at first, there were some technical difficulties but after that it was all systems go! I interacted with fellow content creators like myself and interviewed former footballers. My most exciting interview was with former Liverpool midfielder and Rangers manager, Steven Gerrard! The 40-year-old told me how he managed his Rangers side from home, expressed his thoughts

on when sport should return and took a fond look back at his playing career. It was a fantastic moment for me, I'd never have thought I'd be interviewing an icon in football when I first signed up to Highfields TV!

While lockdown was in full flow, the end of term was approaching and I was asked to host two virtual awards. Firstly, the Wolverhampton City sports awards which celebrated secondary schools' success. I fronted the event and edited the ceremony. I also co-hosted Highfields' PE Legacy awards live alongside my head of PE. These were both amazing opportunities that I'm grateful for.

That exhilarating movie of mine is in full production but there is lots more to be added before the finale...



Check out Jude's YouTube channel www.youtube.com/channel/UCSC5-lu8C8-LDK0MOCBqMLw

Well equipped

Can achieving equal access on the playing field help shape society?

Colin Smith, YST Development Manager Girls' Football Programme, on the role of the beautiful game within and beyond the school gates.

COLIN SMITH
YST Development
Manager Girls Football
Programmes



 There's no better feeling than stepping out on the field and stunning them all by doing what none of them thought you could do."

ASHLYN HARRIS

Sport is never just about the game. Lessons learned reach far beyond the score line, influencing so many aspects of the participants' lives. How to win generously and lose with good grace. How to understand and benefit from teamwork (even in an individual sport, there is a team of people around you – teacher, coach, parents, the list goes on...). How to communicate, persevere and show determination even when the chips are down. Participation in sport touches and improves the lives of so many individuals, in turn bringing huge benefits to communities and society at large, so our focus must be on ensuring that all groups are supported and encouraged to take part.

The FA launched their new four-year women's and girls' strategy on 19 October 2020. Titled Inspiring Positive Change, the strategy pledges to create a sustainable future for women's and girls' football in England. Of the eight commitments, two are of particular interest to the school audience: early participation and development participation. These are based on the understanding that all girls have a right to equal access to football in school, affording them the opportunity to experience the sport, have fun and excel.

A quick look at the history of football tells us that the women's game was very popular at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries with attendance at Preston v St Helen's Ladies on Boxing Day 1920 reaching 53,000. The dream now is to get women's football to reach even greater heights (imagine the day that Wembley is sold out for a women's game!) and this ambition is what lies behind the four year strategy.



In a 2018 blog for YST, Dame Sue Campbell, The FA's Director of Women's Football, described football as holding up 'a mirror to what is happening in...society at large'. She went on to say, 'The way to combat prejudice of any kind, be it against race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, is to ensure fair representation – this holds true equally for the boardroom of a FTSE 100 company or for a football pitch. It is simply not healthy to relegate half of our society to being also-rans in this most pervasive of sports.'

A piece of research undertaken in December 2020 by YST shows that



VS



40%

of those schools surveyed offer girls equal access to extra-curricular football

90%

The FA target for 2024.

The same research shows that

63%

of those schools surveyed offer girls equal access football in PE lessons

75%

The FA target for 2024.

The Youth Sport Trust in partnership with The FA are making great progress against these targets, but together we can all do more.

If we don't extend the right to play 'this most pervasive' game to girls in school, what messages are we sending? Perhaps that girls aren't somehow 'up to it', they lack the skills required, their position is rather one of spectator than participant? Is it too big a stretch to think that these subliminal messages will carry forward into the workplace? I don't think so.

We can't blame the ills of society on football. But what we can do is work to ensure that our schools are microcosms of the society that we would all like to see, where equal opportunity is a given rather than an exception.

As Sue Campbell wrote in that blog from 2018:

If we work together to get this right the impact will be felt way beyond football. Shaping the future of society through sport is possible – let's do it!

There are many ways in which you can work with the Youth Sport Trust to bring girls' football into your school. The Girls' Football in Schools website (www.girlsfootballinschools.org) has an abundance of resources, links and information to support the growth of football for girls and is available for any school in England to access. Schools can also make a pledge to become part of the movement "to ensure every girl has access to football in school by 2024".

There is currently a network of 152 FA Girls' Football School Partnerships – supported by Barclays across England, each have a strategic lead who coordinates the programme for clusters of schools.



There will be an opportunity for new partnerships to be developed in 2021/22. If you are interested in finding out more please email FAGirls@youthsporttrust.org

Well equipped

Supporting young people to access high quality physical education lessons at home

The Youth Sport Trust has been involved with the development of the Oak PE curriculum which provides online opportunities for all pupils to develop their physical health.

KATE THORNTON-BOUSFIELD

Head of Physical Education and Achievement, YST



From the onset of the pandemic, together with a range of partners including Complete PE, we have supported schools to provide physical education at home and in school in a safe and COVID-compliant way. This cumulated in daily PE and physical activity challenges as well as #ThisIsPE content for home learners in the summer term. March 2020 saw the birth of Oak National Academy, an online classroom created by teachers for teachers to use with learners accessing the curriculum at home. The first lessons to go live from Oak were well received but PE was absent from the curriculum offer. We approached Oak National Academy to offer our support in producing high quality physical education lessons that could be accessed in the home environment. There was a plethora of physical activities available online that were being mistaken for PE. In September 2020 Youth Sport Trust and the Association for PE (afPE) were approached to collaborate on an Oak Physical Education curriculum, working with teachers to produce and record PE lessons that would be available in January 2021, afPE wrote the content for primary aged children and YST, the content for Key Stage 3 and water safety across all ages.

This was an important moment for us, the subject of PE and for learners. It was an opportunity to share what PE was about, to challenge perceptions and to help answer the questions arising around PE and physical activity.

The lessons have been produced with the support of our YST PE CatalYSTs network and aim to be fun, engaging and developmental. The key was to enable as many learners as possible to access the lessons, thus they require very little space or equipment. It was important for us to demonstrate that PE focuses on developing both physical and cognitive skills and the lessons were sequenced and learning scaffolded. Each lesson needed to accommodate the learning needs of the individual pupil and deliberate practice was built into each lesson to allow pupils time to secure learning and to keep them active.

During the pandemic it has remained vitally important that pupils continue to access physical activity, and we encourage all pupils to be physically active for a minimum of 30 minutes every day. The PE lessons help provide structure and learning to help achieve both physical and personal outcomes.

The Oak PE curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to develop their physical confidence and competence in a way

that supports their health and fitness. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to develop life skills and build character.

The Oak PE curriculum aims to help pupils to:

- Develop a confidence in and love of moving
- Learn through moving
- Develop competence in a broad range of physical activities
- Be physically active for sustained periods of time
- Enjoy and experience daily physical activity including personal competition
- Understand how physical activity impacts on mental health and cognitive performance as well as physical health
- Lead healthy active lives
- Develop essential life skills and resilience.

The Oak PE curriculum takes a thematic approach where knowledge, understanding and skills are developed over the course of each unit. Schools can teach the units of this curriculum in any order, although a suggested sequence of lessons for each unit has been provided which best supports progression in knowledge and physical skills. Lessons can be taught as standalone too.

The units and proposed sequence of learning are organised around key themes or activities. These start with developing a knowledge and understanding of health and wellbeing, and skills that underpin being able to independently lead a healthy active lifestyle. The curriculum includes a range of different types of activity to ensure the learning is broad and balanced. The units allow teachers to select the most relevant activity to complement the learning currently being delivered in their school PE curriculum. This is to ensure that all pupils can still access and experience the planned learning.

The suggested curriculum sequence builds through the key stages so that as pupils move forward in their education, they revisit and reinforce prior knowledge, understanding and skills they need to succeed in the next phase.

Lessons are structured to allow all pupils to experience success. Most lessons have STEP (Space, Task, Equipment, People) principles built in to support with adapting the lesson to meet the pupils' needs and environment. This includes making the **space** larger or smaller, altering the **task** to make it less or more challenging or putting in a condition like a **time** constraint, using different **equipment** and altering the number of **people** involved (although this is the least likely possibility if home learning).

Tasks are created that build on success and provide pupils with the motivation to keep learning more. The intention is that pupils can take responsibility for their learning, have the confidence and competence to find an activity that they enjoy and that helps them engage in healthy active lifestyles.



Within the confines of working independently it is hoped that pupils will:

- Develop their physical literacy, the fundamental movement skills and a range of sports skills and strategies to overcome opponents (a focus on the strategy if not the execution)
- Consider the variety of ways they can be active for 60 minutes a day
- Explore the importance of exercise for physical and mental health
- Work alone to improve and solve problems
- Practice some of the technical elements of the activity area including any underpinning knowledge
- Analyse their own performances to help them to improve
- Work towards developing the confidence and skills to be able to take part in competitive sports and activities outside school through community links or sports clubs (this is not the focus of the lessons but the learning experiences will keep them on this track).

We would like to thank our PEcatalYSTs, Guy Wnuk, Alex Repton, Joe Lindley and Becky Curtis, for writing and recording the content.



Find out more at www.thenational.academy

Well equipped

The power of teaching and learning through human stories

Penny Rabiger talks about how PE, school sport and wellbeing connect with storytelling.

PENNY RABIGER
Director of
Engagement, Lyfta



Many of our children are exposed to greater diversity than ever before, through direct contact with the people around them, as well as via various media channels with which they interact daily. However, our world also reflects a society that is increasingly affected by intolerance, suspicion and stereotyping. A huge component of human wellbeing is tied up in how we meet the world, and how the world meets us. Recent world events have made this ever more acutely felt – our safety and wellbeing are inextricably linked to how we compassionately engage with other people and with our environment, whoever we are.

Our legal obligation to the Equality Act 2010 as educators has ensured a heightened focus on schools' engagement with their statutory duties with this Act, which prohibits unlawful discrimination and the less favourable treatment of an individual on the basis of any protected characteristic, including sex, religion and belief, race and disability. This engagement must go beyond simply putting in place the all-important policies and procedures. It involves reaching into the hearts and minds of staff and students alike in ways that are human, tangible and often fiendishly difficult to tackle as part of the curriculum – not least during a global pandemic.

No matter the circumstances which may restrict their movement across physical boundaries

or geographical borders, the curriculum should include meaningful interaction with the world around us. We are preparing global citizens to take their place in the world and we need to both maximise on the cultural capital they bring with them, and with that of each other and the wider world. PE professionals are not all about whistles, windy playing fields and winning games – the PE curriculum has a firm commitment to educate the whole child, and practitioners are creative and inventive in how they do this.

One such innovation was a collaboration with the Finnish-British organisation, Lyfta, to provide Youth Sport Trust PE inclusion leads the opportunity to explore interactive and immersive online human storyworlds as a tool to support young people with additional support needs to engage with physical activity offline.

Lyfta provides teachers a tool to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals, skills and values into the curriculum, using its innovative and unique immersive platform, where teachers and children can visit different countries around the globe, explore real spaces, click on things that they see there, and learn about them. Within each of these explorable storyworlds are real people that you can meet through short 3-6 minute documentary films featuring a slice of their life.

Children can be transported from a village in Northern Ethiopia, to the opera house in Helsinki, to a beachcomber's home in Cornwall or a secret garden in Pakistan, with a click and drag of their computer mouse.

Youth Sport Trust and Lyfta collaborated on an online training session with a group of 50 PE Leads across a number of schools nationwide. They were given access to the platform and over 100 lesson and assembly plans, including a special resource created by Lyfta and Youth Sport Trust focusing specifically on PE, school sport, health and wellbeing themes within the storyworlds. Teachers were particularly interested in using Lyfta to ensure that their students engaged with physical activity during lockdown, the period of return to schools, and beyond.

Teachers involved in this project with Youth Sport Trust found that the experience of using Lyfta was impactful for a number of reasons:

Empowerment

The self-navigation of the platform enabled children to make decisions, discover and report on what they had explored, developing their sense of confidence and empowerment.

Self-expression and collective experience

It is anticipated that young people may need to express some of their experiences physically as well as through other mediums. No matter the physical restrictions faced, Lyfta can be used across the community to ensure collective experience. Most schools take a cross-curricular approach to much of their teaching and noted the wide-ranging relevance of Lyfta content to many topics.

Depth of learning

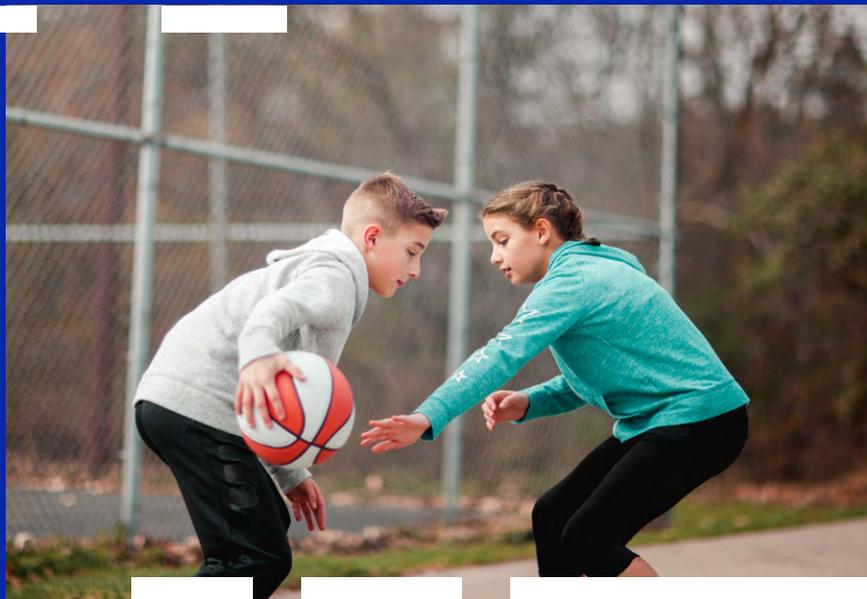
Lyfta offers cultural capital, at a time when young people (and particularly some of those with profound needs) are unable to access the widest range of cross-curricular experience. Poverty of experience is common among many SEND children. Lyfta can help to address this and help young people to view themselves as global citizens.

Lyfta and Youth Sport Trust are looking forward to continuing this collaboration and are excited to see what students and teachers will discover about the world, themselves and each other over the coming year.



Lyfta is a powerful platform that reduces the marginalisation that children and young people with additional needs too often experience. The platform removes boundaries and has the unique quality of removing those labels of SEN or disability. Suddenly the world is there to access, explore, and engage with as a global citizen."

VIJITA PATEL, SWISS COTTAGE SCHOOL



Sense of self

Multiple teaching opportunities were identified that supported discussion around self, family, community and mental health. Guided discussion prompted by the immersive settings supports young people to develop confidence, empathy and self-belief. Teachers felt that learning about different cultures will undoubtedly impact students' understanding of both themselves and others.

Life skills

One practitioner noted his students' lack of routine and understanding around self-care, particularly with regards to physical wellbeing. This group in particular would suffer from a lack of activity structure post-school. Lyfta provides tools to support student understanding of the value of physical activity in their lives and of routine.



They're leaving school in 12 months and need direction for the rest of their lives. They have more physical difficulties than anything: if they aren't in the routine of doing physio they will miss it.

MATT CONNER, PADDOCK SCHOOL, WANDSWORTH

Links with global values

Multiple teaching links were noted to enable PE and the school sport offer to introduce the United Nations' sustainable development goals and global values to young people. Teachers would introduce students to key concepts via the documentary videos and discussion, reinforcing these through offline reminders, vocabulary re-cap and activities.

Aspiration

Practitioners noted the likely positive impact of the platform on the young people they support, and the access it provides to people and places they are otherwise unable to experience. The visual richness of the tool is deemed inspirational, as is its ability to give children a wider appreciation of the world and to broaden horizons. One respondent noted that Lyfta may be of particular relevance to those young people whose independence is compromised due to COVID-19. Teachers felt that their students would be able to access the platform, some with extra support with more abstract content, reading or navigation.



To find out more about Lyfta and see how your school could get involved, go to www.lyfta.com



Staff and headteacher wellbeing is actively supported and championed ensuring the whole school is 'well-led' and connected with the wider school community.

ANNA RUSSELL
Bupa Foundation
Director



Bupa Foundation **support for teachers**

The Bupa Foundation highlights its various support resources for education staff wellbeing.

The Bupa Foundation is committed to working with schools to help improve staff wellbeing. One of the ways we're doing this is through supporting Well Schools and providing wellbeing coaching to staff. Recent research¹ from the Bupa Foundation has shown that nearly half of teachers found the past half-term the most stressful time they have known, with just 4% saying that they were able to prioritise their wellbeing daily.

Nine in ten teachers (96%) said that they are worried about the coming half-term.

The research, which surveyed 6,244 teachers nationally, found that external pressures caused by the global pandemic compounded with the challenges of online teaching, workload and accountability are contributing towards a melting pot of pressure for teachers in the UK.

That's why we're working with educators to share our wellbeing expertise through the Wellbeing for Educators programme – a free, practical, evidence-based programme which helps make a positive difference.

We've also launched a brand new podcast series that shares powerful, personal stories of resilience from leaders. At the Foundation we're lucky to meet amazing people

who are resilience superstars. We thought their stories deserved a wider audience which is how our Resilience Brilliance podcast was born.

In our launch episodes we talk to Ali Oliver, CEO Youth Sport Trust, and Joanna Coates, CEO UK Athletics, about the power of sport to build resilience (and we learnt that you don't have to be sporty to benefit from being active!). Ben Levinson, Headteacher at Kensington Primary School and Soofia Amin, the school's community and English as an Additional Language lead share how they've coped during the pandemic.

We learnt so much from all our guests and hope you do too. Sometimes just knowing you're not alone in feeling anxious, scared or lacking in confidence from time to time can help. Here are some of the top tips our brilliantly resilient guests have shared:

1. Grant yourself permission to give yourself what you need. Take ten minutes to just pause, have a cup of tea and hit the reset button. Go for that walk or run to clear your head.
2. Have the right people around you. Surround yourself with people who can lift you up when you need it most. Being resilient

isn't about being strong all the time, it's fine to ask for help.

3. Actively manage your energy. What's the song that gets you back on track or makes you feel on top of the world? When things get too much, what can you let go of? Helping someone else can help you feel good.

We hope you enjoy listening and we'll share more episodes soon – in the meantime, please look after yourself.

1. www.bupafoundation.org/blog/post/12446/support-for-teachers-mental-health/



To listen to the Resilience Brilliance podcast, visit:
www.bupafoundation.org/podcast



Find out more about the Bupa Foundation Wellbeing for Educators programme:
www.bupafoundation.org/page/wellbeing-for-educators

Ensuring wellbeing is at *the heart of schools and governance*

Steve discusses how values driven leadership from governing boards contributes towards creating a whole school wellbeing culture and why NGA backs the Youth Sport Trust **#WellSchools** initiative.

STEVE EDMONDS
Director of Advice and Guidance,
National Governance Association (NGA)



Many people have been writing their lessons for education from lockdown. It has clearly been a time of reflection. While to a large extent we are still in reactive mode, COVID-19 has reminded us of the things that matter and that governing in schools and trusts should take a long perspective on – our values, our ethos, our culture and pupil outcomes. Placing wellbeing at the centre of school life is not only a demonstration of values-driven leadership, but also fundamental towards creating a positive legacy from the pandemic.

Staff are a school's most valuable resource. School leaders and governing boards have significant responsibilities to support the wellbeing and work-life balance of those they employ. These responsibilities are underpinned by health and safety law and statutory pay and conditions. However, it is more important for those governing to look beyond their legal responsibilities and reflect on the culture of wellbeing that exists in their school or trust. Research from the Education Support Teacher Wellbeing Index 2020¹ found that 62% of education professionals were stressed which rose to 85% between July and October 2020.

The pressures COVID-19 has created have been largely felt by those leading schools. During the autumn term NGA and the Schools Advisory Service², working together as part of the National Wellbeing Partnership³, published an evaluation tool⁴ that focuses on the wellbeing of school leaders, their self-care and how this is modelled throughout the school or trust. The evaluation tool is designed to be practical, easy to navigate and supports meaningful collaboration between those leading schools and their governing boards. It is a 'conversation starter' more than it is a compliance document and encourages:

- Reflection on the approach taken towards staff wellbeing
- An audit of current practice, leading to improvements that positively impact on the wellbeing of the senior executive leader.

Governing boards and school leaders will have spent much time discussing the assessment of what pupils and students have learned since lockdown began and how lost learning is recovered. The majority of governing boards have recognised that such assessments cannot be carried out in a meaningful way, unless they consider physical and mental health and wellbeing, the readiness of our children to learn and planning a way forward from there.

NGA encourages a student voice approach and all governing boards to make PE, school sport and physical activity integral to the mission to improve children's wellbeing. Make time in your governance schedule for discussions about:

- **The quality of PE, sport and physical activity in your school or trust**
- **Potential barriers to developing PE, sport and physical activity in your school or trust**
- **How to engage stakeholders in your mission to improve children's wellbeing**
- **Measuring the impact of PE, school sport and physical activity.**

1. www.educationsupport.org.uk
2. schooladvice.co.uk
3. schooladvice.co.uk/national-wellbeing-partnership
4. www.nga.org.uk



Find out more at
www.youthsporttrust.org/wellschool

Well led

Me, me, me: **how putting yourself first is the ultimate selfless act**

Ben Levinson shares his heartfelt story about how important it is for us to look after our wellbeing first.

BEN LEVINSON
Headteacher, Kensington
Primary School
@mrlev



I **love** being a headteacher. I love it **so** much. I did various jobs before I trained to be a teacher – and I enjoyed being a teacher – but I **love** being a head. The sense of purpose, autonomy, strategic thinking, children, community and the amazing people I get to work with are just the best. But it is also tough. We're talking full-on days and sleepless nights. Every minute of every day is tough. Responsibility for 650 children and 90 staff is tough. A whole community looking to you is tough. And that's when we're not in the midst of a global pandemic.

Of course, a lot of what is driving that is out of our control. Accountability measures, funding, changing demographics and societal expectations. It is vital that we continue working to improve the system, but we also have to accept that will take time. What is in our control is our own wellbeing and I'm here to tell you that it is time you put yourself first.

The Education Support 2020 Teacher Wellbeing Index highlighted some devastating figures.



70%
were working 51
hours+ per week.

59%
considered leaving in
the past two years.

When I started at Kensington, I did not prioritise my own health and wellbeing. At school I'd played lots of sport and been very active but that fell away at university and never really re-started. By the time I got to Kensington I was pushing the scales at over 17 stone. Having moved out of London, my daily commute was no longer walking and in my new role I was more desk-based than standing in front of a class. Ofsted came between me accepting the job and starting, and the school went from Good to Requires Improvement. On my seventh day we had our HMI monitoring visit. I quickly realised that to be successful, first and foremost I would need to work on me. Leadership also exposed my anxiety and self-doubt, something that had always been in the background but that I'd never addressed.

As unthinkable as this is, if you did that survey again today, I fear that the figures would be significantly worse. It is a crisis. In fact, I fear that once we come out of this pandemic, it could be even worse.

So began a long journey that continues to this day. My physical health has been crucial. I lost nearly 5 stone (some of which has gone back on over the past 12 months!) Firstly, I started cycling. At times I've run. Others I've lifted weights. I love to walk. In the nearly eight years since I started, I have been consistent in exercising – although the specific exercise hasn't been consistent. In 2021 I'm hoping to do my first ultra-marathon and I'm aiming to run and walk 2,000km across the year.

Of equal importance has been my mental and emotional journey. I've done a lot of self-discovery. Mainly through reading and lots of reflective conversations. I've realised a great deal about who I am: my introversion, my anxiety, my competitiveness, my sense of justice (and injustice). I've accepted a lot about myself and made peace with a lot.

Investing in myself in this way is what has made the difference for me as a leader. I still wake up at 2am with my mind whirring – that's a work in progress but I have become considerably more resilient. I am far more able to deal with the stresses and strains in a calm and considered way. If I get stressed, getting out and breaking a sweat will quickly get me back to a good place. Then I can get back up, go in, and resolve whatever problems are awaiting me.

One of the biggest barriers to achieving this was not the motivation – or the endless cakes and biscuits in the staff room – but the guilt. The guilt of putting myself first was almost too much to bear at times. Teaching can produce martyrs. I've been in staff rooms where how little sleep you got because you'd been up planning, marking etc to the early hours had become a very unhealthy competition.

As headteachers, there is the added guilt that you are responsible for your team and that you have to set an example. And you do! Setting an example is crucial. But the example you must set is that prioritising your own health and wellbeing is the least selfish thing you can do.

There is always too much to do. The to do list never ends. There are always demands. Always someone who needs to speak to you. There is always another report to write or meeting to have. It is endless. At Kensington, we have spent a lot of time reflecting on Pareto's Theory. For those of you not familiar with it, Pareto (an Italian economist) stated that 80% of the outcomes come from 20% of the inputs. We have used this in many contexts but, for me, I realised that part of my 20% was how I turned up each day. Of course I need to understand budgets and safeguarding and learning, but more important was me. When I am at my

best, I'm amazing. I'm compassionate, sharp-witted, focused. I say the right thing and do the right thing at the right time. But so little of my time I was at my best. So I tried to understand why. I invested in my physical health and then my mental health. At the start I hid this. Leaving 'early' was because of a meeting. Taking 10 minutes to meditate was done in the toilet. But the more I invested in myself the more I saw how much of a difference it made to my leadership. And the more I realised that, the more I realised that I needed to share this.

Kensington is the 2020 Teaching Awards Primary School of the Year and the TES 2020 Wellbeing and Mental Health School of the Year. Ofsted came back two years after that monitoring visit and graded the school Outstanding. Part of the school's 20% is the investment we have made in ourselves as people and as leaders. We have given ourselves the permission to do what we need to in order to be our best selves more often. That is different for everyone.

For some it is leaving early to go to the gym. For others it's having time with family. For some it is about relationships with colleagues or the role we carve out for ourselves. What I know is that wouldn't have happened if I hadn't managed to deal with my guilt. Giving myself the permission and the agency to put **me** first and to invest in my own health and wellbeing was the best decision I ever made. By being selfish I have ultimately done more for my team, the children, and the community than I ever did working an extra hour or ticking another item off my to do list. And, perhaps more importantly, I still **love** being a headteacher.



To find out more and share best practice join the movement at www.well-school.org

PE Premium - Capitalising on your underspend

With disruptions to the PE and Sport Premium action planning and spending, consider how to capitalise on any underspend for creative, sustainable investment.

The DfE's PE and Sport Premium guidance was updated in October 2020, with a revised template taking into consideration the disruption to the end of the 2019/20 academic year. Schools can carry over any underspend from last year and have until the 31 March 2021 to spend this.

Your reporting template is an action plan for the year ahead and should be referred to and updated continually throughout the academic year to track progress and remain purposeful and impactful. You should use the template to reflect on your previous spend (19/20), with key achievements (and how these may have been adjusted due to COVID-19) and continued areas for development specific to the needs of your pupils.

With the winter term not starting in the way we anticipated, you have more than likely seen further restrictions to your planned spending. It is vital that you think strategically, as well as operationally, as to how the funding can be spent for the remainder of this academic year

What is your intent for each key indicator?

Carefully consider how your intent is constructed and informed. What is your data telling you? Consider the impact of the pandemic on your pupils, staff and families – how can the PE Premium play a supporting and recovery role?

For example, COVID-19 has massively impacted on the physical fitness of children, so building physical activity into the school day is crucial for their health and wellbeing. How are you thinking differently about Key Indicator 1?

Or consider the wider wellbeing, behavioural concerns or educational gaps of pupils. How are you using your investment in line with key indicator 2, considering the connection of PE, school sport and physical activity (PESSPA) to whole school priorities?

With restrictions on externals coming into school, how are you ensuring all staff are confident and competent in delivering our subject remotely and in school under bubble, facility and equipment restrictions?

What is your implementation strategy and does it consider a different approach to normal?

The silver lining of this challenging pandemic is how we think and do things differently.

At this time encouraging physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of pupils is paramount. Why not consider using your premium to create resource

EMMA MACKENZIE-HOGG

Development
Manager for Primary
Education, YST



packs to send home with pupils? Packs could include focused task and learning cards (YST has lots of free online resources to download and print off) and basic equipment. You could target year groups where physical activity may be lower or support specific families who need additional support.

How could you use the premium to enhance digital support and profile for PESSPA? Could you invest in a parent app or school video equipment to continue setting physical activity challenges, sharing and evidencing PE skills. With additional facility challenges meaning we are forced outdoors, why not consider investing in equipment, clothing and storage that ensures classes can go out in all weather?

Staff CPD may be a consistent investment of your premium, but what is spent on challenging staff perceptions of PE to ensure everyone values the subject? PE has a leading role to play in the recovery from this pandemic, so source online and remote CPD that empowers teachers to use the subject in its broadest capacity.



To find out more and get support, visit:
www.youthsporttrust.org/PE-sport-premium

Well schools

Sport England's 2020 Active Lives Survey

Here we discuss the findings from Sport England's Active Lives Survey and draw out vital next steps for the school sport and physical activity sector.

In January, Sport England released its annual findings on the activity levels of children and young people. This year's 'Active Lives' report was accompanied by an additional report which provided insight into children and young people's activity levels from when COVID-19 restrictions initially began to lift between May and July 2020.

The main Active Lives report tells us that

86,500 fewer

5-16 year olds fall into the 'Active' category in 2019/20 by comparison to 2018/19, with 3.2 million (44.9%) achieving the recommended average of 60+ minutes per day. Concerning is that 2.3 million children in England were situated in the 'Less Active' category – a rise of 201,400 children and young people by comparison to 2018/19.

Over the last year,

31.3% of 5-16 year olds

have been doing less than an average of 30 minutes of activity a day.

Of course, the 2019/20 academic year was substantially impacted by COVID-19, and adverse weather at the start of 2020. However, the data compels us to consider the troubling long-term health and wellbeing outcomes that could disproportionately impact certain individuals. For example, those from affluent families continue to be more active than their less affluent peers. Over the course of 2019/20, 53% of 5-16 year olds from 'High affluence' families achieve an average of 60+ active minutes per day, by comparison to those from 'Medium Affluence' (45%) and 'Low Affluence' families (38%). Also, children and young people who reported their ethnicity as Black or Other were the least likely to report achieving the average of 60+ active minutes.

Through the additional Active Lives COVID-19 report, we learnt that in the summer term of 2019/20, activity levels fell for children and young people from Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups. This demonstrates the urgent need for a new School Sport & Activity Action Plan which is sensitive to addressing the multiple factors that have prevented, and may well continue to prevent, certain children and young people from being more active. Such a plan could also build upon the positives that have emerged over this exceptionally challenging past year. For example, the COVID-19 report shows that, in 2019/20 over 100,000 more girls were meeting the recommended activity level than in May-July 2018/19 were meeting the recommended 60+ mins level of activity. This may be because girls were more inclined to participate in walking, cycling and fitness, which rose in

ROSS LEVY

Evaluation and Research
Officer, Youth Sport Trust



popularity during May-July 2020. Such participation could be built upon as so to reduce the year-on-year gap between boys' and girls' activity levels.

Additionally, with adults' activity levels dropping more than children and young people's during the pandemic, the innovation and engagement of school sports practitioners must be applauded. A refreshed School Sport & Activity Plan can harness further practitioners' energy and inspiration to engage more children and young people, their families and communities.

To this end, an evidence-based action plan which draws directly from youth voice and insight, such as that provided by Sport England, could contribute enormously. A refreshed School Sport & Activity Action Plan should help us learn from the profound changes which have taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet also robustly challenge recent trends in activity levels. Ultimately, it should put in place sustainable solutions to ensuring more young people achieve the recommended and vital 60 daily active minutes.



To see the full report visit
[www.sportengland.org/
know-your-audience/data/
active-lives](http://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives)

Well schools

Should every Multi-Academy Trust have a **membership of the Youth Sport Trust?**

Stephen discusses why he believes YST Membership is more important than ever for MATs to help all their young people be prepared and equipped for recovery from COVID-19.

STEPHEN MUNDAY
Chief Executive,
The Cam Academy
Trust and President,
Chartered College
of Teaching



As we know, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) now oversee most secondary schools and many primary schools in England. As the responsible body for the schools (academies) in the Trust, MATs ultimately oversee and are responsible for the educational provision and finances in all those schools. Given this, it is not surprising that the Youth Sport Trust is looking at how to strengthen its relationship with MATs across the country.

Garrett Fay, Chief Executive of the Insignis MAT, and I have been asked by the YST to help to support it to develop its work with MATs. We are delighted to be able to do this. We both have a strong association with the YST over several years and are very clear about the great benefits to quality education for schools that have YST Membership. My own background goes back to being head of an early wave Sports College and all the great things that brought to the school and beyond. Given both of our backgrounds with MATs, we hope we can think through how many more MATs around the country can and will see YST Membership as fundamental for their schools.

When thinking seriously about ensuring that all pupils are 'well prepared' and 'well equipped', YST Membership seems vital. All of us in MATs want a great education for every pupil in every school. Without doubt, that must imply high quality physical education (PE), sport and physical activity. No one could claim to offer a proper education to young people without this being a core part of it. At least as notable are of course the range of very significant positive side effects that come from proper PE, sport and physical activity. We can all easily list those. The really interesting thing is that these are not contested. While so much in education currently seems to be heavily contested, every serious study ever conducted into the matter simply reinforces the major positive benefits of proper physical activity and education.

So, if all of this is true, which of course it is, then a proper question to ask is would not every MAT in the country want a clear and positive relationship with the YST? A really obvious way to support this fundamental branch of education for young people is to have a membership of the Youth Sport Trust that provides such excellent support in this. In many ways, this question frames the work that Garrett and I will seek to do in supporting the YST in its engagement with MATs. Speaking from personal experience, I know that a good, flexible and

cost-effective offer exists from the YST to support MATs to help all their schools to deliver well in this territory.

So, what might cause many more MATs to begin a formal relationship and membership with the YST? I would like to suggest that most of all is for YST to be seen as absolutely core to all schools, academies and all those responsible for overseeing them. Perhaps there might be a legacy view that the YST is strongly associated with a particular bunch of enthusiasts, especially those who framed the former Sports Colleges movement (perhaps maniacs like me). We need to see that as an outmoded view. Quality PE, sport and physical activity is fundamental to the education of every young person in every type of school setting. A very obvious way to support that is through membership of the YST, clearly including by MATs. Today, more than ever, that is true. We want our young people to be well equipped and well prepared to move out the of the pandemic and all our MAT schools to be members of the Youth Sport Trust.

Read more about how MAT membership can help your Trust in the article 'Developing Well Led PE & School Sport across Multi-Academy Trusts' here www.youthsporttrust.org/mat21



To find out more about MAT membership visit
www.youthsporttrust.org/membership-networks or
contact ruth.mann@youthsporttrust.org

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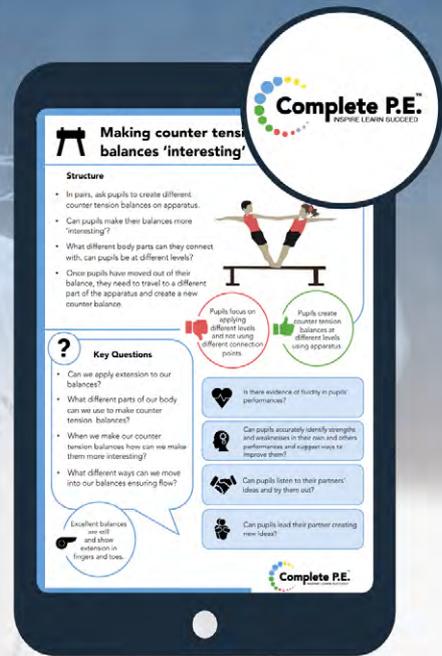
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