

# Dame Dorothy Primary School - Our Active Journey So Far



## School context

Dame Dorothy Primary School is situated in the heart of the busy city of Sunderland. Our aim is to ensure the best possible start in life for all of our pupils: academically, physically and mentally.

## Background and rationale

The Girls Active Programme was installed in Dame Dorothy in 2024 with 10 Girls Active Leaders, which has now expanded to 12. These girls have put in place key features in the school to support the development of sport, fitness and movement for girls within our primary setting. The girls have not only developed key areas for girls but have seen the impact of supporting and having an inclusive environment where boys can interact as well.

## Activities

The girls have set up activities on Tuesdays and Thursdays every week in every term. These have developed from dance and movement, running, obstacle courses, and we have now moved into developing the ideas of producing a hockey team, where children have already been practising hockey sessions and then moving on to a football team, as girls' football is extremely important in school, and it is something that needs to be developed over the coming years.

The girls have subsequently introduced The Girls Active Champion Award. This is a certificate that is handed out during our weekly assemblies to celebrate one pupil who has excelled in participating in Girls Active sessions. This could be a boy or a girl and this was chosen by the girls to be an inclusive award regardless of gender. The next steps mean further funding would be required and the girls have achieved this by proposing ideas to our head teacher and management team and the girls have now received a set amount of funding which will further develop their approach.

**“The Girls Active program has ensured everyone can take part in physical activity.”**

**TEACHER**

**“I feel like I am now more interested in sport and physical activity.”**

**STUDENT**

## Benefits to young people

- Improved cardiovascular health
- Improved cognitive function
- Improved self-esteem

## Benefits to school

- Increased engagement in physical activity
- Bridging the gap between KS1 and KS2 through inclusive Girls Active sessions
- Introducing children to different sports and physical activity

## Challenges

Time is always a challenge within a school setting. The girls take their roles very seriously, but the implementation of ideas (after school club) has taken longer than expected, due to staffing. However, this has given the girls the opportunity to see setbacks as something to overcome.

## Future

The Girls Active Leaders have begun developing forward-looking plans for the programme. They have been holding weekly meetings to generate and refine ideas and will continue to drive the initiative forward through 2026.

Following a recent meeting with the headteacher, we are pleased to share that we have secured funding to purchase resources that will help us strengthen and build the Girls Active brand within the school. We also plan to:

- Develop links with other schools to develop a hockey league
- Coach the younger girls in school in preparation for the KS2 girls' football team.
- Introduce an after-school club

## Top Tips

- Select girls from a wide range of backgrounds, especially those who have found it more difficult integrating into sporting activities in school.
- Give the girls full independence in how they want this programme to develop over time. It has been amazing to see ideas that have been realised by the girls this year.
- Take the time to reflect on what has worked and what has not. These moments have been extremely valuable in developing the girl's resilience and problem-solving skills.