



RESEARCH

Young Ambassador 

Insight driving innovation and impact

Young Ambassadors Case Study: Pool Academy

October 2025



Believing in every child's future

Introduction



Pool Academy is a mixed secondary school with academy status, located in Pool, Cornwall. Below is an overview of the demographic profile of the pupils who go to Pool Academy, and how they compare to the national average of pupils in England in the academic year 2024/25¹.



Free School Meals

National average:
25.7%



Ethnically diverse communities

National average:
38.0%



First language other than English

National average:
21.4%



Special educational need

National average:
19.5%

In the academic year 2024/25, Pool Academy took part in the Young Ambassadors Programme. This programme, led by the Youth Sport Trust, is designed to equip young people with the skills and confidence to act as influencers, using the vehicle of sport and play to improve wellbeing, build friendships and foster understanding. The programme focuses on three key principles that support young people as influencers:

- **Amplify Voices:** Create an inclusive environment for all students and use their role to voice ideas and create change.
- **Build Belonging:** Develop relationships and foster understanding within the school community
- **Leave a Legacy:** Inspire others to creating change that leaves a lasting impact for future generations of young people

Activities



Eight young people were recruited as Young Ambassadors at Pool Academy. This included young people who had completed leadership courses in the past and were motivated and confident to engage others. The lead teacher emphasised that some of the Young Ambassadors were less confident, in

¹ Source for national averages: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2024/25, GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-academic-year-2024-25)

particular in regard to being a sports leader, and that this programme was an opportunity to push them out of their comfort zone. All eight Young Ambassadors attended the **Inspiration Event** on the 5th March 2025 at Penryn College in the Cornish town of Penryn. This event equipped the Young Ambassadors with a toolkit of ideas and skills, to design and deliver a project in their school. A teacher session ran alongside this event, equipping educators on how to support their team of Young Ambassadors in delivering their project.

The Young Ambassadors at Pool Academy decided to focus their **project** on getting students in KS3 active during lunchtime, in particular those less active during PE lessons, those struggling with friendships and struggling in school generally. The Head of Year identified students that fell into this category, but nobody showed interest. As a consequence, the Young Ambassadors planned a **special assembly** for those students and framed the opportunity in a positive way, focusing on the fun and social element of it.

Due to this initiative, 17 students regularly attended a lunchtime club three times a week in the summer term. These students were primarily in Year 7 and Year 8, but they also had young people with special educational needs or disabilities from Year 9 join.



Due to the lunch club's success, additional leaders were recruited for support. After attending six sessions, the students were allowed to choose a reward, which helped engagement. Examples of rewards involved taking students out of lessons for the afternoon and going to the fitness suite or playing table tennis.

Benefits

Amplifying Voices



The Young Ambassadors have successfully created an inclusive environment for all students who attended the lunch club and used their role to voice ideas and create change. For example, in order to create a safe space for the lunch club, the Young Ambassadors had a meeting with the Headmaster where they arranged to get the front field of the schools for sessions. Nobody else was allowed to go to this field during lunch time. Moreover, due to additional funding from Active Cornwall which allowed for additional equipment (e.g. volleyball net, multisport items), the Young Ambassadors were able to let the students decide what sports they wanted to do. This sense of ownership empowered the students and allowed them to do something they enjoy together. The focus of the sessions was having fun, and being active together while creating connections with others.

Building belonging



The Young Ambassadors developed strong relationships and fostered understanding within the school community. The lead teacher highlighted that up to 17 students regularly attended the lunch time club three times a week and enjoyed taking part in the sessions together. These students were selected based on struggling socially with their peers –the Young Ambassadors project created a safe space for these students to connect with others and build a sense of belonging. This extended to PE lessons, where students were observed to get more involved.

“I’ve seen students who have been PE refusers join in PE lessons, and those who used to be on their own at lunch time have somewhere to go now.” TEACHER

Not only have the students taking part in the lunch club benefited from taken part, but the lead teacher also emphasised that the Young Ambassadors have improved their leadership skills and confidence, and that this role has brought them out of their shell. Indeed, the teacher noted that it was beneficial to not give the ‘typical’ sporty students this leadership opportunity but to branch out a bit. The fact that the Young Ambassadors did not fit into the category of a sporty student allowed them to reach the target audience more effectively and allowed them to step up as more relatable role models.

Leaving a legacy



The project uncovered that there was a general lack of active play at lunch time at Pool Academy. The lead teacher reported that more confident children started to come over and wanted to join the Young Ambassadors’ lunch club. Conversations around offering more open areas for students to play in have been started as a consequence of the programme.

Moreover, The Young Ambassadors have inspired others and therefore created change that leaves a lasting impact. For the next academic year, the Young Ambassadors will move into Year 10 – and while they expressed that they would like the project to carry on, they said they would not be able to lead this themselves due to balancing academic commitments. As a result, those students who attended the lunch club regularly as participants will step up as leaders in the next year and continue running this club. They have been empowered and feel ready for the challenge, creating a full-circle moment for them. The invitations for new Year 7s to join the lunch time club in the academic year 2025/26 have gone out.

“One of the participants, a SEND student, said ‘I think I am a leader now’ because he has attended so many lunch club sessions.” TEACHER



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