

Youth Sport Trust
Active Recovery Curriculum



Appendix C: School Case Studies
August 2021

About *spear*

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (*spear*) is located within the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Social Sciences at Canterbury Christ Church University. *spear* undertakes a range of evidence-led analyses, from critical commentaries and reflections on current policy and practice, to commissioned research, evaluation and consultancy.

The Centre's research is funded by a range of national and international funders such as the International Olympic Committee, World Health Organisation, Terre des Hommes, Department of Health, Department for Education, Youth Sport Trust, Chance to Shine, Premiership Rugby, Sport Birmingham, parkrun UK and Sport England. Recent work has focused on sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing in schools and communities.

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Active Recovery Curriculums evaluation undertaken by *spear* and commissioned by Youth Sport Trust. Report produced by *spear*

August 2021

Youth Sport Trust

Active Recovery Curriculum Case Study

Restoring socialisation and readiness for learning with a reduced curriculum and increased PE focus



Holy Family Catholic School, Birmingham

June 2021

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Context & Reasons for Engagement



Holy Family Catholic school is a small one form entry primary school located in the Small Heath area of Birmingham. Pupils live within a few streets of the school in an urban location, with limited access to parks and outdoor green spaces. Within the community, social deprivation and obesity levels are higher than average.

The school itself has a small playground with some football goals and basketball nets and a trim trail around the edge. Physical activities also take place in the school hall; however, this multipurpose space also houses canteen tables, and is unsuitable for activities that involve big groups of pupils at the same time. The school usually make use of specialist PE teachers and sports coaches from a local secondary school to lead their PE curriculum, but opportunities outside of this have been previously limited.

On return to school after lockdown...

When pupils returned to school on the 8th March 2021, following a year of intermittent lockdowns, NQT, Year 3 class teacher and newly appointed PE coordinator Drew Hill, reported pupils were somewhat 'disengaged and preoccupied'. Elements of their learning, including handwriting and concentration had suffered and certain areas were highlighted as a focal point in the school's short-term return strategy. In the first four weeks back at school, much of the usual curriculum was put on hold in favour of a simplified approach which included English, Maths, RE and PE.



Pupils report feeling 'nervous' and 'shy' when they first returned, as well as excited to see and spend time with their friends. Physical activity levels during lockdown were low among pupils, with many reporting having done no physical activity while at home. Teachers also noted that pupils appeared unfit and easily tired while engaging in activities at this time.

During the lockdowns, PE activities were set for all pupils via Twitter every Friday and the school tried to encourage families to go outdoors and be active, however, engagement in these is unclear, and pupils report spending more time sitting down with their laptops and tablets. Teachers recall it being evident that 'some children hadn't run around for months.'

After lockdown....

“

I was most looking forward to PE and music.

Year 2 pupil

“

I wanted to be doing more sport at school compared to being at home.

Year 5 pupil

“

I felt happy to come back because I could get more education, because half the things I forgot.

Year 3 pupil

“

It was difficult during lockdown to be separated from family and friends.

Year 5 pupil

“

In PE lessons at home I did star jumps and exercise and stuff. But I was glad to come back to school because you can't really do it properly at home.

Year 5 pupil

“

I was feeling shy, because I hadn't really seen my classmates in so long.

Year 3 pupil

Activities



In addition to encouraging playground activity, PE was incorporated into every school day to ensure pupils were as active as possible. Key Stage 1 pupils completed new videos from a paid subscription service 'Jump Start Jonny' each morning. Key stage 2 pupils had 15 minute 'after-break' activity sessions every day when they would play fast paced team games to get their heart rates up. A timetable was also organised to allow one class at a time to go onto the playground and run a mile throughout the day. To effectively deliver their Active Recovery Curriculum with limited indoor and outdoor activity spaces, Holy Family have successfully overcome a range of timetabling issues coupled with COVID restrictions on equipment and capacity. Additional barriers such as the weather, and swimming pool closures have forced them to be adaptable and imaginative in order to prioritise time spent being active

Since returning to a full curriculum after Easter, Holy Family continue to prioritise sporting events and opportunities to engage in outdoor teaching and learning. Examples include curriculum lessons, such as teaching maths outside, and non-curriculum events such as sessions delivered by Warwickshire cricket club and weekly visits from a theatre company teaching alternative skills such as wilderness activities and tug of war. Mr Hill said:

"Students have been quite taken aback by the new activities. I don't think they realised how important it is to try new things. They were a bit shy and didn't really know what to do but now they are in the full swing of things it's probably the highlight of their week".



Extracurricular

In recognition of a sustained period of inactivity and an overall lack of local opportunities for pupils, Holy Family have extended their extracurricular activity provision. All staff now have ownership of an activity each week and the school now offers over 10 clubs per week, compared to 3 offered pre-COVID. Around 70% of pupils are attending at least one club, with many attending 2 or 3, suggesting this additional provision is well received by pupils and their parents.



Which activities did you enjoy?

“

We did the activities outside, and I prefer to be outside because there's more space so you can do more things.

Year 2 pupil

“

I enjoyed cricket the most. I like hitting the ball and running around.

Year 3 pupil

“

We got to do lots more fun things outside like tennis and basketball.

Year 5 pupil

“

I like playing football and making jokes.

Year 5 pupil

“

We did lots more extra play.

Year 3 pupil

“

It was more fun instead of staying at home. We got to see and do more stuff.

Year 3 pupil



Impact

Pupils reported 'PE' and 'playing with friends' as some of the key things they missed during lockdown. The school's approach to try and compensate for missed opportunities has distinct impacts on the children.

Physical Wellbeing

Inactivity and obesity levels are high among pupils at Holy Family, however since returning to school, teachers report notable reductions in some pupil's weight and clear improvements in their fitness levels and stamina. Children have also become more aware of the importance of getting fresh air and being active for themselves.

Motivation

The array of opportunities on offer has translated into enthusiasm and increased motivation for many *'All the children are buzzing, all the children want to be getting involved'* (Mr Hill). When pupils were interviewed following recent visits from external cricket and tennis providers, most of them cited these sports as their favourites.

There has also been increased interest in competition. Mr Hill notes during recreational playground activities *'you can see the competitiveness shining through'* and *'winning means a lot to them'*.

Social Wellbeing

The importance of peer-to-peer social interaction has been appreciated more following the lockdowns; one teacher notes *'you could really see how much they value that and how much we all took it for granted and how much they had missed it'*. Many pupils have now increased in confidence after reporting feeling 'shy' and 'nervous' when they first returned. Pupils interviewed recognise the value of friendships and spending time with peers and are 'excited' to be outside and playing with friends.



Achievements and Challenges

Teachers at Holy Family have worked cohesively to develop and deliver activities to best suit the needs of their pupils, while the headteacher has encouraged staff to *'look for opportunities to get more physical activity into the week'*. Engagement in an Active Recovery Curriculum has had a notable positive effect on staff, some of whom are getting involved and joining in with lessons and their afterschool clubs to give themselves an opportunity to be active in their day. Prior to COVID-19, all PE was delivered by external specialists, therefore staff are now more involved with teaching and planning for their classes in this subject due to the additional sessions.

Impact: Pupil voice

“

Being active makes me feel happy and joyful and it makes me feel better if I'm upset or sad because it's fun.

Year 2 pupil

“

Being outside makes me feel happy and being healthy is important. I missed it while we were away.

Year 5 pupil

“

It's important to be active to keep healthy.

Year 3 pupil

“

It's important to spend time with friends otherwise you have no social life.

Year 5 pupil

“

Being active is important, otherwise when you grow older you can't move around because you weren't active when you were younger.

Year 5 pupil

“

When you are outside you are getting more air and stuff. It feels more exciting.

Year 3 pupil

Top Tips

1) Invite the Experts

Look for local sports clubs, teams, dance troupes, theatre companies and other organisations to find unique and exciting experiences for pupils. Encourage pupils and staff to have a go at something they haven't done before.



Teacher perceptions of impact

“

We now offer extracurricular activities every day...cricket, tennis, hockey...we're going to keep that going for September. They are a lot more tailored, and the turn outs are much better.

“

Students have been quite taken aback by the new activities. I don't think they realised how important it is to try new things.

“

They can't wait to get outside and are loving being outside playing all kinds of games; Stuck in the mud...duck duck goose...going on the trim trail.

“

Children need a break in the day – give them a thought break. Even just a 5-minute game of stuck in the mud. They will sweat, have a drink of water, then their minds are much more focused.

Drew Hill, PE Coordinator and Year 3 class teacher

2) Review Extracurricular Provision

Encourage staff to take on responsibility for a club or activity session afterschool on one day. Consult with pupils to find out what kinds of activities they would most like to attend. Ensure activities are well advertised so other staff, pupils and parents all know what is on offer.



3) Take a 'thought' break

Look at the weekly timetable and find an appropriate time to include a daily 10-15 minute pulse raiser. Breaking down physical activity into short and regular chunks is a great way to engage pupils who might be less interested in being active. Doing this everyday helps to normalise making time to be active, which may encourage young people to be active later in life. It also gives pupils a 'thought break', and helps them return to lessons refreshed and focused.



Youth Sport Trust
Active Recovery Curriculum Case Study
Developing social and emotional wellbeing through an Active
Recovery Curriculum



St Breock, Cornwall
June 2021

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Active Recovery Curriculum evaluation undertaken by *spear* and commissioned by Youth Sport Trust. Case study produced by *spear*

August 2021

Context & Reasons for Engagement



St Breock is a mixed primary school located in Wadebridge, an old market town in Cornwall. The school has 205 pupils from Reception to year 6 and the majority are from White British backgrounds. The school is situated on the camel estuary in a rural landscape with extensive grounds available for activities.

Physical activity has always been important for the school but even more so after the lockdowns. The school have a dedicated sports coach, Mr Ross, and are often working with local sports clubs and joining in school initiatives, e.g. National School Sports Week.

On return to school after lockdown...

When pupils returned to school on the 8th March, Headteacher, Mrs Hall, reported children to have reduced stamina for school work and were getting distracted and tired easily. Within the younger children, Mrs Hall reported developmental gaps to be more evident with pupils requiring more supervision at playtime. The older children had increased anxiety levels, and the year of intermittent lockdown had a noticeable impact on their social skills with pupils having reduced tolerances when playing with friends.



St Breock's key focus was to develop pupil's social and emotional wellbeing. Children report most looking forward to seeing their friends when returning to school which was facilitated by the school allowing extra time for pupils to build up relationships and routines again. Prioritising pupils' social and emotional wellbeing also allowed teachers time to settle back into routines and build strong relationships with their classes after teaching from home for so long.

Feedback from the school's Health and Wellbeing lead, Year 4 teacher and PSHE and Literacy co-ordinator, Mrs Dennis, suggested children in Years 2 and 3 found the return to school the most challenging, as they were not accustomed to being around classmates and in noisy classrooms all day. Emotional and social delays were apparent and the school is continuing to focus their efforts on helping pupils socialise and reconnect.

After lockdown....

“

When I was being home schooled I felt like I was trapped and it was quite annoying because I wasn't with my friends. When I came back to school, I was so happy to be able to learn with all my friends again.

Year 4 pupil

“

I was really excited as I'd missed all of my friends.

Year 5 pupil

“

In lockdown you were basically on your own, when we got back to school we could play with our class again.

Year 6 pupil

“

I've definitely been more active at school compared to when I was doing lessons at home.

Year 6 pupil

“

Not being with your friends for so long, being able to interact with them after a long time is nice.

Year 6 pupil

Activities

St Breock incorporated an adapted curriculum for the first two weeks of school return in March. They began each day with a 'shakeout activity' and incorporated regular 'pause for play' activity breaks throughout the day where children did rapid bursts of activity and were allowed to play on the playground equipment.



Additionally, the new curriculum incorporated regular breaks where children were able to sit and chat with classmates and get used to socialising again. Teachers had flexible teaching time over these two weeks and only asked pupils to concentrate on school work for short periods at a time. The school's focus was to prepare pupils to be ready for learning and prioritise their emotional and social wellbeing.

Mrs Hall encouraged all teaching staff to incorporate lessons outside as she felt it was important for pupils to understand the benefits of being outside and being active. This view was reinforced by the school's health and wellbeing lead, Mrs Dennis, who said:

"It was those important social skills that they'd forgotten as they hadn't had it for so long. This could easily be achieved by going outside and doing a lot of activity."

Staff found innovative ways to take curriculum teaching outside and make use of the schools extensive grounds in a variety of subjects:

- Year 1 going on nature walks
- Years 2 and 3 sharing social stories with each other outside
- Year 4 creating a Viking boat in art
- Year 5 visiting the local boules club for curriculum PE
- Year 6 recreating the Battle of Britain in history

Spending time outside was also factored into staff time with staff meetings regularly occurring outside and staff being encouraged to take breaks outside and be active role models for the pupils.



As a further part of the Active Recovery Curriculum, holiday clubs were introduced. Mrs Hall expressed the importance of maintaining social interactions between children over the summer holidays, enabling children to continue their communicative development to facilitate a smooth transition back to school in September.

Which activities did pupils/you enjoy?

“

Instead of writing about the Battle of Britain it's doing it, it helps with my concentration.

Year 6 pupil

“

We did art outside as well, next week we're going to be doing watercolours outside which I'm looking forward to.

Year 5 pupil

“

I was quite worried about doing surfing before I did it but I really enjoyed it and now I do surfing lessons every Sunday at Polzeath.

Year 5 pupil

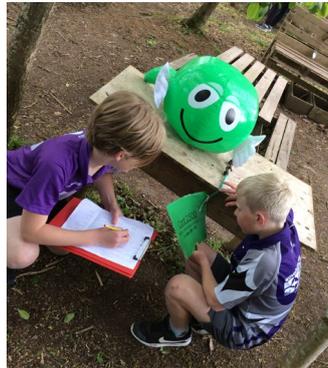
“

We've been doing circle time outside and doing something called 'Pause for Play' where our teacher would say Pause for Play and we'd all get up and say Pause for Play, go outside, walk up and then run in the playground come back and do 10 star jumps and then be able to play on some equipment for a couple of minutes. Then we're all ready to learn again as it freshens my mind and makes me feel more relaxed.

Year 4 pupil

Impact

During the first two weeks of term, St Breock prioritised their Active Recovery Curriculum exclusively to prepare and develop stamina for the academic curriculum in the following weeks. Interviews with teachers and pupils, supported by parent feedback, highlight how this approach positively impacted children's recovery from COVID-19.



"After feeling a bit worried and anxious about going back to school, [child] and [child] were absolutely buzzing with excitement yesterday when they got home!" Parent

Social Wellbeing

Many pupils expressed being excited to see their friends again on return to school, however, a reduced tolerance within friendships was apparent and reported by Mrs Hall, headteacher. The Active Recovery Curriculum allowed friends time to reconnect and learn how to be a good friend again through increased opportunities to play and chat to one another. Pupils were reported to be 'themselves' again and their overall wellbeing increased.

"[Child] said she had such a lovely day at school and it was lovely to see that she had her 'sparkle' back again." Parent

Emotional Wellbeing

Many children experienced heightened anxiety on return to school due to being at home for a long period of time, *"I was nervous having to go back to school"*. Increase anxiety manifested itself into bad behaviour, with pupils being tearful and withdrawn more easily. The school's Active Recovery Curriculum facilitated teachers to be flexible in their teaching and regularly check in with pupils to ask how they were feeling and coping with the transition back to school. Allowing gradual introductions to school work and expressing to pupils that they were not coming back and expected to be getting on with maths and english where they left off, but rather coming back and focusing on being happy and getting to know each other again, reduced anxiety levels and increased pupils' confidence.

"She came home smiling, laughing, talking and being her normal excellent self again. As a parent I can't thank Mrs. Dennis enough." Parent

Impact: Pupil voice

“

You get to do fun things while being active and you get to do it with your friends.

Year 4 pupil

“

In lockdown you were basically on your own, when we got back to school we could play with our class again.

Year 6 pupil

“

Being active makes me feel happy, it distracts me from what I'm thinking about if I'm upset and puts happy thoughts into my head.

Year 5 pupil

“

Exercise boosts your confidence and puts a smile on your face.

Year 4 pupil

“

Being active helps me let out my frustration and the thoughts that are buzzing in my head by going for a walk and enjoying fresh air and doing some activity to just focus your mind to try and stop you from being frustrated so when you get back inside you're ready to learn because you've focused your mind.

Year 4 pupil

Top Tips

1) Balance personal and academic development

Focusing on whole person development in children should be prioritised. Children's health and wellbeing is paramount and influences their behaviour and concentration levels. By placing whole person development on equal terms with academic development, children's readiness to learn will increase.



2) Implement a school-wide strategy



Try and secure interest from all staff in an Active Recovery Curriculum. Having all staff members recognise the benefits and support an Active Curriculum will maximise impact and outcomes both on pupils, and across the school. Reiterating that pupil wellbeing is a key priority will give teachers permission to be flexible with lesson delivery, enhancing pupils' physical, mental, social and emotional health.

3) Pause for play

Allow opportunities for pupils to be active when planning lessons. After having a break for play, pupils are more ready to learn and concentration levels are heightened. Encourage regular breaks for physical activity throughout the day to allow pupils time to refresh their minds and increase productivity when in lessons.



Teacher observations

“

If children are anxious or worried then how are they going to learn, they're not ready to learn. Having those couple of weeks really made a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our children.

Mrs Dennis, Health and Wellbeing Lead, Year 3 teacher

“

General lack of stamina for work and that was right across the school, we needed to build that up again slowly and intersperse that with lots of activity to make sure children were getting those physical breaks and reengaging their brains.

Mrs Hall, Headteacher

“

Giving staff permission to do that and absolutely not jumping into literacy and numeracy, I didn't want baseline testing, I think it would have done more damage.

Mrs Hall, Headteacher

Youth Sport Trust

Active Recovery Curriculum Case Study

Delivering a targeted physical activity intervention to develop
confidence and skills



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Christchurch

July 2021

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Context & Reasons for Engagement



St Joseph's Catholic Primary school is an urban one form entry school in Christchurch, Dorset. The school has a mixed demographic and a reputation of high achieving SATs scores. The school consider themselves to be sporty and recognise the wide-ranging benefits of being physically active and spending time outdoors. As such, re-gaining fitness levels and increasing engagement in physical activity is a top priority for the school.

On return to school after lockdown...

When pupils returned to school in March 2021 there were gaps in many areas of pupil development, ranging from basic selfcare skills through to academic development. In the first weeks back at school, Headteacher, Mrs Elizabeth Rippon, reported a decline in pupil behaviour as pupils re-established structure and routine. Impaired social skills and an increase in pupils falling out with friends was also reported.

Many of St Joseph's pupils live in flats or do not have access to gardens. As such, time spent being active and outdoors at home was limited for many. During the final winter lockdown in particular many children were inside most of the time and had lost interest in going to parks or green spaces. Pupils report being excited to return to PE lessons and to have opportunities to be active once again, however, many children displayed clear reductions in fitness, and were less motivated than before.

Concerns about pupil mental health and wellbeing were also apparent, and this became a focal point of activities throughout the Summer term. St Josephs provided additional sessions with their 'Emotional Literacy Support Assistant'. To align with National School Sports Week, the school included non-traditional activities such as yoga and mindfulness practices, in a bid to introduce children to a holistic approach to overall wellbeing.

To build up fitness and other skills in children most affected by the lockdowns, St Josephs developed intervention sessions for PE, as they would for other core subjects such as literacy or Maths. Class teachers identified about 12 children from each class in years 1-5 who would most benefit from some additional outdoor weekly physical activity, and these children took part in REACTIVE-8 sessions, a programme designed and delivered by PE coordinator, Mr Nathan Rickard.



After lockdown....

“

There were gaps across the board, and we really noticed behaviour had gone downhill, we had a few really tough weeks from March 8th to the Easter holidays where we just had to go back to basics and again the sport helped with that so much as it teaches them different skills.

Headteacher

“

We wanted to make sure our children are active after the lockdown, we're really into sports at school anyway but felt the children have had a lot of time inside and sports not just about fitness it's more than that, resilience, working as a team socially.

PE Coordinator

“

As a school we are always trying to find ways of improving the whole child, we understand the benefit of physical activity on the children, and it helps them learn so by doing the REACTIVE-8 programme they are in a better frame of mind to learn in the classroom.

PE coordinator

Activities

One of the key elements of the Active Recovery Curriculum at St Josephs was REACTIVE-8, a specially designed physical activity intervention programme to help pupils regain fitness and enhance other development skills following COVID-19.

Sessions were attended during curriculum time on Thursday and Friday afternoons by the 12 children selected from each year group. The outdoor multi-sport sessions ran once a week on the hard play area throughout the spring and summer terms. Pupils



REACTIVE-8:

Resilience
Empathy
Agility
Co-ordination
Teamwork
Integrity
Versatility
Enjoyment

worked in pairs and one scored while the other did the activity, before they switched roles. This promoted communication, teamwork and empathy as they offered one another encouragement. Scores were recorded and they had an opportunity to improve upon previous scores each week.

To increase time spent outside, curriculum lessons such as maths, geography and literacy were also taken outside where possible. The school have an orienteering course on the grounds and some lessons used this for pupils to answer questions about a topic area at each checkpoint.

Despite not being able to offer an annual residential trip to older pupils, residual activity funding was used to take Year 5 and 6 pupils to local adventure centres to engage in a range of watersports and outdoor activities that many wouldn't otherwise have the chance to do.

Impact

St Joseph's pupils report really enjoying the additional opportunities to be active at school. Teachers report pupils asking if they can do more of the REACTIVE-8 programme, and pupils who were not involved have asked if they can be next term. St Joseph's plans to continue to incorporate REACTIVE-8 into their curriculum and will develop the programme to meet the changing needs of pupils and try to include more pupils.



Observations

“

They enjoy doing it because it's a social thing, they're laughing, joking, and having fun which they haven't been able to do because they've been in isolation.

PE coordinator

“

We've got an orienteering setup around here where we've done questions and answers relating to a subject, for example geography and asking about capitals.

PE coordinator

“

I'm more active at school compared to when I was at home.

Year 2 pupil

“

Being active at school makes me feel more confident and helps me feel less nervous.

Year 3 pupil

“

I feel happy, confident, excited, because it's fun.

Year 3 pupil

Being outdoors

Spending more time outdoors has been very important to pupils, many of whom would choose to play outside regardless of the weather. Pupils recognise that getting fresh air is fun and makes them feel happier.



How do you feel about being active at school?

“

I like doing sport. It makes me happy and tired.

Year 2 pupil

“

Being outside is important because you're with friends and family and in nature.

Year 3 pupil

“

I love doing outdoor things and being active is important.

Year 3 pupil

“

I'm happy because I'm active, it's important because you can get fit and healthy and don't have to stay inside.

Year 3 pupil

“

Being active makes me feel happy and joyful and it makes me feel better if I'm upset or sad because it's fun.

Year 2 pupil

Academic development

A lot of academic progress has been made since pupils returned, and headteacher Mrs Elizabeth Rippon comments that the gap in learning is 'starting to close' and she feels positive about pupils' potential to achieve in the next academic year. Following REACTIVE-8 sessions, the shift in attitudes to learning and feedback from pupils has been extremely positive.

Confidence



Although the REACTIVE-8 programme focuses on a range of skills and abilities, the overall goal is to improve physical fitness for those who most needed it. The multi-sport focus of REACTIVE-8 and activities offered in off-site adventure facilities have helped to expand pupils comfort zones and increased their motivation to participate.

Headteacher, Elizabeth Rippon said: *“It has helped the children's confidence, we weren't expecting it to do that but it's helped their confidence and enthusiasm for sport. It's given them those skills to join in and social skills of being part of a team.”*

Healthy School Community

Not only are children more motivated to engage in physical activity in school, but PE coordinator Mr Nathan Rickard comments that the programme has *“encouraged children to practice physical activity at home”*. The wider school community have also benefited from St Joseph's Active Recovery Curriculum. Class teachers have benefitted from smaller class sizes while some pupils have been in REACTIVE-8 intervention sessions, and teacher have also found those pupils to be more focussed in lessons. Mrs Elizabeth Rippon says, *“I think if the children are benefiting then the teachers love it.”*



Top Tips

1) Teamwork opportunities

Give children opportunities to work with and support one another through physical activity. This helps to develop communication skills, empathy and to socialise through shared interests and experiences.



2) Offer non-traditional activities

Activities such as Yoga and Mindfulness encourage pupils to make connections between their physical and mental health and develop an understanding of the importance of both for overall wellbeing.

3) Get Outside

After long periods of time confined indoors, children really appreciate the opportunity to get fresh air and enjoy open spaces. Explore opportunities to deliver sections of lessons outside and increase children's activity levels.



Achievements

“

Getting the students to socialise more and bond and come out of their shells a bit more. We let them get outside and play together and rediscover those friendships.

Challenges

“

The biggest challenge when the children came back to school is them learning how to play together again, the socialisation. It was across the year groups, and we got little fall outs because they've been away from each other for so long.

PE Coordinator, Mr
Nathan Rickard

Youth Sport Trust
Active Recovery Curriculum Case Study
Supporting physical literacy and ambition through new
opportunities for young people



The Bourne Academy, Bournemouth
July 2021

About *spear*

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (*spear*) is located within the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Social Sciences at Canterbury Christ Church University. *spear* undertakes a range of evidenced analyses, from critical commentaries and reflections on current policy and practice, to commissioned research, evaluation and consultancy.

The Centre's research is funded by a range of national and international funders such as the International Olympic Committee, World Health Organisation, Terre des Hommes, Department of Health, Department for Education, Youth Sport Trust, Chance to Shine, Premiership Rugby, Sport Birmingham, parkrun UK and Sport England. Recent work has focused on sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing in schools and communities.

Research conducted by *spear* helps guide and inform public policy by contributing to the wider evidence base used by policy makers, providing a rationale for government and commercial investment, and steering programme improvements that enhance the experience of practitioners and participants.

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Context & Reasons for Engagement



The Bourne Academy is a comprehensive secondary school in Bournemouth for just under 1,000 pupils aged 11 to 19. The school has little ethnic diversity and high numbers of pupils with SEND and pupil premium. Within the community, unemployment levels and lifestyle

health problems are higher than national averages. The school has a large sports hall, AstroTurf, grass playing fields and a dedicated outdoor education site. Physical activities are led by PE staff. The school recognise the value of ongoing physical activity and wellbeing within its priorities.

On return to school after lockdown...

Intermittent lockdowns and the return to school had a profound affect on various aspects of wellbeing for many young people. On return to school, Vice Principal Mr Ashley St John reports how *“we have seen a dramatic increase in mental health referrals over the last 14 months”*. Additionally, injuries requiring first aid occurring during PE lessons increased across the school and teachers noticed lack of physical literacy and reduced fitness levels among pupils. As a result, The Bourne Academy prioritised pupils’ physical activity and movement on their return and tried to *“get things going again”*. In addition to impaired physicality, teachers also recognised drop offs in motivation and engagement. Teachers aimed to adapt their approaches in order to better support pupils within curriculum time. Assistant Principal, Jonathan Perkins described the school’s *“Bespoke approach, giving teachers more autonomy to build and develop those relationships to promote and be role models for physical activity”*.



Inspite of COVID-19 restrictions and associated limitations of PE delivery, The Bourne Academy aimed to maintain a sense of normality and maintain the structure and routines pupils are accustomed to, as they believe this helps enhance academic standards at the school. To avoid mixing bubbles, each year group has separate changing rooms to use for PE lessons, as well as separate break and lunchtime areas, each with their own goalposts and footballs for recreational use.

After lockdown....

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Lockdown was really tough, it was hard to socialise with friends.

Year 12 pupil

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When we came out of lockdown I was able to work on my goals and enjoy physical activity.

Year 12 pupil

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Coming out of lockdown and being able to be active has helped me so much.

Year 11 pupil

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Really important part of what we wanted to achieve with students returning was to be active and looking at things such as active travel, the use of social time and being outside as well as maximising curriculum time.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

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Important to support students as they return to school.

Teacher

Activities

Within curriculum time, weekly lessons at The Bourne Academy's outdoor education site have been included for Year 7 and 8 pupils. The school has also increased its ACE (Additional learning, Catch up and Enrichment for students) and Girls Active provision.



To optimise physical activity opportunities, The Bourne Academy increased their physical activity offer at break, lunch and after school. New 'multi-sport' extra-curricular clubs are now offered so pupils have the chance to play a range of sports. For those who wish to be competitive, intra-year group football competitions have been introduced while external fixtures are unavailable. This has doubled the number of places available for pupils to play competitively.

The Bourne Academy has incorporated performing arts as a key part of their Active Recovery Curriculum in the belief that opportunities to perform have positive impacts on pupil wellbeing. The school worked hard to ensure events in the Summer term calendar went ahead as planned, amid uncertainties around ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. Events such as 'The Summer Music Café' and production of A Midsummer Nights Dream were performed outside on site to a live socially distanced audience:

"The students get the experience of being outside in front of an audience and their peers get their cultural experience of watching a piece of live theatre".

Throughout the year the school organise ASPIRE days to help pupils develop physical literacy, self-confidence and ambition. Pupils are introduced to over 25 activities delivered by staff and experts and are encouraged to try something new. This term activities included a Euro 2020 inter-house football tournament, yoga, breakdancing, musical theatre, scavenger hunt, acting masterclass, escape rooms, outdoor education, velodrome cycling and a mental health talk.



Since returning to school, DofE uptake has grown to 110 pupils from years 9 to 12. This year, 45 pupils achieved a bronze award which is more than ever before. Teachers suggest this is a result of the school promoting the activities, and pupils increased desire to spend more time with friends outside. The Bourne Academy have been more aware of the value of the award this year and even have gold award pupils going on a paddle boarding expedition in Scotland.

Teacher observations

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We reviewed the needs of students when we put together the ASPIRE day programme.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

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Looked at additional trips within our ARC and had the largest number of students we've ever had completing the DofE awards during the year.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

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It's absolutely wonderful seeing students taking opportunities to do a new activity, something that they wouldn't normally be able to try.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

Impact

Physical literacy

Increasing physical activity opportunities across the school and introducing new activities via the ASPIRE day has led to improvements in pupils' physical literacy. Pupils have been able to experience new opportunities, learn new skills and find ways to apply their developing skills and competencies to new scenarios.

Personal Development

PE Subject Lead, Mr Mike Child, cited improvements in teamwork, organisation and communication skills since the school has returned and believes an active curriculum had played a role in developing pupils.

Self-confidence

Through incorporating performing arts as a key part of the school's Active Recovery Curriculum and prioritising outdoor performances to audiences and peers, pupils' confidence levels have increased.

"Pupils are buzzing the next day after their performance, they are already excited for the next one". Mr David Mastrocola, Head of Visual and Performing Arts

Ambition

The ASPIRE day provides exposure and opportunities to try activities pupils may not have thought of doing previously. Taster sessions help pupils understand that they can do things they might have previously felt they couldn't, and this shift in mindset can be applied to a range of future scenarios. Inviting experts from the community to lead activities further increases pupils' awareness of opportunities available and provides new role models. Teachers feel a 'sense of missed opportunity' which arose during lockdown which has made some young people more willing to get involved in new activities and extracurricular opportunities.



Achievements and Challenges

Teachers at The Bourne Academy have worked cohesively to overcome the challenges of 'bubbles' at school by increasing provision so small groups of pupils can participate in different activities. Sport staff have also introduced intra-competitions to replace school fixtures, extending participation numbers from one to two teams and increasing competitive opportunities for pupils.

Impact: Pupil voice

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It is nice to have experts come in and teach us which we obviously haven't had in a long time.

Year 12 pupil

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I really really enjoyed performing outside because it felt a lot more personal with the audience.

Year 12 pupil

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Being outside, being in the open air, being able to take a breather has helped my mental health.

Year 12 pupil

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The school has given me a lot of opportunities to know what I want to do in the future and it will help me with going to college or university and stuff like that.

Year 12 pupil

“

I've been involved in a Latin fusion dance workshop which is cool because I've never done something like that before.

Year 12 pupil

Top Tips

1) Encourage activities for all

Find ways for all pupils to experience a range of activities at school to spark interest and increase the chance they will find something they enjoy. Events such as an ASPIRE day encourage uptake of new activities and help break down barriers to pupil engagement.



Teacher observations

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It's so important to broaden students' opportunities.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

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Where a student has tried a new activity for the first time perhaps that may leave a lasting legacy for them where they return to that in their future lives.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

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We're giving teachers more autonomy to build and develop those relationships to promote and be role models for physical activity.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

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Seeing their fun and enjoyment with their peers when being active is really important for their future development.

Assistant Principal, Mr Jonathan Perkins

2) Use staff as role models

All staff can act as role models and inspire pupils throughout the school day. Encourage staff to travel to school actively, to get involved in activities, and to establish new extracurricular opportunities relating to their own interests. Staff being active in front of pupils encourages involvement and can increase aspiration for an active lifestyle.



3) Think outside the box

Consult with pupils on the types of activities they would like to try and try to present relevant opportunities. Introducing multi-sport extracurricular sessions is a great way to incorporate sports and activities to suit a range of pupils, and to encourage pupils to engage in things they wouldn't usually choose.

