GIRLS’ LEADERSHIP THROUGH FOOTBALL

CASE STUDY - FORGE VALLEY SCHOOL, SHEFFIELD:
Purpose for engaging in the programme; Forge Valley wanted to build on their established girls’ football curriculum and extra-curriculum offer.

What was the aim?

To create a sustainable leadership programme for the school’s girls’ football delivery that offers quality opportunities to the football leaders and feedback to help them to progress.

Broaden the learning outcomes for all PE lessons to include the development of character skills

Develop as a teacher

What was the impact?

• The girls’ confidence in football was strongly and consistently developed through the curriculum project. One teacher was particularly excited by the impact of the life skills element of the programme:

“It’s not necessarily about how well you can perform a volley or strike a shoot. It’s more about the communication and coaching each other to improve and them understanding that instead of victimising someone because they don’t have great skills it’s actually coaching them so they can work better as a collective, as a group that’s your team.” – Game of Our Own School Lead

• The Football Activators role modelling has inspired some of the participants to consider leadership roles in football themselves and devote more of their academic lives to sport:

“It shows that when you see men’s football you never see women coaches. So this inspires you to become a coach. It inspires you to be a football coach.” – Game of Our Own Activator

“[The programme] has inspired me to pick sports in year 9, where you pick a topic to base your schooling around.” – Game of Our Own Activator

• Social barriers have been challenged by showing both the boys and girls at the school that girls can play football:

“If you spread the image, more girls will play it. If it can happen with football, then lots of things that are considered for boys, girls will take up as well.” – Game of Our Own participant

What did they do?

• A teacher attended Game of Our Own training where they received training and resources for delivering PE and girls’ football lessons in the curriculum that focus on character skill development as the learning outcome.

• The school used the programme to make girls’ football delivery in the curriculum more coherent and consistent for girls in all year groups, focusing on character skills and creativity.

• Existing female student sports leaders were invited to sign up to be Football Activators, to increase their employability, take on new challenges and develop their leadership abilities. Three year 9 leaders and three year 8 leaders were selected.

• Football Activators visited form groups to promote the new Girls’ Football club and give out personal invitations to those they knew were interested in football.

Biggest challenges:

• Competition for timetable time, both in and outside the curriculum.

• A lack of time to adapt the PE department’s programme of work and have quality discussions with the department to embed character skill development across all PE lessons.

• A tendency for high quality players who play for teams outside of school to unintentionally dominate the training sessions, leading some girls to feel inferior, self-conscious and not good enough to join the after-school club.