BRINGING EQUALITY TO THE PE OFFER

CASE STUDY - THE DEANES, BENFLEET, ESSEX:
Purpose for engaging in the programme; The Deanes had a girls’ football club and wanted to introduce girls’ football into the curriculum.

What was the aim?

To increase participation and confidence in girls to do sport as there is great provision of sport facilities at the school but relatively little uptake from the girls themselves.

What did they do?

- Teachers from The Deanes attended the Game of Our Own training and built a relationship with another school. Over the year they worked closely together to share best practice and keep motivation high.
- The PE Department selected students to be Football Activators; the students with great leadership skills and students with a strong interest in football were chosen to encourage diverse participation.
- Activators identified other teachers to supervise all sessions, including a maths and hair and beauty teacher.

Biggest challenges:

- Staff capacity, but working with the other school has allowed the teachers to feel supported. The Football Activators have taken on responsibilities and have even started to train up some year 7s to be activators next year.

“I really liked it! As a PE teacher you have this kind of project and you think ‘Oh no!’ but I really enjoyed it - it’s something that has really benefited not just their football but also them as kids maturing. I’ve been a lot more enthusiastic with it and I’ve really enjoyed it, so just for enjoyment factor I’ve really enjoyed seeing them change in the way that they have.” – Game of Our Own School Lead

What was the impact?

- Attendance of the football sessions increased from five or six girls to begin with to 22 girls per week by then end of the programme.
- Teachers reported a huge increase in confidence, resilience and ability to work together as a team; along with greater enthusiasm, interest and knowledge:
  “Their confidence has increased so where we’ve enabled it to be girls only those barriers that were initially there have gone, so they’ve been able to develop in their own time so all of a sudden they’re saying ‘why is it just a boys’ sport? Of course, girls can play!’” – Game of Our Own School Lead
- A Football Activator reflected:
  “The programme has built up our self-confidence and gives us a taste of how to do things now we’re in charge. And obviously it’s pressure that we have to get things right, but it’s quite good as well because it helps us for our future.” – Game of Our Own Activator
- The girls are more aware of gender equality now, they see it far less as a boys’ sport and this has crossed over into their parents’ attitudes:
  “When I started I had a lot of the parents saying ‘Really? Girls’ football?’, but since I’ve had a lot of them saying that ‘the girls have loved it - they’re like different kids, they’ve come home talking about what they’ve been doing, what plans they’re making and they’re really confident and I’m really glad they’ve been able to have this opportunity.’” – Game of Our Own School Lead

To improve gender equality and get more girls involved in stereotypically boys’ sports.

Improve attitude to football and ‘boys sport’ such as ‘football isn’t for girls’, and ‘I don’t want to do a boys’ sport’ being prevalent. In addition to this, tackling obstacles such as playing in front of boys and not wanting to be seen as a tomboy.