

### Leadership & Volunteering

Highfield Community Primary School  
Dan Irving & Deborah Doherty (Team PE)

## MEETING THE CHALLENGE

### WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

As we are sure is the case in all schools, we have always given our pupils the chance to share their views and opinions through our school council. When we considered the criteria of the Games Mark Award, it became clear to us that pupils should be given the chance to contribute to, and enhance the provision of school sport in our school.

We are always looking for ideas and opportunities develop our PE in school and this provided us with the ideal platform to develop a new initiative. At the beginning of each academic year we produce an action plan to identify areas that we would like to expand and develop throughout the year. This plan is reviewed half termly and is reported to the school governing body. One of the targets that we identified on this year's plan was to enhance the use of our School Sports Crew and utilise their skills and enthusiasm wherever possible.

On the back of a very positive year for school sport at Highfield, we had a core group of children who had demonstrated the commitment and enthusiasm required to fulfil this role. We wanted to give these pupils the opportunity to contribute to decisions about sporting activities and sports competition in our school, air views and have their opinions listened to, influence and shape school sport for their peers, assist in the development and planning of the programme of activities, organise intra-school competitions within our school and perhaps most importantly be seen as an integral part of Team PE.

### WHAT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN?

The guidance provided on the School Games website gave us a great starting point to help us to set up the School Sports Crew last academic year. We used their Spirit of the Games section to identify the core values that we wanted the Sports Crew to demonstrate; self-belief, teamwork, determination, honesty, passion and respect. The initial idea was launched in an assembly, this gave all pupils the chance to reflect on their own strengths and consider if this was a role they would be keen to take on. Following the assembly we created a job description and application form that the children opted to take home and complete if they were to be considered for the role.

The response that we had was overwhelming, there were children as young as Year 3 who applied for a place on the Sports Crew. The quality of the applications showed us that the children fully understood what we wanted to get out of the role and how it would move PE and school sport forward. Ten children were selected from those who applied, these children were selected on the quality of their understanding only regardless of their needs in other areas of the curriculum.

Once the crew were selected we arranged dates and times that we would meet each fortnight to discuss any upcoming events or items that the pupils wanted to raise. It became clear very quickly that this group of pupils had a lot to offer the rest of the school in terms of leadership. We observed their skills in PE lessons and at after school clubs and identified that these children were more than capable of leading and supporting other children in physical activity.

The opportunity arose to send the children to Thorp Academy to work alongside their Year 8 Sports leaders at a School Sport Champions event to gain a Play Maker award. The children were given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through various activities based on the importance of communication and how to adapt activities for differing needs using the STEP framework.

To make sure that we utilised these skills once we returned to school we asked the Sports Crew how they could see this being put to use. All of the Sports Crew attend our breakfast club and suggested that they might be involved in running these sessions. Mr Irving devised a planning sheet so that the children could structure their session to involve a warm up, skills session, games and cool down. The children were allocated weeks that they would plan and deliver. The commitment that we saw at this point was overwhelming. The children arrive at school at seven thirty when it is their turn and organise their own equipment, resources and space. They take full responsibility for delivering the session to the children, some of whom are in Year 1/2.

Other projects that the School Sports Crew have been involved in include: officiating sports in the intra league, planning, leading and delivering activities during our Games Day and Sports Day, helping to decide the sports that will feature in the Intra league and supporting other pupils in PE lessons.

When we initially started this project we had no idea that this is the direction that it would take. We imagined that the children would support us in delivering PE but not that they would play such a key role in delivering sessions.

# Case Study (2015/16)

## Gateshead School Sport Partnership



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## WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE?

### WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The School Sports Crew who have accessed training and support through our program have told us that they feel more confident to undertake their role and feel more able to lead and influence their peers. They have also taken on a number of volunteering roles where they have organised and supported physical activity delivery within a range of settings to include: school clubs and competitions, community clubs and national competitions such as the School Games.

The children have been able to develop generic leadership skills that will be vital in other areas of life and **Increased self-confidence** that comes through taking responsibility for their own and others learning and enjoyment. These skills alone will provide a valuable platform for the children moving onto secondary school where they will hopefully have the opportunity to move on to other sports leader's awards.

Their own subject knowledge has improved greatly. They understand the key principles of a PE session including a warm up, skills development, application of skills and cool down. They are knowledgeable in a range of sports, showing a great understanding of the rules. When they are planning their sessions they choose warm up games that are skills based and linked to the sport that they are going to cover. These are skills that you would associate with experienced, qualified PE teachers who have a great awareness of a variety of sport that feature in school sport and PE.

The work of our School Sports Crew has impressed us so much that we have often celebrated this on our school website and through our school Facebook page. The feedback that we have had from our parents is incredibly positive. Their comments have informed us that the children are incredibly enthusiastic about the events and tasks that they are taking part in, they cannot wait to come into school on the days that they are leading. They have also commented on a growth in confidence in their children, they have expressed disbelief that their children can organise and lead large groups of children to such an effective standard.

As a result of our publications on social media, we had contact from several schools who were interested in how we ran the Sports Crew. We have had teachers from other schools come out to visit events which have been led by our Sports Crew. They have observed the sessions and spoken with our Sports Crew. After the sessions they have made it clear that this practice is something that they would like to embed in their own school. The children are always extremely proud on such occasions.

As an aside, our Year 5/6 teams have had their most successful year to date in a variety of tournaments including rugby, cricket and boccia. During these events it is clear to see who our Sports Crew are. They are fantastic ambassadors for the school, offering their team mates advice and encouragement throughout the events. The attitude that we see from our Sports Crew is exactly what you would aspire to see from young children.

### HOW HAS THIS BENEFITED PUPILS?

Quotes from some of the Sports Crew Members:

"Being part of the Sports Crew has been a big thing in my school life. It has helped me to build up my confidence in producing sporting activity in front of other students. It has also helped and encouraged me to take part in other sport events."

*Luke Brown, Year 6*

"Being on the Sports Crew has made me more confident with leading games and activities. It has also made me enjoy sports more. In Breakfast club I like to see how everyone tackles the different activities. I really enjoy thinking of new ways to carry out the activities and games. It has been a really good experience."

*Libby Dolan, Year 6*

"Being a Sports Crew member has brought out the inner confidence in me, it has taught me to speak confidently in front of pupils and help them to understand about sports. It has helped me to lead and teach everyone what you need to know to improve in your sports. It has given me a chance to show off my love for sport and given me great independence."

*Freya Horn, Year 5*

"Being in the Sports Crew is an amazing experience. I have learnt to co-operate with people and experienced the thrill of teaching people new skills. I get everyone to try their best. It is a challenge to think of something fun to do next that people will want to do."

*Tia Fox, Year 6*

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## WHY DID IT WORK?

### CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The most crucial factor is making sure that this initiative was effective was selecting the right children for the job. There are many elements of this role which require children to give up their own time e.g. coming into school early to set up for breakfast club, organising games and sports on a lunchtime or break time and after school. At times there are events and sports that the Sports Crew lead and therefore can't compete themselves. If this role was something that was put upon them rather than something that they applied for then the commitment may not be there. Through careful selection and recruitment, we have had a team of children who have thrived on the opportunity that it has presented them and risen to every challenge that has been put in front of them.

There has to be a member of staff or team of staff who are responsible for leading the Sports Crew and finding opportunities for them. We meet regularly to discuss upcoming events and plan in any ideas that come from the pupils. While the children have shown more responsibility than we expected from them, it still requires organisation and planning from the staff involved.

Confidence in your own pupil's ability is key. The children have to be allowed the freedom to trial out their own ideas and learn from them if they don't quite work. The progress that our School Sports Crew have made has been largely down to their own reflections on things they have taken the lead on.

In addition to this, the support from our secondary school has been a huge support as has the documentation on the Games Mark website.

### TOP TIPS

1. Be committed to the launch of the School Sports Crew at the beginning of the year – it is vital to engage the correct children in the project.
2. Careful selection and recruitment – the School Sports Crew need to be committed to this for a full academic year, often giving up their own time.
3. Have key members of staff responsible for overseeing the Crew – it is very beneficial if this is more than one person to share the responsibility.
4. Give the Sports Crew tasks consistently to maintain their interest and commitment to the project – this will also give them the opportunity to develop their skills leading to an increase in responsibility.
5. Make use of additional resources e.g. opportunities to work with the secondary school and their sports leaders, the information and resources on the Games Mark website.
6. Share the success of the children wherever possible – social media, school website and newsletters etc. The fantastic work that our children have achieved has received great praise from people within our school community.

## HEAD TEACHER COMMENT

*I have been delighted to see the development of our School Sports Crew and the positive impact that it has had in our school. The Sports Crew have been trained to a high standard and they have relished in their role of supporting sport throughout the school. They are now an integral part of our school breakfast club and their input has been inspirational, I truly feel that they are excellent ambassadors for the school.*

**Steve Thompson (Head Teacher)**