

**Sport Wales
PESS and PLPS Case Study**

The Families' Journey:

'Do families know they matter?'

Engaging families in raising the achievement of their child

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The Families' Journey

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Engaging families in raising the achievement of their child

Key Points

- *The Families' Journey captures the experiences of families at St Andrews Infant School in extending opportunities for children to participate in enriching developmental experiences.*
- *Extending the learning environment into the home helped to engage the whole family in fun, educational and accessible activities that supported the child's academic achievement and the development of personal and social skills.*
- *This case study highlights the importance of engaging families in their child's physical literacy journey and how broadening the involvement of family in the wider learning environment can enhance the learning experiences of children.*

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Context

Physical literacy is a holistic concept which can be described as the 'motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.' (Whitehead, 2014). A growing body of evidence strongly suggests that physical literacy not only allows children and young people to fulfil their physical potential, but also improves attention, concentration, engagement and on-task behaviour. This ensures children and young people are 'available to learn' and have the potential to achieve better outcomes through physical, cognitive and affective development. Physical literacy is unique to each individual and considered fundamental for a child and young person's health and wellbeing as well as playing a key role in facilitating academic achievement.

In 2000 a Welsh task force outlined a number of key actions required to improve standards of PE across Wales. As a result the PE and School Sport (PESS) Programme was set up and managed by Sport Wales (funded by the Welsh Government in 2001) and continued until 2014. The primary aim for the programme was to ensure that 'every young person is challenged and supported in PE and school sport'. PESS focused on up skilling the practitioners. High quality provision across curricular, extracurricular and community activity helps to engage children and young people, providing them with positive activity experiences and the skills, confidence and motivation to be 'hooked on sport' for life. The PESS project has developed a suite of professional development courses and resources to support practitioners working with 3 to 19-year-olds (Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 and above).

Delivery was managed and supported by expert regional consortia teams with an understanding of physical literacy and the ways in which it can be achieved and improved through the curriculum and the wider community. PESS interventions investigated the potential value of using the physical to create and enhance meaningful learning and improve academic achievement through movement. This approach allowed for the creation and development of bespoke, holistic and child-centred interventions driven by need (as opposed to a 'one-size fits all' approach). Dragon Multi-Skills and Play to Learn developed wide reaching and extensive activities which were used as facilitative vehicles, accepting that the stage of development was more important than age.

The bespoke evolutionary nature of PESS has provided an excellent foundation for the new Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS). The primary focus of PLPS is to create engaging opportunities that meet the needs of every child, helping them to fulfil their full potential.

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Context (Cont.....)

In conjunction with the PLPS a newly developed Physical Literacy Framework (PLF) will provide practitioners with clear expectations that will help track the progress of every child along their physical literacy journey. The implementation of the PLF across Wales will raise the importance of developing a physically literate nation. However, the need to independently collate, review, analyse and evaluate the PESS evidence base and the introductory phase of the PLPS in raising standards across physical literacy, academic achievement and whole school outcomes is paramount.

SPEAR

In October 2014, the Centre for Sport, Physical Education and Activity Research (SPEAR) at Canterbury Christ Church University was commissioned by Sport Wales to independently review the evidence base for the Physical Education and School Sport Programme (PESS), the Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS) and the Physical Literacy Framework (PLF). Part of this independent review involves the collation, review, selection, secondary analysis and innovative presentation of case studies evidencing and sharing a range of best practice across PESS and PLPS initiatives. As such, the narrative and analysis of this case study has been conducted by SPEAR with the resources provided by Sport Wales. Consent to identify children, adults and organisations within this case study has been granted.

SPEAR is a cross school and cross faculty research centre at Canterbury Christ Church University established to bring together expertise across and outside the university and to facilitate collaborative working. In particular, SPEAR brings together expertise in Sport and Exercise Science, Physical Education, Education, Health and Tourism and Leisure. SPEAR's research has helped guide and inform public policy to increase physical activity and sport participation among young people by identifying the processes most successful in increasing participation. It has provided a rationale for government investment, contributed to the wider evidence base used by policy makers, and steered programme improvements that enhance physical activity opportunities and experiences.

More details on SPEAR and its work can be found at:

www.canterbury.ac.uk/SPEAR

The Families' Journey

'Do families know they matter?' Engaging families in raising the achievement of their child

Profile

School-parent¹ involvement is widely understood to be an important factor in children's school experience and educational outcomes. Evidence suggests that a critical dimension of effective teaching and learning is the relationship between the teacher, the learner and the parents (DfE Review of best practice in parental engagement, Goodall et al. 2011). As noted by Estyn (2009), a family that fosters a supportive attitude to their child's learning journey makes a substantial difference to their academic achievement, irrespective of other factors. At primary level where families are actively involved in reading with their children at home, their children's reading scores are reported to improve by between 12 and 18 months (Scottish Schools (parental involvement) Act, 2006). In the secondary sector, evidence shows that differences in achievement by 14-year-olds in English, maths and science can be attributed to home influences (DfE Review, 2011). Parents are also highly influential in shaping the physical activity behaviours and physical development of their children; children of active parents are more inclined to be physically active than children of less active parents (Bentley et al. 2012; Janssen and LeBlanc, 2010). The 2013 School Sport Survey found that children and young people were between 27% and 33% more inclined to become 'hooked on sport' if their parents were active, and 23% more likely to become 'hooked on sport' if their friends were active. Therefore a supportive and engaged family network plays a vital role at all stages of a child or young person's development.

1 School-parent refers to the relationship between the school and the parent, family, carer or significant other.

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Profile (Cont.....)

While a strong school-parent partnership has clear developmental implications for the child and young person, schools and families may face a number of barriers forging these relationships. Parents may face issues around time management, child care issues and confidence about their own skills and abilities. They may also struggle to understand and navigate the education system. However, schools that offer bespoke forms of support (i.e. literacy and numeracy classes, providing fun activities with learning outcomes, parental and pastoral support and responding to real rather than perceived needs) have been shown to be more likely to overcome these barriers and engage families in the holistic learning journey of their child (DfE Review, 2011).

The Physical Literacy Framework outlines the important role of families in supporting a child and young person's progress on their physical literacy journey. A primary school in South Wales wanted to better understand how building a strong school-parent partnership could enhance the learning and developmental experiences of children. St Andrews Infant School implemented a bespoke, family-inclusive PESS intervention using Play to Learn resources. The school wanted to explore the impact of this intervention on the physical literacy, wellbeing, literacy and numeracy development of children applicable for the pupil deprivation grant. This case study follows the journey of the children and families taking part in the PESS initiative.

The Challenge: What was the problem?

St Andrews Infant School had already embraced a holistic approach to learner development and had a clear understanding of the importance of physical and academic development through Play to Learn. Staff had received extensive training regarding physical literacy and understood how physical development could be embedded across the curriculum to create an innovative child-centred approach to teaching and learning. Following further training and mentoring, cross curricular maps and schemes of work were created to ensure that subject topics, themes, stories and children's interests were intertwined with Play to Learn. This allowed the intervention to be used as a vehicle for learning across the school.

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The Challenge: What was the problem?



St Andrews Infant School: Their Play to Learn Journey (click picture to play video)

St Andrews Infant School wanted to “raise the bar” and make the transition from “good to excellent.” The school wanted to understand ‘to what extent does family participation in Play to Learn activities impact on children’s physical literacy, wellbeing, literacy and numeracy development?’ More broadly, St Andrews wanted to take a whole school, strategic approach to tackling poverty.



To what extent could family participation in Play to Learn impact on children’s literacy, numeracy and physical development (click picture to play video)

The school wanted to provide enriching experiences for disadvantaged children helping to close the gap between those children perceived as most and least advantaged. In order to narrow the gap and reduce the effect of poverty on attainment, the school explored how creating better links and partnerships with parents in school life could increase wellbeing, attendance rates, punctuality and behaviour, as well as improving the development and learning progress for children.

The Intervention: What did they do?

All children continued to receive the Play to Learn activities through focused PE lessons. These had already been mapped across and embedded into the curriculum. In addition, a group of Foundation Phase children (class 5) were identified as the focus group for the intervention involving parents. Families of these children were sent explanatory invitation and consent letters inviting them and their children to take part in the intervention which took place from October 2013 to April 2014 (inclusive of planning, recruitment, delivery and evaluation). The children and their families who agreed to participate received physical development group sessions based on Play to Learn resources.

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The Intervention: What did they do?

Learning objectives were derived from pre intervention measures taken from:

- The Dragon Tracker App.
- Self-Esteem constructs from the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Questionnaire (completed by children and parents).
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).
- Literacy and numeracy baseline data and National Literacy and Numeracy Framework targets.



Sample Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



Sample National Literacy and Numeracy Framework targets

Participants were retested during and after the intervention. Photographs and videos were taken and focus groups conducted at both pre and post intervention stages. Parents provided weekly review and evaluation forms allowing data and evidence to be collated and to track progress against the intervention outcomes. Themes and activities were planned and developed using the underpinning Play to Learn principles and resources which enabled each activity and session to target specific aspects of self-esteem, literacy, numeracy and physical development. Following on from each development session, parents were given the opportunity to take activity cards and resources home in a ‘skill sack’. This allowed the whole family to practice activities and to consolidate learning.

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The Intervention: What did they do?

Parents were also encouraged to form and participate in a focus group which was used as a forum to gather thoughts, ideas and evidence, as well as discussing ethical and data sharing protocols. Further sessions provided a platform in which the evidence and impact of the intervention could be shared with parents and the wider family. This enabled the school to gauge the effectiveness of activities at home and to share opinions on how best to progress and expand the intervention across the school. Not all children and families from class 5 wanted or were able to engage in the intervention so a control group developed naturally from children who did not participate in the intervention. Data from this control group was collated and compared with data collected from the intervention group.



Sample parent evaluation forms



The intervention explained (click picture to play video)

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Impact: What changed for the children?

The intervention increased physical development and skill acquisition. Children in the intervention group successfully achieved 7 out of 10 physical skills recorded on the Dragon Tracker App, in comparison to the control group who achieved 5 out of 10 skills. A marked improvement in both literacy and numeracy skills was also observed, not just within the classroom but in many other contexts within the school and at home; children developed social, emotional and personal skills which culminated in engaged and well behaved learners. One child with special learning difficulties (SpLD) made substantial gains in their personal wellbeing and social behaviour, as well as improving their ability to work independently.



What changed for this mother's son (click on picture to play video)



Benefits for other children within the family (click picture to play video)

Impact: What changed for the families?

The intervention has resulted in enthusiastic and motivated families who now have a strong understanding of physical literacy and an appreciation of the wider holistic benefits such an innovative teaching and learning approach can have on a child and their family. Parents have become more confident participating in and delivering Play to Learn activities and using skill sacks to consolidate and reinforce their child's learning experiences in the home environment. They have become more confident in providing quality opportunities outside of school for their children.

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Impact: What changed for the families?

The intervention has also helped parents better understand the expectations for their children in relation to physical development, numeracy and literacy outcomes. As a result of engaging parents in the physical literacy journey, St Andrews Infant School has created strong partnerships with families and extended the learning community for children. This intervention has helped parents to engage more readily and confidently with their children at home providing fun, healthy, educational and accessible learning activities for the whole family to enjoy.



Parents working with children using Play to Learn in school (click picture to play video)



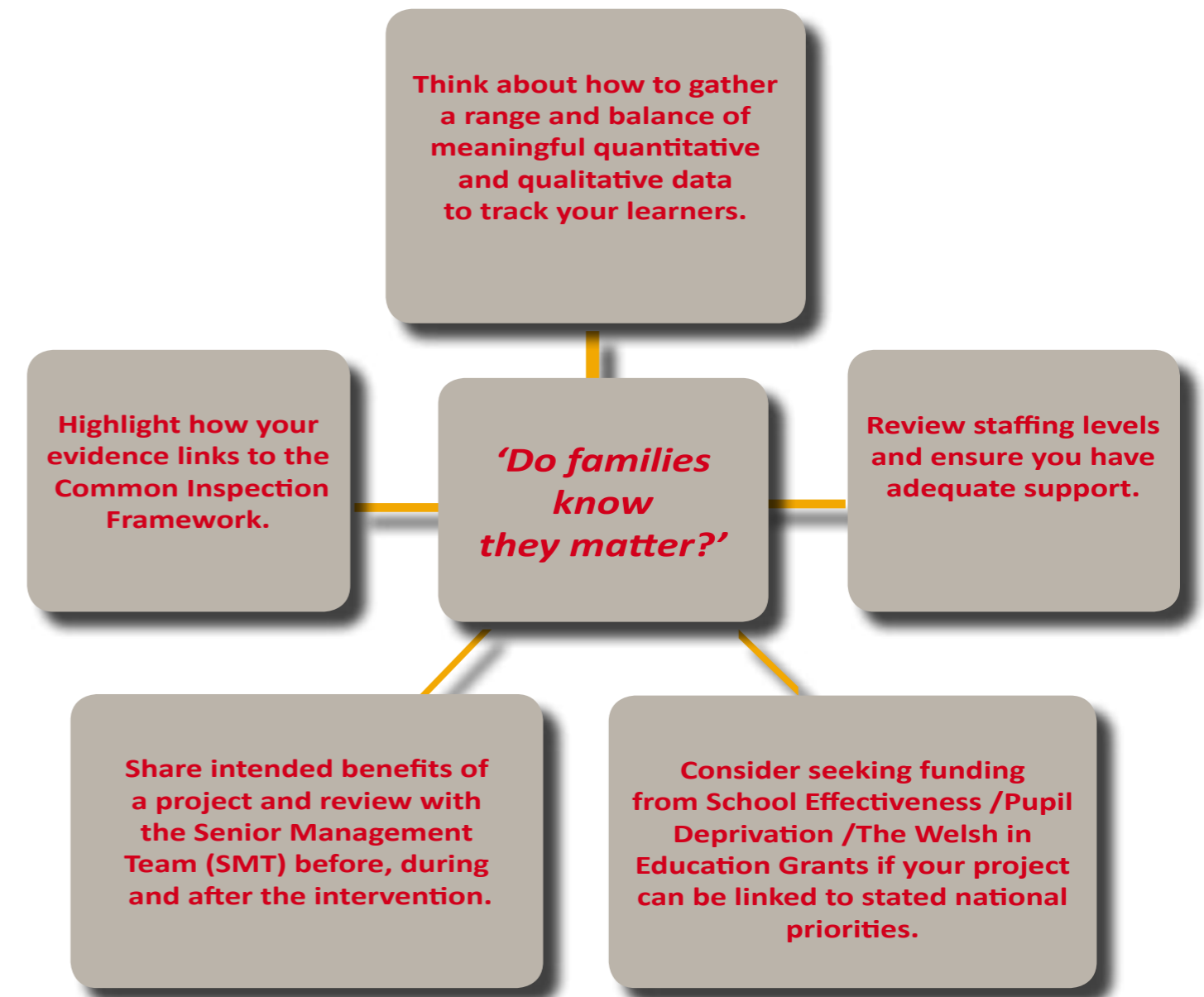
How Play to Learn has impacted upon family activities (click picture to play video)

Impact: What changed for the school?

The intervention had such a profound impact on the school that an additional Play to Learn initiative engaging parents in a Physical Literacy club was delivered over the 2013/14 Summer Term. The school enlisted the help of year 6 learners and parents that had previously participated in the Play to Learn intervention and have become advocates and mentors to support the continuation of the programme. Staff received further training and mentoring to allow the school to expand delivery in September 2014, providing opportunities to the families of children in Foundation Phase. The intervention improved the wellbeing and attainment of all children, but its impact was particularly noticeable in those funded by the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG). The PDG helped to fund further resources linking Play to Learn with literacy and numeracy in reception, nursery and the Learning Resource base which impacted positively on outcomes in the early years setting. The physical literacy initiative was seen to be so successful that the school has provided 'release time' for the project leader, ensuring the initiative has the resources to evolve and grow in an effective and sustainable manner.

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Recommendations: Advice for schools and practitioners



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