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centre for sport, physical education
& activity research



Active Kids Paralympic Challenge: School Journeys



June 2016

About SPEAR

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education and Activity Research (SPEAR) is located within Canterbury Christ Church University. SPEAR undertakes a range of theoretically-informed analyses, from critical commentaries and reflections on current policy and practice, to commissioned research, evaluation and consultancy.

SPEAR's research guides and informs public policy to increase physical activity and sport participation. It contributes to the wider evidence-base used by policy-makers, provides a rationale for government and commercial investment, and steers programme improvements to enhance the experience of practitioners and participants.

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Active Kids Paralympic Challenge Journey Lutterworth High School

School Context

Lutterworth High School is a secondary academy located in Lutterworth, near Leicester. The proportion of students from a minority ethnic background is below average, while the proportion of students with disabilities or a statement of SEN is also well below average. The school has an indoor sports hall, an average-sized playground and a small playing field.

Lutterworth offers a range of extra-curricular clubs, including dodgeball, basketball, golf and skiing. Students are encouraged to suggest ideas for new clubs and are given the opportunity to take leadership roles within these clubs.

Reasons for Engagement

Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher at Lutterworth, signed up to Active Kids Paralympic Challenge in the hope of offering students new opportunities: *“Some of these students will have never done anything like this, so it will be a great experience for them”* (Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher).

Sarah wanted to use Active Kids Paralympic Challenge with a group of students she felt could benefit from activities requiring cooperation and communication:

It is a mixed group, but I think that doing team based activities where they have to work together and talk a lot will get them out of their comfort zones a bit.

(Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher)

The group also includes a girl with a severe vision impairment, and Sarah hoped that Active Kids Paralympic Challenge would be an opportunity for her to get involved in sport: *“She hasn’t really been able to do much before, so it is a really good chance for her to be part of something”* (Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher).

Snapshot of Activities

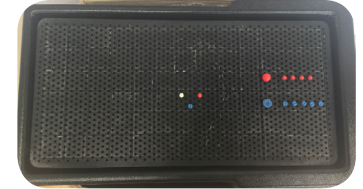
Sarah has been running Active Kids Paralympic Challenge as weekly club during curriculum time for the group of six Year 7 students. The group has completed a different activity each week, including guided running, boccia and goalball.



Working in teams



Boccia



The 'boccia board'



Using the 'boccia board' (click picture to play video)

On the day of the visit, the group completed a boccia session that was largely game based. The session started with a recap of the rules, followed by the group being split into two teams of three. One team used a 'boccia board' to guide their visually impaired teammate, inserting red, blue and white pins to map out the location of the boccia balls, as well as clapping next to the target when it was her turn to throw.

Following the first game of boccia, each team had to assign one guide and two blindfolded players for the next game. The students kept their blindfolds on throughout the rest of the game, and relied on their teammate to support them using the boccia board and verbal guides. The students found the game more difficult when blindfolded, but began to communicate and work together to select a strategy and throw more accurately.

At the end of the session, Sarah asked the group if they had fun: *"Yes it was really good... I think I am getting better because I got a lot closer this time"* (Year 7 participant).



Boccia
(click picture to play video)



Blindfolded boccia
(click picture to play video)



Blindfolded boccia 2
(click picture to play video)

Perceptions of Resources

Sarah has struggled to access some of the online resources but has found the activity videos to be a useful tool to engage students: *"I think showing them the actual activity really helps make it more interesting and exciting for them"* (Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher).

The equipment itself supplements Lutterworth's current disability sport resources, but also allows the school to offer students new opportunities: *"It is great to have stuff like the goalball equipment, because otherwise most of our students would never get a chance to try it"* (Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher).

Impact of Active Kids Paralympic Challenge at Lutterworth

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge has raised awareness of both disability sport and the Paralympic games at Lutterworth: *"I hadn't even heard of some of the sports until now; like I didn't even know goalball existed... I will definitely watch it when it is on though"* (Year 7 participant).

Sarah believes that Active Kids Paralympic Challenge has also helped students gain a greater understanding of disabilities: *"I think it has let them get a feel for what it is like being disabled"* (Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher). In particular, using the blindfolds has allowed students to experience what participating in sport is like for their visually impaired classmate:

It is much harder than I thought it would be, I don't know how she does it really... I don't think I really understood what it was like before.

(Year 7 participant)

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge has provided an accessible opportunity for a visually impaired student at Lutterworth to become more involved in sport: *“Doing the boccia is really good because everyone is the same... It is normally quite hard to do other sports”* (Year 7 participant). Being able to participate in disability sport regularly has helped develop the student’s self-esteem and enjoyment in physical activity:

She has absolutely loved it; she wants to come every week... It is great because they are all level for the boccia, so she has a good chance of winning, which has really given her a boost.

(Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher)

All of the Active Kids Paralympic Challenge activities have required students to work as a team, and Sarah has noticed improved cooperation and communication among her group: *“They are always helping each other in the activities, and having someone be a guide has forced them to explain things clearly”* (Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher).



Boccia: Guiding for visually impaired student (click picture to play video)



Boccia guide (click picture to play video)

Sustaining and Embedding

Sarah intends to continue running Active Kids Paralympic Challenge into the next academic year, offering the activities to different groups of students: *“We are definitely going to carry on with it... We are going to do it with a new group of students”* (Sarah Tomlinson, PE teacher).

With access to the Active Kids Paralympic Challenge resources, some students hope to participate in more activities in the future:

I’d definitely like to try some more disability sports... And now that we have the equipment I think it would be really good to do more boccia and goalball, maybe even if we had like a club.

(Year 7 participant)