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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

The Shrubbery

School Context

The Shrubbery is an independent school in Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham. There are currently 256 children on roll from 3 to 11 years of age. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds; few have SEN. The school is located in a converted two-storey Georgian house with a playground and small playing field.

The Shrubbery offers a variety of traditional sports clubs and more recently, handball and kabaddi. The school operates a strong leadership pathway with a group of Year 6 pupils, known as the 'Sports Crew', regularly delivering activities to the junior school, along with two young ambassadors.

Reasons for Engagement

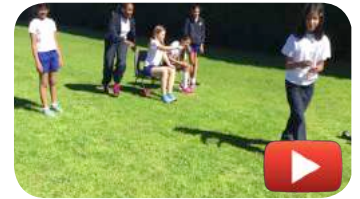
Michael Griffin, PE subject lead at The Shrubbery, saw Active Kids Paralympic Challenge as an opportunity to challenge his pupils: *"The children here are quite high achieving and are involved in lots of sport outside of school, so they would usually be able to pick it up really easily, but this has really challenged them"* (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead). The pupils have had limited exposure to disability and Paralympic sport, and Michael felt the activities could raise awareness and understanding: *"It will hopefully give them a different view of sport, and help them to understand and appreciate what it is like for people with disabilities"* (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead).

The school was also drawn to the online aspects of the programme: *"I liked the integration of technology; the online resources, the App, the showcases. It really fits in with the direction we are heading"* (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead). The adaptability of the activities also appealed: *"I liked the way it fit into our curriculum but also there is a lot more you can do with those activities, whether in PE, at lunch time or in a club"* (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead).

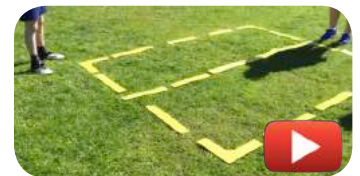
Snapshot of Activities

The Shrubbery delivered an interactive assembly on Active Kids Paralympic Challenge at the beginning of term, outlining the Paralympic values and how these fit with the school values.

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge activities are integrated into the curriculum for Year's 3 to 6, and Michael has been used the challenge cards to deliver a variety of sessions on boccia, athletics, goalball and sitting volleyball over the past 3 months. The Sports Crew and young ambassadors deliver activities at lunchtime, and disability sport has found its way onto the playground: *"During break time I've seen kids who would usually be playing football or something, and instead they are playing boccia. They have adapted it to use beanbags instead"* (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead).



Boccia bowling
(click picture to play video)



Creating boccia 'Connect 3'
(click picture to play video)



Boccia connect 3
(click picture to play video)



Boccia: How to guide
(click picture to play video)



Boccia guide
(click picture to play video)

On the day of the visit, Michael delivered a Year 6 PE lesson focused on the boccia challenge cards. From the outset, it was clear that children were encouraged to take ownership of the activities. Michael instructed the pupils to get into groups and set up a 'boccia bowling alley', allowing them to define the distance between the pins and the throwing location.

The children were then asked to set up grid for 'Connect 3 Boccia'. Michael gave each group a 'Connect 3' challenge card but asked them to come up with their own rules and use the equipment they felt was appropriate, following the STEP (Space, Task, Equipment, People) principles.

Michael asked the children how they could adjust the activity to make it more inclusive. The groups were given two blindfolds, and in pairs, had to use different strategies to guide their partner. Some children would guide their partner by clapping or bouncing the bell ball, while others held their partner's wrist and guided a throwing motion. The session ended with a short discussion about the children's experience of using the blindfold.



Using your other senses
(click picture to play video)



Boccia connect 3: Guide
(click picture to play video)

Perceptions of Resources

Michael finds the online resources integral to session planning and delivery: "We watch the video to give them an idea of what we are doing... I didn't even know goalball myself so watching it beforehand was really important" (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead).



Boccia connect 3: Using the 'bell ball'
(click picture to play video)

The challenge cards are also seen as key to delivery, for both Michael and the Sports Crew leading activities:

We were aware of the STEP strategy but having these resources, it expands your knowledge further. I have transferred it into all my other teaching... I use STEP for every skill I teach and that's because I saw the challenge cards which were clear and made it easier for the kids to learn... The kids have also been able to use them and take ideas from them; they were well presented and easy to use. They could use them straight away really.

(Michael Griffin, PE subject lead)



Active Kids Paralympic Challenge Resources

The equipment itself is regularly used in both PE lessons and at lunchtime: "We have almost everything you need, but Active Kids Paralympic Challenge equipment is a bit different" (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead).

Impact of Active Kids Paralympic Challenge at the Shrubbery

Children at The Shrubbery are reported to be engaged and enthusiastic about Active Kids Paralympic Challenge: "They've loved it, they are always asking questions and wanting to know more" (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead).



Taking ownership
(click picture to play video)

Michael has introduced the idea of disability sport but encouraged personal exploration of how they can make activities inclusive: *“I like just making our own decisions, instead of someone else telling us what to do, it is more kids related”* (Year 6 Participant). The activities challenge children to be creative and resilient by designing their own activities and then adapting them: *“It was quite difficult at first but after a while we figured out a way to make it work for people who maybe can’t see”* (Year 6 Participant).

The activities are seen to help the children develop essential transferable skills, including cooperation, trust, communication and empathy:

It’s just putting them in someone else’s shoes, doing something they’ve never done before. It’s given them an appreciation for what some people have to overcome, and how difficult it can be...

(Michael Griffin, PE subject lead)

One child is reported to have greatly benefited from Active Kids Paralympic Challenge:

He was one of those who tried his hardest but never really excelled, but because this was so new it put everybody on a level playing field. He was going away and researching all of the sports and before we had even put the resources up he would say ‘oh, I know all of the rules for that’ and he would stand up and tell everyone which I was really impressed with. He has been one of the leaders and taking control and really thinking ways he could challenge it and expand the challenge. So he certainly stood out for me.

(Michael Griffin, PE Subject Lead)

Michael is also more confident in his own ability to deliver inclusive activities and Paralympic sport: *“I do feel much more confident in delivering Paralympic sport... the challenge cards and STEP strategy makes it a lot easier to plan”* (Michael Griffin, PE Subject Lead).

Sustaining and Embedding

The Shrubbery has clear plans for the programme going forward: *“We definitely want to implement it into the curriculum every year, it fits in really well with what we are trying to do long term”* (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead). Michael also hopes that the Sports Crew will continue to deliver the activities at lunchtime, using the cards as a guide: *“I think, using the cards, they will feel confident to expand on the activities and try their own ideas”* (Michael Griffin, PE subject lead).



Understanding disabled sport (click picture to play video)



What have you learnt? (click picture to play video)

“It’s quite difficult, when you don’t have your eyes, you use your other senses more wisely (Year 6 participant)



Working in teams



Active Kids Paralympic Challenge Assembly