

# spear

centre for sport, physical education  
& activity research

## Active Kids Paralympic Challenge Executive Summary



September 2016

# About spear

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education and Activity Research (spear) is located within the School of Human and Life Sciences. spear undertakes a range of theoretically-informed analyses, from critical commentaries and reflections on current policy and practice, to commissioned research, evaluation and consultancy.

The Centre's research is funded by a range of national and international funders such as the International Olympic Committee, World Health Organisation, Terres des Hommes, Department of Health, Department for Education, Youth Sport Trust, UK Sport, Sport England and Sport Wales. Recent work has focused on sport and physical activity in schools and the community and on aspects of Olympic and Paralympic legacies.

Research conducted by spear has helped guide and inform public policy by contributing to the wider evidence base used by policy makers, providing a rationale for government and commercial investment, and steering programme improvements that enhance the experience of practitioners and participants.

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Active Kids Paralympic Challenge evaluation undertaken by spear and commissioned by the Youth Sport Trust. Report produced by spear.

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# Context

## About the programme

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge is funded by Sainsbury's, supported by the British Paralympic Association (BPA) and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST). The programme runs from September 2015 to September 2016. The aim of the programme is to engage and educate through activities and resources that capture the imagination and inspire participation in the active celebration of Rio 2016.

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge showcases four Paralympic sports: boccia, goalball, sitting volleyball and athletics. The programme is delivered primarily through an online resource with registered schools receiving equipment and access to free downloadable resources. Schools and young people can record and track their activities on the Get Set Road to Rio app. They are also encouraged to showcase their achievements and have the opportunity win prizes through the Reward Scheme.

## About the evaluation

spear has been commissioned from July 2015 to August 2016 to conduct an independent evaluation of Active Kids Paralympic Challenge. The evaluation is designed to capture evidence of outcomes achieved and draw out key lessons learnt.

This Final Report focuses on the impact of Active Kids Paralympic Challenge on young participants and schools, explores how the programme has worked in schools and considers a counterfactual for the programme. Data informing this report are drawn from interviews with senior representatives of Sainsbury's, the BPA and YST; Edcoms registration data; and survey returns from 2,174 young participants and 338 teachers who participated in the programme in the 2015/16 academic year. Picture or Poem Award entries; telephone interviews with teachers; and data from 6 site visits complement and triangulate the survey data allowing the perspectives and experiences of a range of stakeholders to be presented.

The report is divided into four substantive sections: Reception & Engagement; Participation & Impact; Activities, Achievements & Challenges; and Counterfactual. Recommendations are also presented.

Programme vision:

*Active Kids Paralympic Challenge will create the opportunity for 2.5 million young people in schools across the UK to:*

- *be inspired by,*
- *be active through,*
- *have increased awareness and understanding of*

*Paralympic sport, in the lead up to Rio 2016*

Key research questions:

1. *Has Active Kids Paralympic Challenge inspired young people to be more active?*
2. *Has Active Kids Paralympic Challenge increased motivation, awareness, competence and confidence around Paralympic sport and disability inclusivity?*
3. *Has Active Kids Paralympic Challenge impacted on broader outcomes for young people?*
4. *How have any outcomes for young people, teachers and schools been achieved?*

## Reception & Engagement

### Registrations & Roll out

As of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016, over 7,600 schools with almost 2.4 million young people have registered for Active Kids Paralympic Challenge; 95% of the 8,000 target for schools and 2.5 million target for young people registered by the end of September 2016.

### Reasons for taking part

Increasing inclusive sport provision and pupils' awareness and understanding are the main reasons given by schools for engaging in the programme. The potential for Active Kids Paralympic Challenge to enhance holistic development is recognised by schools, alongside the opportunity to support delivery and learning across the curriculum. Schools have also been drawn to the online aspects of the programme and the free equipment.

## Participation & Impact

### Opportunities & Awareness

Over 2.2 million young people will have played Paralympic sports through Active Kids Paralympic Challenge by the end of September 2016. Of the almost 1.5 million young people who participated in 2015/16, over two thirds say they know more about Paralympic sports they can play. Teachers report that the programme has helped participants learn about Paralympic sports and raised awareness of Paralympic sports opportunities and disability inclusivity.

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge is widely perceived by schools to have supported meaningful engagement with Paralympic sport. Through that engagement, pupils are reported to have a greater awareness of Paralympic sport and a more positive perception of disability. They have a better understanding of 'difference', the need to celebrate difference and to be respectful of that difference. They are also seen to be more aware and accommodating of the opportunities disabled people need and the role they can play in enabling those opportunities.

### Activity, Motivation, Competence & Confidence

Participants have welcomed the chance to play more sport and to play for fun. They have also enjoyed playing to win; the 'level playing field' created by the Paralympic sports seen to provide a safe space for more pupils to enjoy an element of competition. The inclusive nature of the Challenge activities is also seen as effective in supporting participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity.

- *To date...  
7,617 schools &  
2,384,121 young people  
registered for Active Kids  
Paralympic Challenge*
- *Monitoring data indicate that,  
by the end of the programme,  
Active Kids Paralympic  
Challenge will have created  
the opportunity for  
2.5 million young people in  
8,000 schools  
to be inspired by, be active  
through, and have increased  
awareness and understanding  
of Paralympic sport*
- *~88% of registered schools  
(~7,049) will have delivered  
Active Kids Paralympic  
Challenge by the end of  
September 2016 (assuming  
registration targets are met  
and all schools registered since  
July 2016 deliver the  
programme)*
- *13% of schools registered in  
2015/16 decided not to deliver  
the programme, citing other  
activities and lack of staff time  
(Teacher Survey)*
- *71% of registered schools are  
primary, 23% are secondary,  
4% are special schools*
- *~2,202,353 young people will  
have played Paralympic sports  
through Active Kids Paralympic  
Challenge by the end of  
September 2016*
- *~1,014,016 (69% of  
participants who engaged in  
2015/16) say they know more  
about Paralympic sports they  
can play*
- *~915,838 (63%) say they play  
more sport than before*
- *~930,491 (64%) say they want  
to play more sport than before*
- *~95% of teachers say the  
programme has raised  
awareness of Paralympic  
sports opportunities and  
disability inclusivity*

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge participants have retained positive attitudes to sport and activity across the programme. Teachers feel the programme has helped participants become more positive about being active and about Paralympic sport, and more confident and competent playing Paralympic sports.

## Social, Emotional & Individual Development

Participants' perceptions of their social, emotional and individual skills and attributes have remained stable over the course of the programme. However, teachers believe Active Kids Paralympic Challenge has helped develop social skills, confidence, resilience and empathy, given participants a sense of belonging, raised aspirations and provided valuable leadership opportunities.

## Whole School Impact

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge is widely perceived by teachers to support whole school agenda and enhance provision across the school. Teachers' ability to exploit the broad potential of the programme and maximise whole school impact is seen to be supported by increases in their knowledge, awareness, motivation, competence and confidence.

The programme is also reported to have strengthened school and community partnerships; through festivals and Paralympic themed events, schools have capitalised on the celebratory features of Active Kids Paralympic Challenge to develop and refresh links with community organisations and local schools.

- No change in all participants meeting CMO guidelines for physical activity (~40%)
- Increase in primary participants now achieving 60 active minutes every day (43%)
- Increase in participants who have taken part for 4 months or more now achieving 60 active minutes every day (44%)
- 93% of teachers say the programme has added value to PE and sport provision 'a little' or 'a lot'
- 67% of teachers say it has supported delivery across the curriculum
- 64% of teachers say it has increased their competence to deliver Paralympic sports opportunities 'a lot'
- 61% say it has improved their ability to embed Paralympic sports opportunities in school

# Activities, Achievements & Challenges

## Delivery

Schools that ran Active Kids Paralympic Challenge in the 2015/16 academic year were keen to get started and take full advantage of what the programme had to offer in the run up to Rio. Schools planning to run in September 2016 and those who decided not to run cited other activities and lack of staff time as key reasons for postponing delivery or deciding not to run.

## Participation & Engagement

Aspects of the programme reported by teachers to effectively engage participants include the chance to have fun, try new sports and play Paralympic sports. The equipment and opportunities to be with friends, help their peers, play more sport and learn about Paralympic sports are also seen to have engaged participants. Comments on the Teacher Survey suggest varying levels of enthusiasm for logging activities on the app, and that participants may have liked smaller, more 'tangible' incentives.

- 91% of teachers say the fun aspect of the programme has engaged participants 'a lot'
- 85% of teachers say the chance to try new sports has engaged participants
- 75% of teachers say the opportunity to play Paralympic sports has engaged participants

## Resources & Support

Active Kids Paralympic Challenge equipment and resources are seen as integral to delivery. A small proportion of schools cited difficulty accessing online resources and would have liked all resources available at the start.

## Activities & Events

Participants' experiences have been enhanced by taking part in Active Kids Paralympic Challenge Festivals and events. These events have brought together pupils from across the school, and across clusters of schools, to celebrate their engagement in Active Kids Paralympic Challenge. They have provided Young Leaders with delivery opportunities and given pupils with different needs and abilities the chance to learn and play together.

## Sustaining & Embedding

The broad impact of the programme on pupils' holistic development and whole school agenda means that many schools are committed to sustaining and embedding the activities and lessons learnt through Active Kids Paralympic Challenge.

- 83% of teachers say Active Kids Paralympic Challenge equipment has been useful to delivery 'a lot'
- 82% say the online resources have been useful 'a little' or 'a lot'
- 20% of schools are not aware of the Get Set Road to Rio app
- Between a third and two thirds of teachers have little or no awareness of aspects of the Reward Scheme

## Counterfactual

Consideration of the counterfactual suggests that the scale, focus, reach and impact of Active Kids Paralympic Challenge is largely attributable to the affiliation between Sainsbury's, YST and the BPA. If Sainsbury's had not sponsored Active Kids Paralympic Challenge, a replicate affiliation with the necessary finance, commitment and expertise to deliver a programme on the scale and with the focus of Active Kids Paralympic Challenge would be unlikely. Consequently, the counterfactual scenario assumes there was no alternative activity beyond the continuation of existing initiatives.

The counterfactual estimation assumes there was no alternative activity; that registration targets are achieved (as is indicated by monitoring data); that 13% of schools registered in the 2015/16 academic year did not deliver the programme (Teacher Survey); but that all schools registered after July 2016 do deliver the programme.

On the basis of this scenario, by the end of September 2016, Active Kids Paralympic Challenge will have out-performed the counterfactual case resulting in:

- over 2.2 million young people playing Paralympic sports
- over 1.5 million young people more aware of Paralympic sports they can play
- almost 1.4 million young people playing more sport than before
- almost 1.4 million young people wanting to play more sport than before

## Recommendations

Consider sustainable ways to support schools to retain young people's engagement in the Paralympic movement and ensure a lasting legacy for Active Kids Paralympic Challenge.

Capitalise on the evidence for Active Kids Paralympic Challenge and the festival and demonstration effects of the Paralympic Games to encourage registered schools yet to deliver the programme, to do so.

Maximise the accessibility of resources and ease of website navigation for programmes delivered primarily through an online platform to enhance engagement and increase impact.