

# spear

centre for sport, physical education  
& activity research

## Skills2Play/Sport Programme Evaluation 2016



Executive Summary  
July 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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Skills2Play/Sport Research undertaken by SPEAR and commissioned by Youth Sport Trust. Report produced by SPEAR.

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## Context

### About the programme

Skills2Play and Skills2PlaySport are complementary primary school initiatives designed by the Youth Sport Trust (YST) to develop children's physical literacy and support the Primary School Physical Literacy Framework. Together they comprise the Skills2Play/Sport programme. The programme consists of training and a resource and equipment package, which includes activity cards for both Skills2Play and Skills2PlaySport (sample set), supplied to primary school deliverers by YST. Skills2Play is targeted at Key Stage 1 (KS1) and focuses on generic skill development through a range of play activities that focus on stability, object control and locomotion. Skills2PlaySport is targeted at lower Key Stage 2 (KS2) and includes multi-skill activities that build from generic skills and introduce connectivity with sports through the development of skills specific to sporting 'themes' including Invasion, Striking and Fielding, Net/Wall and Gymnastics.

### About the evaluation

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (SPEAR) was commissioned by YST to conduct an independent evaluation of the Skills2Play/Sport programme between January 2014 and July 2016. SPEAR evaluated the Skills2Play/Sport Pilot in May 2014 and evaluated the programme in July 2015, one year after its roll out to 1,000 school nationally. This Final Report captures programme delivery and impact 2014-16; maximising survey samples, facilitating repeated measures analysis (to enhance the robustness of cross-sectional research findings in 2014/15) and the collection of qualitative data from school site visits in 2015-16. The Report comprises two substantive sections to address the three research objectives: Delivery and Impact (of Skills2Play and Skills2PlaySport). The final section provides Recommendations to support programme development and Case Studies are presented at appendix A. The Children's Survey and response data are presented at appendices B and C.

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#### Definition:

*Physical Literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, knowledge and understanding that provides children with the movement foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity*

Primary School Physical Literacy Framework, Youth Sport Trust et al.

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#### Research Objectives:

1. To assess how Skills2Play and Skills2PlaySport are being delivered and sustained in primary schools to support children's physical literacy development
2. To investigate the impact of Skills2Play on the development of Key Stage 1 children's physical literacy over 12 weeks of the programme
3. To investigate the impact of Skills2PlaySport on the development of lower Key Stage 2 children's physical literacy over 12 weeks of the programme

## Programme Delivery

YST interim monitoring data (to March 2016) show a total of 1,121 practitioners attending training in 2016 from 908 schools (of which 867 are new schools and 42 have attended previously and did so again in 2016).

Deliverer Survey data suggest that while teachers are leading the programme in schools, just over 40% are assisted by teaching assistants; approximately a fifth of delivery is assisted by young leaders and around 13% by lunchtime supervisors.

Schools report a range of 3 to 300 children participating in Skills2Play/Sport, with a mean average of 42 children per school (average of 14 children per school participating for 12 weeks or more). Almost half (48%) of respondents are delivering the programme to both KS1 and KS2 children. Approximately 30% are delivering to KS1 only and approximately 20% to KS2.

Almost a third of respondents (30%) state that Skills2Play/Sport sessions are not targeted at any specific group of children. Over 40% of respondents report targeting Skills2Play/Sport sessions towards KS1 children and 25% towards KS2; 30% targeted less active children; approximately a quarter aim the programme at children with low confidence and just over a fifth at children who do not join other clubs.

Over 40% of schools report running the programme as an afterschool club (44%), with similar numbers reporting that they deliver sessions in lesson time (43%) and during lunchtime (42%). Qualitative data from telephone interviews also suggest that the flexibility of the programme is welcomed by deliverers as enabling use of the resources both within and outside of curriculum time.

Around two thirds of schools (67%) report that they are using Skills2Play/Sport in 2016 as a 'dip-in' resource; a quarter state that they are delivering Skills2Play/Sport as a distinct programme. Comments received in relation to use as a 'dip-in' resource are largely positive; respondents report an appreciation of the flexibility of the Skills2Play/Sport resources. They are able to supplement and complement other planned activities with Skills2Play/Sport resources to keep children engaged. Schools also report that the resources facilitate the generation of new ideas and provide valuable support to less experienced colleagues.

- In 40% of schools teaching assistants are helping to deliver the programme
- In 20% of schools young leaders are assisting with delivery
- In 13% of schools lunchtime supervisors are assisting

- 40% of schools are targeting participation at KS1 children
- 25% are targeting KS2 children
- 30% are targeting less active children
- 25% are targeting children with low confidence

## Programme Impact

The majority of respondents to the Deliverer Survey report that the programme has helped children to become positive about being active (99%) and about sport (98%), improve movement skills (99%) and sport specific skills (98%). Over 80% of respondents state that the programme has helped children achieve 60 active minutes a day (in line with CMO recommendations) and become more active beyond and outside Skills2Play/Sport sessions (83%). The majority of respondents note gains in children's confidence in their movement (99%) and in their understanding of their body's movements (91%); key components of physical literacy development.

### Skills2Play

Across visit schools, interviews with lead deliverers reveal that schools welcome the opportunities that Skills2Play has opened up; deliverers report that the training and programme has provided new ideas, a space to re-evaluate both current and future offer for KS1 pupils, and developmental opportunities for young leaders.

In addition to new opportunities for KS1 children to be physically active, deliverers express appreciation of the value of helping children to develop positive attitudes, increase confidence and enhance knowledge and understanding as a means to facilitating their future participation in physical activity and sport. Increases in these aspects of physical literacy were observed during visits at weeks 1 and 12.

All respondents (100%) to the Deliverer Survey running Skills2Play with KS1 children report that the programme has helped children to develop and improve their movement skills, become positive about sport and gain confidence in their movement. The majority of respondents report that the programme has helped children become positive about being active (99%), develop sport specific skills (96%) and develop understanding of how their body moves (94%). Among these respondents 86% say that children are more active outside Skills2Play sessions since taking part and 87% believe that the programme has helped children achieve more than 60 active minutes per day.

Other key impacts reported by nearly all Skills2Play respondents include increased confidence of participants (96%), resilience (88%), social skills (86%), creativity and sense of belonging (both 83%). Positive programme impacts are also reported in relation to participants' aspirations (79% of respondents), empathy (68%) and behaviour (67%); just over a third (35%) say that the programme supports cross curricular learning.

#### Key Components of Physical Literacy:

- Behaviour
- Motivation & Attitudes
- Confidence
- Knowledge & Understanding

- 100% of KS1 deliverers report increased movement skills and confidence
- 87% of KS1 deliverers say Skills2Play is helping children to achieve at least 60 active minutes a day
- Deliverer Survey 2014-

- Participants at visit schools exhibited increased confidence, motivation and attitudes, knowledge and understanding
- Young leadership opportunities at visit schools are enhancing leadership skills and participant engagement

## Skills2PlaySport

The research utilised a Children’s Survey to capture data relating to key aspects of physical literacy. The survey has been designed to be completed by KS2 children and to capture repeated measures data that can be analysed to measure programme impact on respondents’ behaviour, motivation and attitudes, confidence, knowledge and understanding. These physical literacy outcomes are closely aligned to YST CARE outcomes (Creativity, Aspiration, Resilience and Empathy) and impact on these aspects is reported.

Children’s Survey data show a statistically significant increase between weeks 1 and 12 in the physical literacy of KS2 participants. Statistically significant increases are evident in all component constructs of physical literacy - behaviour, motivation and attitudes, confidence, knowledge and understanding.

The level and intensity of participating children’s physical activity increases significantly between weeks 1 and 12. The percentage of children reporting that they undertake 60 minutes of physical activity ‘every day’ increases from 21% at week 1 to 28% in week 12. A strong, positive, statistically significant correlation between responses to the activity frequency and intensity questions indicates that the reported activity is of least moderate intensity. This represents a significant increase in the proportion of participating children meeting the Chief Medical Officers’ recommendations for physical activity.

Statistically significant increases are evident in the creativity and empathy of participants.

Qualitative insights from telephone interviews with Skills2PlaySport deliverers in four schools signify increases in social skills, confidence and movement skills.

- Children’s Survey data show a statistically significant increase in children’s physical literacy over 12 weeks of participation in Skills2PlaySport
- All aspects of physical literacy – behaviour, motivation and attitudes, confidence knowledge and understanding – increase significantly over 12 weeks of participation in Skills2PlaySport

## Recommendations

- Encourage schools to deliver Skills2Play/Sport as a distinct 12 week programme to maximise impact.
- Link Skills2Play/Sport physical literacy outcomes with whole school agenda to embed and sustain the programme in schools.
- Encourage schools to measure progress to enhance awareness of key outcomes, demonstrate impact and contribute to physical literacy development.

- 67% respondents to the Deliverer Survey report use of Skills2Play/Sport as a ‘dip-in’ resource
- 6% of respondents to the Deliverer Survey state they are measuring children’s progress in Skills2Play/Sport