

Girls Active 2015-2020

Impact Report



June 2020

Funded by:



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About *spear*

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (*spear*) is located within the Faculty of Social & Applied Sciences at Canterbury Christ Church University. *spear* undertakes a range of evidence-led 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, Terre des Hommes, Department of Health, Department for Education, English Federation of Disability Sport, Mencap, Access Sport, Youth Sport Trust, UK Sport, Sports Coach UK, Sport England and Sport Wales. Recent work has focused on sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing in schools and communities.

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

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Girls Active 2015-2020 Research undertaken by *spear* and commissioned by the Youth Sport Trust. Report produced by *spear*.

June 2020

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Context

About Girls Active

Girls Active is funded by Sport England, delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST), supported by Women in Sport and aligned to This Girl Can. Established in 2015, Girls Active aims to help schools understand what motivates girls to take part in physical activity, PE and sport, enabling teachers to work with girls – through consultation and leadership – to make the necessary changes to their PE, sport and physical activity provision. Girls are empowered within the programme to become GLAMS (Girls Leadership and Marketing Squad), a network of role models to inspire, engage and support peers.¹

The Girls Active programme comprises a one-day training for secondary teachers, hard-copy and electronic resources, self-reviews, insight surveys and reports, seed funding to support actions and ongoing support. A separate residential leadership camp for girls aged 15-17 has also provided training for some schools with a specific focus on girls' leadership and developing girls as coaches.

Stepping up for Change launched in 2017, extending Girls Active into primary schools. The programme comprises a one-day teacher training workshop for primary and secondary teachers and a girls' 'camp style' leadership day. The focus of Stepping up for Change is supporting primary girls' transition to secondary school, with leaders acting as role models for younger girls and strengthening links between schools.

About *spear*'s Evaluation

spear has been commissioned from March 2020 to June 2020 to examine and present the impact of Girls Active since its inception in 2015. The research is designed to evidence the reach and impact of Girls Active, celebrate and showcase best practice, and identify good practice for embedding and sustaining the programme.

Data informing this report are drawn from 29 Girls Active Case Studies, 46,752 Girls Active Surveys, 1,600 GLAMS Training Evaluations, 603 Teacher Training Evaluations, 57 Teacher Best Practice Surveys, 17 Teacher Telephone Interviews, and 1,227 school monitoring returns.

The Report is divided into three substantive sections: Reach & Impact, Best Practice, and Embedding & Sustaining. Recommendations for Schools and Recommendations for the Programme are also presented.

Programme aim

“

The aim of Girls Active is to develop a partnership between teachers and girls to understand what makes girls fully engage in PE, sport and physical activity in their school and then, through a network of role models and peer leaders, provide relevant opportunities for all girls, not just the sporty few.

Youth Sport Trust, 2020

Research objectives

- Evidence the reach and impact of the programme
- Celebrate and showcase best practice
- Identify good practice for embedding and sustaining Girls Active

¹ Girls Active short and long-term outcomes are presented in appendix A on page 27

Table 1. Girls Active 2015-2020 Research

Research		Sample (& MME ^a)
Best Practice Survey	Online survey of teachers developed by <i>spear</i> administered April-May 2020. Captures teachers' perceptions of key impacts, top tips for engaging and developing girls and recommendations for embedding and sustaining Girls Active in schools	57 survey returns from teachers (MME=12.7%)
Girls Active Survey^b	Analysis of YST Girls Active Surveys completed by primary and secondary girls and GLAMS in schools' consultation phase. Survey explores perceptions of PE, sport, physical activity, leadership, wellbeing and individual development	46,752 survey returns from girls (MME=0.3%) 11,347 survey returns from primary girls 35,405 survey returns from secondary girls
GLAMS Training Evaluation^b	Analysis of YST GLAMS Training Evaluation completed by primary and secondary girls after training. Survey explores the impact of training on leadership skills and attributes, physical activity perceptions and behaviours, wellbeing and individual development	1,600 survey returns from GLAMS (MME=2.2%)
Teachers Training Evaluation^c	Analysis of YST Girls Active and Stepping up for Change Teachers Training Evaluations completed by primary and secondary teachers at the end of training. Survey explores the impact of the training on skills and confidence	603 survey returns from teachers (MME=2.7%)
Teacher Telephone Interviews	Follow-up Telephone Interview with teachers completing the Best Practice Survey conducted May 2020. Interviews explore perceptions and experiences of engagement	17 telephone interviews with teachers
Monitoring Survey	Analysis of YST Monitoring Data to generate engagement figures for the programme	1,227 monitoring survey returns from teachers in England
Case Studies	Analysis of YST Case Studies	29 case studies from Girls Active participating schools
Recommendations	<p>Recommendations for Schools: <i>Engaging and Developing Girls through PE, Physical Activity and Sport & Embedding and Sustaining Girls Active in your School</i></p> <p>Recommendations for Girls Active: <i>Developing, Sustaining and Showcasing Girls Active</i></p>	

^a MME = Maximum Margin of Error (see Methodological Note at appendix B for further details)

^b Girls Active Survey and Training Evaluation data shown in appendices C to H (separate document)

^c Girls Active and Stepping up for Change teacher training (see Methodological Note at appendix B for further details)

Reach & Impact

Getting girls active at an early age and ensuring they have positive experiences in and through physical activity and sport is key to lifelong participation. Engaging girls in positive activity and leadership opportunities has the potential to enhance their health, wellbeing and individual development. It also has the potential to build a community of inspirational and aspirational women who are advocates for active lifestyles and accessible role models for their peers.

In recent years we have seen a positive shift in thematic emphasis, enthusiasm, support and investment in initiatives focused on engaging girls in activity and leadership. Despite these advances, girls' activity levels remain lower than boys. This disparity in participation is evident as early as age seven and persists through adolescence into adulthood.² However, while less than half of girls meet the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines^{2,3} and only a third comprise senior sports leadership roles,⁴ evidence suggests around three quarters of girls *want* to become more active.⁵

Girls' engagement with sport and physical activity is multifaceted and complex, motivations and barriers to participation various and diverging. Girls Active aims to help schools identify and address these barriers and motivations and create the sustained change necessary to instigate the self-perpetuating cycle of opportunity and success key to girls' engagement, wellbeing and progression.

Engagement

Targets for Girls Active across 2015-20 are to

- *engage 810 schools in Girls Active*
- *train and support 910 teachers and 4,620 GLAMS*
- *engage 59,500 Girls as Participants in Girls Active activities and events informed, driven and delivered by girls, for girls.*

The Engagement Map on page 5 shows the geographical reach of schools engaged in Girls Active. Monitoring data collated by the YST across 2015-20 and presented in the infographic on page 6 show these output targets have been exceeded.

² [Sport England \(2019\) Active Lives Children & Young People Survey 2018/19](#)

³ [Sport England \(2019\) Active Lives Adult Survey May 18/19](#)

⁴ [Women In Sport \(2017\) Beyond 30%: Female Leadership in Sport](#)

⁵ [Sport England \(2016\) This Girl Can: Inspiring Millions to Exercise](#)

Reach of Girls Active across 2015-2020

837 schools engaged

1,122 teachers and...

8,212 GLAMS trained to engage...

81,286 Girls as Participants in activities and events informed, driven and delivered by girls, for girls

Average engagement across 2018-2019...

10 GLAMS per Girls Active school of which...

14% have SEND

32% are BAME

374 Girls as Participants per Girls Active school of which...

12% have SEND

22% are BAME

YST Monitoring Data

“

We want to empower them, it's a lifestyle and that's what we want to encourage. It's not just a one-off programme, it's embedded within the school.

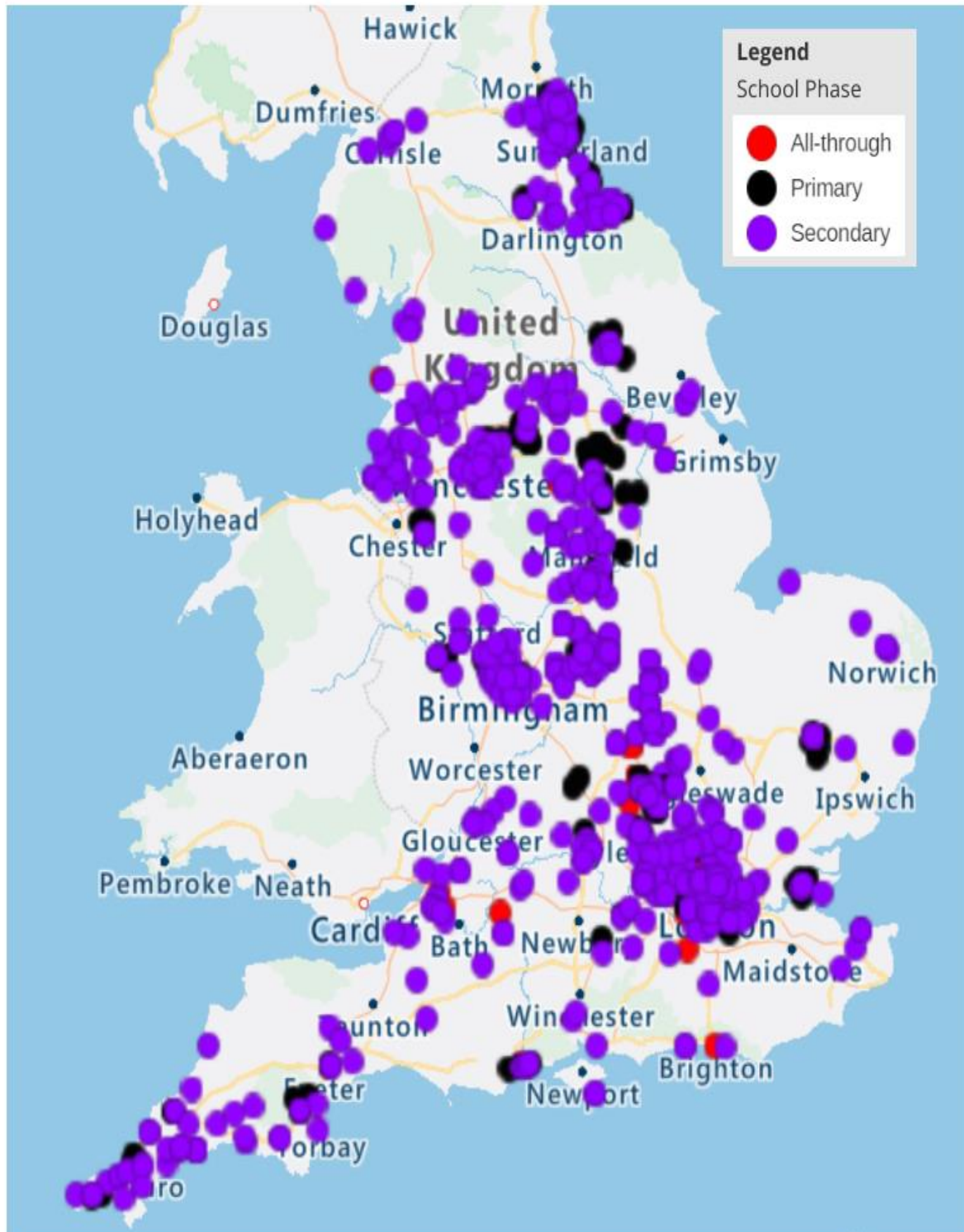
PE Teacher, Secondary School, Interview

“

It's just trying to get the students more active. If they are doing more things in school they might be more encouraged to try more things outside of school. Hopefully that will have a knock-on effect on their lives and their futures.

Teacher, Case Study, Slated Row School

Girls Active reach in schools across England



“It's just trying to get the students more active. If they are doing more things in school they might be encouraged to try more things outside of school”
Teacher



“We want to empower them, it's a lifestyle and that's what we want to encourage. It's not just a one off programme, it's embedded within the school”
Teacher

Girls Active: Secondary Schools

Total*	371	441	4,028	49,230	54,070
2019-20	48	59	465	2,481	54,070
2018-19	49	56	267	4,049	51,017
2017-18	55	60	377	6,577	46,596
2016-17	77	87	1,778	18,996	39,527
2015-16	142	179	1,141	17,127	18,589
Academic year	Schools	Teachers	GLAMS	Girls as participants	Running total

* Due to Covid-19 much of schools' planned activity was cancelled and schools did not complete a summer 2019/20 report

Girls Active: Stepping up for Change

Total*	466	681	4,184	32,076	37,407
2019-20	156	194	1,411	6,187	37,407
2018-19	108	264	1,728	15,071	29,459
2017-18	202	223	1,045	10,818	12,288
Academic year	Schools	Teachers	GLAMS	Girls as participants	Running total

* Due to Covid-19 much of schools' planned activity was cancelled and schools did not complete a summer 2019/20 report

Data derived from YST Monitoring Data and Teacher Telephone Interviews.

Insight

This section explores the activity levels, attitudes and wellbeing of girls and GLAMS, and teachers' perceptions of engaging girls in sport and activity. Data are drawn from 46,752 Girls Active Survey responses, 1,600 GLAMS and 603 Teacher Training Evaluations. Data were collated between 2015 and 2020, with key findings presented below and in the infographic on page 10.

Girls

Girls Active Surveys were completed in participating schools by 46,752 primary (24%) and secondary (76%) girls between 2017 and 2020. Survey results are provided to each school to help shape their Girls Active campaign. Schools also receive a national report enabling comparison between their students' responses and the wider school community.

Physical Activity behaviours, attitudes & perceptions

Girls Active Surveys ask girls what they do, think and feel about PE, sport and activity. Data from these surveys show the importance of being healthy and active is recognised by both primary (94%) and secondary (83%) girls. The majority of primary (94%) and secondary (76%) girls also enjoy being active. Further perceptions and attitudes of primary and secondary girls are presented in figures 1 and 2 respectively.

Activity behaviours

Primary girls

20%

achieve 60 active mins/day

36%

are active every day

82%

are active with their family

78%

are active with their friends

Secondary girls

8%

achieve 60 active mins/day

55%

are active in school outside PE

78%

are active outside school

Girls Active Survey

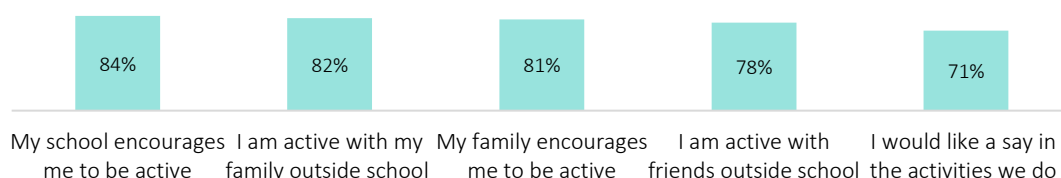


Figure 1. Primary girls' perceptions and attitudes to sport and activity 'a little' or 'a lot' (Girls Active Survey 2017-20, n=11,347)

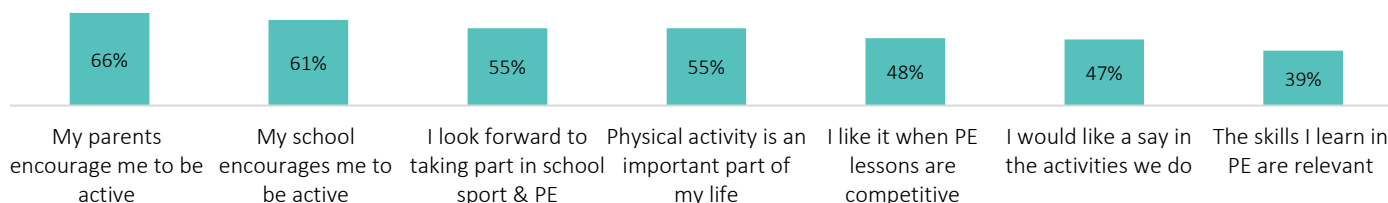


Figure 2. Secondary girls' perceptions and attitudes to sport and activity 'mostly true for me' or 'very true for me' (Girls Active Survey 2017-20, n=35,405)

Despite positive perceptions and attitudes to PE, sport and activity among primary participants, physical activity levels remain low: only a fifth say they achieve 60 active minutes every day. However, over two thirds of primary girls say they would like to be more active in school (68%), for example at break times and in extracurricular school clubs. Less than a tenth of secondary girls (8%) report achieving 60 active minutes every day, and this low level of activity is reported consistently across 2017 to 2020.

Data show significant differences between girls who report being more active and girls who report being less active⁶. More active primary girls report greater enjoyment of PE, being active and sports day than less active girls. Significant differences are also evident for more active secondary girls; they look forward to taking part in PE lessons much more than less active girls and have greater understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Across both primary and secondary, girls from BAME communities report to be less active. Having SEND did not significantly impact on primary or secondary girls' activity levels.

Wellbeing, skills & attributes

Girls Active Surveys ask secondary girls about their wellbeing, skills and attributes. While just over a quarter of secondary girls had experience as a sports coach, leader or administrator (26%), almost half say they feel confident in their ability to lead or influence peers (45%). Almost two thirds exhibit resilience in their determination to succeed, but just over one third have the confidence to initiate and apply new ideas. Half of secondary girls say they feel confident and over two thirds say they feel happy (figure 3). Just under three quarters say they feel happy with the way their body looks at least some of the time (70%).

Primary girls were asked to rate their happiness on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is 'completely happy'. Nearly three quarters of primary girls report their happiness as between 6 and 10 (72%).

What stops you enjoying being active in school?

“

Sometimes I don't like my body.

“

I feel like I might hurt myself.

What do you enjoy about being active in school?

“

Being in a team - performing and the exciting pressure.

“

Having fun but at the same time learning.

Primary participants, Girls Active Survey

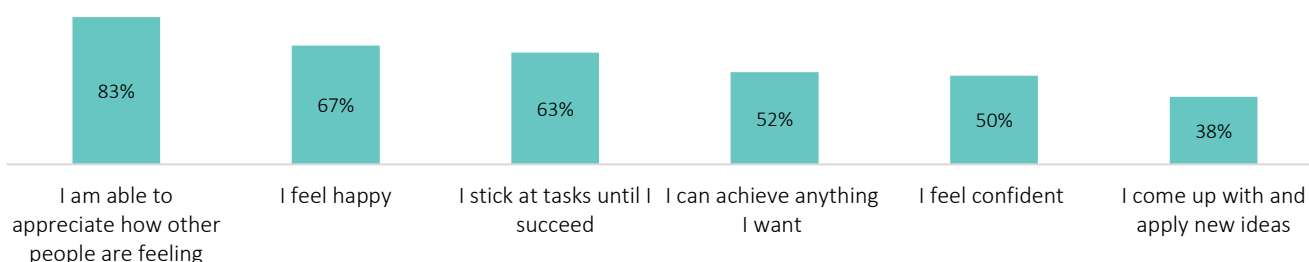


Figure 3. Secondary girls' perceived wellbeing, skills and attributes 'always' or 'often' (Girls Active Survey 2017-19, n=27,317)

⁶ Definition of 'more active' girls in Methodological Note on page 28

Motivations & barriers

Girls Active Surveys ask girls what motivates, enables and stops them taking part in sport and physical activity. The key reason cited for engaging is fun, reported by over four fifths of primary (87%) and almost two thirds of secondary girls (63%). Primary girls also value being with friends (81%) and feeling happy (75%), while secondary girls cite being healthy (60%) as a further reason for engagement.

A common barrier to activity reported by a quarter of primary girls and a fifth of secondary girls is lack of confidence. Around a fifth of primary girls also say they dislike getting hot and sweaty (22%) and feeling they are 'not good at it' (20%). Worries about being watched also discouraged secondary girls from doing sport and physical activity both at school (29%) and outside school (22%). Lack of confidence and time due to school workloads stopped secondary girls taking part in sport and physical activity outside school.

GLAMS

Leaders Training Evaluation Surveys were completed between 2017 and 2020 by 1,600 girls, a third secondary and two thirds primary. Surveys are completed following 'camp' style leadership training and explore perceptions of PE provision in their schools. They also explore primary girls' perceptions of transition. These insights are used to inform schools' provision and development of Girls Active training.

PE Provision

Girls are asked what they would like to see change about the PE provision in their schools. In 2019-20, the top three changes cited by secondary leaders are having different activities, increasing the length of PE lessons and having greater equality between the girls' and boys' activities on offer. Primary leaders also want different activities, longer PE lessons, and to have a say about the activities provided.

Teachers & schools

Teacher Training Evaluation Surveys were completed by 603 primary and secondary teachers between 2015 and 2020. The surveys explore perceptions of engaging girls in school sport, activity and PE and key reasons for taking part in the programme. Insights are used by the YST delivery team to drive and shape the Girls Active training and campaign.

Teachers highlight concerns around inactivity and reluctance of girls to take part in PE. They report low engagement "a high number of girls are not engaged in PE", less active girls "in the playground the percentage doing sports and generally being physically active is lower than the boys" and declining involvement "currently huge drop-off in participation".

Insight into the attitudes and perceptions of young people and teachers demonstrates both a need and desire for change in the means and mechanisms by which to engage girls in school sport and physical activity. These insights are presented in the infographic on page 10.

What would you like to change about PE?

“

I would like to mix all the different sports up so it is more fun.

“

Being able to do the same activities and same opportunities as boys.

“

Don't do same things in every lesson because it is boring.

GLAMS, Training Evaluation

Transition perceptions

“

Making new friends and losing other friends that you already know.

“

Harder work and getting used to the new PE games.

GLAMS, Training Evaluation

Teacher perceptions

“

To encourage girls to gain the confidence to participate in physical activity, regardless of their athletic or sporting ability - promote enjoyment.

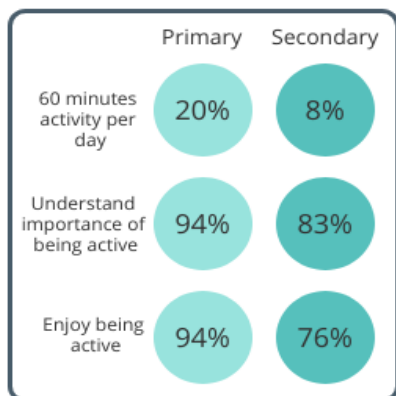
Teacher, Training Evaluation

“

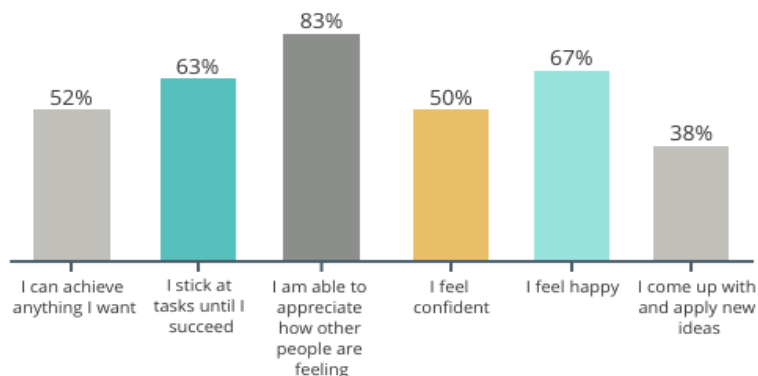
The girls didn't like competition and disliked getting hot and sweaty.

Teacher, Case Study, Mortimer Community College

Girls



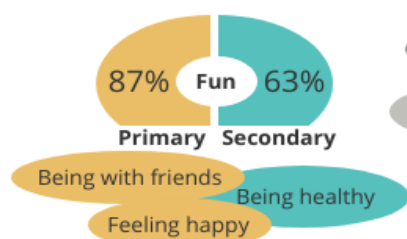
Secondary girls' perceived wellbeing, skills and attributes



Percentage of girls who answered 'always' or 'often' (2017-20 Girls Active Survey n=27,317)

Motivations & Barriers

Key reasons for engagement



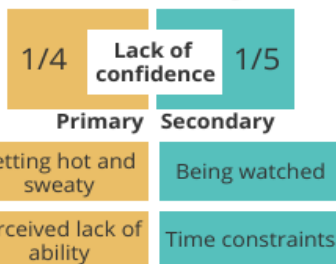
Primary girls with SEND were as active as other girls surveyed

BAME girls were less active than girls from White ethnic groups

More active girls...

enjoy PE more
enjoy sports day more
understand about healthy lifestyle

Barriers to activity



GLAMS



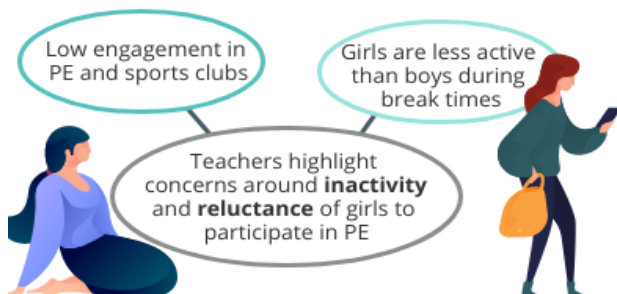
What would you change about PE?

Longer PE lessons
Different activities
To have a say about activities
Greater equality between girls and boys

Concerns about transitioning to secondary school

Increased workloads
Unfamiliar activities in PE
Building new friendships
Maintaining friendships
Reduced activity
Puberty

Teachers & Schools



Key reasons for taking part in Girls Active

- To get girls involved in leadership in school and inspire them to motivate others
- Sport participation of our young girls is of significant concern
- To give the girls a say in the school PE and sport offer



Data derived from Girls Active Survey and GLAM and Teacher Training Evaluation.

Impact

This section presents the impact of Girls Active training on GLAMS and teachers and the broader impact of the programme in schools. Data informing this section are derived from 1,600 GLAM and 450 Teacher Training Evaluations, 57 Best Practice Survey and 17 telephone interviews with teachers, 1,227 school monitoring returns and 29 Case Studies. Programme aspects key to achieving the impacts shown in this section are presented in Achievements on pages 19-20.

GLAMS Training Impact

Skills & confidence

Girls Active training is valued highly by girls. Two thirds of girls completing Training Evaluations between 2017 and 2020 say they 'loved' the training (67%); just under a third 'liked it' (31%).

Training evaluation data presented in figure 4 show girls have developed valuable leadership skills and attributes from Girls Active training. They understand why being active is important for girls and the role leadership and advocacy can play in inspiring and engaging peers. They have learnt the skills needed to be a GLAM and have the knowledge and confidence to apply these skills in school. They also say they like being healthy (76%) and active (84%) more since taking part in the training.

Significant differences are evident in the impact of training between primary and secondary girls, girls with and without a disability and girls from different ethnic groups. Primary girls enjoyed the training more than secondary girls and felt more confident afterwards. Although girls with a disability reported enjoying meeting new people, making new friends and practising their leadership skills at the training they reported least confidence in their leadership skills and attributes. Girls from White ethnic groups felt most confident to be a role model, while girls from BAME communities felt most confident in their ability to inspire and engage others.

Since taking part in GLAMS Training....

92%

of girls say they learnt the skills needed to be a Girls Active leader

96%

learnt why being active is important for girls

93%

learnt how to get more girls to enjoy being active

90%

believe they can inspire other girls to be active

94%

believe being an active role model is important

92%

are confident to be a Girls Active leader and role model

94%

are confident to help other girls to be active

GLAMS Training Evaluation

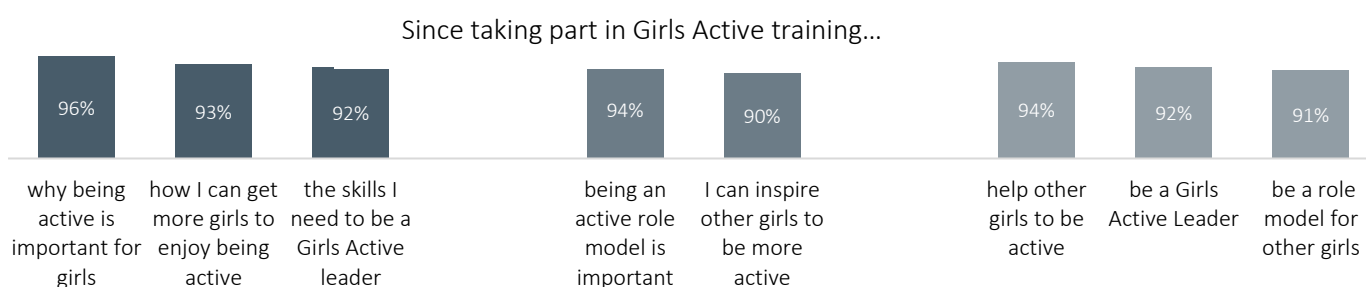


Figure 4. GLAMS' leadership skills and attributes following training (Training Evaluations, n=1,600)

Commitment & motivation

Girls Active GLAM training generated ideas and enthusiasm in girls and motivated them to go back to their schools and deliver activities. Postcard Pledges showed areas they identified where they wanted to effect change, and how they planned to do this. GLAMS cited actions such as: encourage more equal participation “we will inspire both boys and girls to get them more active in sport”; promote “advertise in assemblies and with leaflets to promote girls only active sessions”; change attitudes “inform the whole school that girls are equal to boys and that we want to make more girls confident and active” and provide choice “allow students to have a say in the curriculum”.

Teacher Training Impact

Skills & confidence

Girls Active teacher training is valued highly by teachers. Training Evaluations completed between 2017 and 2020 show all teachers rate the training as ‘good’ or ‘very good’. After training, almost all teachers say they feel confident in their ability to implement Girls Active in school and just under two thirds say the training helps them feel more confident and motivated in their role.

Data presented in figure 5 suggest teachers understand and can articulate why and how they should engage girls in physical activity after taking part in the training. They also know how to enable girls to motivate and support one another.

The impact of Girls Active training is most evident on female teachers, who report being more able to recognise the challenges and principles of engaging girls in physical activity than their male counterparts. Female teachers also report greater confidence in advocating why and how girls should be engaged in physical activity, and enabling girls to motivate peers through advocacy, marketing and delivery roles.

Since taking part in Girls Active Teacher Training...

97%

of teachers feel confident and competent to implement Girls Active in school

61%

say they feel more confident, competent and motivated in their role

Teacher Training Evaluation

“

It inspired me to do more sport. Girls aren't failures and not all boys are better than girls.

Primary GLAM, Training Evaluation

“

It was fun... I got to help primary kids and that helped me gain confidence and leadership skills.

Secondary GLAM, Training Evaluation

“

The training was inspiring and showed the importance of removing barriers to participation at an early stage for girls' attitudes to sport and PE.

Teacher, Monitoring Data

Since taking part in Girls Active training I can effectively...

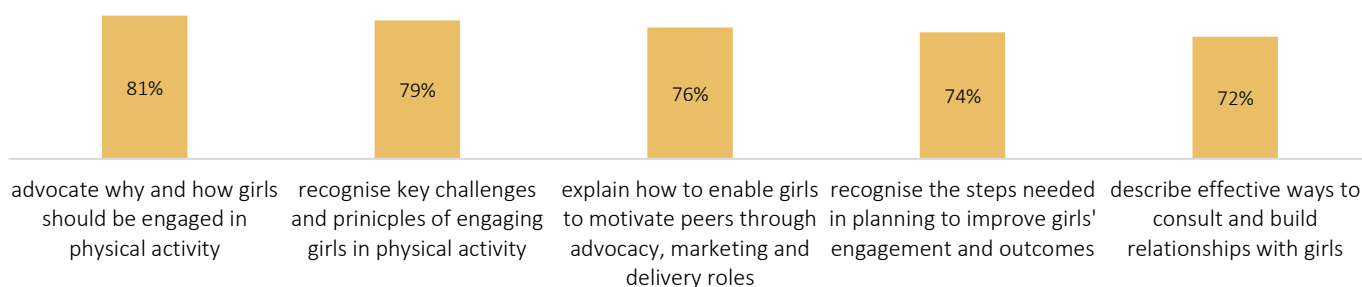


Figure 5. Teachers' perceived competencies following training (Training Evaluations, n=450)

Girls Active Programme Impact

Data from all sources of evidence collated between 2015 and 2020 show Girls Active has impacted on the following key areas 1) PE, sport and physical activity engagement, 2) wellbeing and individual development, 3) opportunities, 4) transition and 5) whole school change.

PE, sport & physical activity engagement

Girls Active Case Studies suggest schools have engaged girls with a range of interests, abilities, needs and preferences in Girls Active training, activities and events. Schools have selected GLAMS with differing leadership experience and sporting ability, and participants who are 'sporty' and those that are less active, less confident, and less engaged.

Increased participation in PE, sport and activity feature strongly among the top three impacts identified by teachers responding to the Best Practice Survey. They note increased engagement in extracurricular clubs among all girls, but particularly among girls previously less active and engaged. Girls are reported to be more positive about being active, have a more positive attitude in PE lessons and are more willing and confident to embrace new activity opportunities.

Case Study data suggest the programme impacts on PE, sport and physical activity engagement through an ethos and activities that attract girls with differing interests and abilities. Highfields School offered orienteering which appealed to academically-focused students and girls who do not usually take part in competitive sport. Increases in the number of girls engaging in after-school clubs and activities *outside* school have been observed as girls' enjoyment of physical activity *inside* school has increased.

Wellbeing & individual development

Teachers report multiple impacts on the wellbeing, leadership and wider development of girls. The programme is seen to raise the profile of girls' sport, give girls a voice, and engender a sense of empowerment. These positive developments have, in turn, increased girls' sense of self, self-belief, and confidence.

Girls' newfound confidence is seen to have wide ranging benefits, enhancing their engagement and development across and beyond the school. At Larkmead School, previously less active and less confident girls are now reported to lead warm-ups in PE, while at St Thomas More RC Academy, girls train with the athletics club on the school field "even if there are boys present". At Mortimer Community College, girls are actively motivating other girls to participate in PE and have gained the confidence to work with pupils from the local primary school. At Houghton Academy, teachers report girls feel better equipped to tackle exams as a result of increased self-confidence gained through Girls Active.

Case Study data suggest Girls Active has impacted positively on the skills and confidence of girls with additional needs and disabilities (SEND). After taking part in the programme, a teacher at West Lea School observed girls with SEND are now more active and more assertive with boys in PE. They are also reported to encourage each other instead of relying on staff.

Participation & wellbeing impacts

“

Girls Active is the highest attended sports club in our school.

“

It made more girls want to be active as they could see the positive affect on the leaders.

“

Less active girls come because they don't feel under pressure as no boys are there.

“

Girls are more positive about being active.

“

Girls taking ownership of activities means they are self-motivated particularly during break and lunch times. Some of them have initiated clubs after school times!

“

Given girls a higher profile within PE and school sport.

“

Girls feel empowered to lead physical activity.

“

Girls are confident to express their opinions about their experiences and beliefs about physical activity and sport.

“

Increase in self-confidence of girls across the curriculum.

Teachers, Best Practice Survey

At Slated Row School, one GLAM created registers and certificates for Girls Active sessions on her own initiative. Opportunities to embrace varying roles and responsibilities within Girls Active are seen to enable development of valuable employability and life skills.

Opportunities

Girls Active is reported to facilitate multiple opportunities to support girls' engagement, wellbeing and development. Monitoring Data and Training Evaluations suggest schools have created or strengthened links with community providers and used these to support the progression of girls. The programme has also provided mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration between schools, enabling girls to expand their social circle, develop their leadership skills and support transition.

Schools report Girls Active has provided opportunities to talk about a range of issues affecting girls' engagement and development in and through PE, sport and physical activity. These include challenges to girls' engagement and how to overcome them, and the best ways to activate and empower girls to achieve their potential and affect positive change for themselves, and their peers. Girls Active sessions have also provided the impetus and space for girls to talk about wider issues that affect them such as body image, social media pressures, mindfulness and wellbeing.

Transition

The Stepping up for Change programme was developed to target primary school pupils and improve their transition to secondary school. The programme is widely reported to allay fears voiced by girls around transition, providing opportunities for primary girls to visit their new school, meet secondary girls and teachers and make new friends. It has also provided opportunities for secondary GLAMS to be role models for younger girls and to hone their leadership and mentoring skills.

Whole school change

The high profile of Girls Active and the valuable impacts on girls' participation, wellbeing and development have supported the engagement of staff across the school. One teacher responding to the Best Practice Survey notes Girls Active has changed relationships between staff and girls, with staff now working with the girls rather than against them. Greater awareness of the importance of physical activity for girls, the role it can play in enhancing wellbeing and development, and the potential of provision informed, driven and delivered by girls for girls is seen to have increased both the quality of schools' provision and the nature of girls' engagement.

The impacts described above are illustrated in the infographic on page 15. Profiles of girls and GLAMS are presented on pages 16 and 17.

Opportunities, transition & whole school impacts

“

Our Girls Active programme has made a huge difference to increasing opportunities for girls with SEND to compete and participate in a range of sports.

“

The programme has given the school ideas for improving and supporting transition for both boys and girls.

“

Girls Active is opening minds and changing perceptions.

“

Whole school increase in recognition of the value of the power of physical activity to engage inspire and motivate girls in education.

Teachers, Best Practice Survey

“

Some girls have gained more self-esteem and more confidence from this and it has led to more girls going to community clubs out of school. That's a real breakthrough.

Teacher, Case Study, St Breock School

“

It's just such a positive experience for them, really does make a massive difference on every aspect of their lives, not just PE.

Secondary Head of PE, Interview

Impact

YST GIRLS ACTIVE

Since taking part in Girls Active training...

I have learnt...

96%

why being active is important for girls

93%

how I can get more girls to enjoy being active

92%

the skills I need to be a Girls Active leader

I am confident to...

94%

help other girls to be active

92%

be a Girls Active leader

91%

be a role model for other girls

I believe...

94%

being an active role model is important

90%

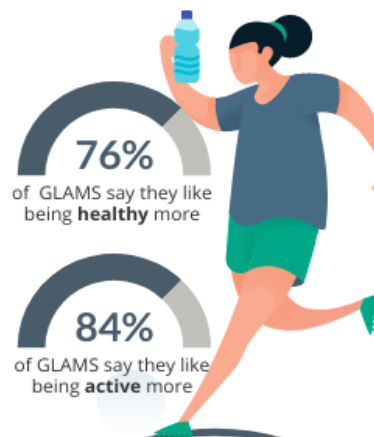
I can inspire other girls to be more active

GLAMS with a disability enjoyed

meeting new people, making **friends** and practising leadership skills

GLAMS from BAME communities were

most confident to **inspire and engage** girls



Teacher Training

100% rated the training 'good' or 'very good'



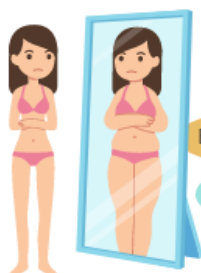
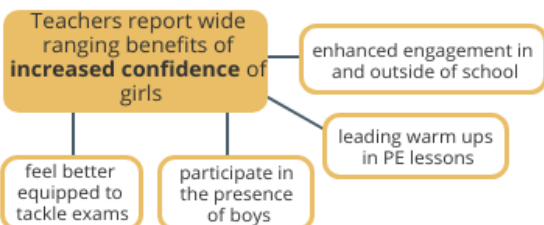
almost **2/3** say it helped them feel more confident and motivated in their role

Impact of training was **greater on female teachers** compared to males



almost **all** say they feel confident in their ability to implement Girls Active processes into school

Wellbeing, skills & confidence



Girls Active has provided a **safe space** to talk about **wider issues** and given girls a **voice**

Body image Mindfulness Social media pressures Wellbeing

Whole school approach

Positive change in **attitudes** to girls' sport in school, **increased awareness** and **better relationships** with both male and female staff



Participation

Increased enjoyment of physical activity **inside** school

Increased attendance by girls at afterschool clubs & activities **outside** school

Increased interaction with wider community, improving social skills and sense of belonging

Increased positive attitude of girls in PE lessons

Offering a variety of activity **opportunities** to attract girls with differing interests and abilities



Stepping up for Change improved primary girls' transition to secondary school by...

Meeting secondary school girls and teachers

Providing opportunities to visit their new school

Making new friends

Data derived from GLAM and Teacher Training Evaluation, Best Practice Survey, Teacher Telephone Interviews, YST Monitoring Data and Case Studies.

Eden is a Year 8 student with natural athletic prowess but has struggled with her behaviour, attitudes and mood swings since joining secondary school.

Eden is noted by her teacher to "excel at team sports" but finds it difficult to support her peers during team games. This has resulted in arguments with team members, leaving Eden ostracised from her peers.

Since becoming a leader, Eden's teacher describes how she has learnt how to manage her temper, and be positive and constructive towards her peers. Her teacher has also noticed increases in Eden's confidence, within and outside sport. Eden has grown dramatically through Girls Active in her attitudes towards learning and helping others; growth which will stand her in good stead for the future.

Rebecca is a primary school student from a deprived area who struggles to engage with school life. Rebecca was described by her teacher as "just not resilient at all" and "needed encouragement".

Rebecca was chosen to become a Girls Active leader at her school to help build her confidence. Since being a leader, Rebecca has successfully started a breakfast skipping club along with other extra-curricular clubs for her peers.

Rebecca's teacher nominated her for a 'Star' award and she attended a celebration in town with her parents. Her teacher describes how the ceremony allowed Rebecca's parents to recognise that their daughter is "strong and capable of doing things". Rebecca agrees!



Freya became a Girls Active leader when she reached Year 5. Previously she had attendance issues and didn't choose to participate in any extra-curricular clubs. Since taking part in Girls Active, Freya's school attendance has improved and she has signed up to three after-school clubs.

As a leader, Freya is involved in all aspects of the group and feels a sense of belonging when at school. Her PE teacher describes these improvements to be the result of "camaraderie with the other girls, and realising it was something she could be a part of".

Now Freya is the first one to sign up to clubs and volunteer to have a go in PE lessons.



Paisley was described by her PE teacher as being a nervous girl who often used to say "I can't do that". When Paisley was in Year 5 she was selected to be a GLAM at her school.

Since becoming a GLAM, Paisley is now "getting stuck into her sport and giving it a go". Paisley now not only volunteers within her PE lessons but also frequently puts her hand up in class.

Paisley's confidence has increased while being a GLAM and she is now pushing herself to be more involved in all aspects of school life. She has just volunteered to help organise and be involved in the School Games.

Aysha is an enthusiastic Year 8 student who is a member of the school's GLAMS. As a Muslim, Aysha experienced cultural barriers when taking part in physical activity.

Aysha has been pro-active in breaking down those barriers for herself and her peers and has ultimately raised the profile of the Girls Active programme within her school.

Through being a GLAM, Aysha's confidence levels have increased and she has successfully encouraged many like-minded girls to join and take part in the Girls Active activities and events.

Participant Profiles

YST GIRLS ACTIVE

Susie is a Year 6 girl who never had the confidence, motivation or self-belief to take part in any kind of physical activity. She had low body confidence and felt her weight restricted her participation.

Since joining Girls Active, Susie regularly attends three extra-curricular sports clubs per week, has joined a local rowing club and completed three charity fun runs in her own time.

Due to the growth in Susie observed by her PE teacher, Susie has been invited to be a GLAM next year. She is looking forward to the challenge!

Lydia is described by her PE teacher as a shy girl "who often avoids eye contact but perhaps is a bit of a tomboy". Lydia was encouraged to attend the Girls Active club by her PE teacher.

To start with, Lydia would hang around outside and not have the confidence to come into the hall. Then she plucked up the courage to sit and watch while the girls were taking part. Finally, she started to join in with the activities.

Since taking part in Girls Active, Lydia has made a couple of friends and started to improve her sport skills. Her PE teacher expressed, "it was nice for her to just be with other people".



Amelia is in Year 7 and has cerebral palsy which effects her movement and coordination. Amelia is described by her teacher as incredibly active and a hard-working student.

Despite this, Amelia struggled with transition to secondary school. Half-way through her first year her confidence took a dip, so teachers encouraged her to take part in Girls Active. Being part of girls active is reported by teachers to have really helped Amelia "find her feet".

Amelia now regularly contributes excellent ideas to the club and was instrumental in the planning of the school's annual Girls Active sports day.



Chloe is a naturally talented sportswoman who was described by her teacher as being "really badly behaved across the whole school". Chloe was approached by the Director of Sport and personally invited to take part in Girls Active.

Chloe agreed to attend if she could play rugby and used her initiative to recruit friends and start a Girls Active rugby club. Her teacher organised a special rugby coach to run the club.

Chloe is now in sixth form studying sport, captaining the football team and has successfully started a girl's school rugby team. Since taking part, her teacher described a massive change in Chloe, "she's still not a perfect angel, but there's definitely been a massive difference".

Harper is in secondary school and regularly had a note to say she couldn't do PE due to injury. After consulting her parents, her PE teacher found out Harper wasn't injured but had extremely low body confidence and self-esteem.

Harper's PE teacher persuaded her to come along and watch a Girls Active club the following week. Harper attended the club and watched the girls play bench ball and experienced the environment, with music on and everyone just "having a go".

Harper is now attending every week. She is getting changed without a problem, joining in with the games and attending PE lessons. Her teacher expressed her biggest achievement to be increasing Harper's confidence.

Best Practice

'Impact' on pages 11-14 shows Girls Active has impacted positively on girls, GLAMS, teachers and schools. This section shows how this impact has been achieved, explores some of challenges experienced and highlights practice key to successful Girls Active delivery and outcomes.

Activities

Girls Active schools deliver a wide range of activities including lunchtime and afterschool clubs, festivals, wellbeing sessions and family events. Examples of physical activities planned, supported or led by girls include boxing, swimming, cricket, fencing, basketball, rugby, rowing, kayaking, cheerleading, gymnastics, Zumba, dance and self-defence.

Girls Active Case Studies provide examples of some of the innovative activities instigated by schools. At St Breock School, a 'Hunger Games' style event was created by linking with the local RAF. Held in local woods, girls completed challenges in pairs learning skills such as stalking and camouflage. The event highlighted opportunities to connect with nature and be active outside, increasing girls' energy, enthusiasm, and confidence to work with one another. It also appealed to less active girls, now seen to be engaging in school sport.

At King Edward VI School, GLAMS took responsibility for planning and organising a 'This Girl Can' week. PE staff, local clubs and instructors delivered a variety of novel activity sessions, raising girls' awareness of opportunities to be active in and out of school.

Frederick Bremer School have used Girls Active to support their whole school focus on student health and wellbeing and challenge misconceptions of Muslim girls through fencing. 'Muslim Girls Fence' comprises coaching by former Olympian Linda Strachan and sessions that explore the identity and aspirations of Muslim girls. The programme is seen to appeal to girls who are 'quiet' in PE and wider school life, with notable impacts observed on their engagement, skills and confidence.

At Flixton Girls School, a 'Wellbeing Wednesday' was held to engage less-active students and their parents. It was also advertised to Year 6 students as part of a transition open evening. Led by GLAMS, the evening event comprised physical, relaxation and creative activities and a family game of rounders. At Flixton, and across other Girls Active schools, whole school support, a cross curricular approach, and the drive, enthusiasm and commitment of GLAMS are seen as key to the engagement and development of less active girls.

Activities

“

We did a dance group at lunchtime last year. And they had such a good uptake for it...we had to have time for each year group and keep rotating it. And so it was virtually every girl in the class that wanted to do it, which was lovely.

Primary PE Lead, Interview

“

We have linked with Tottenham Hotspur Football club to develop a girls' only disability football programme.

“

Planned, delivered and ran a Race for Life for all the girls in school and contacted local businesses to get water, balloons, inflatables etc.

“

GLAMS have set up a 'Dancing in the Dark' club which has targeted new girls that had previously never done a sports club.

“

New clubs e.g. Morning Fitness, Touch Rugby, Rowing and Breakfast Club.

Teachers, Monitoring Data

Achievements

This section explores effective strategies used to engage girls, shape provision and maximise outcomes. It also looks at common challenges experienced by schools and how these were overcome. Data informing this section is derived from 29 Girls Active Case studies, 57 Best Practice Surveys and 17 teacher telephone interviews. Three themes to emerge from these data key to achieving impacts are 1) ownership and choice, 2) incentives and rewards and, 3) whole school and community support.

Ownership & choice

Case Study and interview data suggest activities informed, driven and delivered by girls for girls are most effective in engaging the least active and increasing participation and outcomes. Girls Active Surveys and bespoke consultation activities have helped schools gather insight around the needs and preferences of girls, shaping their provision to make PE and sport sustainable, accessible and relevant to girls' lives. In one school, girls indicated they disliked PE and competitive sport, so Parkour, bench ball and orienteering were introduced into PE to replace their traditional curriculum offer.

Giving girls ownership and choice and empowering them to design and deliver PE and sport has elicited multiple benefits for girls, leaders, teachers and schools. At King Edward VI School, GLAMS were instrumental in driving, delivering and promoting their Girls Active Campaign. Teachers report this approach has enhanced girls' confidence and self-belief, with several undertaking role model, mentoring and leadership roles across the school.

A consistent finding across all data sources is that girls thrived on increased responsibility. Teachers are now more aware of girls' ability to support and enhance provision, and more likely to delegate responsibilities in future. Staff time and resources are key challenges cited by schools, alongside the engagement of less active girls. Taking a long-term approach, investing time in training, supporting girls and gradually increasing their leadership contribution is seen to increase engagement as well as making the provision appealing and sustainable.

While GLAMS are seen as highly effective in engaging their peers, challenges to motivating and sustaining the participation of less active or less confident girls are reported. Teachers and GLAMS have worked hard to create a welcoming environment for these young people, and to overcome logistical barriers to participation through considered scheduling of sessions. Teachers report it is important to continue planned activity sessions consistently regardless of turnout, and some schools send 'runners' to remind girls to attend. However, drop-in sessions have also worked well by allowing girls to self manage their commitments and to choose when to attend.

Successful strategies

“

We get them (GLAMS) to take the lead role and make sure they have ownership. I think this is the most important part of the programme that they have complete ownership and see themselves as leaders and take their role seriously.

“

Having a club on the same day every week is useful as they don't get into a routine otherwise.

“

I think it worked having the club on the day where there aren't boys' clubs on so they aren't worried about who's there and will see them.

“

Making exercise fun is important and they love the music, which is a big part of it.

“

I encourage them to bring their friends along. If they get the bus home, I ask them to see if a friend could take them home as logistics aren't always thought about.

“

I think it's about reminders as young people these days have so much distractions, I think they need a reminder to make it happen.

Teachers, Interviews

Incentives & rewards

Incentives and rewards play a role in engaging and retaining all young people in sport and physical activity, particularly those less active or engaged. Use of simple hooks such as T-shirts and water bottles are reported to work well to sustain engagement in Girls Active sessions. At St Thomas More RC Academy, attendance is rewarded with golden tickets placed into a draw to win tickets for a Premier League football match, while at Mortimer Community College, collation of attendance stamps result in a pass to jump the lunch queue, and for the most regular attenders, a trip to a trampoline park.

Incentives for participation cited by schools include encouraging girls to bring friends/family to sessions, allowing them to wear their own sportswear or leader clothing, music in sessions, and using Girls Active funding to decorate the girls' changing room and create a more positive, welcoming environment. Data suggests that friends were also powerful motivators for encouraging girls to take part in PE, sports lessons and clubs.

Whole school & community support

Girls Active is widely perceived to support schools' commitment to the health and wellbeing of students. While the high profile of Girls Active supports awareness, data suggest it is the observed impacts on girls' wellbeing and development that are responsible for the buy-in of parents, schools and communities.

At Flixton School, having a school-wide commitment to health and wellbeing ensures Girls Active has a high profile and is supported practically by all staff. At Slated Row School, the focus on inspirational role models and helping girls transition to community sport resonates with staff committed to supporting students with SEND to lead more independent lives.

Schools have reached out to parents for support in engaging less active girls, and aiding transition to secondary school. At Flixton School, GLAMS engaged girls and their parents in an evening of activities while at Castleford Academy, the primary gymnastics club assisted by GLAMS is seen to support relationships with primary teachers and prospective parents. Familiarity with the school through PE and sport is also reported to help new students settle more quickly into secondary school.

Links with community sport and activity settings are key to sustained engagement, with schools reporting new or strengthened links with providers that can offer appropriate exit routes for girls in a participation or leadership capacity. At Houghton Academy, staff are in talks with a local badminton club to offer sessions in the evening for girls and their families while at Frederick Bremer School, GLAMS are now role models and leaders for new participants in a national fencing programme.

This section highlights the importance of ownership and choice, incentives and rewards and whole school and community support in successful delivery of Girls Active in schools. Top Tips for engaging and developing girls are presented in the Best Practice infographic on page 21, examples of practice from a range of schools on page 22, and overarching recommendations for schools on page 24.

New community links

“

External coach from Leeds Rhinos taught girls rugby in lessons and after school.

“

Local water sports centre to run outdoor and beach activities. Gig rowing club provide taster sessions and access routes for girls.

“

External coach has come into school to provide a 6-week block of girls only self-defence.

“

We have made links, mainly through our twitter account with our local Ladies Rugby, Football and Netball teams. We regularly tweet success, opportunities and have an agreement that we always retweet and share.

“

Specialist netball coach brought in for special netball club sessions. Greater links created with local gymnastics club due to requests made by Girls Active group!

Teachers, Monitoring Data

Activities



Achievements

3 themes key to achieving impacts:

1 Ownership & choice



Giving girls ownership and choice has elicited multiple **benefits for girls, leaders, teachers and schools**

Activities informed, driven and delivered **by girls for girls** are most effective in engaging the **least active** and increasing participation

3 Whole school & community support

Data suggest observed impacts on girls' **wellbeing and development** are responsible for the buy-in of parents, schools and communities



2 Incentives & rewards

These play a role in **engaging and retaining** all young people in sport and physical activity, particularly those **less active**



T-shirts and water bottles work well to **sustain engagement** in Girls Active sessions



Incentives for participation

Wear own sportswear or leader clothing

Bring friends or family to sessions

Decorate changing rooms

Use music during sessions

Teachers' Top Tips for engaging and developing girls through PE, physical activity and sport

(Quotes from teacher interviews)

1

Listen to girls ideas for activities

give them a choice of activities

encourage girls to share ideas

listen to girls opinions of PE, sport and activity

provide a variety of activities

find out the barriers and then work with girls to overcome them

2

Offer a **choice**/ wide range of activities

offer a choice of activities

cater for different interests

let girls plan lessons or help set up

give them ownership of clubs they are running

3

Let girls have some **ownership** of the session



Data derived from Best Practice Survey and Teacher Telephone Interviews.

Highfields School is a comprehensive secondary school located in Derbyshire. The school is split across two sites, with the lower school (Years 7 and 8) independent from the senior school (Years 9 to 11). Highfields have engaged with Girls Active since 2013.

Student voice is fundamental at Highfields and a key aspect of their Girls Active programme. The girls are encouraged to say what activities they'd like within their Girls Active sessions. Highfields choose older girls as GLAMS to empower the younger girls to take part. GLAMS visit the lower school site weekly and present their experiences to the girls in assemblies. All staff members promote Girls Active and Highfields used part of their funding to develop their current female staff enabling them to teach new activities such as yoga and Zumba to the girls.

Highfields have embedded Girls Active throughout the two school sites over the seven years. Girls are encouraged to see physical activity as a lifestyle rather than a one-off session and many girls have carried on with sport beyond their school years. Girls' attitudes towards sport and physical activity have changed at the school, GLAMS are seen as positive role models and girls' self-esteem and confidence levels have improved as a result of Girls Active.

King Edward VI School is a larger-than-average-sized secondary comprehensive school in Suffolk. The school ran their Girls Active programme for three years from 2016 to 2019.

GLAMS are at the centre of King Edward VI's programme, with female PE staff choosing one girl from each of Years 7 to 10 to be 'the voice of their year group'. The school used a combination of PE staff, local clubs and instructors to deliver a variety of sessions not normally on offer, helping to provide alternative role models and raise girls' awareness of community provision. Girls were allowed to attend school in their PE kit and GLAMS in their personalised This Girl Can t-shirts. GLAMS also created a loyalty card scheme where attendance rewarded girls with lunch passes or prize draws. The programme had a very high profile across the school. The school also promoted a GLAM who is disabled as a champion of disability sport and the 'face' of their campaign as a way to inspire girls, staff and parents. GLAMS provided materials to promote the programme at school, in the press and with parents.

King Edward VI achieved great success with their programme especially in the development of their GLAMS. GLAMS were recognised as role models across the school and went on to take on more responsibility resulting in further increases to their confidence. All girls widened their friendship groups across the school by mixing with other year groups. As a result of the new sports on offer, the PE department changed its extra-curricular offer enabling further opportunities for girls. The programme was valued at the school by girls, teachers and parents alike.



Wadebridge School is a coeducational secondary school situated in an affluent area of Cornwall. They have been running Girls Active for four years, since 2016. The school prides itself on offering a range of sports to their students and challenging gender sporting stereotypes, e.g. netball is offered to boys and rugby to girls.

Wadebridge targets Girls Active at girls who would not normally take part in physical activity or sport outside PE. They select GLAMS from Years 9 and 11 and encourage GLAMS to stay on through these years at the school. All clubs are planned by their GLAMS and offer a range of activities each week which are advertised daily on the school website. GLAMS also promote a point system for attendance with a beach festival as a reward at the end of term.

Wadebridge has broken down barriers to participation and engaged girls who wouldn't otherwise have joined in. They engage a range of girls from different year groups through their different aged GLAMS. By ensuring girls have a choice in activities and offering a reward-based system, their attendance at the club is consistently high.

West Lea School is a school for students aged 9-19 with special educational needs. The school is located across three campuses in North London and prides itself on its community feel. West Lea ran their Girls Active programme for two years from 2015 to 2017.

West Lea recruited girls to take part in their clubs by handing out personal invitations each morning the club was running. The girls' personal teaching assistants led with the invitations but highlighted each session to be optional. The school also invited speakers to inspire the girls which included Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

The Girls Active sessions became a support group for the girls where they were able to meet, have fun and discuss the challenges they face without boys being around. The girls found a sense of belonging and identity within themselves and their peers from the sessions. The weekly sessions became part of the girls' school routine and they always knew what to expect when attending.

Embedding & Sustaining

This section explores how schools are embedding the programme and implementing it in a sustainable way. Data informing this section are derived from 17 interviews with teachers and 57 responses to the Best Practice Survey. Three themes to emerge from these data are 1) raising the profile of Girls Active, 2) growing and developing GLAMS, and 3) widening support networks.

Raising the profile of Girls Active

Schools have promoted Girls Active and shared their successes in assemblies and newsletters, on 'live' noticeboards and social media, and in School Council, Senior Lead Teacher and governor meetings. They have raised awareness of the programme through community events and celebrated achievements at award evenings. Creating and maintaining a high profile for Girls Active in schools and communities is seen as key to the appeal, reach and longevity of the programme.

Growing and developing GLAMS

Teachers report the success of Girls Active is dependent on a strong, growing workforce of GLAMS. The programme is seen to give girls an identity and a voice, and the skills and confidence to lead change in their schools and communities. The transferable skills gained by GLAMS have been used to motivate and support the engagement of less active peers. They have also been used to mentor new GLAMS, helping to grow the body of Girls Active ambassadors key to embedding and sustaining the programme.

Widening support networks

A common feature of successful, sustainable delivery reported by teachers is the presence of whole school and community support. Broader awareness and understanding in schools has helped build relationships between girls and staff, resulting in mutually beneficial impacts within and beyond the programme. Strong links to local clubs have supported provision and progression opportunities, while parental support has enhanced girls' engagement and the success of transition events.

Raising the profile of Girls Active, growing and developing GLAMS, and widening support networks are central to schools' plans for embedding and sustaining Girls Active. Overarching recommendations to support schools' engagement with the programme are presented on page 24 'Recommendations for Schools: Engaging and Developing Girls through PE, Physical Activity and Sport & Embedding and Sustaining Girls Active in your School'.

Future Plans & Priorities

“

Girl only multi sports lunchtime club (Tuesday) in our sports hall to balance out the fact that very few girls use our male dominated ball courts at lunchtime.

“

Change PE kit expectations to enable greater participation.

“

Design a meaningful KS4 curriculum that engages students in activities that they will carry on with once they leave school.

“

Students to take more warmups in lessons. This is starting to happen a lot more.

“

Understand what is needed by the female students at our school to keep them engaged in PE.

“

To reduce anxiety around body image, body confidence and other people's opinions.

Teachers, Monitoring Data

Recommendations for Schools

Engaging and Developing Girls through PE, Physical Activity and Sport & Embedding and Sustaining Girls Active in your School



Get to know your girls

Activities informed, driven and delivered by girls for girls are most effective in engaging the least active and increasing participation and outcomes. Gather insight into girls' needs and preferences. Frame your offer in ways that relate to their perceptions and tap into things that matter to them. What do they need to know and what do they want to achieve? Meaningful engagement will help shape a relevant, accessible and sustainable Girls Active offer girls want, and are proud, to be part of.



Incentivise and reward

Incentives and rewards play a role in engaging all young people in sport and physical activity, particularly those less active or engaged. Recognise the power of friends and incentivise engagement by selling activities as opportunities to spend time with friends. Rewarding attendance with T-shirts and water bottles works well, but recognising, showcasing and celebrating girls' achievements will have a more profound and lasting impact on their motivation to engage.



Grow your GLAMS

A strong, growing workforce of girls is central to a thriving school sport and activity offer. Give girls ownership of activities to give them an identity and a voice, and grow the skills and confidence necessary to lead change in their schools and communities. Empowering girls to become role models, motivators and mentors will help grow the body of Girls Active ambassadors key to embedding and sustaining the programme.



Get everyone on board

Engaging and developing girls in and through sport and physical activity requires a long-term, whole school and community approach. Create a strategic plan for involving local schools, community clubs, parents and teachers. Engage them in events run by girls so they can see what girls can do and what they can offer. Providing meaningful opportunities for engagement will build connectivity and help create an active, invested and diverse network to support girls' participation and progression.



Spread the word

Maintaining a high profile for Girls Active is key to the appeal, reach and longevity of the programme. Promote Girls Active and share successes in assemblies and newsletters, on 'live' noticeboards and social media. Raise awareness through community events and celebrate achievements at award evenings. Being resourceful and plentiful in your communications will ensure Girls Active has the attention and recognition it needs to engage, support, and reward the achievements of your girls.



Create beacons of change

As Girls Active becomes increasingly established and produces more role models and advocates, the aspirations and expectations of girls, schools and communities change. Support this culture of change through inclusive opportunities that foster a sense of ownership and empower young people and their families, schools and communities to be the voices of equity and inclusion for girls.

Recommendations for Girls Active

Developing, Sustaining and Showcasing Girls Active



Training for all

Girls Active training is valued highly by girls, however, differential impacts are evident on girls with a disability and from different ethnic groups. Include even more diversity within your sporting examples and presentations at training days for GLAMS. This will build the skills, confidence and self-belief of all girls, especially those with a disability. Empowering and representing all girls at training will ensure you maximise the impact of training for all GLAMS.



Empowering male teachers

While Girls Active Teacher Training impacts positively on all teachers, female teachers report greater knowledge and confidence in engaging and developing girls following training than male teachers. Focus efforts on increasing male teachers' confidence at training events. Bespoke workshops for males could provide a safe space for discussion and help them develop the knowledge and confidence necessary to lead the programme in their school.



Training and networking opportunities

If resources permit, GLAMS and teachers would welcome the opportunity for further training and networking events. Further training and events could provide opportunities for the network of GLAMS and teachers to meet and develop their knowledge and skills, share useful practices, access supplementary support and guidance and keep up-to-date with programme developments.



Creative communications

Teachers indicate they would benefit from receiving additional communications from the YST. Creating quarterly newsletters, if not already provided, could increase connectivity and engagement with schools, keeping them up-to-date with Girls Active achievements, programme developments, examples of good practice and upcoming events.



Raising the profile

Showcase Girls Active regularly to policy makers, investors, governing bodies and schools to raise the profile and evidence the value of the programme. Communicating the relevance of the programme and programme impacts on health, wellbeing, and the development of skills and attributes that are meaningful and useful to girls' everyday lives will strengthen the support for, and sustainability of, Girls Active.

What next for Girls Active?

Commentary from the YST

It is clear from Youth Sport Trust Girls Active insight from the last five years and more recently Sport England's Active Lives Children's survey (2019) that more needs to be done to engage, support and empower girls to be active. Stubborn inequalities continue to exist and therefore it is important in coming years that while encouraging every school to adopt the six principles of effective practice in engaging girls that underpin Girls Active, more must be done to support those who are the least active and most disadvantaged.

More recent insight⁶ obtained during lockdown indicated that despite widespread closure of spaces and places, and many activities for young people being vastly limited, girls were one of the few groups who were more likely to say they were being more active under lockdown, they were also less likely to say they were being less active than usual. This isn't to say that they are meeting the CMO guidance of 60 active minutes daily, but it does require us to consider and understand what is it about the physical activity experience during this time that has had this positive effect on girls. Therefore, focus areas of the programme for the future will be:

Target and tailor the programme resource to support the most disadvantaged communities

E.g. communities with Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles 1&2.⁷

Ensure schools engage girls who are underrepresented or marginalised

E.g. protected characteristics such as ethnicity or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Encourage schools to collaborate to minimise the decline in girls' participation with age

E.g. to support girls at critical points such as transition from primary to secondary, or from participation in school to community participation.

Provide wider access for more schools on effective practice in engaging girls

E.g. through a range of free to access tools, resources and examples of practice.

Furthermore, following the mid-point review of the Youth Sport Trust's 2018-2022 strategy⁸ we will also ensure the Girls Active programme contributes positively to themes emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information on Girls Active visit: www.youthsporttrust.org/girls-active

YST response to themes emerging from Covid-19

Address social disadvantage

Stay even closer to young people, their experiences and their needs in a post-Covid world

Empower increased followership through opening up some of YST's intellectual property through free to access content

Extend our networks and content to embrace individual professionals, practitioners and parents

⁶ [Children's experience of physical activity in lock, Sport England, July 2020](#)

⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833959/loD2019_Infographic.pdf

⁸ LINK TO BE ADDED

Appendix A

Girls Active short and long-term outcomes

	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
...for schools	<p>Increased awareness of the value of targeted approaches to raising physical activity levels among young girls</p> <p>Increased capacity and capability of workforce to support girls to be and remain physically active</p>	<p>Sustained commitment to delivering targeted physical activity programmes</p> <p>Commitment to targeted physical activity programmes embedded in all levels of school culture and governance</p> <p>More equitable participation in PE and sport by boys and girls</p>
...for GLAMS	<p>Increased participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity</p> <p>Improved wellbeing including improved self-esteem and body confidence</p> <p>More (and different) girls who develop leadership and marketing skills</p> <p>Increased readiness for further education, employment and/or sporting roles</p>	<p>Sustained levels of increased physical activity</p> <p>Sustained improvements in all aspects of wellbeing</p> <p>Sustained ability to engage with, and succeed in, education and employment</p> <p>Increased life chances, overall</p>
...for participants	<p>Increased (and widened) participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity</p> <p>Improved wellbeing including improved self-esteem and body confidence</p> <p>Increased readiness for further education, employment and/or sporting roles</p>	<p>Sustained levels of increased physical activity</p> <p>Sustained improvements in all aspects of wellbeing</p> <p>Sustained ability to engage with, and succeed in, education and employment</p> <p>Increased life chances, overall</p>

Appendix B

Methodological note

Data analyses & presentation

Data analysis and presentation include data from girls and teachers in Girls Active schools in England, Northern Ireland schools' data has been excluded where detailed. Throughout the report, survey data presented represent the responses of all participants in each stakeholder group (girls, GLAMS, teachers). Sub-analyses (e.g. by year, school phase, ethnicity, disability status) have been conducted on all data sets where possible and findings are presented where relevant, and where statistical differences are identified.

Teacher Training Evaluation Surveys

Teachers took part in Girls Active or Stepping up for Change training, which is comparable, so survey responses are combined and presented together in this report. Differences in Girls Active or Stepping up for Change training questions between 2015-2017 and 2017-2020 mean it is not possible to combine responses. Teacher Training Survey responses from 2017-2020 only are therefore presented in the Impact section of this report. For 2017-2020 demographic data was collected enabling sub-analyses by disability, ethnicity, year of participation and school phase. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAs) has been conducted to explore statistical differences, and where identified, these are presented in this report. It is noted that some survey questions changed across the years.

GLAMS Training Evaluation Surveys

Demographic data was not collected for 2017-2020 enabling sub-analyses by disability, ethnicity, year of Girls Active participation, school phase and year group. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAs) was conducted to explore statistical differences, and where identified, these are presented in this report. Some survey questions changed across the years.

Girls Active Surveys

Data presented represent the responses of girls only, survey responses from boys have been excluded from analyses and are not presented in this report. Survey questions vary between 2015 and 2020. Responses to questions across years have been combined in the analysis and are presented together where possible. Where questions differ significantly between years, or questions are not included in a particular year, data are presented for years where the sample of responses for key questions is greatest. Primary 'more active' girls definition is based on reported activity 'every day' or 'most days'. Secondary 'more active' girls definition is based on reported engagement in 60 minutes or more physical activity on 4-7 days in the past week.

Termly Monitoring Data

It is noted that not all questions were asked for all years, and questions changed across years. Only Spring data is currently available for 2019-2020.

Maximum Margin of Error (MME)

The MME shows the level of accuracy the participant sample has, the smaller the MME, the greater the accuracy. It is calculated at the standard 95% confidence level so we can be 95% confident that the sample results reflect the population results to within the MME. For example, if the survey sample has a MME of +/-5% and 50% of participants say they 'enjoy being active', if the survey were conducted 100 times, the percentage who state they 'enjoy being active' would range between 45% and 55% most (95%) of the time.

Statistical significance

Throughout this report, where changes in participants' responses are reported, they are statistically significant at $p < .05$. This means there is a less than a 5% chance that changes reported are not real changes that might be expected in the wider population beyond the sample.