

Case Study – Polesden Lacey Infant school



Project Title:

Mile a day

Healthy Schools Theme:

Physical Activity

School Context:

Polesden Lacey Infant School is located to the south of Bookham overlooking green belt land. There is capacity for 90 pupils and we are generally full. The school has identified Eco schools, values and outdoor learning as drivers for the curriculum and these aspects of school life are very important. Two teaching assistants have Forest School accreditation and lead Forest Schools activities across all 3 years. The school earned its first green flag in 2008 and has since then been awarded Green Flag Ambassador status. We have been awarded FAIRTRADE schools status twice and work linked to FAIRTRADE has led to the Headteacher making a presentation at the international FAIRTRADE conference. Gardening has been a high priority for many years and vegetables are provided for school dinners. There are strong links between gardening and eco schools including building a greenhouse from recycled bottles and making growing containers recycled materials. At Polesden Lacey pupils achieve well and consistently above local and national averages. However the staff has serious concerns about current expectations for seven year olds but there is a strong determination to continue to provide a creative and active curriculum experience. We believe to do otherwise is detrimental to the well being of children. There are currently 2.2% of pupils in receipt of Pupil premium and 2.2 % on the SEND register. There is a higher than average number of EAL pupils at around 17%.

Identified Priority:

The school identified physical activity as an area for improvement as compared to all other areas of the Healthy schools agenda it had had less focus. In particular there was a concern that staff did not have opportunities during the school day to take exercise. The Headteacher had heard about a school in Scotland who had introduced a project called a Mile a Day. When this was suggested to the rest of the staff and the governors it was met with enthusiasm although there was some concern about how it would work on our very small site. We decided to have a trial and sent a member of staff with a pedometer to workout how many

times around a circuit of the playground and driveway would equal a mile. Next year 2 had a go. They loved it! We decided that rather than a mile a day it would be for 15 minutes and the children could count their laps so some would do potentially more than a mile and some would do less but keep up the activity for the full time. We decided to call it the daily run.

We did a few more trials and worked out that we could have year 1 and 2 running together without causing crashes. We made do not enter signs for the gates – no vehicles or visitors can come in whilst we are doing it.

Then we set baselines by getting the children to run holding 10 multilink cubes and dropping one off at the end of each circuit. This way they could work out how many they had completed at the end. 7 = 1 mile.

We found that at the start 50% of the KS1 children could do 7 laps in 15 minutes

We found 23% of Reception class children could run 7 laps in 15 minutes

Staff completed a questionnaire and most identified feeling as though they could be fitter.

Staff were invited to join in whenever they wished to.

Outcomes:

by July 2016 94% of Year 2 could run 7 laps in under 15 minutes and 65% of the Year 1 (group A) pupils could run 7 laps in under 15 minutes

this means 79.5 % of KS1 can run 1 mile in 15 minutes

50% of Year R (group B) could run 7 lap

By May 2017 86% Yr 2 (group A) could run at least 7 laps (NB 53% could run more than 9 laps)

56% of Yr 1 (group B) could run 7 laps

this means 71 % of KS1 can run 1 mile in 15 minutes

2 pupils identified with fitness issues can now run 5 laps – neither ran very much at all to start with

Staff joined in more sporadically than we had hoped. This was for wide ranging reasons e.g. children fall over and need first aid/ involved with encouraging the children rather than running flat out

However 2 members of staff have reported weight loss. All staff enjoy supporting the children.

Activities / Interventions:

The run: (15 minutes before morning break) The children just wear their normal uniform and shoes – getting changed is not practical. There is a designated route. 1 member of staff goes ahead to check gates are closed and no entry signs are in place. Cones mark out some parts of the route. The children jog at their own pace. They are discouraged from chatting. We encourage jogging rather than running as it is easier to sustain and there are less accidents.

The dancing (15 minutes at the start of the day) (see below) 1 member of staff leads using lively pop music. It ends with a couple of minutes of slower 'cool down' music.

These activities have been running every week since February 2016.

They have not cost anything.

Impact:

The impact was very positive because it is a whole school activity and the children enjoyed doing something together. They could see that they were improving how far they could run too. The children like the adults joining in too.

We did notice though that doing the run every day had some downsides. After a while the children became less enthusiastic. It was also problematic if the weather was too hot or very wet. Closing

the driveway caused some problems too which limited the times of day we could do the run. We asked the children and they said they thought the run and being fit was really good but when you do it every day it gets a bit boring. We decided to take a different approach. We all agreed that we wanted 15 minutes of cardio exercise each day but decided that having an indoor version too would help. We decided to do aerobic dance on the days we don't do the run. This has now settled down into dance 3 days a week and the run on the other two days. We have found this much easier to manage and it rarely gets cancelled. The children are much more enthusiastic on the run days too.

In the end of year surveys 100% of parents in KS 1 indicated they were aware of the high emphasis on physical activity. 98% thought it had a positive impact on their child's health and well being.

In the end of year pupil survey (carried out by the school governors) 100% said they joined in the run and 90% thought it made them feel healthier.

Next Steps:

We are planning to introduce mindfulness to the curriculum. The Headteacher has gained Paws b accreditation earlier this year and the whole staff has been invited to attend Mind Up training this term with a view to introducing this into the classroom in the Autumn Term.

Senior Leader Quote:

'With an active start to the day I notice that pupils settle well into class ready for their learning. Reception class have been introduced to wake and shake from the start this year and improvement in their co-ordination and ability to follow instructions has been clear for the teachers to see. In the autumn term members of staff needed to support some children who found the lively hall a challenge and by the summer term all reception pupils take part with very little support from adults.'