

Schools Evaluation 2022 - 23

What an amazing year we've had working with lots of different schools!

The schools work started post-covid and has gone from strength to strength! The Community section work with both primary and secondary schools, working with the hardest to reach groups that are highlighted through the East Devon Public Health agenda and by working closely with the school to identify children that would most benefit from our project, we aim to target children who would not otherwise receive such an opportunity.

We have offered children/young people that struggle to engage in physical activity of any kind the opportunity to enjoy an activity in a slightly different way helping them to develop their lifelong habit with physical activity. We work to help eliminate barriers and support young people to have a positive experience with physical activity.

We have been busy this year providing lots of different activities including fun fitness games, body balance, yoga, street dance, gym, circuits, glow dodgeball and a swim to sea project to name just a few! This year we also extended our Swim to Sea Project after a trail last year with 1 school. We wanted to offer those children that don't normally get the opportunity to experience the benefits of open water swimming whilst being supported by qualified instructors to equip them with the skills needed to be safe in the open water. The 6-week course has given the children the opportunity to gain in confidence and learn about the safety eliminates of swimming in the sea as well as the actual swimming. We were surprised to learn of a number of the children that don't visit the beach on a regular basis because of a number of reasons that included parents' own perception of their children not being safe in the sea – we hope that now by providing equipment and the skills the children will be able to visit more regularly and enjoy this special place where we live.

We have worked with 10 different schools this year, all with different needs and various age groups ranging from Year 1 (5/6 year olds) to Year 11's (15/16year olds)

	No of sessions per week	No of children attending weekly
Autumn Term	7	118
Spring Term	13	398
Summer Term	18	372

Sessions have been provided once a week with a carefully selected instructor, and generally lasted 30minutes. The instructor has adapted each of the sessions according to the ability of the group to meet the needs of



the children. They have provided them with all the necessary information and skills required for them to develop over the sessions and enjoy and achieve individually.

We have also been working with Heads Up the Mental Health charity that on certain sessions work alongside us to create sessions that work towards the children developing the wider skills of resilience and to support their social /emotional skills that the wider benefits of physical activity can offer. At the end of term we also provide the children with a participation certificate and reward vouchers to some of the children so that they can visit the leisure centre. We also offer a leisure centre visit to each of the schools so that the children can visit, learn and feel comfortable with the centre so they are more likely to return.

One of the schools we have been working with is Littleham Primary (Exmouth) for the last 2 years, we received some lovely feedback from the Pastoral Lead, Jo Poslett.

“We have had such a great year and the children have flourished with your support. The support of Tabby and Lucy on the children’s mental health and well being has been immense this year. For the year 6’s in particular, they went into their SATs feeling relaxed and confident with many strategies to calm themselves. It’s been lovely to hear them mentoring the younger children who maybe be distressed at lunch or breaktime and sharing the strategies that they have learnt. The impact of this is immense and ensures a life long change for these young people.

For some of the younger children it has been the second year that they have worked with Tabby and Lucy. This has been really powerful as initially they struggled to link physical activity to supporting their mental health but this year, as the strategies are embedding, they are beginning to articulate how their body feels during different emotions.

Added to all this, at a time when school staff are under ever increasing pressure, staff have also learnt new strategies to support their own mental health and the children have commented how much they enjoy learning the new techniques with the staff. The learning alongside has been really powerful.”

We also work with a number of children at Exeter Road, Exmouth that in particular have very diverse needs where we use physical activity as a platform for the children to work on an even level.

“Over the year we have found the sports and mental health sessions to be a real benefit to our children at Exeter Road. Our children that attend and have shown more resilience and understanding of their mental health. This has helped immensely across all areas of the curriculum and their social emotional skills. Some children have also been able to regulate their feelings better in everyday situations. Within PE lessons, I have been impressed by their fine motor, and gross motor skills development. This is clearly shown when the whole group showed me that they could do bunny hops over a bench easily. The children that attend the sessions come back into class with the biggest smiles, positive attitudes, and red faces! It’s amazing to see all their development over a year.” Gemma Sperry Year 1 teacher/PE Lead



