

Case study: a staged approach

The value of giving young people the chance to succeed, with potential for a project to develop further once confidence has grown.

Background

Willow Tree Primary School's* innovation project invited two alternative education providers to participate: a secondary pupil referral unit (PRU) in Hounslow and a social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) school in Ealing, West London. Neither setting had previously participated in the School Games: each has a relatively high student turnover and it had been difficult to engage leadership concerned about their pupils' ability to cope within a competitive setting, to work as a team or to deal with new social situations. It was hoped that a positive experience via the innovation project might lend itself to wider engagement with the school amongst all alternative education providers (APs).

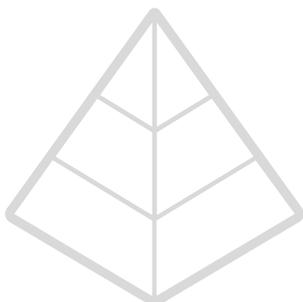
The value of anticipation

The chance to scope a project that might enable their students to participate in an activity outside their setting appealed to both providers. Emphasis was placed on the student-led nature of the project and the opportunity for staff to gain greater insight into both which activities young people were drawn towards and their preferred delivery style.

Trust in the lead member of staff was essential in supporting this openness and was also what young participants sought from teachers.



Young representatives from each school explored their experiences of PE and were invited to shape a preferred offer. Structured discussion supported young people's ability to contribute without conflict: each was asked to pick their top activities from a much longer list, all results being combined to create a 'consensus' pyramid.



The Head of PE was able to get them to open up their feelings and emotions over a two min. window. They really expressed how they felt. Then they realised what they'd done and the walls came up.



Participants were encouraged to create a pyramid of preferences

Older students: pupil referral unit

The three PRU participants were members of the school's sports committee, picked for their ability to reflect on provision for their peers (and potentially influence them). Dodgeball and tennis came out strongly for this group, who also opened up about their desire to take part in sport off-site.

Tennis was selected, with the opportunity to compete off-site a long-term ambition.

Feelings and ambitions

- Feel trapped in school
- Want to be trusted
- Want to visit new places
- Want to take part in sport off-site
- Want to compete

Planned activity

- An on-site tennis programme run by an external coach
- Informal opportunities for peer leadership integrated within each session
- Potential for an off-site inclusive competition.

The Coach will lead it but C [a pupil] 'wears the tracksuit' - they feel like they are doing a professional warm up.



Younger children: SEMH school

Six SEMH school participants picked martial arts, dodgeball and athletics as their preferred activities. Dodgeball was perceived to be fun, have credibility and be 'easy' i.e. naturally inclusive, whilst martial arts to be aspirational. Most had had some experience of athletics and were drawn to its individual nature, which staff also noted might be most appropriate for these younger children. Successful activity over a period of weeks might permit progression to a local track plus peer leadership opportunities.

Planned activity

- Athletics sessions run by a GB coach with a background in occupational therapy and mental health.
- Weekly session with a warm-up and drill routine that children can co-lead
- Structured and professional: build aspirations
- Planned progression to a local track
- Potential for the group to run a session with another class