

This is one of four case studies funded and administered through Sport England that illustrate the partnership work undertaken by Youth Sport Trust **Lead Inclusion Schools**, Local Authority staff and community sports providers to explore and enhance the Local Offer for young people with SEND and how this is communicated. The project advocated collaborative approaches, student voice and added value experiences via improved signposting.

Case study 2

DAVENANT FOUNDATION SCHOOL, ESSEX

Context

Essex is a large county with extensive provision for young people with SEND² in and out of school. There are effective partnerships between Active Essex, Essex County Council and other local providers.

Over 60 primary and secondary schools actively participate in the local Multi Schools' Council³ (MSC), an initiative that began in the region and that seeks to give voice and representation to young people with SEND across all areas of the Local Offer⁴. Regular council meetings of successfully recruited young people address perceptions of disability and mental health and seek to challenge the status quo. The format of these sessions permits contribution from every young person with SEND including those with communication difficulties.



Figure 1 Special School Games, 2018



Different is okay and we can use this to our advantage”¹



We always sought to extend the provision but the Schools Council enables children from Key Stage 1-5 to play an important role in shaping this.”⁵

¹Charlie, a pupil at Market Field School in Colchester and a founder member of the MSC

²Special Education Needs and Disabilities: applies too in this context to young people with mental health challenges

³www.multischoolscouncil.org.uk seeks to break down negative perceptions of young people with SEND and their abilities via collaborative, multi-school council meetings.

⁴The Local Offer for Essex is communicated via a standalone website: <http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/>

⁵Gill Newlyn, Inclusion Lead, Davenant Foundation School, Essex

Objectives

Gill Newlyn is the Youth Sport Trust Lead Inclusion School contact. Her county-wide relationships enabled the widest participation from schools within the Council and helped to disseminate and act on key sports outcomes:

- 1 To help support the majority of primary and secondary schools to the Council
- 2 To help shape the local PE and sports offer for SEND
- 3 To signpost good practice amongst schools
- 4 To help support the LOC⁷ deliver young people's expectations in terms of School Games and sport

Discoveries

The widest applications of student voice and the concerted efforts of all partners to act on feedback received impacts schools and young people in some unexpected ways.

CATALYST FOR CHANGE

The MSC acts as a catalyst for the widest participation amongst schools in the County. Its profile supports engagement and understanding.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM BUY-IN

Senior leadership commit to a school's involvement: this in turn gives authority to the delivery of inclusive PE.

CULTURAL CHANGE

Where schools cannot actively attend council meetings, the Council's ethos and their association with it still inspire and permeate school culture.

GREATER INTEREST IN INCLUSIVE SPORT

Schools' advocacy has a positive impact on students as volunteers at inclusive sports events.

Achievements

- 1 To discuss and consider every piece of feedback and all ideas, even those hard to deliver
- 2 To overhaul the Special School Games in 2018, with revised events, participants and format
- 3 To widen the Local Offer to include a multi-sports disability football club
- 4 To create a specific sports platform for student voice via Sports Ambassadors
- 5 To improve signposting to community sports providers and the Local Offer

⁶School Games Organiser

⁷Local Organising Committee

⁸Gill Newlyn, Inclusion Lead, Davenant Foundation School, Essex



The young student that actively campaigned for the Special School Games is now a Sports Ambassador. Raising her voice in support of one cause helped her to feel empowered and valued. She continues as an active participant and advocate of inclusive PE.⁸



Figure 2 Special School Games, 2018

Further opportunities to be explored

- 1 To continue to **challenge inequality** of provision and representation
- 2 **Improve the usability** of the Local Offer website
- 3 **Signpost school-based provision** within the Local Offer website
- 4 **Celebrate the Special School Games**, including amongst non-participants
- 5 **Explore communication of the Local Offer** to schools, and improve this

Recommendations

A key learning arising from this project is the augmenting impact of student voice over time:

THE IMPACT OF STUDENT VOICE

Intrinsic impact of their opinion being sought

Empowering and impactful for young participants.

Acted upon centrally and by multiple parties

Valuable and exciting changes to the Local Offer for young people with SEND.

Ethos cascaded to schools county wide

Wider impact on attitudes, perceptions, behaviour and local delivery.

Cultural ethos of student voice in every school

Young people have a sense of agency and greater desire to make their voices heard.