

School Games Mark- an Alternative Provision perspective – our journey to Gold!

The latest blog in the 'Engaging Alternative Provision' series is authored by 16Niamh Mourton (BSc, MSc, PhD)- Alternative Provision Development Coach and Senior Manager for Special Olympics, and Adam Bailey PE Teacher at Wings School Notts.

Wings School Notts is a safe and caring community where there is a passion for learning. It is a residential and day alternative provision (AP) school that welcomes and works alongside children and young people with social emotional and mental health, ADHD, autism, attachment needs, childhood trauma or other specific learning difficulties. They use physical activity, physical education, and school sports to holistically develop students and raise their aspirations. They aim to create purposeful opportunities for every student in and through sport that everyone can benefit from beyond school. Last year, Wings School became the Youth Sport Trust Lead Inclusion School for Nottinghamshire. They use this newfound status to try and positively influence as many young people as they can through inclusive practice, not just at Wings but across the county. Recently, they were awarded the prestigious Gold School Games Mark Awards, one of only 16 APs in the country who have achieved this accolade. We sat down with Adam Bailey the PE lead at Wings School to discuss this journey to gold from an AP perspective.

This journey to Gold School Games Mark started when Adam arrived at Wings a few years ago, and he worked tirelessly with staff to completely rewrite the PE and sport landscape. They created a vision towards physical literacy and holistic development for all, and a wider life skill-based offer that was not only beneficial in PE and sport, but in the wider curriculum and community. They wanted something bespoke, and child centred for their pupils.

PE, school sport and physical activity are all interconnected within Wings but are seen as three different entities with three different outcomes.

- PE is seen as planned and assessed, where they can use formative and summative measures to showcase everyone's progress in their own PE journey.
- School Sport is there for anyone interested and motivated in a competition pathway, those who want to achieve personal bests or competing with others individually or in a team, within school or externally representing their school.
- The physical activity school offer comprises of lots of extracurricular clubs to ensure everyone is active and everyone's interests are met with the focus being on fun, inclusion, friendships, having a go, trying new things and being active.

They create purposeful opportunities that are chosen by the young people which they can take with them beyond education, leading to healthy active lifestyles and even potentially careers in the field of PE and sport. It is very clear that PE, school sport and physical activity are powerful tools to help raise aspirations of all young people across Wings school.

Some Top Tips that helped Wings School to achieve their Gold School Games Mark.

- Don't be afraid to redesign the structure PE, physical activity and sport in your school – Wings changed it to be more inclusive, so that everyone can engage at their own level of interest, motivation and pace – this helped remove barriers of 'being the best' or 'being the worst' or pupils 'comparing' their journeys. This has helped all students to take personal responsibility for their own unique journeys through PE and school sport. Removing these



barriers, opens the gates for a wider cohort of pupils to experience the life changing benefits of PE and school sport.

- Use PE and sport as a vehicle to develop a wider skill set for all pupils. They aren't trying to create football players of the future but if they can use football as a vehicle to raise aspirations and develop a skill set that includes resilience, determination, honesty, self-belief that follows them through life then that is just as successful as sending someone for a trial at a local football club.
- Wings worked with YST to undertake the My Personal Best initiative to help students' develop life skills through PE and sport and help track students' personal bests in running and the gym. This allowed students to choose what motivates them, whether it is just for fun or to compete against themselves and against others if desired. They all took personal responsibility for their own personal best, not just in movement (running/gym) but also in the life skills that were important to them to build along the way. From running club in school to lots of students and staff taking part in a local fun run, everyone found their own motivations to engage together and have fun.
- Sports Leaders is invaluable for all students as it helps develop these life skills further and the application of these life skills will follow young people through education into adulthood and the real world. It also helps them across the curriculum and in wider society. It helps build belief in those young people and they can see themselves as leaders of the future.
- Establishing plans and routines in and through PE and school sport. Staff working together on the same page on the same mission. SLT engaging and backing the mission towards the School Games Mark – seeing the value in it and backing it every step of the way. Staff participation in events helps to break down and ease the social anxiety a lot of the pupil's experience when engaging in something new or sport.
- Empower your School Games offer by partnering with external providers. Wings work closely with Mansfield Town Football Club, and they don't just come in and deliver; they collaborate with the Wings staff to stretch and scaffold the great work that is happening. Mansfield Town have helped with interventions across the curriculum, such as a very successful literacy reading intervention with Key Stage 4 students. Breaking down barriers to learning and skills like reading by linking it to sport and showing how all these skills matter in life and to not underestimate your power to learn.

Adam shared a personal school success story that really brings to life the impact this journey to Gold School Games Mark has had on Wings School. They had a young person start at the school 2 years ago who had had a terrible experience of PE at his last school. This previous PE offer had been highly competitive and very sport based, you learnt rugby skills to get picked for the rugby team, you learnt running so you could race others, there was no choice, and the fun was taken away. He hated it and felt like a failure and had no sense of belonging in PE at all.

When he joined Wings, he wouldn't come into the sports hall for PE, he would stand outside in the rain rather than come into PE. He wasn't rude, he was just absolutely not going to engage in PE. The staff spoke with him and together they restructured his PE to a one-to-one session with a learning support assistant, starting with 5 minutes kicking a ball, throwing a ball against the wall or walk laps of the sports hall, whatever he wanted to do that was active. They built that time up from 5 minutes to 10 to 15 up to a full lesson. So that young person was doing their lesson alongside their peers during the PE lesson. They built

that up again over time to the young person engaging in some parts of PE with their peers and then completely engaging in the PE lessons.

That young person started to feel a sense of achievement and belonging, and at the end of last year came to ask if he could come and try football club. Of course, he was welcomed and attended football club every week. This academic year, he asked if he could represent the school on the football team at a fixture. He now is playing on the football team representing his school at the School Games. In the last game they played, he was voted for and selected by his peers to be the captain of the team. The team won that match with him captaining them. But the biggest win was the journey he had been on and his new love for all things PE and school sport alongside his peers.

That is just one story to show how Wings uses PE and sport to raise aspiration and give meaningful opportunities to each young person, so they can fall in love with physical activity, aligned to their motivations, on their terms and taking full responsibility for this journey through life. Wings School Notts demonstrate their dedication to promoting sportsmanship and healthy competition and the School Games

Mark serves as a benchmark for this providing recognition for endeavours in advancing sports participation among all of their students.

This prestigious honour shows the remarkable example Wings School has in promoting sports and competition within their school and also their wider community. Everyone at Wings School, including teachers, staff, and students, can take immense pride in this achievement. Their collective efforts have played a crucial role in earning Wings School Notts this well-deserved recognition.

