BURNLEY
SCHOOL SPORT PARTNERSHIP

READY, SET, MOVE
ACTIVE SCHOOLS NETWORK

Olive High School

Youth Insight
PE, School Sport
and
physical Activity



This report summarises the findings from a consultation with girls at Olive School regarding their relationship with PE, physical activity and school sport. The purpose of the consultation was to better understand their attitudes towards PE, their physical literacy, including how they think, feel, and connect with movement, as well as their knowledge, skills, confidence, and motivation to participate. We were also keen to find out what activities they would like to take part in and what the intent of any inter-school events should be.

The activities used during the consultation included statement reactions, voting exercises, group discussions, and collaborative decision-making tasks.

What we did.....

A total of 61 girls from across Y7 and 8 took part

15/16 girls at a time, came out of lesson for a 35 minute engaging and interactive session.

The girls were split into small groups of 5 to 6 and completed two focus from the below:
Focus group 1: PE
Focus group 2: Physical Activity
Focus group 3: Enrichment, Sport and Inter-school activities

PE: Using a grafiti style wall, girls were given several prompts to share their likes, dislikes and thoughts.
Physical Activity: Understanding motivation, confidence, knowledge and understanding to take part, (physical literacy, barriers to taking part, and activities they like and dislike!
Enrichment and Inter-school activities: Intent of taking part in inter-school activities, what a good event would include, types of activities that would appeal to them.

What we found out..... A summary



Positive Attitudes but low motivation
While most girls understand and value physical activity, motivation and confidence remain key barriers.

Confidence is the primary barrier to taking part
Concerns about appearance, judgement, safety, and competence significantly limit participation.

Time Constraints Are Significant
Madrassah attendance, homework, and tiredness after school reduce opportunities for engagement.

Peer influence is critical
Girls are far more likely to participate when friends are involved.

Preference for informal and inclusive activities
Fun, skill-building, and low-pressure environments are preferred over competition.

Access barriers exist
Swimming, cycling, and park-based activities are popular but require improved accessibility and culturally appropriate provision.

Physical Education



Things Pupils Like in PE

Pupils shared many positive views about PE, with responses showing that they value fun, friendships, activity, and competition.

Social Aspects

A strong theme was the importance of friends and social connection

- Being with my friends
- Teamwork
- Everyone working together

Competition and Winning

- Teamwork
- The excitement of competition

Being Active

- It feels different from classroom lessons
- It helps keep us active
- It doesn't feel like a lesson

This suggests that PE is seen as a break from learning and is valued for being more practial and energetic

Key Messages



Pupils enjoy PE most when it is:

Social
Active
Fun
Competitive (for many)
Varied
Different from classroom learning

These responses show that PE plays a vital role in pupils' wellbeing, confidence, and enjoyment of school.

Physical Education

BORING!!

Things they find boring

- Repetitive warm ups
- The same pupils being chosen for certain roles
- Too much waiting and talking
- Complicated rules
- The excitement of competition
- Long explanations
- Not active enough
- Teams always being picked the same way

Key Messages

Pupils are most likely to feel bored when:

- They are inactive for long periods
- The same routines are repeated
- They feel excluded from important roles
- There is little choice or variety



They want PE to be active, fair, fast-paced, and varied.A common theme was that pupils dislike spending long periods not being active

Specific sports they find boring



Football
Basketball
Netball
Badminton
Cricket

Complicated or too many rules
Not having the skills

Things we find difficult in PE

Getting into groups

Hitting a ball in cricket

Working with people who aren't our friends

Not having the confidence to join in

Throwing and catching

Kicking a football

Rembering PE kit!

Understanding and remembering what to do

Understanding the rules



What this might mean.....

Pupils challenges in PE are not just about physical competences. **They also include:**

- Worries over social interactions
- Organisation
- Knowledge and Understanding

Recommendations

- Provide enough time and opportunity for pupils to practice skills
- Provide clear instructions,
- Consider adapted and modified versions of traditional activities demonstrations and visual reminders
- Give pupils some flexibility in selecting who they work with

Things we don't like about PE!

Unfair teams
All the best players being in the same teams

Inactivity
Too much waiting long explanations

Repetition
Doing the same activity too often



"If I Were in Charge of PE, I Would..."



Pupils at Olive High shared a wide range of ideas about how they would change PE if they were in charge. Overall, their responses focused on comfort, fairness, fun, choice, and variety.

My big idea is.....

PE Kit and uniform changes

- Changing the PE kit
- Being less strict on PE uniform
- Wearing trainers all day instead of changing
- Long-sleeved tops, black joggers, long socks
- Hoodies and flared trousers
- Black or white headscarf options
- Clothing that feels comfier and more practical

A very strong theme from pupils was the desire for a more comfortable and flexible PE kit. Many felt current expectations are too strict or uncomfortable.

My big idea is.....

More PE & more opportunities

They suggested:

- PE every day
- PE three times a week
- Extra lessons each week
- More time being active

My big idea is.....

More variety & choice

They suggested:

A wider variety of sports

Letting students pick what they want to do

Dodgeball more often (some even said every lesson!)

Dodgeball at the end of every lesson

My big idea is.....

Learning environment

They suggested:

- Going outside more, especially in summer
- Using the park
- Making lessons more engaging

My big idea is.....

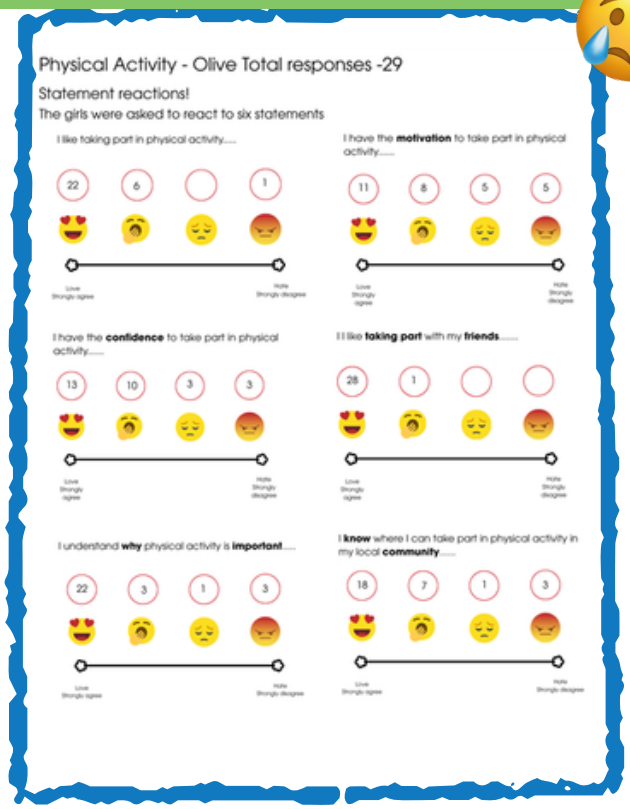
Fairness & inclusion

They suggested:

- Picking fair teams
- Giving everyone a chance at different roles
- Not letting the same people always lead
- Making sure everyone is having fun
- Letting girls do different activities if they feel uncomfortable

Many pupils spoke about fairness, teamwork, and making sure everyone feels included.

Statement reactions using emoji's



Relationship with Physical Activity

The majority of girls **(78%)** responded positively and reported that they enjoy taking part in physical activity. They demonstrated a good understanding of the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing.

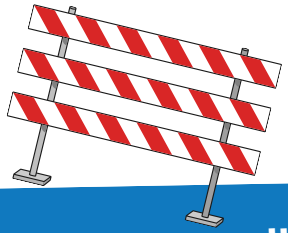
However, only **39%** reported feeling motivated to take part. Motivation appears to increase significantly when activities involve friends. Peer support and friendships were identified as important factors in building confidence and encouraging participation.

Confidence levels remain a concern:

20% of girls do not feel confident taking part in physical activity.

33% feel only somewhat confident.

Many cited concerns about not being good enough or worrying about how they look.



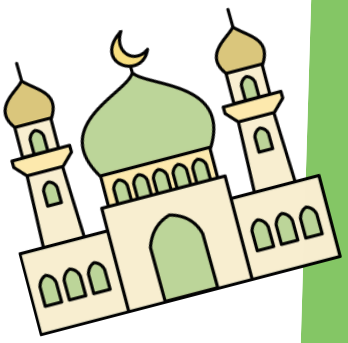
Barriers to participation

Girls identified their top three barriers to participation through a voting activity.

Confidence-related factors were the most prominent overall barrier (29) combined votes across related categories). These include:

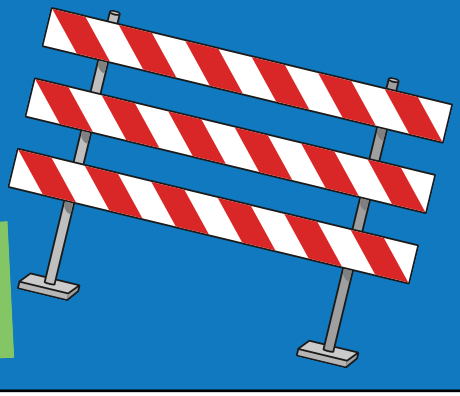
- Not looking cool
- Body confidence
- Fear of being judged
- Not feeling safe or welcome
- Not having the right kit





One of the most significant structural barriers identified was attendance at madrassah, along with homework demands and tiredness after school. These factors contribute directly to lower motivation and limited availability for after-school activities.

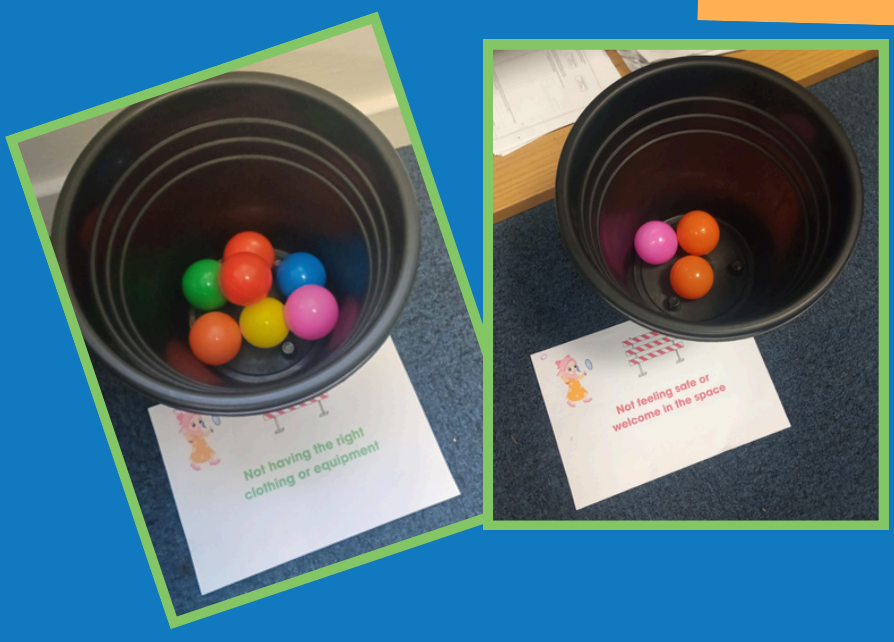




Barriers to participation - voting buckets

Barrier	Votes
Mosque/Madrassah time	16
Not looking cool*	22
Friends won't take part with me	12
Not having the right equipment or clothing*	9
Cost of activities	2
Body confidence and fear of how they will look*	12
Not feeling safe or welcome*	12
Parent influence/not acceptable/fear of being judged*	4
Parent influence – Risk - fear of injury	1
Fear of being judged by boys*	1
Not knowing what is available	8
Medical conditions	0
Too much school work/homework	6

***Confidence barriers**



Ways to keep active.....

Using a voting grid - the girls voted for their top three activities that they do or would like to do to keep active

Walking including walking to school 31	Swimming 18	Going to the park 12	Football 16	Cycling 14
Horse-riding 20	Running 17	Archery 18	Martial Arts 17	Gym/Fitness 16
Ten Pin Bowling 15	Rounders/cricket 14	Dancing at home 8	Golf 14	Badminton/Tennis 13
Dancing with a club 2	Dodgeball 12	Netball 2		

Key insights

- Walking emerged as the most favored activity, with girls describing it as relaxed, social, and not demanding high skill levels.
- Sunnah sports (archery, horse-riding, swimming, running and wrestling/martial arts) were prominently featured; it's important to acknowledge the significant role that faith plays in determining what feels culturally appropriate for the girls to engage in.
- Archery was highly regarded, highlighting the importance of having access to proper equipment and trained staff within the school.
- While horse-riding and ten-pin bowling received considerable interest, discussions with the girls revealed that these were more aspirational than practical, as both activities are ones they would love to try.
- Swimming was greatly valued but recognized as challenging to access; girls voiced a need for girls-only sessions with female lifeguards.
- There was interest in park-based activities and cycling, although access to these options was limited.
- Traditional competitive team sports, such as netball and rugby, were notably less popular among the girls.



What type of inter-school activities....



Through a group "**Hot Air Balloon"** decision-making activity, girls selected the following preferred activities:

Leadership, team-building and problem-solving activities

These were viewed as opportunities to build relationships, develop confidence, and strengthen wider life skills.

Dodgeball and benchball

Considered simple, inclusive, fun, and accessible, with minimal rules and no requirement to be highly skilled.

Football

Seen as a familiar team activity where most girls felt they had sufficient knowledge to participate. There was also interest in linking football to fitness-based activities





Recommendations.....

Develop Confidence-Focused Programming

- Deliver non-competitive, inclusive sessions.
- Introduce beginner-friendly and "no experience needed" activities.
- Promote body-positive messaging and create psychologically safe spaces.

Increase Peer-Led Opportunities

- Establish buddy systems or friend sign-up models.
- Develop girl-led leadership and ambassador roles.
- Promote team-building and problem-solving activities.

Adapt Scheduling

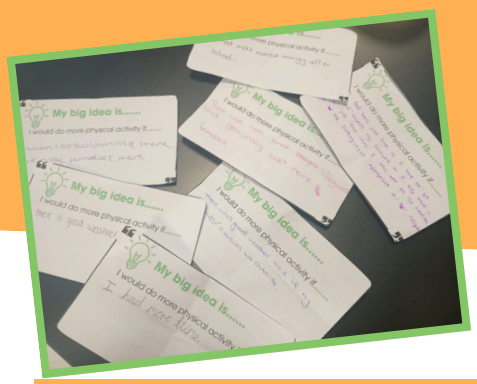
- Consider lunchtime sessions or alternative timing to avoid madrassah conflicts.
- Offer shorter, flexible sessions to accommodate homework pressures.

Motivators for increased participation

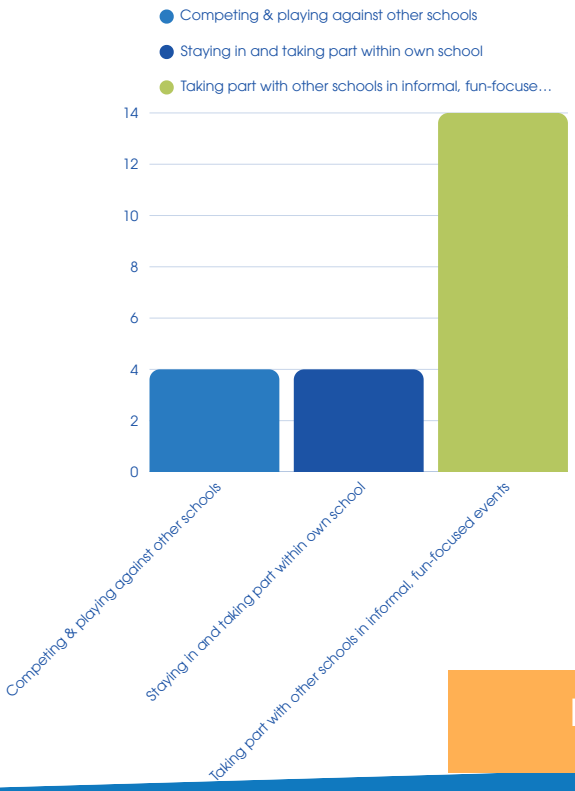
When asked, **"I would do more physical activity if..."**, the most common responses included:

- Having more time
- Feeling more motivated
- Having friends to take part with
- Gaining parental permission
- Having access to suitable kit
- Better weather





peer support emerged again as a strong enabler.

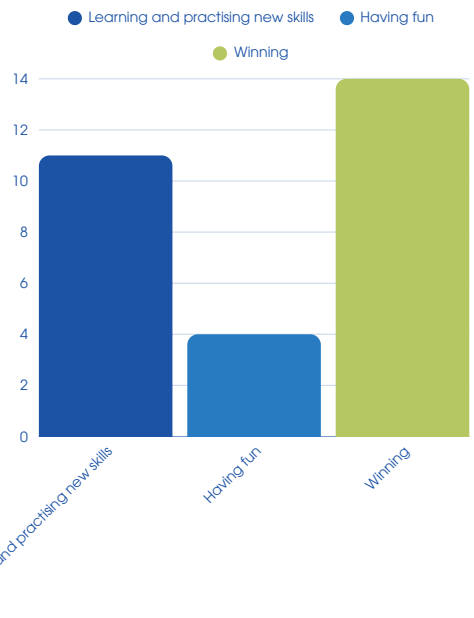


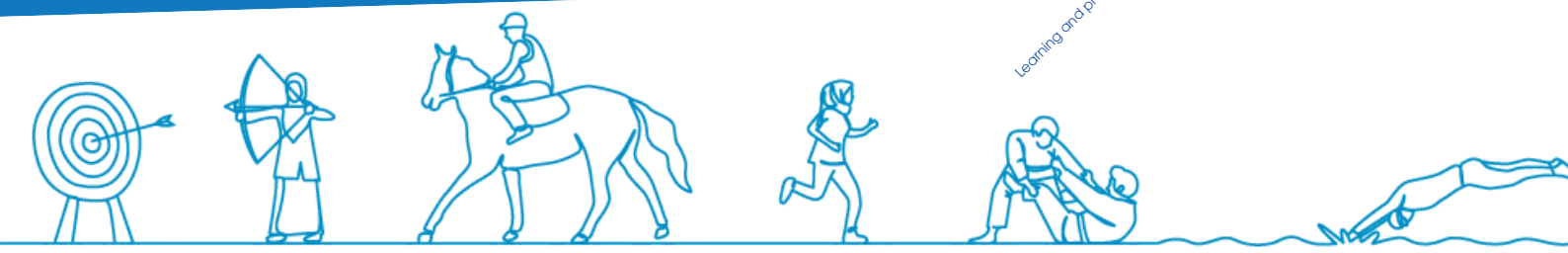
Inter-school activities

The preference clearly favoured informal, fun-based inter-school events rather than competitive formats.

Intent and Purpose

When asked about the intent of such events, responses were:
Learning and practising new skills – 11 votes
Having fun – 5 votes
Winning – 4 votes
This highlights that **skill development** and **enjoyment** are stronger motivators than competition.





Strategic Recommendations

Prioritise Confidence and Inclusion

- Introduce fair and transparent team selection methods.
- Rotate leadership roles.
- Deliver beginner-friendly and skill-building sessions.
- Embed body-positive and inclusive messaging.
- Create safe and culturally appropriate spaces

Review PE Kit Policy

- Explore greater flexibility in kit options.
- Increase comfort-based choices.
- Provide spare kit to reduce non-participation.
- Ensure inclusivity for religious requirements.

Improve Accessibility toequipment and different environments

- Utilise park spaces more often and explore partnerships to provide accessible park-based and cycling opportunities.
- Facilitate girls-only swimming sessions with female lifeguards.
- Provide equipment loans or subsidised kit where possible.

Focus on Enjoyment and Skill Development

- Prioritise fun, informal inter-school events.
- Emphasise skill-building over winning.
- Include leadership and confidence-building components.

Strengthen Parental Engagement

- Communicate benefits clearly to parents.
- Provide reassurance around safety and cultural considerations.
- Offer information sessions or family engagement events where appropriate.

Final Conclusion!

The consultation highlights a strong foundation of positive attitudes towards PE, school sport and physical activity among girls at Olive School. However, confidence, time constraints, and access barriers significantly affect participation. Motivation to take part is influenced by peer dynamics and social experiences. The issue is not lack of interest it is the quality and inclusivity of the experiences. By prioritising inclusive, socially supportive, and culturally sensitive programming, the school can meaningfully increase engagement and long-term participation.