

Sport Wales PESS and PLPS Case Study

The Child's Journey

'Being Available to Learn': the physical literacy journey of Kieran

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'Being Available to Learn': the physical literacy journey of Kieran

Key Points

- *The Child's Journey charts the progress of Kieran and a group of targeted children through an initiative reflecting the principles of the Physical Literacy Framework and using resources developed through PESS and PLPS.*
- *The bespoke, child-centred initiative provided a safe, inclusive, innovative setting for Kieran and his group to experience success, believe in themselves, increase their self-esteem and become 'available to learn'.*
- *This case study highlights the importance of understanding and prioritising the child's stage of development as opposed to their age so that initiatives are accessible and engaging, activities are differentiated and progression is tracked and planned effectively.*

The Child's Journey

Context

Physical literacy is a holistic concept which can be described as the 'motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.' (Whitehead, 2014). A growing body of evidence strongly suggests that physical literacy not only allows children and young people to fulfil their physical potential, but also improves attention, concentration, engagement and on-task behaviour. This ensures children and young people are 'available to learn' and have the potential to achieve better outcomes through physical, cognitive and affective development. Physical literacy is unique to each individual and considered fundamental for a child and young person's health and wellbeing as well as playing a key role in facilitating academic achievement.

In 2000 a Welsh task force outlined a number of key actions required to improve standards of PE across Wales. As a result the PE and School Sport (PESS) Programme was set up and managed by Sport Wales (funded by the Welsh Government in 2001) and continued until 2014. The primary aim for the programme was to ensure that 'every young person is challenged and supported in PE and school sport'. PESS focused on up skilling the practitioners. High quality provision across curricular, extracurricular and community activity helps to engage children and young people, providing them with positive activity experiences and the skills, confidence and motivation to be 'hooked on sport' for life. The PESS project has developed a suite of professional development courses and resources to support practitioners working with 3 to 19-year-olds (Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 and above).

Delivery was managed and supported by expert regional consortia teams with an understanding of physical literacy and the ways in which it can be achieved and improved through the curriculum and the wider community. PESS interventions investigated the potential value of using the physical to create and enhance meaningful learning and improve academic achievement through movement. This approach allowed for the creation and development of bespoke, holistic and child-centred interventions driven by need (as opposed to a 'one-size fits all' approach). Dragon Multi-Skills and Play to Learn developed wide reaching and extensive activities which were used as facilitative vehicles, accepting that the stage of development was more important than age.

The bespoke evolutionary nature of PESS has provided an excellent foundation for the new Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS). The primary focus of PLPS is to create engaging opportunities that meet the needs of every child, helping them to fulfil their full potential.

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Context (Cont....)

In conjunction with the PLPS a newly developed Physical Literacy Framework (PLF) will provide practitioners with clear expectations that will help track the progress of every child along their physical literacy journey. The implementation of the PLF across Wales will raise the importance of developing a physically literate nation. However, the need to independently collate, review, analyse and evaluate the PESS evidence base and the introductory phase of the PLPS in raising standards across physical literacy, academic achievement and whole school outcomes is paramount.

SPEAR

In October 2014, the Centre for Sport, Physical Education and Activity Research (SPEAR) at Canterbury Christ Church University was commissioned by Sport Wales to independently review the evidence base for the Physical Education and School Sport Programme (PESS), the Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS) and the Physical Literacy Framework (PLF). Part of this independent review involves the collation, review, selection, secondary analysis and innovative presentation of case studies evidencing and sharing a range of best practice across PESS and PLPS initiatives. As such, the narrative and analysis of this case study has been conducted by SPEAR with the resources provided by Sport Wales. Consent to identify children, adults and organisations within this case study has been granted.

SPEAR is a cross school and cross faculty research centre at Canterbury Christ Church University established to bring together expertise across and outside the university and to facilitate collaborative working. In particular, SPEAR brings together expertise in Sport and Exercise Science, Physical Education, Education, Health and Tourism and Leisure. SPEAR's research has helped guide and inform public policy to increase physical activity and sport participation among young people by identifying the processes most successful in increasing participation. It has provided a rationale for government investment, contributed to the wider evidence base used by policy makers, and steered programme improvements that enhance physical activity opportunities and experiences.

More details on SPEAR and its work can be found at:

www.canterbury.ac.uk/SPEAR

The Child's Journey

'Being Available to Learn': The physical literacy journey of Kieran

Profile

There is a clear link between learners being 'available to learn' and academic achievement. Being available to learn is much more than just a good attendance record; it requires learners to be confident, ready, willing and motivated to concentrate as well as interacting and engaging with others and with the learning environment. Those learners who may have difficulties in accessing learning effectively in 'traditional' environments can often manifest frustrations through poor or disruptive behaviour, which has implications both for their learning, and for the rest of the class. Embracing the ethos and principles of the Physical Literacy Framework, Gelli Primary School in South Wales implemented a pilot intervention to understand 'how using the Dragon Multi-Skills approach created through the PESS programme within curricular and extracurricular sessions impacts positively on self-esteem, confidence, personal and social skills for a targeted group of learners.' This case study follows the progress and impact of the intervention and the journey of Kieran and his friends (see video below).



Baseline behaviour and concentration video observations. Kieran is sitting at the back with a green spot (click picture to play video).

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The Challenge: What was the problem?

Within his school, Kieran was part of a targeted group of eight children at Key Stage 2. The children had either Individual Educational Plans/Individual Behavioural Plans, were on the Free School Meal register, or were low achievers. Additionally, a number of children did not engage in extracurricular activities or had been identified with personal and social issues. Kieran in particular found it difficult to engage in sessions and interacting with adults and peers was extremely challenging; *"I hate working with people because they don't listen to me"*. Kieran lacked confidence, had low self-esteem, lost concentration quickly and struggled with fundamental physical movement skills; *"I can't do anything in PE. I am rubbish"*.

Kieran struggled to cope and react positively to challenges and as a result found it hard to persist with activities. If at first he did not quite succeed he would not try again and would often cry in frustration and anger; *"everyone spoils my games"*. The staff at Gelli Primary school wanted to create a sustainable and conducive learning environment for Kieran and his group to fulfil their physical, cognitive and academic potential with support and guidance from the PESS mentors.



Meet Kieran

The Intervention: What did they do?



Sample activity cards

Between December 2013 and January 2014 a bespoke intervention using Dragon Multi-Skills and Play to Learn and adopting the holistic approach reflected in the Physical Literacy Framework was developed. Underpinning the approach was a clear understanding that the stage of Kieran's development was more important than his age. The intervention valued the 'how' as much as the 'what', maximising the effectiveness of the learning environment and engaging the children, allowing Kieran and his friends to be 'available to learn'.

The Child's Journey

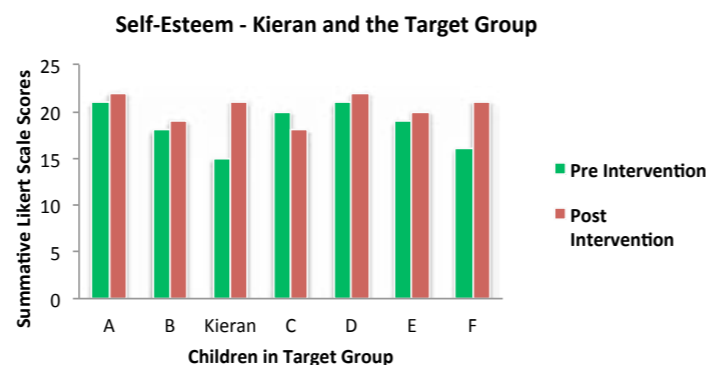
The Intervention: What did they do?

Professional development training for staff with a specific focus on Dragon Multi-Skills and Play to Learn combined with the holistic support available from the PESS team resulted in the creation of a 10 week bespoke personalised plan. The work focused on the development of personal and social skills and required weekly support in the form of mentoring sessions from a teacher within curriculum time (February 2014 to May 2014). The intervention was further extended to include extracurricular activities during playtime, lunchtime and after school from April until the end of June 2014. To measure the impact and effectiveness of the intervention various assessment methods were used, pre (baseline) and post intervention, to measure:

- Physical skills (Dragon Tracker App),
- Confidence and self-esteem (Pupil Perception Survey and videos),
- Positive behaviour, social interaction and engagement (Dojo software, behaviour logs, videos and teacher assessments, school based RAG system).

Impact: What changed for Kieran and his group?

The intervention facilitated a positive and holistic transformation of Kieran and his fellow group members with the development of physical, personal and social skills. The intervention had created a conducive and effective learning environment allowing Kieran and his group to experience success, believe in themselves and increase their self-esteem.



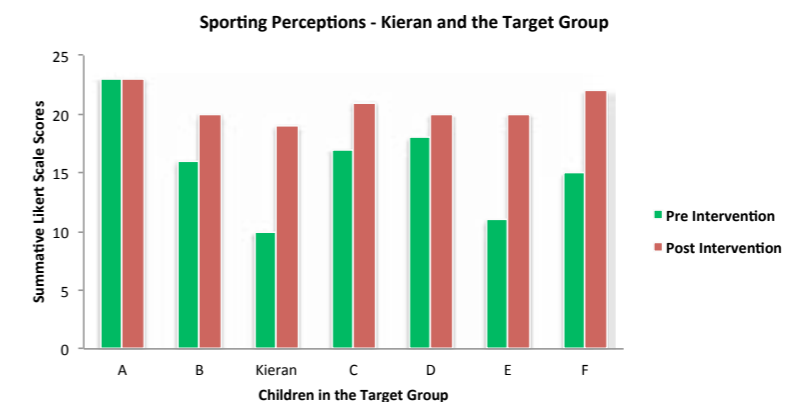
Self-esteem pre and post intervention

Personal and Social Skills from February to May 2014								
Personal and Social Skills	Kieran		Pupil B		Pupil C		Pupil D	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Work Sensibly with Others	Red	Amber	Amber	Green	Red	Amber	Red	Amber
Take Turns to Share	Red	Amber	Amber	Green	Red	Amber	Red	Amber
Talk and Listen to Others About our Work	Red	Green	Amber	Green	Red	Amber	Red	Amber

A sample of 4 of the 13 social and personal skills assessment in 4 of the children pre and post intervention. The first 2 columns show Kieran moving forward from mainly red (not successfully achieving skills) to amber and green (developing and achieving skills)

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Impact: What changed for Kieran and his group?



Sporting perceptions pre and post intervention

These positive changes resulted in available and engaged learners whose behaviour, according to the weekly class dojo measures, had improved by 36% from week one to week five and continued to improve throughout the intervention and beyond. Kieran now enjoyed sport; he had even made friends and enjoyed working with others. He also created and demonstrated games and was confident enough to give feedback on these games with his partner or group.



The Class Dojo measuring behaviour changes over a 5-week period

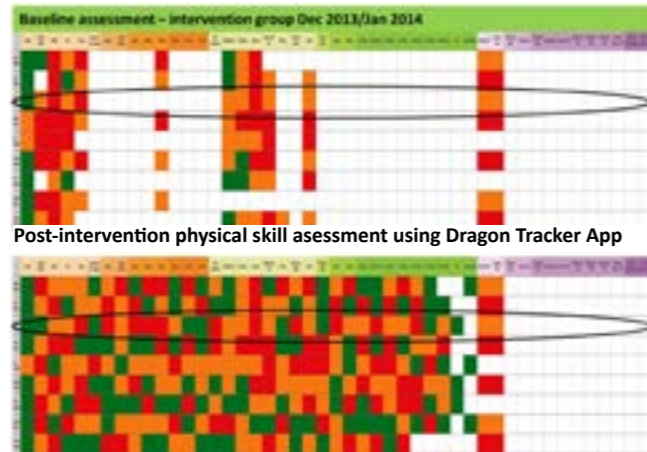
While all children showed a marked improvement across all areas, Kieran had the biggest improvement across the board of any of the children involved in the intervention. An effective learning environment that was child-centred and focused on the stage not age had provided a safe, fun and innovative setting for Kieran and his friends to grow and develop.

“Each child has developed and progressed in all areas. Not just physically, but emotionally and mentally. They are able to meet challenges and suggest ways to adapt the challenges. Seeing the children work has been a very rewarding enjoyable and humbling experience”. Angela Williams (PESS Mentor)

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Impact: What changed for Kieran and his group?

Pre-intervention physical skill assessment using Dragon Tracker App



The Dragon Tracker App monitoring physical competencies pre and post intervention. The figures shown above show that the group progressed from not meeting basic physical competencies (red cells) to meeting and achieving competencies after the intervention (amber and green cells). White cells indicate the physical competency has not yet been assessed.

The positive impact of the programme on Kieran and the rest of the group convinced the practitioners to extend the programme to include extracurricular activities (playtimes, lunchtime and after school). As the register showed, Kieran did not miss a session. Kieran is now on the road to reaching his physical potential, improving his academic attainment and becoming a happier and healthier child. Such overwhelmingly positive results add strength and momentum to the Physical Literacy Framework and the PLPS and the need to embed the framework across every primary school in Wales.



Behaviour and concentration post intervention (click picture to play video)

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Impact: What changed for Gelli Primary School

Pre-intervention, Mr Cynan Jones, headteacher of Gelli Primary School, had spent many a playtime, breaktime or lunchtime supervising in his office the children targeted through this intervention due to poor and unacceptable behaviour. Post-intervention Mr Cynan Jones remarked:

“Measuring the impact of this project has been very easy to do as previously I’d have the pleasure of the company of most of these children during playtimes, now I’m alone in my office.”

Gelli Primary School showed strong leadership in raising standards, providing high quality, needs-led learning experiences and improved physical and mental wellbeing through staff development and the delivery of an innovative pedagogical approach in partnership with the area PESS Consortium and Sport Wales. Gelli Primary School has committed to embedding the approach developed through the intervention into future sessions and will ensure the programme is delivered throughout the whole academic year. The next step is for Kieran and his group to lead by example and help others by becoming playtime leaders.



Communicating with peers post-intervention (click picture to play video)

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Recommendations: Advice for schools and practitioners



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