

School Sport Organising Crew – Cherry Grove Primary School.

Young leadership in sport had been on our schools to-do list for some time but hadn't seemed either achievable or sustainable. We had tried play leaders and play buddy type schemes but this, even with the most enthusiastic of teachers and lunch time assistants supporting them, had faded out and the children had lost interest.

Over the past 2 academic years, it felt like something had changed. We have been working on a daily basis through PE lessons, clubs and enrichment to raise the profile of sport and PE and we believe this was the missing link – an ethos where sport and competition was a high priority for children and staff.

We now found it difficult to choose children to attend the Bronze Ambassador's course because there were so many to choose from. Candidates were chosen and after attending their training day they came back charged and ready to go. They were desperate to achieve the targets that were set for them. With the help of Judith Gilmour, they delivered an assembly to inspire our other pupils to get involved. They sent out application forms for children to 'apply' for a place on their all new School Sports Organising Crew (S.S.O.C.). With help from the PE leadership team candidates were shortlisted and pupils were hired! We have 10 S.S.O.C.'s and 2 Bronze Ambassadors that make up the full crew. Initially, for our first year of being, we selected only pupils from Year 3 – 6 with plans to extend this next year. Their roles are varied and they decided as a crew that they wanted to be able to exchange roles regularly so everyone gets to experience all aspects of the crew from refereeing and score keeping to reporting and photographing.

We meet regularly when time allows and when it doesn't they chat to me informally and organise themselves. The Crew assist in many of the day to day aspects of PE and sport at school. They are the eyes and ears on the playground and have been the driving force for changes at break times that have improved behaviour and fairness. They wanted to try girls only football day to encourage more girls to get involved and this has been a huge success. They have helped reform the break time rota to make it fairer to all age groups. They have made suggestions for how the PE curriculum could be changed to include a wider range of sports and are a constant source of support for our teams entering competition. They have regularly accompanied our sports teams to help coach, support, photograph and report on our ever increasing success. Our school recognises their input and importance with both the high amount of time they allow them for crew activities and the regular praise they receive in celebration assemblies for the activities they have helped with. Offering them a budget has been difficult, especially in a year that we have very much considered it a test year. This has not fazed them. They have been happy to be resourceful and creative with what is already available.

The culmination of the year was their ALL IN! Intra-School Sports competition. They made their own SSOC T-shirts for the events, selected activities and sports to suit the age, ability and physical abilities of each group of children taking part. With the help of some other children that they selected, they refereed, timed, scored and coached over 250 pupils with almost no support from adults. They dealt confidently with issues and were supportive throughout both to competitors and to the additional 30 children who they asked to be involved in leading.

We have had grand plans over the course of the year and with the best will in the world, we haven't been able to stick to them. But what we have had is inspired children who have been prepared to help work around the limitations of school life and budgets to make the most of a fun and exciting role in our school. They have genuinely helped to guide and support sport and have helped to raise the profile of PE right throughout the school.

To finish our year, they will help choose our next ambassadors and decide if they would like to stay on the crew or give someone else a turn. They will then choose replacements for our Year 6 children who are leaving and are even planning an award ceremony to celebrate the sporting successes of our pupils.

Next year we plan to increase the funding they receive from the Sport Premium and this will allow them to budget to run competitions and give prizes etc. They will have an increased role in organising events as we build up our Olympic based topic throughout the year. We want them to be even more visible and have even more input in to leading play and leading the curriculum. We want them to be the genuine voice of the pupils. We have a number of sponsored events plans to raise money for sport at Cherry Grove and the crew will be at the front of organising this. Our motto as a school in PE for next year is "To be leaders in sport". It's our hope that The Crew will be the facilitators of achieving this aspiration.