

Aim	To provide out of school hours learning opportunities for young disabled people.
Outcome	Fully inclusive school and after school clubs which match the needs of the disabled young people.

School: Emerson Park School

Type of school: Mainstream – Secondary (Ages 11-16), 18% pupils with SEN

In order to improve the sports provision for young disabled people in the area, Emerson Park School initiated consultation with community partners in the summer of 2003. The consultation began with meetings with officers from Havering Primary Care Trust and Havering Community Development and discussions followed with Havering Association of Disability groups, University of East London, Romford YMCA, Disability Sport England, Havering Disability Sports group and the London Sports Forum for Disabled People.

As a result of this consultation, one of the issues identified concerned football for people with cerebral palsy (CP). Opportunities for CP players to take part in competitive soccer are limited by the present football structure in the area, which mixes CP players either with non disabled players or with players with other impairments, who are less limited by their lack of mobility. The limited opportunities for competitive matches suggested the need for more players to be attracted and a disability specific structure to be developed locally. This was endorsed by the Football Association and by Mark Leach, a SCOPE representative and himself a former CP paralympic player, who confirmed the need for players to take part in competitions against and with other players with cerebral palsy if their needs were to be met and to better prepare them for regional and national squad selection.

Emerson Park School (EPS) in partnership with representatives of neighbouring LEAs and SCOPE subsequently developed an action plan to address this, with Essex FA confirming that the plans were in line with the latest FA policy for inclusion and talent development of players with a disability.

The school then established a football club specifically for ambulant players who have cerebral palsy, meeting monthly in the first year and fortnightly in Year 2. Attendance is currently at 15, well up on the 10 which was the original target and regular attendance hovers around 80% (target 70%). All of the sessions are run by FA accredited coaches with the Essex County FA providing a coach for the first two meetings and Tottenham Hotspur Football Club now providing a Level 2 coach who himself has cerebral palsy. In addition the school currently funds an additional coach and the coaching focuses on playing with other players with a similar impairment rather than 'surviving' in a mainstream team.

The activities of the club have been publicised through monthly flyers (a mix of electronic and Royal Mail deliveries) and articles have appeared regularly in the local press, Tottenham match day programme and Frontline - a specialist publication for physiotherapists. The latter has led to the involvement of a volunteer physiotherapist. Players are brought to the club by their parents and students from the Vale Special School Tottenham, are also brought to the sessions by one of the Tottenham coaches.

Future plans include:

- To encourage the growth of other teams that would provide club members with meaningful and 'fair' competitive matches.
- To develop a centre of excellence for CP football with high quality (FA accredited) coaching and exit routes that would feed players through to the national squad.
- To add to the coaching pool by sponsoring club members through Level 1 & 2 coaching courses
- To establish a programme to monitor and raise fitness levels.
- To ensure that facilities developed at the school supported the short and long term aims of this initiative and that the club drew on other development areas identified by the school. For example, to provide access to the fitness suite and provide high quality opportunities for individuals emerging from the Sport Leader Awards schemes that are running with partner schools.

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