

Aim	To provide the opportunity for students to experience competition, develop skills and provide a starting point for continued involvement and development in sport.
Outcome	The opportunity for young disabled people to sample a variety of sports and test their skill and ability in appropriate competitive situations

School: Wilson Stuart School

Type of school: Special School (Ages 2-19), Physical Disabilities

The Disability Sport Events' Mini Games is a multi activity event for 6-12 year olds and the primary section of Wilson Stuart School has been involved in the event since its inception. With 100 children attending the 2005 games in Aylesbury, the event has proved very popular for children who want to try a variety of sports with the idea of continuing to develop, post event, in their particular chosen sport. Each year 10 to 15 pupils from the school have attended the games and access to the games is open to all pupils in Classes 3, 4 and 5, regardless of their ability.

Staff in the PE department feel that the Mini Games are a great opportunity for their pupils to participate in such an event particularly as there are limited sports opportunities for pupils with disabilities at primary school age. This event encourages the students to develop their sporting skills within a relaxed environment and in addition offers the opportunity to compete at, and try out, new sports. It also gives the pupils the opportunity to meet and talk with other children and to develop their social skills. The teachers at Wilson Stuart School believe that the Mini Games provide a rare chance for their pupils to go away for the weekend and for many it is the first time they have been away from their parents for any period of time.

However the principal aim of the Mini Games is to provide an opportunity for pupils to try out new sports with the aim of then continuing to develop their skills in a specific sport after the games. There have been many examples of students at Wilson Stuart School who have started out taking part in the Mini Games and then gone on to develop in their chosen sport, some up to national and international level.

A current YR7 student who has participated in three Mini Games competitions won the Under 15's West Midlands Championships in the 60m sprint despite being only 12 years old. His PE teacher felt that the Mini Games gave him a good grounding in sport and competition and as he has moved into secondary school his performance has blossomed. He has now been selected to represent the West Midlands Region at the DSE National Junior Athletics Championship in Blackpool.

Another ex Wilson Stuart pupil, now 19, was also involved in the Mini Games whilst at school and continued to compete throughout his secondary school years, becoming a multiple gold medal winner at the National Athletics Championships. Through his involvement in sport he has also undertaken training as a young coach and sports leader and he is now employed as a coach at the OSHL sports club at Wilson Stuart and continues to compete as the England Table Cricket Captain.

At Wilson Stuart School, sport provides a major part of the pupils' social life with at least 95% of the students participating in OSHL opportunities and these clubs, which meet weekly for 2 hours throughout the school year are used as an opportunity for pupils to prepare for the Mini Games. The school has also established links with a local mainstream primary school which has established an alternative sports club. Although there are only 2 pupils with a physical disability at this school, 20 pupils participate each week in this club, with all pupils at the club playing the same sports offered at the Mini Games.

Involvement in the Mini Games also gives the teachers the opportunity to see their pupils in a competitive situation which has led to pupils being subsequently selected for school teams. Two students, for example, both aged 10, were included in the school team for Zone Hockey based on their performance at the Mini Games, even though the team is predominantly made up of older students.

For the staff, the Mini Games not only gives them the opportunity to see their students putting into practice, in a competitive situation, the skills that they have learnt in PE, but also to see a development of pupils' social skills. It also allows them to take their pupils into a safe environment which they know is well organised and where the pupils are in good hands due to the wide knowledge of the event's staff and their attention to detail. This allows the teachers the opportunity to meet up with other staff and share good practice. It can also be an opportunity to gain knowledge about new games and equipment as the organisers of the Mini Games regularly ask schools to demonstrate new games, equipment and ideas during the tournament.

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