SCHOOL CASE STUDY
HOLMFIRTH JUNIOR, INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL
EMBEDDING PHYSICAL LITERACY IN THE PE CURRICULUM

WHAT INEQUALITY DID YOU TARGET?

Before I took on the role of P.E. lead, the program primarily focused on sports, with Years 3–6 participating in identical activities each term. While this approach supported some development of physical competence, it lacked a deeper educational focus. Students demonstrated limited understanding of how they achieved their performance outcomes, and lessons failed to integrate broader learning objectives.

Additionally, social and problem-solving skills were not adequately addressed and we didn't embed strategies to leverage P.E. as a tool for developing a wider range of essential life skills.

WHAT DID WE DO?

	A 1	A 2	S1	S2	S 1	S 2
Y3	Hockey	Netball	Gymnastics	Striking and fielding	Tennis	Athletics

This transformation has been a collaborative, whole-school effort.

Our curriculum now follows a well-structured sequence, spanning from Early Years, where progression is aligned with the sensory motor pyramid, to Year 6, where students seamlessly transition into school sports ensuring consistent progression. Beyond lessons, all students are offered opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities through strong partnerships with external organisations and clubs, fostering a culture of lifelong activity and engagement.

Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 3	Run Jump Throw	Gymnastics- Symmetry, Balance, Travel + Key steps	Acro - Dance/Gymnastic	Look Run Avoid	Strike React Rally	React Roll Retrieve
	Agility Balance Coordination	Inspire Create Perform	Fair Share Dare	Lend Move Score	Watch Move Connect	Evade Invade Capture

IMPACT

The **variety of activities** offered has expanded considerably, leading to **increased participation** in both competitions and extracurricular opportunities. On average, our school enters one extracurricular event per week throughout the academic year, fostering an environment of ongoing physical engagement and growth.

Through pupil voice, we've observed substantial improvements in students' ability to **communicate** and **collaborate** with their peers.

Additionally, our **baseline testing** results have shown significant improvement, reflecting the positive impact of our curriculum changes.

Once a year, I meet with the school governors to discuss the progress of P.E. at the school, **review** the effectiveness of current practices, and identify areas where further changes or improvements may be necessary.

Child-led activities facilitated by **Sports Leaders** have been integrated into our physical education program, highlighting the broader impact of our approach in developing leadership, communication skills, and physical competence.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Discovering Beyond the Physical was a pivotal moment. It was refreshing to discover a scheme of work that aligned perfectly with the principles of physical literacy and the broader vision of going "beyond the physical."

The Yorkshire Sport P.E. Conference provided an invaluable foundation, equipping me with the knowledge to create an actionable plan to present to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). A particularly helpful tool was a comprehensive grid, outlining the responsibilities of a primary P.E. lead. This framework enabled me to clearly define my role, delegate tasks such as administrative duties, and identify areas of shared responsibility.

The Pennine Sports Partnership has also played an instrumental role in this transformation. Their support has ranged from consulting on the redesign of our curriculum to delivering a variety of events that offer students opportunities to engage in both competitive and non-competitive activities. Additionally, their efforts to promote active learning within the school have been vital in fostering the new culture of physical education we are building.

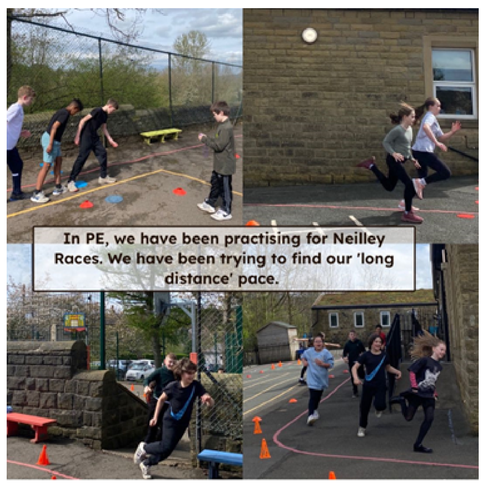
SUCCESS STORY

Throughout the past two years, we implemented an approach in P.E. that emphasised connecting activities through meaningful discussions. Teachers posed reflective questions during lessons, such as, How could we adapt the equipment used in this game? or What strategies led to your success? These discussions encouraged students to think critically about their physical activities and apply problem-solving skills.

A standout moment was finishing 3rd place in the Kirklees Sports hall athletics competition and advancing to the Yorkshire Finals. The team of 23 students, comprising both boys and girls, displaying exceptional competency and teamwork despite the school being a single-form entry. Demonstrating the depth of physical literacy from a broad range of students.

LEARNING

- **Structure your curriculum with upcoming competitions** in mind, as this can enhance students' confidence and increase their willingness to participate.
- Ensure a balanced focus across specific P.E. strands (e.g., Net and Wall, Invasion Games), regularly reviewing to guarantee a well-rounded curriculum.
- **Explicitly teach the STEP principle** (Space, Task, Equipment, People) and encourage more able students to adapt and modify games as appropriate, fostering creativity and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrate tasks clearly, then allow students to replicate the setup in small groups. Don't hesitate to step back and observe whether **students can independently organise and run activities without adult intervention**. This ability, beyond physical competence, is a crucial life skill.
- **Treat your P.E. space as a learning environment**. Each lesson should have a clear skill or learning objective that students aim to improve.



"The core focus of P.E. lessons should be on integrating an educational element that emphasizes physical literacy. By doing so, we not only help students develop essential physical skills but also inspire a lasting interest in extracurricular activities, fostering lifelong engagement in physical activity."

- James Peech, PE Lead -