

MOVE WITH CONFIDENCE:

Reimagining the Girls' PE Kit

BISHOP YOUNG CASE STUDY

Part of the Moving with Confidence: Reimagining Girls' PE Kit project delivered through the Leeds Well School Partnership.



Leeds Well School Partnership

Physical Activity • Physical Education • Sport



INTRODUCTION

Bishop Young were invited, via their School Games Organiser, to participate in the Moving with Confidence: Reimagining Girls' PE Kit project. This project was part of the Leeds Well School Partnership, with four secondary schools across the city taking part.

It aimed to respond to key student voice and research findings in Leeds, which highlighted that PE kit is a significant barrier to girls' participation in PE. Issues such as comfort, modesty, body image, cost and identity are causing too many girls to disengage from physical activity.

The project was run by Louise Hacking, Partnership Consultant for Secondary PE and Girls and supported by Libby Cotter and Megan Greaves from Active Leeds.



INTENT

- Increase girls' engagement and enjoyment in PE by addressing kit as a barrier.
- Empower girls through a co-design process, ensuring students shape the solutions.
- Create a practical and cost-effective process for schools to reimagine their PE kit.
- Pilot the process in 4 Leeds secondary schools, each producing its own kit design.
- Share the blueprint and evaluation across the Leeds Well Schools to influence practice at scale.



IMPLEMENTATION

A diverse group of initially 11 Year 8 girls were invited to take part – selected because they did not necessarily have a positive view of, or relationship with, PE. As the sessions ran, a consistent 8 pupils attended. The intention was to ensure that the voices of disengaged were central to the process. The girls were fully involved in all three workshops, with a strong emphasis placed on their opinions and choices. External partners from Active Leeds (Libby Cotter and Megan Greaves) provided expertise and support.



WORKSHOP 1: UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS

Girls discussed their current experiences of PE, exploring the positives, challenges and their views on the PE kit. They then explored how these experiences could be improved.



WORKSHOP 2: EXPLORING OPTIONS

A range of different kit examples were introduced and critically evaluated. Girls identified what they would want from their own PE kit in terms of comfort, fit, style, modesty and practicality.



WORKSHOP 3: DESIGNING THE FUTURE KIT

Using everything they had learned, girls researched and designed their ideal PE kit and prepared presentations for the Senior Leadership Team.

The findings were presented to the Headteacher (Rachael Cole), who was incredibly supportive and keen to act on the suggestions. The girls and Louise then presented to Governors, who were also supportive and agreed next steps (for September 2028 as information had already gone out to current pupils). A drip feed approach will be taken to allow pupils with the current PE kit to keep it if they wish.



IMPACT

The project led to several positive updates to the PE kit.



IMPROVED EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

Better communication with parents and carers via planner, parents evenings, kit lists and letters home. Links to sports bras will feature on the website. Changing rooms will include information, education and useful advice about sports bras and periods to help normalise conversations.



OPTIONAL LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT

An optional long sleeve T shirt (not rugby shirt) will be available for girls who do not feel comfortable showing their arms in PE but also feel too hot in a jumper.



ROUND NECK COLLAR ON TOPS

The option to have a round neck collar on both the T-shirt and the jumper (rather than the zip up) to allow more comfort when running and to support girls wearing hijabs feel more comfortable tucking them in for PE.



MORE CHOICE FOR BOTTOMS

More options of bottoms – leggings, joggers and tracksuit – should be allowed if plain black to accommodate different body shapes and support girls' confidence in PE.



TOP TIPS

- 1 Start with the least engaged voices**
Target students who are disengaged from PE rather than those who already enjoy it. Their insights are often the most valuable in identifying real barriers and meaningful solutions.
- 2 Create a safe and open environment**
Be intentional about creating a space where students feel comfortable sharing honest opinions, especially around sensitive topics like body image, confidence and comfort.
- 3 Embed cultural sensitivity into kit design**
Recognise and respect diverse cultural and religious needs by offering inclusive PE kit options (e.g. modest clothing, head coverings, or alternative fits), by actively listening to and representing the voices of all students.
- 4 Use real examples and physical resources**
Bringing in different types of kit made discussions more concrete and helped students articulate what they liked and didn't like more effectively.
- 5 Involve external partners where possible**
Working with organisations like Active Leeds added credibility, expertise and support to the project.
- 6 Think beyond the kit**
The project opened up wider conversations (e.g. menstruation, modesty, inclusivity). Be ready to build on this and link to broader wellbeing and participation issues.



The project strengthened relationships between staff and students and ensured that student voice was at the heart of decisions about the future PE kit.



NEXT STEPS

Looking ahead, the next academic year will focus on building on this work. This includes:

- Continuing to explore inclusive kit options such as sport hijabs and sports bras.
- Opening up a wider conversation around the impact of menstruation on participation and performance in sport.
- Embedding student voice within future PE developments to ensure changes continue to reflect the needs of all learners.

QUOTE

"That's so good and amazing there presented themselves well. I will feed it back and also we will reward them through our school reward platform."

Love the write up and will definitely share if that's okay.

Moving forward if you could support further that would be amazing. Everything you mentioned is definitely the direction we would like go especially supporting the girls with sports bra's."

– Gav O'loughlin



PHOTOS FROM THE PROJECT



Student voice. Inclusive choices. Confident participation.
Together, we're reimagining PE for every girl.

