

MOVE WITH CONFIDENCE:

Reimagining the Girls' PE Kit



Leeds Well School Partnership

Physical Activity • Physical Education • Sport

RUTH GORSE ACADEMY CASE STUDY

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



INTRODUCTION

Ruth Gorse Academy 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 is ran 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 Leeds Well Schools to influence practice at scale.



IMPLEMENTATION

A diverse group of eleven Year 9 girls – selected because they did not necessarily have a positive view of, or relationship with, PE – took part in all three workshops. The girls shaped the discussions, sharing their views on what they felt comfortable wearing and what they believed other girls would prefer. External partners from Active Leeds (Libby Cotter and Megan Greaves) provided expertise and support.



WORKSHOP 1: UNDERSTANDING 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 girls presented their recommendations to the headteacher and SLT, who engaged with, questioned and considered the students' recommendations.



IMPACT

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



PE SOCKS UPDATE

PE socks will be amended for the next academic year, with students now given the option of a minimum crew height in navy blue. This provides flexibility for those who prefer not to wear football socks.



LONG-SLEEVED T-SHIRT OPTION

Long-sleeved t-shirts will be introduced as an option for all students, supporting greater comfort and inclusivity.



PROGRESS ON SPORT HIJAB

Progress around the introduction of a sport hijab is ongoing. Initial enquiries, including discussions with Decathlon, identified that available options (such as those from Nike) were significantly over budget. As a result, the next step is to work directly with the school's uniform supplier to explore more affordable alternatives.



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



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.



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.



STAFF REFLECTION

"I just wanted to say another big thank you for your work with our students over the last few weeks, it really was a wonderful project and so insightful to hear their thoughts and feedback."

Charlotte Ball (HOD PE)



PHOTOS FROM THE PROJECT



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

