



CASE STUDY

Middleton Primary School – Daily Dash

Keeping our school active, happy and ready to learn



Active
Children
Brighter
Futures



Intent

As a school, we have noticed the reduction of physical activity in children since the COVID lockdowns and saw the weight of some children had increased and fitness decreased. We began to look at how we could improve the amount of Physical Activity we offer the children within the school day and became part of the Creating Active Schools pilot. This put PA on the School Improvement Plan. Initially we started with a Daily Mile in Year 4 to increase the physical activity of the pupils returning from lockdown. This was then rolled out cross school. Our aim was to see children have an active break in learning, which would see them return to class with an improved attitude to learning and behaviour in lessons.



Implementation

The Daily Mile was introduced across school (2021-22) with classes asked to complete in the afternoon to break up the lessons. Some classes completed this between 2 lessons, whilst others completed nearer the end of the day, always at a set time. Through drop ins it was seen that some classes were actively encouraging the children to run for the 10 mins around the playground, whilst others were stood watching. This impacted on the effort that the children gave and resulted in some behavioural issues where teachers and teaching assistants were not active with the children. A trial with Years 5 & 6 was conducted to change the way they did the Daily Mile to shuttles and relays in 2022-23. This saw an improvement in activity from all children for longer. This was then rolled out to Years 3 & 4 before Years 1 & 2. The School Council were set with the task of naming this new active session. In the following academic year (2023-24) saw the Daily Dash timetabled for a morning slot, after a Well Schools Meeting introduced the thought of starting the day with some physical activity. The biggest challenge was allocating space for every child in school to be outside being active at the same time. We looked at the playground and gave each class a zone to work in. Drop ins have showed that all classes are engaged in the new system, classes are split into 4 groups and complete shuttles/relays across the playground. All staff shared ideas of how the children could move and improve the activity done by all children and they are encouraged to decide which movement to do next.



*"Small steps
make a big
difference!"*



More active



Happier learners



Stronger community



Brighter futures



Impact

Through the Daily Dash, children have improved on their physical literacy. They have improved on their agility, balance and coordination through skills like hopping, hopscotch and lunging as well as their running. One child in Year 4, who is not agile, has been engaged in the Daily Dash and has seen some improvements in her agility. Children are more settled when they return to class and focused on the lesson ahead. It has had an impact on the wellbeing of the children, as they start the day much happier and enjoy the 15 minutes they spend outside in the fresh air (especially for the younger ones). Because we do the Daily Dash at the same time, everyone feels that sense of being part of the whole school community. Children across school enjoy the Daily Dash and Year 2 are distraught if they can't do it for reason like the weather. The children enjoy the Daily Dash because they get to do tricks and stuff rather than just running. They also said that by doing different things they felt they kept going for longer. One child felt that it wakes them up for their reading lesson, although some felt they did get a bit giddy. The Daily Dash has ensured that all children guaranteed to be active for 15 minutes a day contributing to the 60 active minutes of moderate intensity exercise that children should be achieving a day. The Daily Dash has become such an integral part of the school day that the children are distraught if they can't do it. During the Daily Mile we would have a few first aid and behavioural issues, especially in Year 5 & 6. We now have none.



Top Tips

The Daily Dash has been successful because it has been backed by SLT, as seen through its timetabling. As well as through the dedication of teaching staff to complete it and make it regular part of the school day. By monitoring and sharing different suggestions has seen the interest of the session remain high and not drop off, along with the enthusiasm of the staff to make the session fun, engaging and competitive. The space we have has enabled it to be a whole school initiative, which again has ensured it has continued and become a daily occurrence that the children enjoy.



Next Steps

The next steps are to monitor and share ideas of how to sustain interest. Initial changes have been sharing the organisation of the session i.e. splitting groups into 2 so they are active more quickly, increasing the competitive nature by introducing races into the activity. This will help improve the understanding of relays that can transfer and be used in PE lessons, especially among the younger children. By continuing to incorporate these fundamental skills, children will become more physically literate and hopefully be



*A healthier, happier Leeds
through active schools*