

# Wiltshire Healthy Schools



## Case study focus: Active Mile

Core theme: Healthy Weight

## St Peter's CofE Academy

### School context

St Peter's is an average sized primary academy, drawing children from Chippenham and surrounding villages. The majority of children are of white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of children supported by pupil premium is below the national average. St Peter's is part of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust.

### Why choose this project?

Data from the National Child Measurement Programme (2017) showed a higher percentage of Foundation Stage and Year 6 children were overweight or obese than in other schools. Having installed a running track, the school thought that implementing an Active Mile would be a useful way to improve the physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing of children, regardless of age or personal circumstances.

### What did the school want to achieve?

- To involve every child in an Active Mile (6 laps of the running track) participating at least 3 times per week in running/ walking a mile
- Children to improve their stamina by completing a mile more quickly throughout the year
- Foundation Stage children to increase their number of laps as the year progresses (Minimum 1 lap per term in school, i.e. term 1 - 1 lap, term 2 - 2 laps, term 3 - 3 laps...)
- To increase the children's personal wellbeing through exercise

### What did the school do to achieve these aims?

Children were encouraged to use the running track at playtimes and lunchtimes by the Mid Day Supervisors (MDSAs), who monitored track usage on 5 different days throughout the year in June, October, March and July. Discussions about physical activity have been a focus of various school council meetings, PE lessons and assemblies.

The school set up 2 running clubs, one in the morning for parents and one after school for children, discussing tips and techniques for running distances.

### Measuring success

A mile was completed at least 3 times a week by each class from Reception to Y6. Most children improved the speed with which they completed the mile during the year. The timings of 93% of EYFS/KS1 children improved as they did for 94% of KS2 children. The timings improved for 90% of all girls and 98% of all boys.

## Case study focus: Active Mile

Core theme: Healthy Weight

### St Peter's CofE Academy

MDSAs reported that incidents of poor behaviour at lunch play reduced, as the children had more space and freedom to run. They also commented on how lovely it was to see older and younger children running together, challenging each other and boosting their self-esteem.

Feedback collected from the children has been overwhelming positive and included the following:

- "I like running to get fit. I am fast now." EYFS
- "I like playing superheroes and flying fast on the track." EYFS
- "I like the running track because it gives me more exercise and I feel good." Y1
- "I like running in the rain as it goes on your face." Y1
- "I like beating my time – I feel proud." Y2
- "I like running because it tires me out and then I don't talk in class." Y3
- "I like doing running every day because it helps me be fit to play football and run fast after the ball." Y4
- "It helps me be strong, physically and mentally." Y5
- "I like exercising each day as we all help each other in our class by cheering and high fiving." Y5
- "It has helped me be more self-motivated to improve my own pace." Y6
- "I run all my worries away and can be calm in class." Y6

Comments from staff included: "My class settle down very quickly after the Daily Mile. Less fussing, more learning." and "Whenever my class are beginning to fidget, we jump up and go out. 10 minutes later we are focused and ready to continue our learning."

There were also personal benefits for some of the staff who said "at the beginning of this project, I couldn't run an entire lap without stopping. I can now do the entire mile. I love it!" and "I've definitely toned up without having to go to the gym after work."

#### Lessons learned

The weather was a major challenge. However, the all-weather track enabled continuity of running during cold wet winter months, with many children (59%) improving their times between September and March. The hot summer was managed by timetabling runs during the coolest part of the day.

Despite the time constraints of the curriculum, staff and pupils were encouraged to participate as often as possible. Classes of older children used the track during their PE sessions, as a warm up or cool down session. Some staff have seen a rise in their own personal fitness and wellbeing, which encouraged them to support the project.