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Champions in Schools Evaluation

Executive Summary

Champions in Schools, a Winning Scotland Foundation initiative, is running for the fourth year in Scotland. This report evaluates the impact of the Champions in Schools programme in terms of its success in achieving its five key objectives of:

1. Pupils will have an increased enjoyment of sport and physical activity
2. Pupils will learn to set and achieve goals
3. Pupils will appreciate the value of effort and hard work
4. Pupils will understand the benefits of and keep a healthy diet and lifestyle
5. Pupils will develop a positive, winning attitude

There was a number of different data collection methods employed in this evaluation, ranging from large scale survey to individual interview. These were used to gain a broad overview as well as a detailed, rich perspective to allow both breadth and depth of analysis. All of the parties involved in Champions in Schools were invited to take part in the evaluation process. Those involved were school pupils, school teachers and head teachers, active schools coordinators, the athlete ‘champions’ and local authority contact personnel.

Pupil Participants Survey Results

- 93.7% of CIS participants believed that Champions in Schools was of some value to them
- 96.4% of CIS participants liked learning new ideas and skills in Champions in Schools
- 90.7% of participants appreciated the importance of effort
- 92.8% of participants thought a healthy diet and lifestyle was important

- 94.7% of participants felt they learned to appreciate that everyone has different strengths
- 91.6% of participants have learned that top athletes face challenges just like them

Results also showed that those pupils who participated in the Champions in Schools programme showed a marked increase in self determination, ambition, perseverance and effort than the non-participants. There was little difference measured in their ability to set goals but they demonstrated more positive attitudes, more involvement in sport and physical activity and more understanding of a healthy lifestyle and diet than their non-Champions in Schools peers.

As can be seen from the views of all groups of participants the Champions in Schools programme has been well received. All of the 'Champions' who volunteered for interview were overwhelmingly supportive of the Champions in Schools programme. The key reasons for taking part were given as wanting to give something back and the enjoyment that they got from the interaction with the pupils. In all programmes of this type the care taken in the choice of role model and the structured implementation of the programme are crucial.

Interviews carried out with selected teacher, head teachers and local authority contacts demonstrated that the majority of interviewees were appreciative of the programme. The local authority contacts had little practical interaction with the programme running in their schools and some head teachers were more involved than others. Local authority and head teachers were interested in the programme due to the links to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and the value for money offered by Champions in Schools.

Teachers who completed the surveys felt they needed further support in the implementation of the programme. They felt that a model of 'best practice' as to how the programme has run in schools previously would be beneficial. This model should include a number of support mechanisms considered to be crucial to the effective implementation of the programme.

One approach should not be advocated over another but experiences could be shared as to what has not worked as well as examples of best practice. For example, active schools coordinators have varied remits with the different local authorities and some are more able to champion the programme in schools than others. This may help with pupil and teacher motivation as well as establishing clear roles and responsibilities for all involved parties.

The Champions in Schools programme has been shown to make a significant contribution to the Curriculum for Excellence within Scottish schools. The programme has shown that it has fulfilled its key objectives and has been well received by the participants. The children involved at secondary school age are a difficult group to please but as the results of this evaluation show the programme has been effective at changing perceptions and attitudes within this group.