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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Champions in Schools Evaluation**

### **Executive Summary**

In 2013-14 Winning Scotland Foundation's Champions in Schools programme was delivered for the sixth year in schools in Scotland. This interim report from an ongoing evaluation process evaluates the long-term 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 interim 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 school coordinators, the athlete 'champions' and parent of Champions in Schools participants.

### **Overview Results**

#### Participating Pupils

- There was general enjoyment of Champions in Schools programme
- 98.7% of respondents felt they put a lot of effort into their school work
- 97.4% of respondents felt teachers showed confidence in their ability to do well in school

- 96.2% of respondents felt they wanted to get better at their school work
- Participants in Champions in Schools felt challenged by activities
- There were improvements in goal setting ability, GRIT and perseverance.
- There were longer term gains in some key messages of the Champions in Schools programme.

### Adults in Schools

- Would recommend programme to others
- Questioned whether Champions in Schools was aimed at correct age group
- Would like to see more control of activities with school
- 89.5% of respondents felt pupils in the Champions in Schools programme understand effort and commitment
- 90% of respondents felt pupils are enthusiastic about Champions in Schools
- 89.7% of respondents said pupils talk about their experiences in Champions in Schools
- 84.6% of respondents said the Champions in Schools programme showed pupils what sporting success can achieve and what hard work, commitment and dedication can lead to.
- Perceptions that pupils were motivated:
  - To learn
  - To be with friends

### Parents

- Overwhelmingly supportive of Champions in Schools programme
- Noticed increase in confidence in their children
- Would like further information and involvement

As can be seen from the views of all groups of participants the Champions in Schools programme has been well received. In all programmes of this type the care taken in the choice of role model, the structured implementation of the programme and the ongoing visits and support are crucial to the success. A previous evaluation carried out in 2011-2012 concluded:

1. Participating pupils showed significant gains in self-determination, ambition, perseverance and effort
2. There was little difference measured in their ability to set goals
3. Teachers, head teachers and local authority contacts benefited from the links for Curriculum for Excellence.
4. Local authorities and head teachers also endorsed Champions in Schools for the value for money and positive media opportunities offered by the programme.
5. Teachers would appreciate a model of 'best practice' for implementation.

This evaluation for 2013-2014 has looked at different parameters, but has shown that the positive benefits from 2011-2012 have been continued and there have also been further gains. For example, after identifying difficulties in goal setting (item 2 above) the workshops and activities were adapted to highlight goal setting more. By encouraging more attention on the importance of goal setting, the evaluation for 2013-2014 has shown significant improvements. Also, the examples of best practice requested by teachers (item 5 above) have been highlighted by the use of an interactive blog. Utilising and accessing the Champions in Schools blog has allowed teachers to share ideas and 'best practice'. This has resulted in teachers requesting more flexibility within the Champions in Schools programme, allowing them to use the fundamental principles of Champions in Schools but adapt them to suit their own particular context. Such flexibility has been integrated into the 2014-15 programme.

This interim evaluation attempted to examine the longer-term benefits of the Champions in Schools programme as well as evaluating the current delivery. This is a unique aspect as many role model programmes are short-term in both delivery and impact. Any longitudinal evaluation would expect to see improvements in many of the aspects under examination as a result of the maturational process. As a consequence the long term benefits attributed to the Champions in Schools programme must be compared with similar non-participants in the programme.

The evaluation undertaken this year was more successful in numbers of responses from current participants in the Champions in Schools programme, as well as a control group of non-participants. Longer term benefits in were identified by those who had previously participated in the programme. In the next few years it should be easier to gather this longitudinal data as close relationships have been developed with a number of schools making the identification and recruitment of past participants more manageable.

