



Leicestershire & Rutland Disabilities Club and Schools Links

Overview of the project

Discussion with clubs and schools identified the need for collaboration to support inclusive and disability sections, both in clubs and in school sessions. The links aimed to increase the opportunities for pupils to participate and perform, provide exit routes for participants and develop teacher knowledge and experience within gymnastics delivery.

Through British Gymnastics regional funding, specific training was offered for special schools through specialised gymnastics clubs and coaches in the area. A disabilities programme was created by modifying the 'Key Step' Gymnastics to ensure it was accessible to a wider range of children and young people, with a variety of disabilities and needs.

Project Objectives

- Better links to gymnastics clubs that offer Disability Gymnastics with trained coaches
- Greater opportunities to participate for children and young people with disabilities
- Improved knowledge and confidence for teachers of gymnastics in special schools
- A dedicated festival and competition framework to link in with Key Step Gymnastics
- Increased opportunities to perform and achieve within the specialised framework
- Stronger links between schools to promote sharing of good practice and support networks

Summary of Success

- Increased opportunities to participate and perform for disabled children & young people
- Increase in knowledge for teachers and teaching assistants in special schools
- New national framework commenced for Disabilities Key Steps
- Increased awareness of how gymnastics can benefit disabled children and young people

Description of what happened/how the project was delivered

Initially, Key Step Gymnastics was modified to include adaptations for disabled users; this was linked into the new national framework for Disability Key Step.



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The framework was circulated to special schools and specialist gymnastics coaches, with a view to holding a festival. A series of training days was arranged within Leicester Leys GC for teachers and teaching assistants from special schools; this was then followed up with 'in-school' training and support from specialist coaches.

The Adapted Key Step festival was organised for May, with participants working towards achieving certificates on the day based on their improvement over the project. Certificates were awarded with one, two or three stars.

Impact/Outcomes

- Strong links have been formed between 5 schools and Leicester Leys GC
- National framework developed, with support from local gym clubs and schools
- 28 children and young people participated in the first inter-school festival
- 3 further schools so far, have signed up for support in the next school term
- 5 schools benefited from specialised training and support
- Teachers involved have stated that gymnastics participation had a direct impact on the improvement of some children and young people's physical strength and movement control

Why did the project work? – Key success factors?

- The need for links between clubs and schools was identified and appropriately managed
- The Gymnastics Clubs provided a realistic and effective exit route for participants
- The special schools involved were provided with effective training and support
- The support the teachers received gave them confidence as well as knowledge
- The opportunity for pupils to participate in the festival was aimed at the schools involved
- The right expertise was used to develop the framework at the correct level

Key Partners

- Leicestershire and Rutland Sport
- Leicestershire & Rutland Club Development Co-ordinator
- Leicester Leys Special Needs Gymnastics Club
- Special Schools of Leicestershire and Rutland



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- Schools Sports Co-ordinator for Special Schools in Leicester
- British Gymnastics

What is your advice to other clubs/organisations wishing to run a similar project? *What are the key things that other clubs can implement to achieve success? & from your experience, what should be avoided?*

Developing effective and appropriate links between the club and the schools will ensure there is a benefit to all partners, with clearly stated exit routes for young people to attend the gymnastics club. Ensure your coaches have a minimum level 2 coaching qualification and the Disabilities Gymnastics Add on Module. If you are aiming to provide a festival at your club for participants to attend, set out the requirements of the event clearly and decide how best to reward participants for their efforts; feedback from similar events suggest that some participants benefit from a competitive event and some from a festival.

Future Developments

The project will be extended to cover a greater number of clubs, schools and participants, with a view to this year's participants progressing to the inter-Schools Sports Partnership county final with a parallel category. Additions to the clubs are Coalville Gymnastics Club and Hinckley Gymnastics Club.

Funding to support this work is from the Disabilities Legacy Fund secured by Hinckley Gymnastics Club to work at improving the links and support for disability gymnastics.

Contact Details:

For more information please contact Hazel Colton on 07827 303 967 or email hazel.colton@british-gymnastics.org