



## Encouraging Physical Activity at Willows High School

**Priority:** To engage more pupils in sustainable, healthy physical activity.

**Actions taken:**

- Developing our sports teams to engage in regular matches and tournaments with other schools and using outside sporting resources.
- Implementation of physical activity through an enrichment programme. Worked with local businesses and resources such as Boulders, swimming pools and No Fit State Circus.
- Worked with Active Travel Schools to update and implement our active travel plan.

**Outcomes**

- Increased attendance.
- Sustainable success in pupils physical activity skill level.
- Uptake in physical activity by pupils.

## Stakeholders

- P.E. and wellbeing department *identified* the priority in consultation with SLT and *decided* the actions to be taken.
- Pupils and staff helped design and *implement* the action taken.
- Local businesses and Active Travel Schools helped *implement* action taken.
- SLT, P.E. department, wellbeing lead and the enrichment coordinator *evaluated the outcomes*.

# The Willows Way

The positive impact that exercise and physical activity has on our wellbeing and mental health has been proven time and time again.



Y RHWYDWAITH YMCHWIL  
IECHYD MEWN YSGOLION  
SCHOOL HEALTH  
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Regular exercise can boost your mood if you have depression, and it's especially useful for people with mild to moderate depression.



## How can physical activity help my mental health?

There are many studies which have shown that doing physical activity can improve mental health. For example, it can help with:

- **better sleep** – by making you feel more tired at the end of the day
- **happier moods** – physical activity releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better in yourself and give you more energy
- **managing stress, anxiety or intrusive and racing thoughts** – doing something physical releases cortisol which helps us manage stress. Being physically active also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.
- **better self-esteem** – being more active can make you feel better about yourself as you improve and meet your goals
- **reducing the risk of depression** – studies have shown that doing regular physical activity can reduce the likelihood of experiencing a period of depression
- **connecting with people** – doing group or team activities can help you meet new and like-minded people, and make new friends.

The Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of the UK recommend that children and young people engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week<sup>30</sup>. This can include all forms of activity such as physical education, active travel, after-school activities, play and sports. Time spent being sedentary should also be minimised.<sup>7</sup>

**Physical activity levels tend to decline as children move into adolescence**

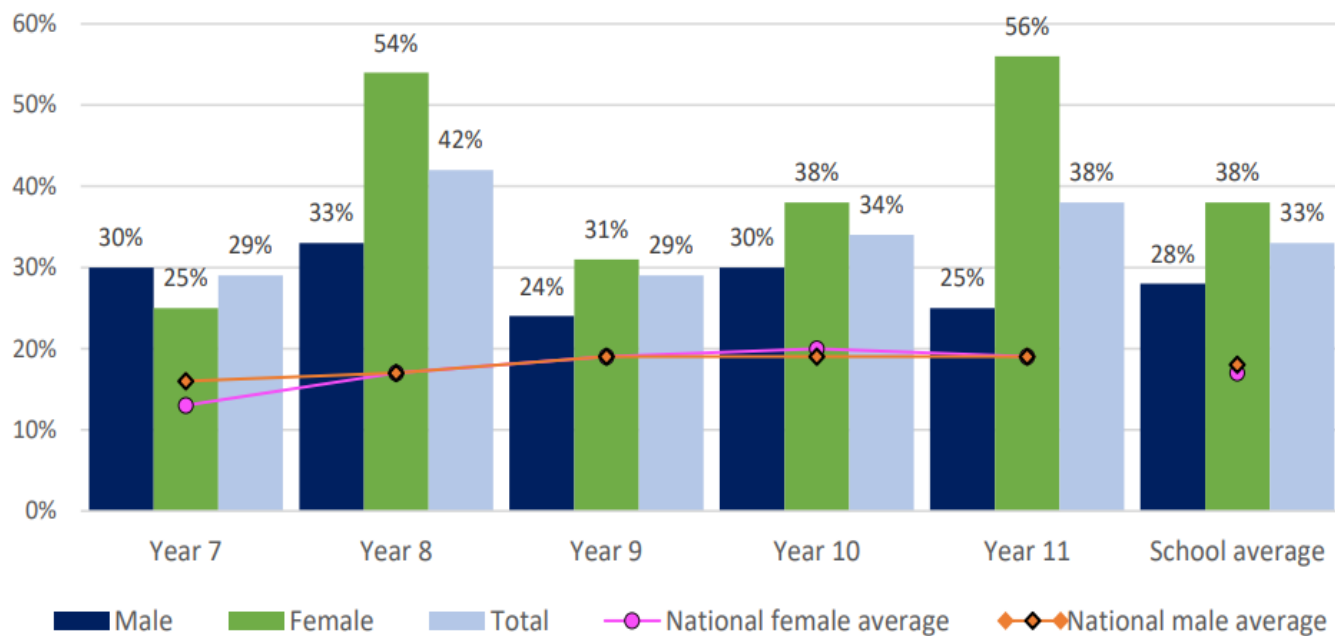
**School-based physical activity programmes can help young people be active.**



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## Sedentary behaviour

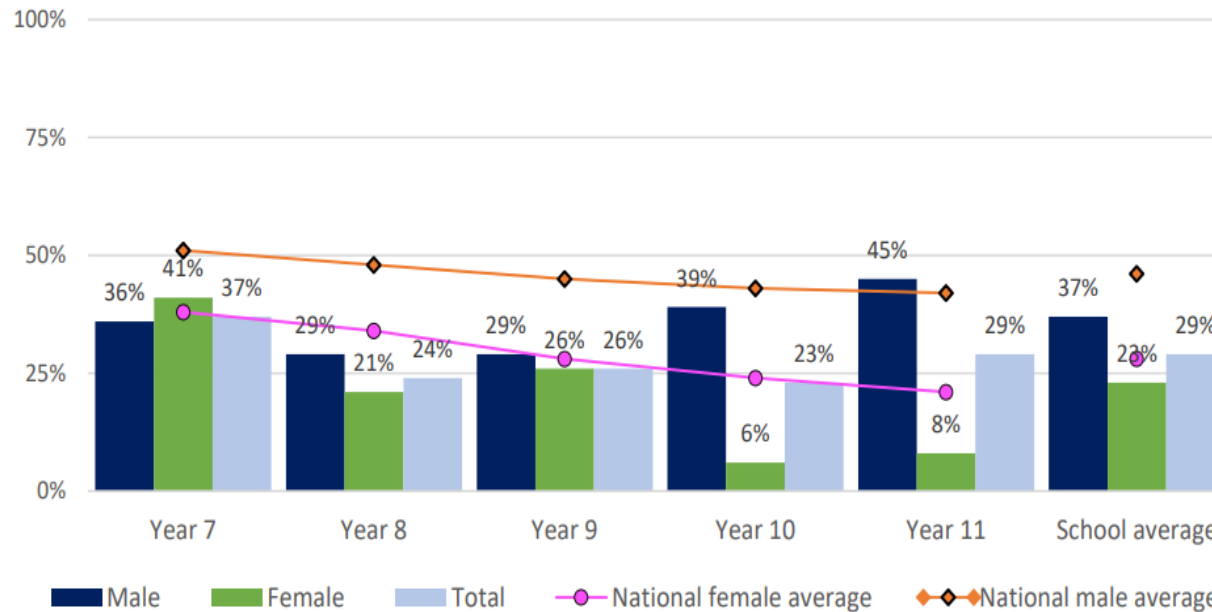
Fig. 8 Willows High School: Students who usually spend 7 or more hours of their free time on a week day sitting down



Across the board above average.

## Outside school hours

Fig. 9 Willows High School: Students who exercise vigorously outside of school time at least four times a week



Aside from Year 7 females and Year 11 males below average.



## Our school

- 60% Free School Meals
- Area of great need.
- Lack of opportunity and means.

## Our priority:

- Provide opportunity for pupils to become more physically active and less sedentary in life style.
- Open their eyes to the variety of different ways of exercising and establish new and sustainable passions and interests.

# Sports Teams

- Head of P.E. used the SHRN data to design curriculum.
- Consulted Pupil Voice.
- Revised and improved subjects and scheduling of lessons - Girls football switched to first half-term riding on the success of the lionesses.
- Basketball more popular than volleyball, now offered over several year groups.



# Sports Teams

- Found a specific teacher to focus on football.
- Began playing other schools.
- Lost first 5 matches, persevered. Won next 9.



# Sports Teams

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- Pupil Voice asked to form a basketball club. Started with 5 members and now have 40. Next year 2 year groups will join a league.
- Students who have not shown special interest in sport previously.

PE EXTRA CURRICULAR TIMETABLE 17-21st April	
<b>MONDAY</b> *Staff Meetings*	<b>TUESDAY</b> ATHLETICS Boys + Girls Y7/8/9
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> ⚽ MATCH DAY ⚽ Y7+8 Cardiff City 5s 🏀 Y9/10/11 Training	<b>THURSDAY</b> 🏀 Y9/10/11 Training ATHLETICS Y7/8/9
<b>FRIDAY</b> WRU 'Road to the Principality' Community Event	<b>NOTES</b> 🏟️ Home fixtures and training on the Astro Turf 🏀 In the Gym





# Sports Teams

- Athletics.
- Competing in the Under 15s boys and girls championships.



# Enrichment Programme – Why?

- As teachers, we have a lot of cultural inequality to deal with!

When teaching the GCSE Poetry to my group of culturally diverse Year 10s, I noticed that I was spending much of my time filling in gaps in knowledge before even scratching the surface of the meaning of the poems themselves.

- How can a 14 year old student from a disadvantaged background analyse a poem by Seamus Heaney that makes subtle references to Irish political upheaval if they don't even know where Ireland is or how it is divided?
- We wanted to help fill the gaps ourselves and give pupils the opportunity to experience activities out of the regular academic setting.

# Enrichment Programme

- A fantastic enrichment programme, unique to Willows High School, providing our pupils with an exciting range of activities to choose from.
- Giving pupils new experiences, extending their learning, and making school life more fun.
- Helping pupils lead a healthier lifestyle.
- Last lesson every second Wednesday.
- Sessions outside of normal academic curriculum.
- Physical activities include dance and singing, gardening...



# Gym Induction

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# MMA/Self Defence

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# No Fit State Circus Training

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# Military Training

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# Climbing

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## Cycling



**‘Pupils who have never had to opportunity to try cycling or had access to bikes have learned to ride for the very first time. They are gaining in confidence and are learning a life-long skill that will allow them to be independent. Without the opportunity for enrichment, some of them would never learn this important skill.’**

Suzie Warren (Assistant Head)



## Swimming

- **Swimming has been a really successful component of the Enrichment program this year, and one I felt keen to lead having discovered last year that over half of my form group did not know how to swim.** Statistics from Sports England in 2020 also showed that 80 percent of black and Asian pupils could not swim, and as our school is rich in its cultural heritage, I felt it important that our pupils developed this life saving skill.
- Since September, many pupils who opted to learn to swim have indeed taken their first strokes at the Star HWB pool. It has been a really incredible experience to watch some pupils to develop their swimming skills and build up their resilience in the water. **Pupils have gone from getting into the water with slight trepidation, to not wanting to leave the pool, from supporting each other to just forgetting about their worries and just playing. Many of these pupils now go swimming almost every weekend – something they would have been unable to do!**
- **Swimming Enrichment has also been supported by parents, who have come to the pool to watch their children learn to swim and have been really impressed with how they have done.** Our pupils have also been commended by a member of the public who asked them to be mindful about not splashing her daughter with special needs, who was nil by mouth. The pupils were extremely respectful of the mother and her daughter. The mother (the wife of an ex WHS teacher) later sat by the pool and spoke to some of the pupils in Arabic, and she commented on how well - behaved the pupils were.
- The swimming staff at the pool have really enjoyed working with the pupils and we are now discussing setting up a swimming gala with other schools, and early morning training sessions for some pupils who are interested.

## Evaluating Outcomes

- Sustainable, leads to a cycle of healthier lifestyles.
- Pupils have learned to swim and cycle.
- Pupils have joined Boulders club outside of school.
- Pupils have joined the gym outside of school.
- Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
- Combined with healthy cooking sessions. Recipes shared with families.



# Evaluating Outcomes

Attendance 21/12/2022 – 17/05/23

Enrichment Wednesday	Non-Enrichment Wednesday
87.96%	71.94%
86.1%	82.47%
85.17%	84.65%
84.96%	76.24%
82.98%	83.71%
84.05%	84.02%
85.63%	84.64%
83.64%	84.70%



## Pupil Feedback

“I’ve loved trying new things.”

“I’ll keep it up.”

“Enrichment has given us so many chances to try different sports. We love that we have a choice.”

## Parent Feedback

“I think it’s a great initiative.”

“Just had to share something really nice from Enrichment this afternoon. A parent of one of the boys with Helen in the pool came over to the STAR centre to watch her son because she was so delighted he was learning to swim!”

## Staff Feedback

“Enrichment has ensured that our pupils have taken part in life-enhancing activities and experiences. It is a pleasure to see the smiles as pupils exit school on a Wednesday afternoon.”

“My Willows Enrichment activity provides our pupils with the opportunity to access the local sports centre and make use of the state of the art health and fitness equipment. In addition to this the pupils are supervised and supported by a qualified PT instructor who is on hand to guide, support and educate our pupils as well as keep them safe. This is an extremely popular enrichment option, and pupils enjoy spending time outside of school in a different environment. **In many ways this type of safe access breaks down barriers for many of our pupils who have never had the confidence or opportunity to access local public facilities before. In turn this has a positive impact on the community as a whole, building relationships with adults and local businesses/organisations, as well as helping to instil health and fitness lifestyle habits in our learners. ”**

## Staff Feedback

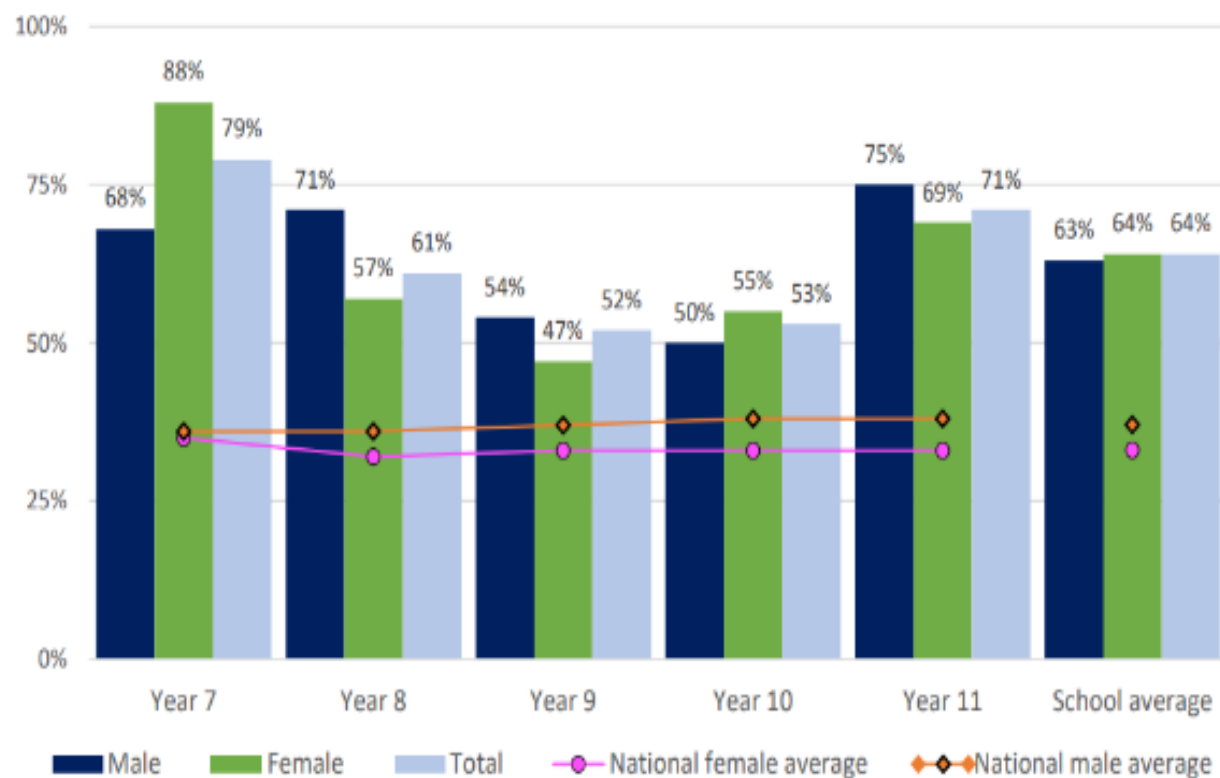
“Pupils have had the opportunity to try new things and learn new skills and pupil engagement has been excellent. Working in groups away from their form classes has allowed them to mix with pupils from other year groups and allowed them to develop new friendships. I have seen pupils grow in confidence in themselves throughout the sessions.”

“I'd like to give a 'Shout Out' to Jane for the Enrichment sessions, and to Jack for sorting out the swimming. It was lovely to see so many happy faces in the pool today. **A real positive was seeing pupils swim for the first time and how proud they were.**”

## Next Steps

- Continue to encourage pupils to partake in different activities.
- Continue forging links with community groups and local businesses.
- Continue working with pupil voice to adapt and improve.
- Updated termly booklet for pupil choice.

Fig. 7 Willows High School: Students whose main part of their journey to school is walking or cycling



Ysgol Teithio Llesol



Active Travel School

## Willows High School Active Travel Plan

**Our Active Travel Pledge:** We pledge to work towards the actions on our plan to become an Active Travel School and increase pupils and staff walking and cycling to school.

Action	Who is responsible?	When will it be completed?	What will success look like?	Next Step
More school starters to travel by foot	CA/Parents	Sept 2024	School starters sign	More starters sign



# Discussed:

- Street lights along dark pathways.
- Where bike storage should be placed.
- Security.
- Gates to get into parks.
- Crossings.
- **Next Steps**
- Active Travel will send revised plan.
- Active Travel will be meeting pupils in the yard to discuss plans.
- Active Travel will join assemblies.
- Active Travel will continue to work with student council.

**The Willows Way**

Thank you!