



## CASE STUDY :: 04

## LOCATION

UK

# Playing for success

**OBJECTIVES**

Improving literacy and numeracy

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Department for Education and Skills *Playing for Success* initiative establishes out of school hours study support centres at football clubs and other sports grounds. Centres are managed by experienced teachers who use the medium and environment of sport to support work in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, and provide facilities for pupils to complete their homework

Centres are equipped with the latest ICT facilities and are open after school hours, at the weekend and in the holidays. Typically, each pupil attends a two hour session each week for 10 weeks. Centres have strong links with schools to ensure that Centre Managers understand pupils' needs and schools recognise pupils' achievements at the centre.

Strategies for learning include:

- enabling pupils to meet players
- getting pupils to complete player profiles
- using the ground for practical tasks
- using sports-themed software
- opportunities for pupils to play sport, including coaching in sports skills
- club merchandise or match tickets offered as incentives and rewards
- a celebration event to congratulate pupils on completing their course, including the presentation of certificates or prizes

**PURPOSE**

- to improve pupils' attitudes and motivation
- to learn to raise literacy, numeracy and ICT standards amongst Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils using the environment and medium of football/sport as motivational curriculum tools.

**PARTNERS**

- a DfES (Department for Education and Skills) initiative
- Football Association (FA) Premier League, the Nationwide League
- Local Authorities



## COST AND DATE

- established in 1997
- Funding is based on a partnership between DfES and Local Authorities, sports clubs and business sponsors.

## TARGET

Key stage 2 and 3 pupils who are underachieving, struggling or de-motivated, particularly those in urban areas

## STEPS

- 1 Pilot launched in 1997 in FA Premier League and Nationwide Division One clubs
- 2 Department for Education and Skills supported a small pilot extension in 2000.
- 3 The Football Foundation joined the initiative in 2002 to extend the programme to football clubs in Division 2 and below. A second roll-out extension began in October 2002 with a further extension in spring 2004.
- 4 Extension of programme to other sports (including rugby league/union, cricket, hockey, ice hockey, tennis, gymnastics, basketball and horseracing) through funding secured following the DfES finance review exercise.
- 5 In April 2005, 102 football and other sports' clubs have signed up to the full Playing for Success model and 89 have opened centres to date. Around 100,000 pupils have benefited so far, and over 40,000 will benefit each year when all centres are open.
- 6 The success and popularity of Playing for Success has resulted in the establishment of Playing for Success International, a pilot programme run by the British Council in connection with Dreams + Teams, linking six English football clubs with schools and football clubs in other countries. Each link is developing a project focused around citizenship and sharing cultures (Ipswich Town FC and Accra in Ghana - Project Kabom Leeds United FC and Johannesburg Liverpool FC and Barcelona FC Mascots Exchange Manchester City FC and Israel Manchester United FC and Perlis in Malaysia - "Let's Go There!" Newcastle United FC and Schalke '04 FC)

## OUTCOMES/IMPACT

Key findings from the recent evaluations show:

- on average primary pupils improved their numeracy scores by on average of 17 months, and secondary by 24 months
- while primary pupils' reading comprehension did not quite reach statistical significance, secondary pupils' performance improved by 8 months
- pupils ICT skills improved significantly
- pupils made significant progress in their independent study skills and self image, and parents and teachers noticed particular improvements in their attitudes to education
- PfS reached its target group of underachieving pupils with improvements regardless of gender, deprivation, ethnicity or fluency in English.

Playing for Success shows that motivating children *to learn through sport works*. It's the magic of football, rugby, cricket and the heroes they produce that children love. Playing for Success is incredibly popular with pupils, parents and teachers and is boosting the skills, self-esteem and motivation of thousands of children. It demonstrates the value of partnership between schools and the community. As Secretary of State I am delighted to see Playing for Success going from strength to strength (quoted in DfES 2003b: 1, emphasis added).

## BENEFITS

*Playing for Success* has proved popular with pupils, parents and schools has contributed to improved attitudes, motivation and self-esteem The initiative has contributed to improved academic skills and achievement has reached its target group of underachieving pupils

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Researchers identified the football/sports clubs setting as one of the key factors for the initiative's success. It motivated pupils to become involved and made them feel privileged to be selected, rather than singled out as in need of extra help. Once at the centres, pupils responded positively to many aspects of the work, in particular, using computers and the Internet.
- The centre staff student mentors encouraged pupils to become more self-reliant in their learning. Pupils received feedback on their progress. There were opportunities for pupils to make choices and to develop independent study skills. All these elements contributed to pupils' progress and sense of achievement.
- Support from LEAs and clubs
- Involving the players
- Quality staffing
- Good liaison between centres and schools.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

*Playing for Success* email post box.

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