

## Secondary Teacher Training case study (Pilot): Ninestiles: An Academy

*Please note: the pilot phase of the Secondary Teacher Training Programme ran from July 2018 to July 2019. Individual schools were awarded a larger amount of funding than those participating in the national rollout. The intended programme outcomes were the same as those for the national rollout. Schools were selected to represent the diverse nature of schools across England.*

### Background to your school

Ninestiles, An Academy is a mixed comprehensive academy situated in Acocks Green, Birmingham. It is part of the Summit Learning Trust with over 1,400 students. Ninestiles converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2011. The proportion of pupils for whom the academy receives the Pupil Premium is well over the national average at around 52% (compared to 14% nationally). The number of pupils who do not have English as a first language is also very high (41%) compared with the national average (16%).

The PE department itself (now the 'HAL team'), comprises a head of department and seven staff, all with different teaching allocations, depending upon their role in the school. Staff range from a Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) to Senior Leaders (SLT), and six out of the eight staff have 9+ years' teaching experience.

### Intent: what did you want to change?

Before beginning their Sport England project, the PE department had already considered rebranding themselves to the 'Healthy Active Lifestyles' team (HAL). As part of this project they conducted a thorough self-review of their curriculum, out of school hours and competition offer, which identified:

- PE was considered not as important as 'core' subjects by SLT, with a reduction in lesson time and frequent disruptions (e.g. exams, students taken out of PE for additional study support).
- Large numbers of students were disengaged in lessons, with limited competition take-up.
- 23% of students attended extra-curricular clubs in 2017/18 – the clubs focused on competition so many students turned off or away.
- The school's Active Survey data revealed that only 16% of students were active every day. 43% of students did less than 30 mins of activity each day.

With support and mentoring from their Secondary Teacher Training consultant, the newly branded HAL team spent a lot of time undertaking academic research, carrying out a thorough self-review and working with staff and students to understand their views in more detail so any changes were needs-driven. Engaging with students was a critical part of the planning process, and revealed the following insights:

- There were limited options for activity in rainy weather
- There was a desire for choice in what sports and activities they could do
- Students didn't feel that there was enough space at break and lunchtimes for everybody to be active.
- Lots of students lacked the confidence to be active in lessons and with peers.
- There was a significant challenge for the school in engaging girls and SEND pupils in physical activity.

### Implementation: how did you do it?

#### **Healthy Active Lifestyles: rebranding and promotion – a whole school approach**

Ninestiles developed and launch a new Healthy Active Lifestyles (HAL) team within the school, to instigate a culture change and a new holistic approach showing that academic achievement can be balanced with improving the broader health and wellbeing of students. A series of information leaflets were also produced, alongside presentations at parents' evenings and open days to secure engagement from students, parents, and staff.

HAL principles have been embedded across the school, with teachers from the languages, science and history departments supporting the project by introducing elements of physical activity into their lessons. In addition to this, the school introduced a sensory learning project in English, specific inclusion and SEND projects, and, alongside encouragement for healthy eating, an intervention to improve access to water during lessons and educate pupils on the importance of hydration.

Part of the project focused on teaching parents the benefits of HAL. Instead of the usual meetings at parents' evenings, HAL staff used the time to give support and guidance to parents' around how they could help promote healthy lifestyles at home.

To gain buy-in across the school the HAL team presented the plan to other members of staff, focusing on the principles of what they were trying to achieve, as well as wellbeing and student engagement. The HAL team also continued to share the impact of the project with members of the senior leadership team, governors and wider school staff.

### **Creating a team of ambassadors to support and embed the project**

The HAL team recruited a team of staff and students as ‘HAL ambassadors’ from across the school to embed and share good practice. 40 HAL student ambassadors were given clear roles to support the project including: creating a new school tie to represent HAL, leading surveys about changes to extra-curricular clubs, contributing to the review of assessment procedures and designing a new kit for active lessons. The ambassadors were also tasked with undertaking peer-to-peer conversations and advocacy on a continued basis.

### **Curriculum and assessment review**

Ninestiles changed their standardised curriculum PE and sport delivery to a wider focus of health and activity. Pupils are now educated about physical activity and health and every lesson develops knowledge and understanding of physical, mental and social wellbeing. For example, the effects of exercise, sedentary lifestyles, nutrition, body image, stress, relaxation, sleep, communication and teamwork to improve social wellbeing to name just a sample of the topics taught. Assessment procedures were reviewed to move away from a judgement on sporting ability to a focus on student’s understanding of how to live a healthy, active lifestyle and why it is important for well-being. A ‘passport to HAL’ programme was developed for Year 7 students to support a healthy active lifestyle at home as well as at school.

### **Amended extra-curricular programme**

Following consultation with students and staff, the HAL team introduced a range of new activities and increased the number of extra-curricular clubs to 45 each week (including morning clubs). Table tennis tables were made available outside of lessons to help students be active at break and lunchtimes.

### **Impact: did it work?**

As a result of this ambitious project, staff at Ninestiles have reported improved attitudes, better engagement and improvements in attainment amongst pupils across a range of subjects. Pupils see the importance of the subject and the profile of physical activity and its importance has been raised. HAL is described as an inclusive project which has resulted in less children feeling uncomfortable and improved engagement in PE and school sport.

The range and choice of activities, which have been influenced by student voice, are helping to broaden engagement and the pupils are all more informed about both what is on offer and how it may benefit them. They’ve seen great improvements in student’s activity levels too. Survey data collected from Year 7 pupils has shown that 38% now undertake more physical activity each week. Also, 46% feel happier as a result of the introduction of HAL and related initiatives, 32% feel the same (but of these 88% already felt happy). Pupil engagement in extra-curricular clubs increased significantly, from 331 pupils in 2017/18 to 609 in 2018/19, an increase of 84%.

### **Learning and next steps**

The support provided to staff across the school was fundamental in providing the necessary confidence to be creative and try out new ideas. Without dedicated support from the HAL team, it is unlikely that the initiative would've built momentum as quickly or got the necessary buy-in to instigate a change in the culture around being healthy and active.

Liaising with pastoral teams to focus on the role of a HAL on personal development helped to consolidate HAL as an important subject.

### **Top tips?**

1. Engage students and non-PE staff to become engaged through specific roles, i.e. as ambassadors.
2. Raise the profile of PE, School Sport and Physical Activity (PESSPA)/HAL across the school not just in the PE department area.
3. Engage members of SLT who are not currently PESSPA “supporters” and identify at least one Governor to support developments.
4. Be flexible with your approach. There will be aspects which work and some which don’t. Treat

Ninestiles did find that the gender gap identified at the start of the project is still evident, despite some successes in terms of engagement (particularly in Year 7). Ninestiles plan to build on the successful projects and roll out the HAL approach further where timetabling and resources allow.

it as an ongoing process rather than a finished article. We are constantly tweaking our curriculum to meet the needs of our students.

**SLT testimonial:**

"[The project lead] and his team are really cutting edge and he's changed the perceptions of how we [SLT] view things. We're finding it's feeding into [performance] even our English exams. They're more knowledgeable about the impact that it has. They're talking about how exercise is good for stress relief, it releases endorphins... Students feel empowered. They feel that they are more informed to make those [healthier] choices. And it's not this short-term thing, it's long-term, it's strategic. Parents are taught how to support their child through what they're eating, how they're sleeping, what they're doing, all the things that some parents are not necessarily educated in."