



# Evaluation of the 'Active Education Beyond the School Day' Programme

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September 2022



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## Executive Summary

To explore Active Educations Settings in a Welsh context, [Sport Wales](#) established the 'Active Education Beyond the School Day' (AEBSD) programme. The [Welsh Institute of Physical Activity Health and Sport](#) (WIPAHS) were commissioned by Sport Wales to support the evaluation of the programme and draw insight from the data collected in order to provide recommendations for future implementation.

### Background

- In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO published global standards for [Health Promoting Schools](#), stating schools are a key setting to influence behaviours of children, young people and wider cohorts of the population. In the [WHO \(2022\) policy brief](#), two of six evidenced-based domains for increasing physical activity in schools are 'active before- and after-school programme's' and 'inclusive approaches to physical activity'.
- The [New Curriculum in Wales](#) presents an opportunity to create the right environment and experiences to support young people in developing the skills, confidence, motivation, knowledge and understanding to enjoy being physically active for life. One label applied to this approach is 'Active Education Settings'. A literature review of international evidence on active education settings (Marshall & Rees, 2021) concluded that a sporting offer through increasing accessibility to school facilities could be beneficial to increasing community engagement with physical activity and the improvement of health and well-being.
- A total of 13 individual schools and one federation, from across Wales took part in the pilot. All schools were categorised as mainstream schools. However, several pilot schools had allocated learning resource base classes and those pupils with additional learning needs were catered for within several of the pilot schools. [Table 1](#) displays the demographic characteristics of the schools and illustrates the diversity of the schools. A range of data collection tools were used to capture the breadth of data (see Box 2).
- This report presents the findings in line with the evaluation [research questions](#):
  - [Section 1: Individual School Case Studies](#)
  - [Section 2: Combined School Case Study](#)
  - [Section 3: Sharing Best Practice](#)

#### Active Education Settings are defined as:

*Proactive schools that provide access to sport and physical activity opportunities beyond the school day, through the utilisation of their facilities, when necessary, to serve the needs of the community.*

## Key Findings

- Each school proposed and administered their own version of the AEBSD programme (see [Section One](#)). To illustrate the journey of each school, individual case studies are provided. Examples of key school focuses are:
  - Develop an inclusive offer for different groups in the schools (e.g. LGBTQ+ community, pupils with additional learning needs, disengaged girls)
  - Develop extracurricular opportunities through upskilling school staff, especially learning support assistants
  - Support the Traveller communities through community provision in an area of high deprivation and anti-social behaviour
  - Collaboration between sport and youth services; a school as a safe space to be active for all groups, especially for the Traveller community
  - Develop a relationship between a school and a local leisure centre and increase community cohesion in rural villages in Wales
- Box A shows examples of attendees at the AEBSD programme engaging in activities and an example of a material made by the school to support the programme. Further pictorial evidence is displayed in [Section One](#).



### Pupils Perspective

- Pupils were asked, via a survey in July 2022 (121 completed), to reflect on their experience of participating in the AEBSD sessions. Overall:



99% of pupils rated the overall experience of the sessions as good



99% of pupils felt confident when attending the sessions



100% of pupils were likely to recommend these sessions to someone



95% of pupils were likely to continue attending the sessions

Data were presented at individual school level for four schools. Around 8 in 10 pupils in three of the four schools who completed the pupil survey reported increases in the physical activity levels. The school which had the highest reported repeated attendance, 75% of pupils reported attending more than 10 sessions, nearly all (99%) stayed in school to attend.

### Staff Perspective

Figure A shows the positive experiences and the areas for improvement drawn from the focus groups and interviews with pupils and staff, respectively. This is important as it shows where perceptions and interpretations between the two audiences are aligned and differ. Addressing the challenges could help strength future implementation of the programme.

### Impact of the Programme

Eleven schools submitted reflective learning logs, which were reviewed to understand the perceived impact on the school. Focused on three specific areas, the following headline impacts were reported:

- i) *Educational Priorities* - Schools recorded a positive impact on pupil behaviour. Organised after-school activities provided a safe space for pupils to go to, often where there was little else available for young people in the neighbourhood. In addition, the programme became an effective tool to teach pupils to manage their emotions and learn self-control. Staff perceived pupils improved their confidence, self-esteem, and resilience. The programme helped deliver cross-curriculum benefits as well as collaborative learning between schools.
- ii) *Sport and Physical Activity* – All schools highlighted that the pilot project had, in their anecdotal opinion, resulted in increased levels of physical activity and sports participation. Schools reported increased participation in dance by boys, and the re-engagement of disengaged girls back into physical education. As a result of the opportunities, physical skills were developing and schools observed a better standard of performance, equipping pupils with the foundations that could lead them to exit routes of community-based provision
- iii) *Community Cohesion* - One benefit of the pilot project has been the ability to offer new opportunities for private providers, local authority teams, and National





Governing Bodies (NGBs) to connect with potential participants. The programme has improved many of the schools' relationships with parents, as well as potentially contributing to reduced anti-social behaviour.

### *Motivations for Becoming an Active Education Setting*

With an outcome of the pilot being to create active education settings, schools were asked to select the key reasons as to why becoming such a setting was important to them. The top three reasons identified were:

1. To improve pupils' health and well-being
2. To give pupils access to active opportunities
3. To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of being physically active because it is an important part of their educational experience and development

### *Suggested Support Requirements for Implementation*

- Teachers and supporting sports organisations outlined for successful implementation to take place, the following should be considered:
  -  Funding (e.g., for instructor-led activities and school staff support)
  -  Coaching staff
  -  Transport provision
  -  Regular touchpoints to share good practice
  -  Support to build networks
- Further in-depth top tips from schools for transforming a school into an active education setting were:
  - Be community- and partnership-focused - undertake consultation with pupils and the community to meet their needs, and connect with local clubs
  - Consider sustainability from the outset and integrate contingency budget
  - Write a plan, review, commit and engage - be realistic
  - Work with Sports Development Teams
  - Consider allocating an initiative coordinator and getting enthusiastic staff involved

*"Finally... Don't give up! Stand back and watch –  
you'll be amazed [at] what you've done!"*

*Headteacher*

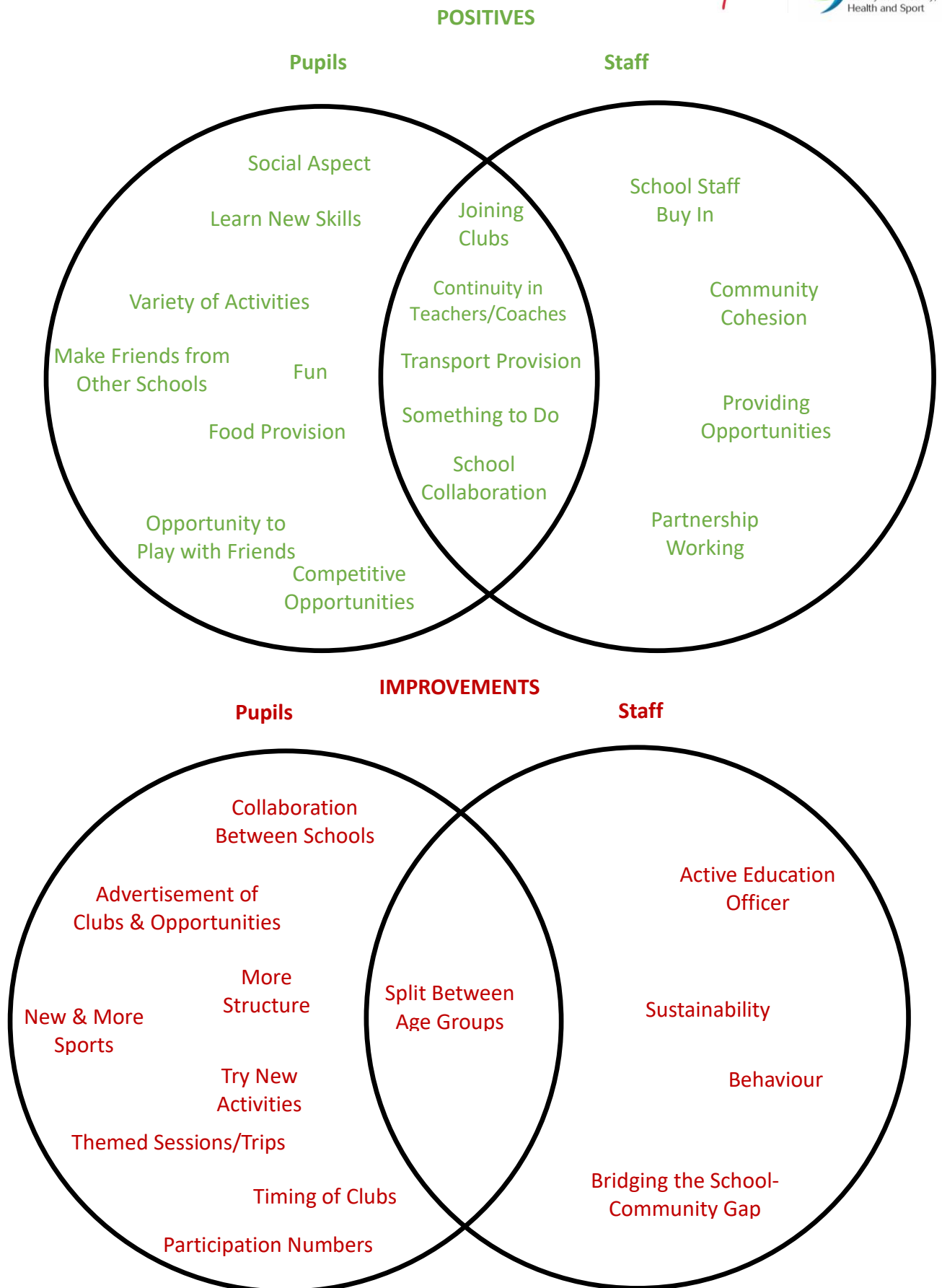


Figure A: Positives and improvements of the AEBSD programme identified by pupils and school staff through qualitative measures

## Discussion

- The findings of the programme have been contextualised by each of the evaluation research questions within the [Discussion](#).
- Successful practices and challenges identified in this pilot project were consistent with those found in the international evidence. It is important to achieve senior leadership buy-in for the programme to be ambitious and to drive implementation forward.
- To be sustainable, the programme should be informed by what the end users want to participate in and should connect with the wider community. Schools highlighted the challenge of continuing the programme from a cost perspective, particularly those who invested their funding in people and not infrastructure and equipment. Sourcing ways of continuing to deliver these programmes will be paramount to the sustained success.
- The demographics of the schools taking part in the pilot highlighted that many were situated in some challenging areas in Wales. This is evidenced by some schools reporting a target of decreasing anti-social behaviour and stating that the police have reported a reduction in crime within the surrounding communities. Providing opportunities to children and young people in clean, safe, and stimulating environments is critical. All schools should be active education settings and capturing the wider holistic benefits of the programme would be beneficial to further understand the impact of the programme. Increasing the collaboration between schools and local authorities would be beneficial to identify measures that are already in place, as well as support interdependent working.

## Recommendations

Based on these findings of the pilot project, the following **key recommendations** are suggested:

### Recommendation 1:

*Develop a clear message on the purpose of the AEBSD programme, taking into consideration the evidence presented in the evaluation as to why pupils attended (e.g. learn new skills).*

Whilst the primary outcome is currently designed to increase physical activity levels, focusing on more holistic outcomes such as social interaction, curriculum engagement, improved well-being of staff and pupils, qualities and experiences that result from taking part can motivate attendance which, in turn, increases physical activity.

### Recommendation 2:

### *Undertake continued evaluation of the AEBSD programme*

The evaluation should include objective measures (e.g. physical activity), and linking planning and evaluation together using recognised tools and approaches. This will also capture ongoing changes to the environment and developing children and young people as agents of their own health. Repetition of the same measures is advantageous to enable comparisons.

#### **Recommendation 3:**

### *Develop a systems approach to the national implementation of the AEBSD programme*

As the school does not function in isolation, understanding the connections and impact of the programme with and on partners is important. Schools need to operationalise at a local level at the outset (e.g. with their local authority education leads), and then build to regional. This approach will also help bridge the gap between schools and community sports groups, but also consider where deficits in the community may occur as a result of the programme (e.g. local leisure centre gym membership).

#### **Recommendation 4:**

### *Develop a AEBSD toolkit for schools*

The toolkit should set out a framework of ideas for how they become an active education setting. The toolkit could consider the following, non-exhaustive, ideas:

- Consultation with end-users, including those supporting attendance and attenders
- Create a pupil voice group
- Assessment of current provision to identify gaps
- Governance structure
- Communication methods, with suggestions of phrasing
- Arranging travel provision, including aiding active travel
- Equal opportunity across the ages to ensure the programme is inclusive
- Sustainability plans

#### **Recommendation 5:**

### *Develop a sustainable funding model to support schools to initiate and continue the programme*

As schools have autonomy on how they deliver the programme, they should have autonomy on how the funding is spent. Successful implementation has funded provision through outsourcing external provision whilst others have funded equipment.

## Introduction

To explore Active Educations Settings in a Welsh context, Sport Wales established the ‘Active Education Beyond the School Day’ (AEBSD) programme. The [Welsh Institute of Physical Activity Health and Sport](#) (WIPAHS) were commissioned by Sport Wales to support the evaluation of the programme and draw insight from the data collected in order to provide recommendations for future implementation. This report covers the data collected by Sport Wales from January 2022 and analysed by WIPAHS until August 2022.

## Background

The benefits of physical activity are irrefutable ([Chaput et al, 2020](#)). The Chief Medical Officers (CMO; 2019) guidelines [recommend](#) that “*children and young people should engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day, across the week,*” including “*a variety of types and intensities...to develop movement skills, muscular fitness, and bone strength.*” However, globally, physical activity levels in young people remain consistently low, with an estimated 80% of young people being insufficiently active ([Guthold et al., 2020](#)). In Wales specifically, the [School Health Research Network](#) reported that only around 1 in 5 (17%) young people met the recommended physical activity guidelines. It is important to note that this data was pre-pandemic, and it remains unclear what impact the pandemic has had, and may continue to have, on these statistics. With a strong message from the 2019 CMO guidelines of “*more is better*”, identifying novel, sustainable ways which consider a systems-level approach is required to support young people to be physically active. [Sport Wales School Sport Survey 2022](#), which will release figures in Autumn 2022, will provide an initial indication of the current state of physical activity and sport engagement post-COVID-19 pandemic.

*“Children and young people should engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average OF AT LEAST 60 minutes per day across the week”*  
CMO Guidelines 2019

In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO published global standards for [Health-Promoting Schools](#). Schools are a key setting to influence behaviours of children, young people, and wider cohorts of the population. This is due to the extended time children and young people spend in schools and that schools are often a focal point of a community. The [WHO \(2022\) policy brief](#) on promoting physical activity through schools’ highlights six evidenced-based domains for increasing physical activity in schools, and two of those focus upon ‘active before- and after-school programmes’ and ‘inclusive approaches to physical activity’.

WHO defines physical activity as “*any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activity refers to all movement including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person’s work.*”

### New Curriculum for Wales

The new curriculum in Wales presents an opportunity to create the optimal environment and experiences to support young people in developing the skills, confidence, motivation, knowledge and understanding to enjoy being physically active for life. One label applied to this approach is ‘Active Education Settings’.

### Active Education Settings

Sport Wales defined ‘Active Education Settings’ as:

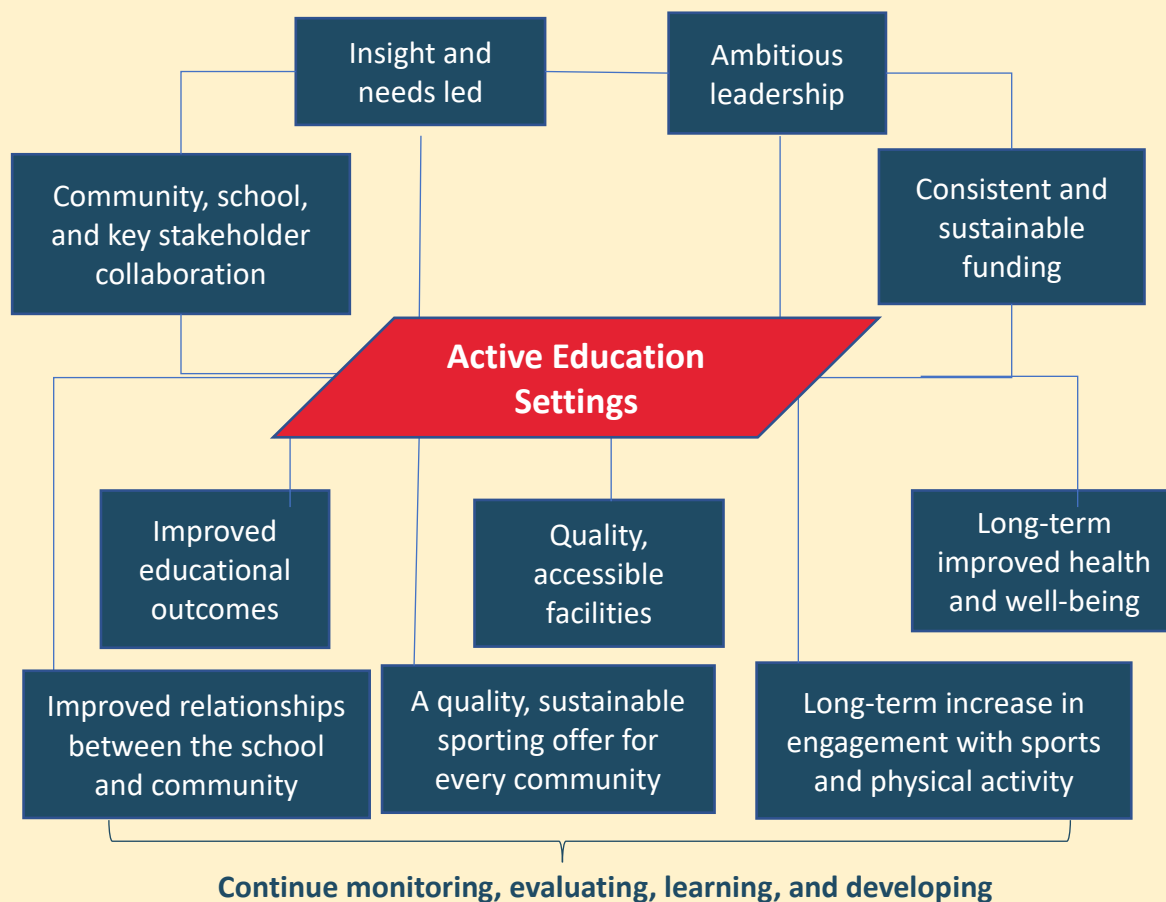
*Proactive schools that provide access to sport and physical activity opportunities beyond the school day, through the utilisation of their facilities, when necessary, serve the needs of their community.*

In 2021, the [Welsh Labour Manifesto](#) promised to realise the commitment of creating community-focused schools. Sport Wales responded with the development of the ‘Active Education Settings’ which have a focus on physical activity, while community-focused schools also focus on art, play and family engagement. Welsh Government allocated funding to Sport Wales and the Arts Council to develop community-focused schools as they saw appropriate.

As part of the first phase of this stream of work, Sport Wales undertook a literature review of the international evidence available on the impact of active education settings, including a focus on policy and practice (see Marshall & Rees, 2021 for full review). The review found that the opening of school settings for physical activity opportunities outside of the curriculum time or traditional school day could have a positive impact on making sporting opportunities available more inclusively. Box 1 summarises the consensus from the review regarding what is required to create an active education setting. However, understanding *how* such approaches can be applied sustainably and aligned to specific local needs remains under-researched.



**Box 1.** Schematic illustration of the key findings regarding the international evidence of creating an active education setting



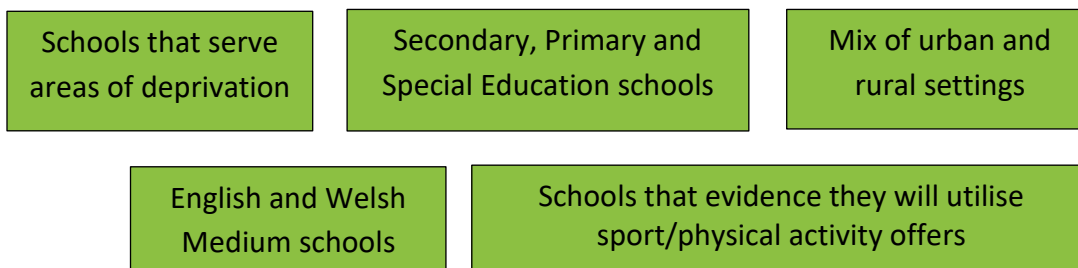
Sport Wales states that creating active education settings, which are accessible to all, will help young people in Wales to thrive. Active education settings refer to promoting high-quality sport and physical activity inside and outside of the school curriculum. Further, Sport Wales has advocated for the opening of school sport facilities beyond the traditional school day, and this process evaluation seeks to determine the feasibility and acceptability of such an approach. This pilot project focused on the opening of school sites, beyond the school day, including evenings, weekends, and school holidays.

#### ‘Active Education Beyond the School Day’ Programme

In October 2021, all schools in Wales were invited, in collaboration with their Local Authority Sport/Leisure and Education Leads, to submit an Expression of Interest. In submitting their Expression of Interest, the school and supporting local authority agreed to the following statement:

*Schools and the supporting local authority will work with Sport Wales to support the learning from the pilot. This will include baseline, monitoring, and evaluation information.*

The school inclusion criteria set by Sport Wales were as follows:



Schools were required to outline a proposal of how their schools would operate as an active education setting to facilitate sport and physical activity sessions for pupils, families, and the wider community. Schools were required to consider their environment to make the proposal most suitable to the target audience and meet local needs. This meant no proposals were the same, and the sporting offer was individualised. Schools were required to make the sporting offer accessible to the “community”, however, the term was self-defined. As a result, “community” could be defined as either the “school community” or the “wider community”. Within these labels, school community could refer to pupils only, or pupils and parents, and wider community could refer to pupils from neighbouring schools, as well members of the public either individually or through local community clubs/groups.



As a result, “community” could be defined as either the “school community” or the “wider community”. Within these labels, school community could refer to pupils only, or pupils and parents, and wider community could refer to pupils from neighbouring schools, as well members of the public either individually or through local community clubs/groups.

The shortlisting panel who reviewed the applications and selected which schools were eligible to participate in the pilot involved:

- Sport Wales Members of staff from varying teams including the: Education Lead, Foundations and Participation Lead, Policy Lead, Local Authority Officer, Investment Team representative and a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Welsh Government Community Focused Schools Team

Each pilot school was responsible for implementing the sporting offer outlined in their proposal. The sporting offer was to be a part of the school’s usual practice and therefore covered under standard education processes and policies for children, young people, and adults to take part. Where permission was required, schools were to seek and store the permission in accordance with their usual practices. Who attended the organised sessions was at the directive of the school; not Sport Wales or WIPAHS.

## Method

### Evaluation Framework

#### Research Questions

The research questions designed by Sport Wales to evaluate the programme were as follows:

1. What enables a school to become an active education setting?
2. What is the impact of a school becoming an active education setting?
  - The impact it has on the vision for sport and Sport Wales strategy
  - The impact it has on physical activity levels
  - The impact it has on education priorities including attendance
3. What can ensure the active education approach becomes sustainable and embedded into school development plans?

#### Responsibilities

The evaluation was predominantly designed and developed by Sport Wales. WIPAHs were commissioned following a competitive tender process in March 2022 (six months after project inception) and upon appointment provided input to project materials and data collection tools to further shape and refine.

#### Data Collection

This study employed a mixed-methods design, using a range of data collection methods (see Box 2). At the outset of the programme, due to the nature of the work the school was seeking to implement, three schools were selected to participate in the evaluation as longitudinal schools. This meant these three schools took part in additional measures over multiple time-points. All schools received financial support to relieve school staff to participate in monitoring and evaluation aspects of the programme. Further detail on each of the data collection methods is presented in [Appendix 1](#).

#### **Box 2.** Data collection methods

1. Expression of interest
2. School forums
3. Learning logs
4. Attendance registers
5. Staff structured interview
6. Child-level survey

#### *Additional measures for three longitudinal schools*

1. Staff semi-structured interviews
2. Children's focus groups

## Findings









A total of 13 individual schools and one federation, consisting of a cluster of three primary schools, from across Wales took part in the pilot project (Table 1). Ten schools were primary, five were secondary, and one a 3-16 years school. Although all the schools were classed as mainstream schools, several pilot schools had allocated learning resource base classes and those pupils with additional learning needs were catered for within several of the pilot schools. Schools received funding at different times across the academic year and continued to be impacted by COVID-19 to varying degrees, and consequently were (and are) at varying stages of their programme implementation and delivery. Timeframes across schools are therefore not directly comparable.

Due to this variability, it is important to consider how the different variances of the programmes have been administered. As a result, each school's progress is evaluated on an individual school perspective, and then a wider perspective is taken across the schools to reflect their experiences and share learning for future delivery of the programme.







This section is separated into three sections:

1. [Section One: Individual School Case Studies](#)
2. [Section Two: Combined School Case Study](#)
3. [Section Three: Sharing Best Practice](#)

**Table 1.** Schools participating in the AEBSD Pilot and their demographics

Name of School	Local Authority	No. of Pupils	% Eligible for Free School Meals^	% Special Educational Needs^	% English Additional Language^	% Ethnic Minority^
 <a href="#">Deighton</a>	Blaenau Gwent	177	45.2	4.8	*	4.9
 <a href="#">Johnston Community</a>	Pembrokeshire	210	16.0	36.0	2.5	3.5
 <a href="#">Maindee</a>	Newport	494	25.9	21.5	79.2	87.2
 <a href="#">Sofrydd</a>	Blaenau Gwent	163	29.3	15.8	*	4.2
 <a href="#">St Anthony's RC</a>	Flintshire	97	31.5	14.8	14.8	27.2
 <a href="#">St Ethelwold's Church in Wales</a>	Flintshire	102	42.8	35.8	14.9	19.4
 <a href="#">The Point of Ayr Federation</a>	Flintshire	52	36.2	19.0	0.0	*
Ysgol Gronant		83	15.4	10.0	0.0	8.3
Ysgol Bryn Gwalia		168	40.4	21.1	*	*
 <a href="#">Welshpool Church In Wales</a>	Powys	283	31.8	38.1	18.3	24.8

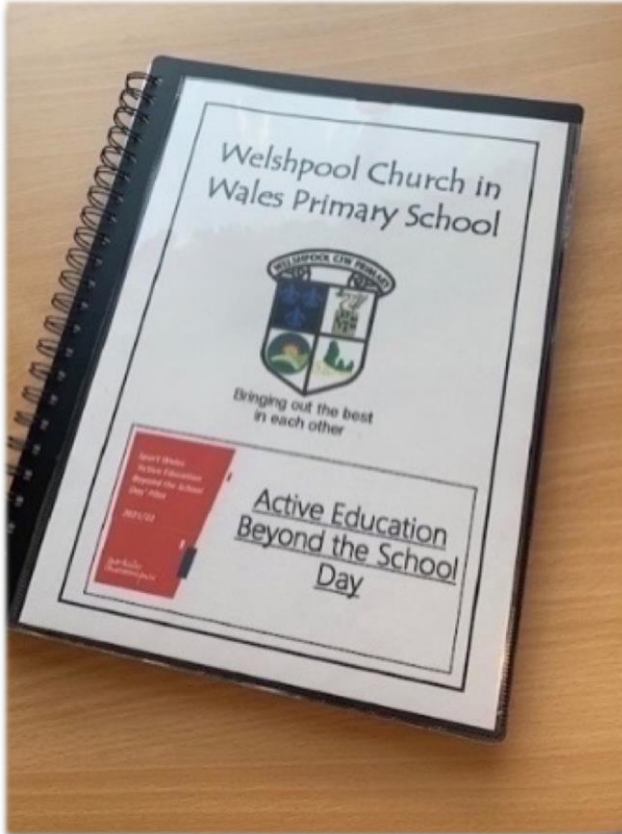
Primary

3-18		<a href="#">Ysgol Henry Richard</a>	Ceredigion	326	12.8	33.1	2.4	3.5
Secondary		<a href="#">Ysgol y Grango</a>	Wrexham	562	27.1	8.9	2.7	4.8
		<a href="#">Dylan Thomas</a>	Swansea	500	50.7	58.3	5.6	15.2
		<a href="#">John Frost</a>	Newport	1,307	26.3	28.2	24.8	41.5
		<a href="#">Pencoedre</a>	Vale of Glamorgan	1,000	34.6	32.1	2.1	8.6
		<a href="#">West Monmouth School</a>	Torfaen	1,132	26.8	22.6	0.9	7.1
Wales				21.3	20.6	6.0	12.9	12.9

\* = Represents no data available; ^Data sourced from Pupil Level Annual School Census [StatsWales](#).

Section One: Individual School Case Studies





Deighton Primary School

**School Focus:** Develop the school as a community hub and outdoor fitness equipment provider.



### Expression of Interest Overview

Deighton Primary School serves the community of Tredegar, Blaenau Gwent. With almost half of the pupils eligible for free school meals (45.2%), it would suggest that local provision would be beneficial for the pupils within the area. The school identified that there was a lack of suitable and safe outdoor spaces for children and young people and the school sought to allocate the programme investment to enabling the school grounds to act as a community hub. The school planned that if the weather prohibited the use of the outdoors, the school hall could be utilised. The intention was for the funding to be spent on three overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Supplement additional paid hours for the caretaker and cleaners to ensure a clean and safe environment was provided in the evenings, as well as the next day for school
2. Purchase outdoor fitness equipment and associated equipment (e.g. flood lights)
3. External providers to deliver sessions

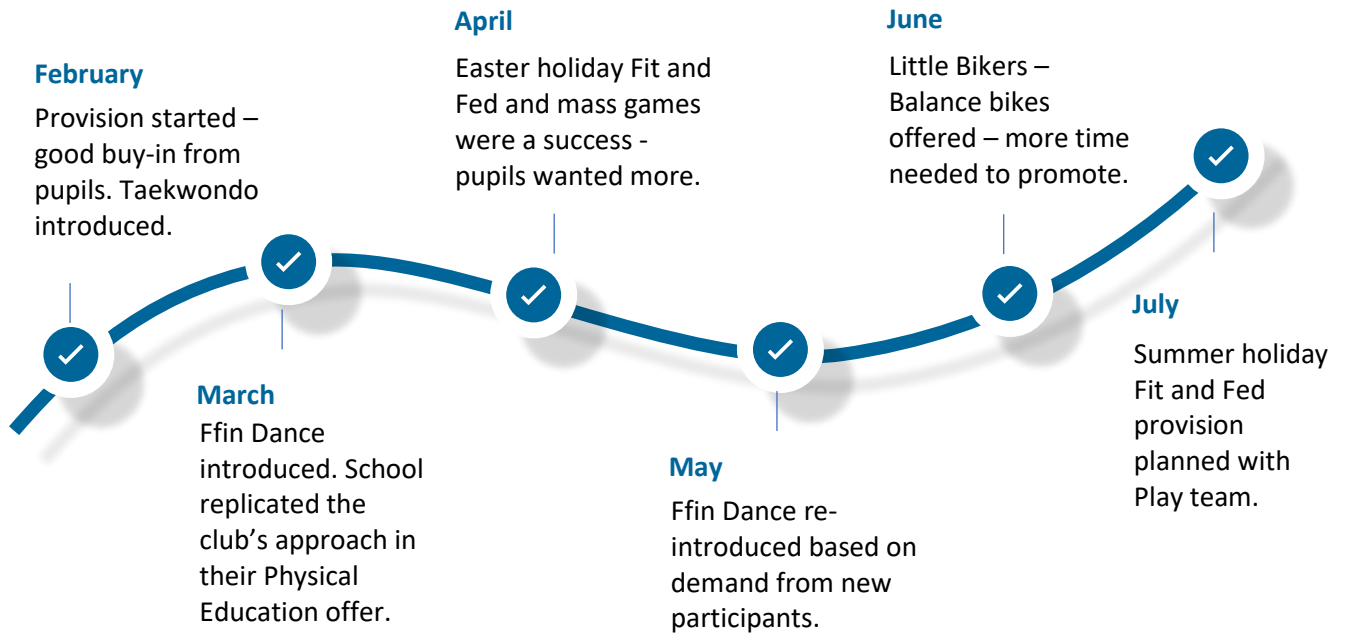
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from February to August 2022. Attendance numbers, recorded by the school, tailed off across the months, with greatest attendance in February (34 participants), followed by April (24 participants), and the least attendance in June (8 participants). Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as Taekwondo, dance, balance bikes, holiday Fit and Fed, and participant-led mass games.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 1.

- **What worked well:**
  - Ongoing consultation shaped provision
  - Holiday mass participation activity and using external providers to deliver new activities was very popular
  - Children and young people from an isolated community attended
  - Signposting to community offers
  - It was perceived by staff that pupil's physical activity levels increased
- **Learning points:**
  - Improve communication - allow more time to promote new activities and inform families at nearby schools
- **Next steps:**

- Explore cost reductions to support families in deprived communities
- Consider partnerships with Play and other agencies to develop further holiday provision



**Figure 1.** The school’s monthly reflections on programme implementation

*Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

The school will be seeking to embed the learning from the pilot into a sustainable long-term model to continue delivering the programme.

*The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Pupil’s survey*

## Dylan Thomas School

**School Focus:** Develop an inclusive offer for the LGBTQ+ community and children and young people with additional learning needs.



### Expression of Interest Overview

Dylan Thomas School serves Townhill, Swansea (one of the most deprived areas in Wales) with 50.7% of children eligible for free school meals and 58.3% of children with additional learning needs. The school was successful in a Sport Wales/Collaboration Fund investment to finance a new floodlit 3G training area on the school grounds. The new facility is already benefiting the wider community. However, additional provisions have been identified by user groups to maximise the use of the school facilities, such as access to indoor changing facilities and use of indoor facilities. The school consulted six pupils (some who identified as transgender) to design new gender-neutral changing rooms. The intention was for the AEBSD funding to be spent on the following three overarching areas to increase the offer of the school to the community in an inclusive manner:

1. Develop gender-neutral changing space in existing changing rooms
2. Additional hours for school sports co-ordinator
3. Provision of indoor sport equipment for after school and community use (e.g. fitness pack, storage)

### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from January to December 2022. Due to the nature of the funding and delays in the upgrading of the changing rooms, the programme is yet to be implemented as desired. As such, attendance data, monthly learning logs and pupil's survey will potentially be completed in the Autumn term.

### Next Steps – September 2022 onwards

Monitoring of sessions will be ongoing until December 2022. Impact, if any, of the changing room within the school community will be reported in a future report.

## John Frost School

**School Focus:** Transition from school to community, development of community clubs and exit routes into the sporting pathway. Provision of additional transport to enable pupils to return home later in the day.



### Expression of Interest Overview

John Frost School is a multi-cultural school (41.5% of pupils from an ethnic minority background) and serves multiple areas of deprivation within Newport, South East Wales. As part of the approach to developing an active education setting, the school conducted a pupil voice survey to help the senior management team identify what pupils perceived the barriers were in accessing extra-curricular provision. Based on the survey findings, regarding what barriers the pilot should seek to remove, the school's intention was for the AEBSD funding to be spent on the following three overarching areas to support increasing the offer of the school to the community in an inclusive manner:

1. Late bus from secondary school to the feeder communities
2. Pack lunch for pupils attending clubs
3. Fees associated with delivery including sports hall fee, providers, and registration fees

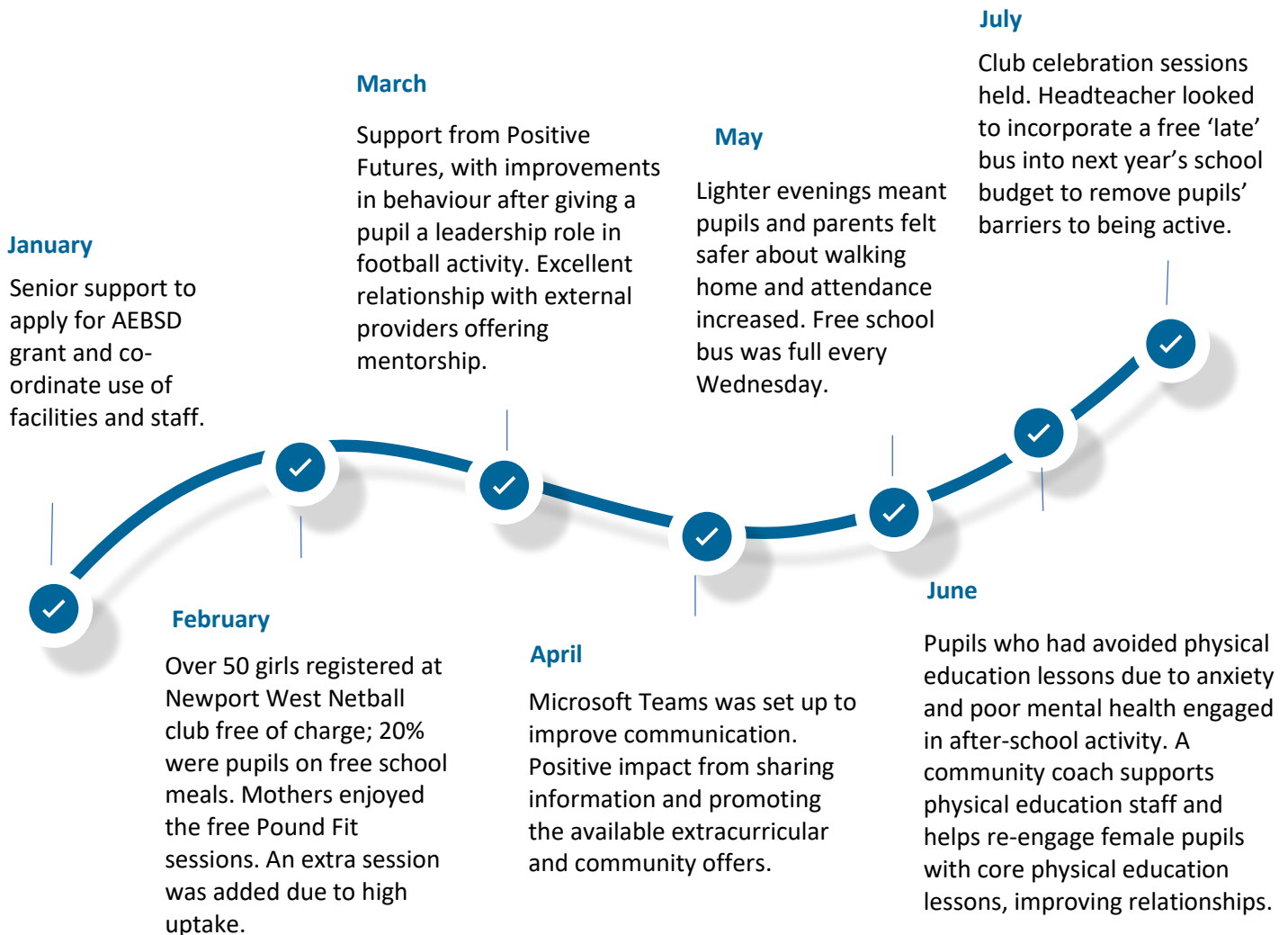
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from November 2021 to July 2022. Attendance numbers, recorded by the school, fluctuated across the months with the greatest attendance in March (1,243 participants) and May (1,128 participants). The lowest attendance was in January (307 participants), which was notably lower than most months, suggesting that once knowledge of the sessions circulated, attendance increased. Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering as Late bus, free 'Pound Fit' sessions for mums, variety of sports clubs, including netball and football and basketball, behaviour interventions, Well-being Wednesdays, and recreational sessions.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 2.

- **What worked well:**
  - A free bus removed the major barriers of transport and cost of participation
  - Improved participation rates from female pupils in Key Stage 4
  - Using leadership opportunities to address pupils' behaviour and improve their well-being
  - Using community providers who are familiar to pupils improved trust and participation levels
- **Learning points:**
  - Identify better ways of communicating with pupils to raise awareness of offers

- Challenges remain in supporting pupils to attend community sports clubs - cost and travel barriers will continue to need support
- **Next steps:**
  - Continue to collaborate with community partners and offer the late bus provision
  - School intends to prioritise pupil leadership across the school (not just in physical education lessons)



**Figure 2.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

### *Perceptions of Staff and Pupils*

Figure 3 shows the positive experiences and the areas for improvement drawn from the focus groups and interviews with pupils and staff, respectively. Overlap in pupils' and staff's positive perceptions was observed; for example, both reported the positive aspect of transport provision and the continuity of teachers. Pupils also reported that having competitive opportunities, learning new skills, and enjoying the social aspect were positive experiences. The member of staff also noted how the "buy-in" from other members of staff was excellent.

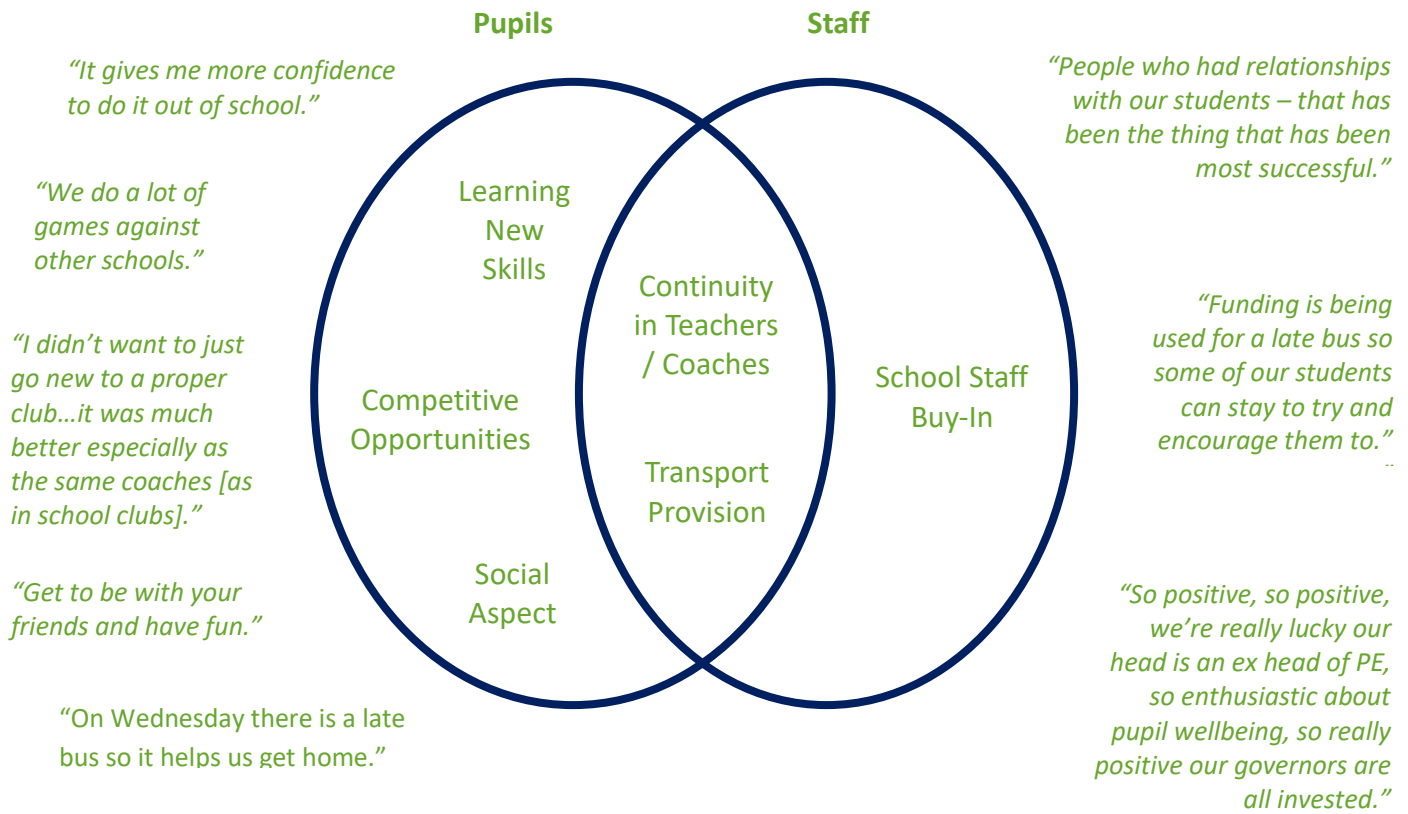
However, there was no overlap between pupils and staff suggestions for improvements. Pupils discussed that to improve the AEBSD sessions, there needs to be more consideration of the collaboration between schools, participation numbers, the provision of new sports, the advertisement of clubs and opportunities and the timing of clubs. The member of staff made suggestions such as the project being sustainable, further bridging the school-community gap, and employing an active education officer. There was concern around the sustainability of the programme.

*Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

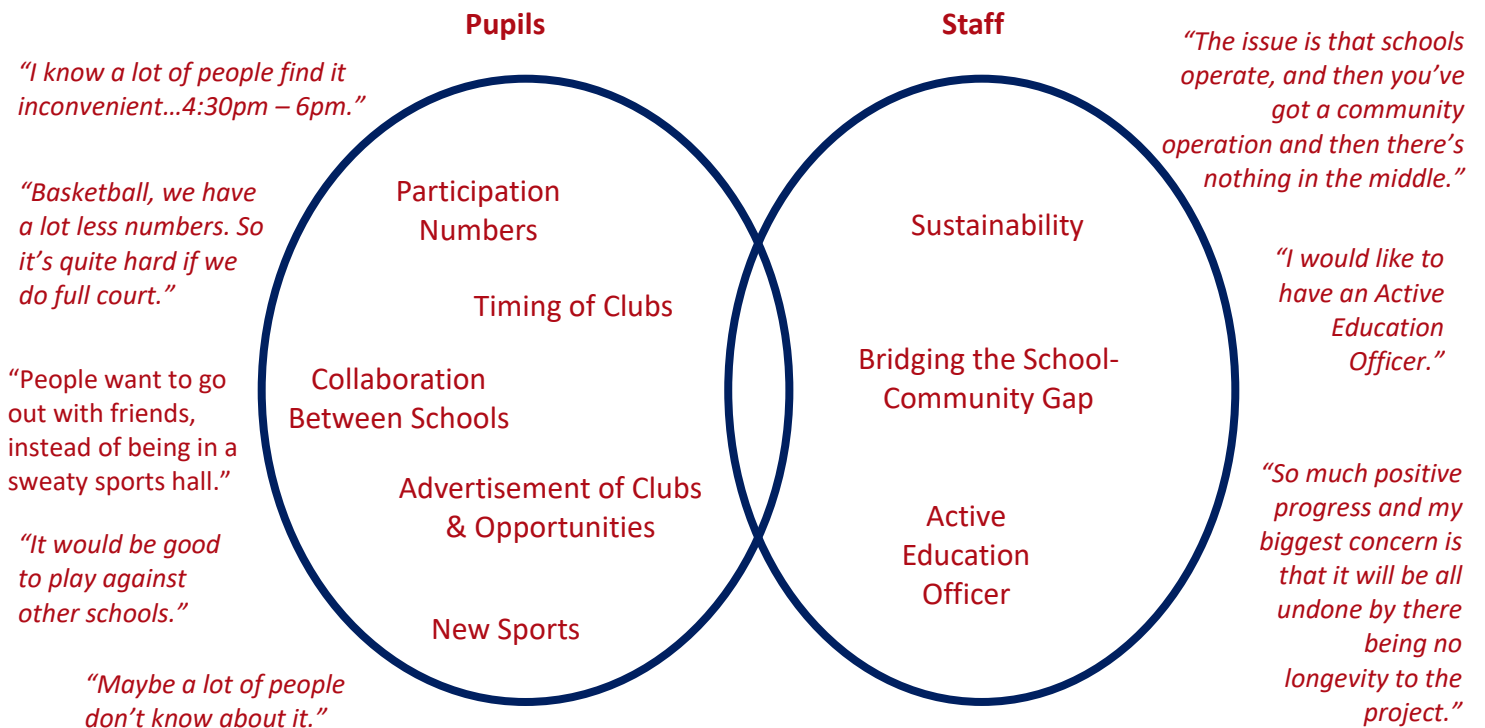
The school seeks to embed the learning from the pilot into a sustainable long-term model.

*The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Pupil's survey*

## POSITIVES



## IMPROVEMENTS



**Figure 3.** Positives and improvements of the AEBSD programme identified by pupils and school staff through qualitative measures

## Johnston Community Primary School

**School Focus:** Develop extracurricular opportunities through upskilling school staff, especially learning support assistants.



### Expression of Interest Overview

Johnston Community Primary School, located in Johnstone, Pembrokeshire, has a high percentage of children with special educational needs (36% compared to national average of 6%). The school sought to become an active setting by striving to achieve all pupils attending a minimum of two extracurricular clubs per week. The provision provided was to be inclusive for all pupils (e.g. wheelchair users, children with autism). The intention was for the AEBSD funding to be spent on the following three overarching areas to support increasing the offer of the school to the community in an inclusive manner:

1. Sports equipment
2. Site manager time
3. Coaching provisions

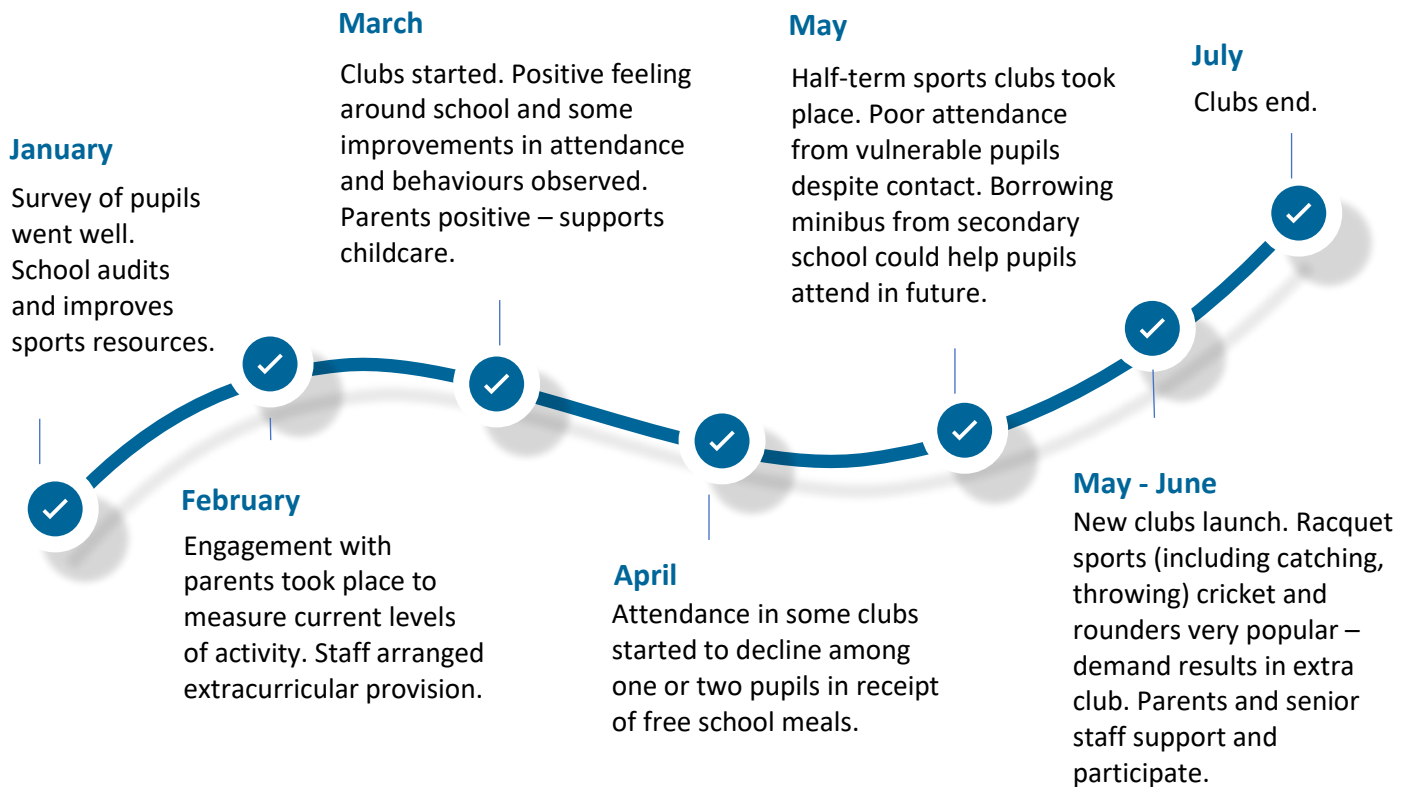
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from December 2021 to July 2022. Attendance numbers, recorded by the school, fluctuated across the months, with greatest attendance in March (681 participants) and May (577 participants). The lowest attendance was in April (147 participants). Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering as basketball, netball, football, rugby, racquet sports, cricket, and rounders.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 4.

- **What worked well:**
  - High levels of participation and demand at the sessions
  - Increase in the time pupils spent participating in activities
  - Parental buy-in and active support from senior leadership team
  - Some improvements in attendance and improvements in pupil behaviours observed
  - Positive attendance from Learning Resource Centre pupils who attended supported by additional staffing
- **Learning points:**
  - Clubs for younger pupils were more difficult to provide as higher staff ratios were needed
  - Sometimes difficult for vulnerable pupils to attend holiday provision due to lack of transport

- Community clubs did not need the school facility and their volunteers do not have capacity to offer additional input at school clubs
- Parent and child running club was less popular than other offers
- **Next steps:**
  - Remaining grant money used for food and fitness camp, which was running for a week in the 2022 summer holiday



**Figure 4.** The school’s monthly reflections on programme implementation

*Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

A business model within the school to be developed, which will cover the costs of the school support staff to run the extracurricular provision.

*The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Pupil’s survey*

## Maindee Primary School

**School Focus:** Support the Roma communities through community provision in an area of high deprivation and anti-social behaviour.



### Expression of Interest Overview

In an area of extensive deprivation and anti-social behaviour and with 79.2% of pupils with English as an additional language, Maindee Primary School, Newport, has a reputation in the community as a safe, trusted environment. The school, in consultation with community partners, identified a need to provide outdoor safe space with safe faces to support the children from within the school and wider community. Through the programme, the school hoped to build community cohesion; this being a shared vision between a group of people, along with a sense of belonging to each other. The intention was for the funding to be spent on three overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Infrastructure equipment (e.g. storage containers, portable floodlights)
2. Sporting equipment (e.g. football and basketball posts, boxing gloves, skipping ropes)
3. Staff costs (e.g. caretaker and school staff)

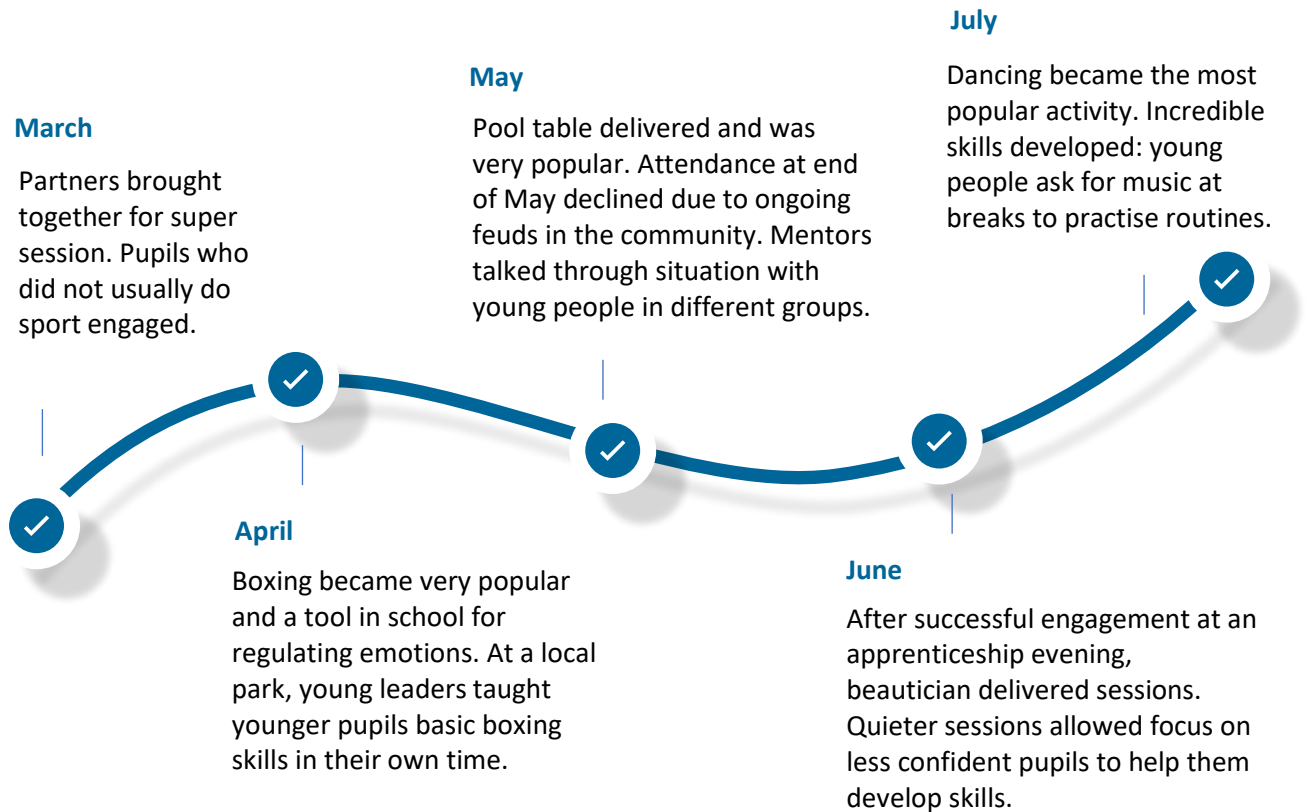
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from February to July 2022. Attendance numbers, recorded by the school, were stable across the months, with greatest attendance in April (335 participants) and May (302 participants). The lowest attendance was in March (97 participants), when the sessions started, which was notably lower than most months. This therefore suggests that once knowledge of the sessions was disseminated, attendance grew. Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as Wicked Wednesday sessions, boxing, dance, pool table, and beauty sessions.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 5.

- **What worked well:**
  - Bringing partners together and reminding community members of session times
  - Celebrating and encouraging young leaders and volunteers
  - Mentors talking to young people in different groups to resolve community tensions, supporting community cohesion
- **Learning points:**
  - Ensuring all partners were aware of their roles and responsibilities
  - Regular dialogue about activities that the young people would like to try to ensure the project was led by young people

- **Next steps:**
  - Identify funding to continue to work with dance providers, as dance has been the sporting offer that many of the young girls have needed



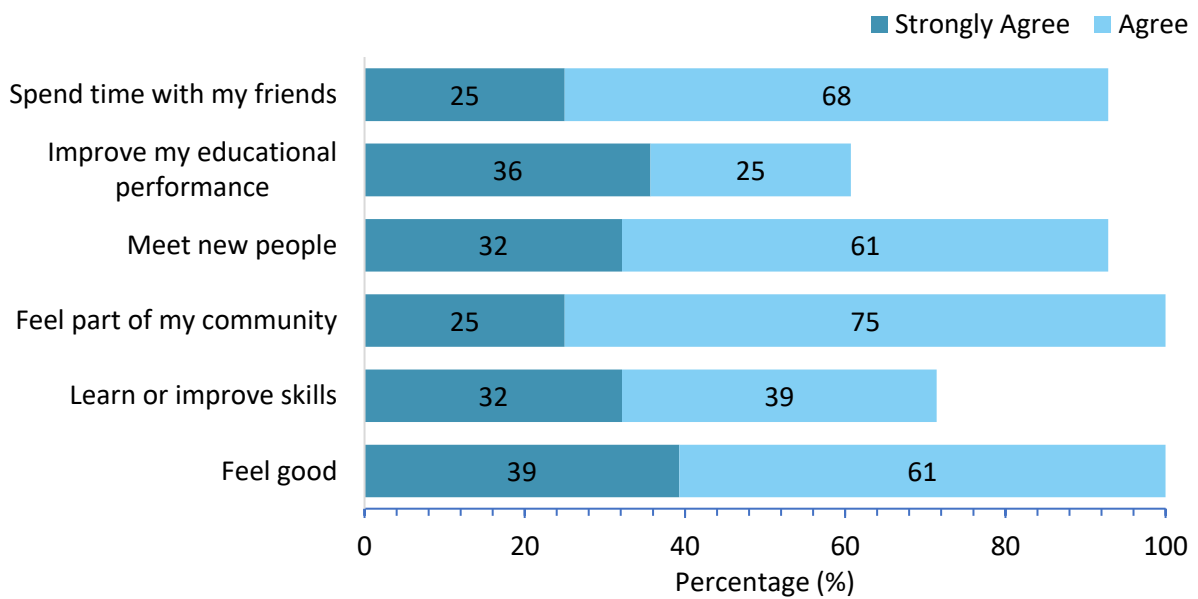
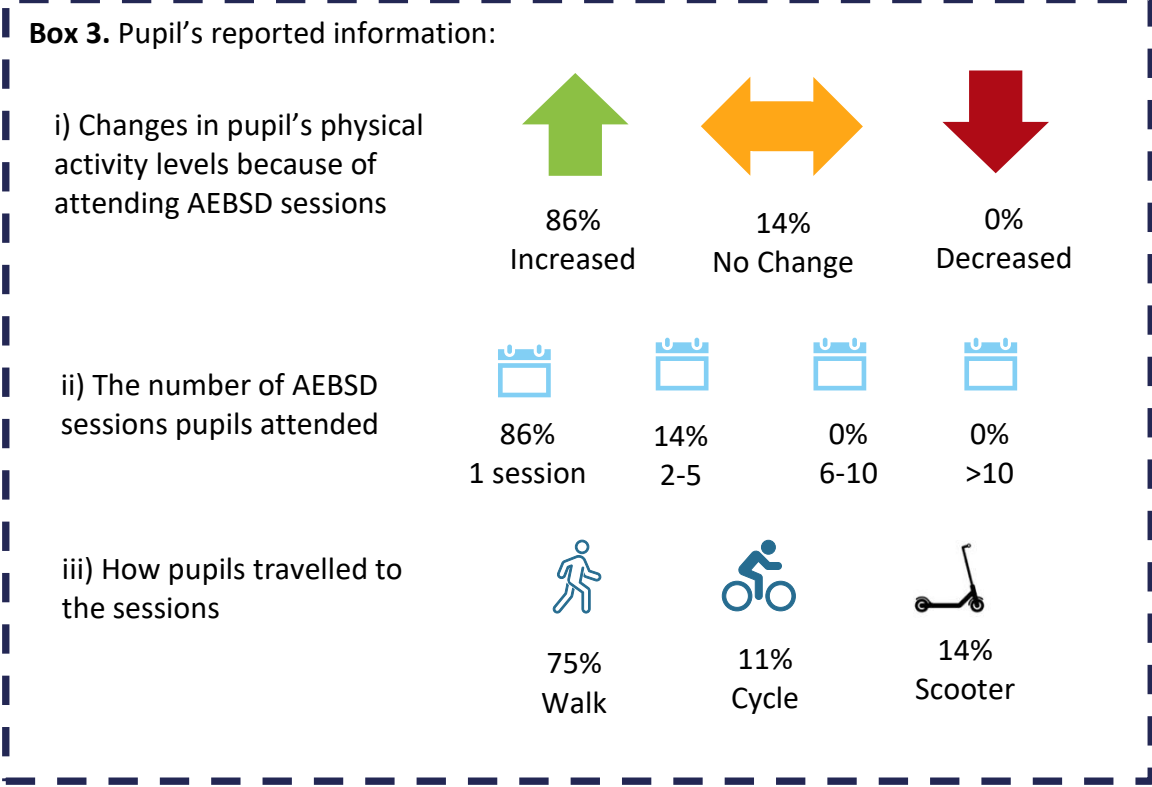
**Figure 5.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

### *Pupil's Survey Overview*

Twenty-eight pupils completed the survey in July. Overall, most children (86%) felt that attending the sessions increased their physical activity levels, with 86% reporting they attended one AEBSO session (Box 3). Pupils also reported that it was very easy to travel to the sessions as they walked, cycled, or went on their scooter. Understanding how the AEBSO programme can help pupils is important, particularly how they perceive it helps them. Figure 6 shows attending the sessions helped all the pupils to feel good (100% agreed/strongly agreed) and feel a part of their community (100%), and nearly all pupils said the sessions helped them spend with time their friends (93%) and meet new people (93%).

### *Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

The school lead for the pilot project has recently been awarded the role of Community Focused Manager for the Local Authority. The model developed within the school as part of the AEBSO will now be rolled out across the cluster and further afield over the coming months.



**Figure 6.** Pupil's perception of how attending AEBSO sessions helped them

## Pencoedtre High School

**School Focus:** Develop a holistic offer focusing on physical activity and nutrition in an area of deprivation through employing a co-ordinator to support the additional opening hours of the school site.



### Expression of Interest Overview

Pencoedtre High School is situated in the Cadoc Ward of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan where there are significant social-economic challenges, with the school's catchment areas including some of the top 10% most deprived areas in Wales. The school has experienced a marked increase in pupils eligible for free school meals; the school has recognised the poorest families are experiencing the greatest challenges. The school is seeking to create a world-class educational, well-being and community establishment. To achieve this, the school identified a need to enhance the provision of community-based physical activity opportunities in the area. For example, in the 2018 Sport Wales School Sport Survey, the school found that participation in after school sports provision amongst their pupils was low compared to the rest of the Vale of Glamorgan. The school also learnt from the 'Have your Say' survey that secondary school pupils wanted to do more physical activity after school and in community settings. In response to this, the school committed to extending the school opening hours, along with arranging and hosting sessions at the school. The intention was for the funding to be spent on the following three overarching area to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Delivery of sports activities
2. Staff costs
3. Infrastructure costs

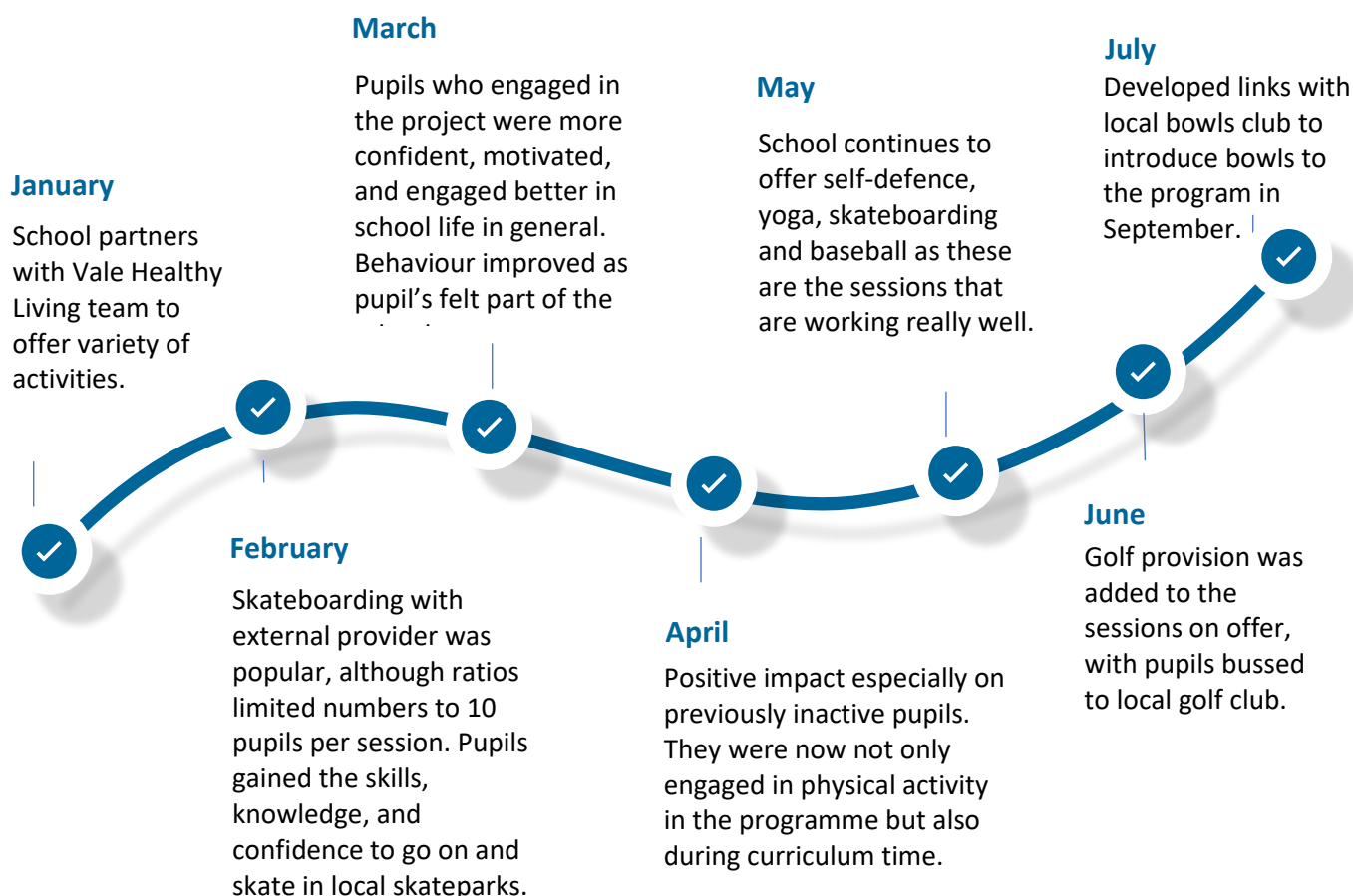
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from November 2021 to March 2022. Attendance numbers, recorded by the school, fluctuated across the months, with the greatest attendance in March (248 participants) and January (187 participants). The lowest attendance was in July (71 participants). Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as dance, Tai chi, self-defence, baseball, yoga, skateboarding, running, and golf.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 7.

- **What worked well:**
  - Partnership with Vale Healthy Living team enabled links to community offers - an exit route for pupils
  - Skateboarding was popular

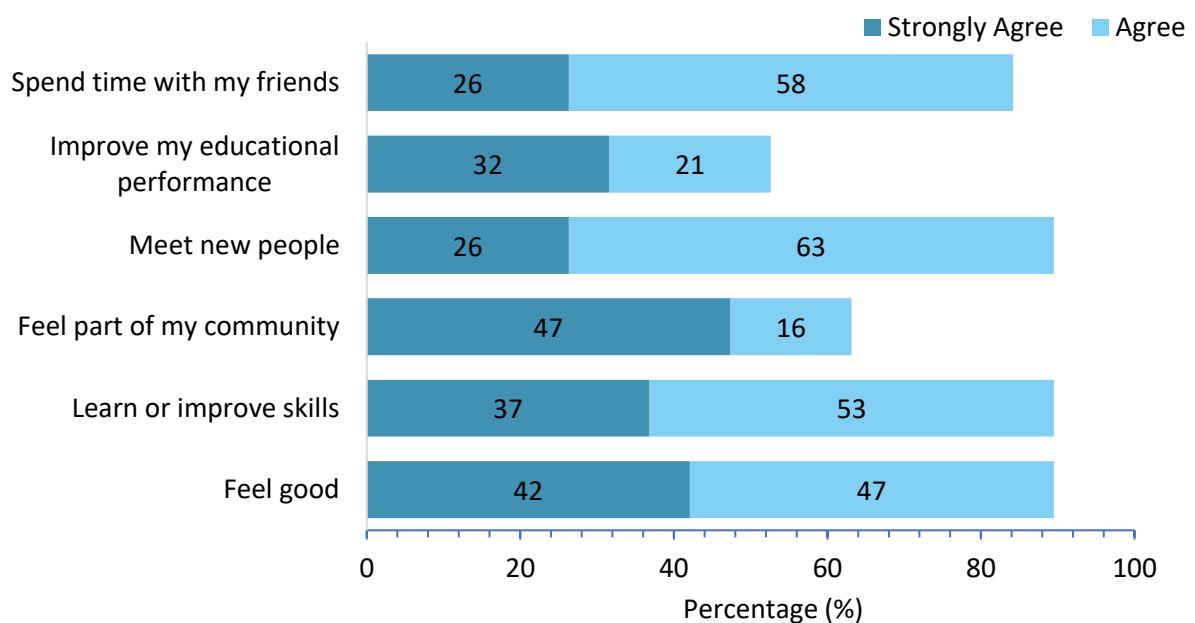
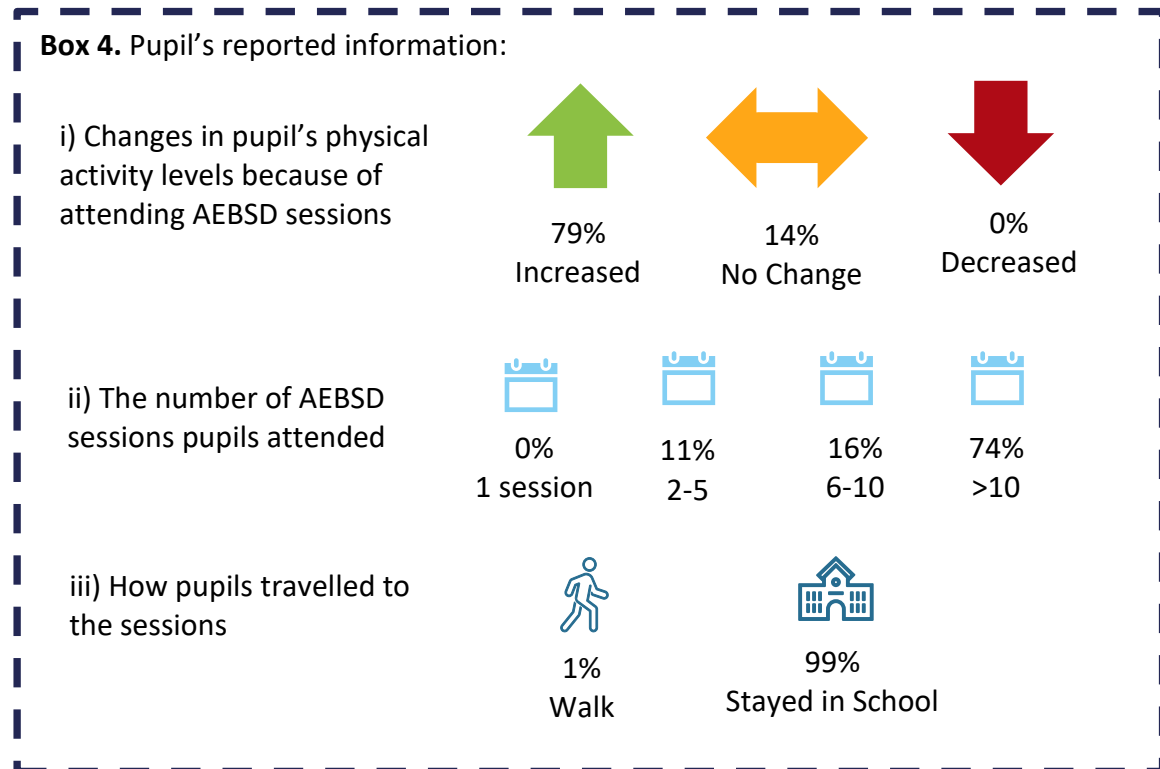
- Instructors built a rapport with pupils, teaching them life skills and how the choices they made now will impact them going forward in life
- Positive parent feedback and impact on community
- Police-reported reductions in crime, anti-social behaviour, and Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) issued in the area since the programme initiated
- **Learning points:**
  - Minibus transport to local clubs and facilities was not always available and needed planning
  - The development of outdoor facilities at the new-build school is in progress
- **Next steps:**
  - Continue to consult with the pupils and engage new Year 7 cohort in September
  - Use Sport Wales School Sport Survey results when available in the Autumn to inform programme and develop more links with local clubs



**Figure 7.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

### Pupil's Survey Overview

Nineteen pupils completed the survey in July. Overall, most pupils (79%) felt that attending the sessions increased their physical activity levels, with 74% reporting they attended 10+ AEBSD sessions (Box 4). Pupils also reported that it was very easy to travel to the sessions as they went during their lunch time/after school. Figure 8 shows attending the sessions helped pupils to learn or improve skills (90% agreed/strongly agreed), meet new people (89%), and feel good (89%).



**Figure 8.** Pupil's perception of how attending AEBSD sessions helped them

### *Additional Findings*

The school sought to upskill pupils to become playleaders throughout the pilot project.

The school identified that the programme had a particular impact on one pupil, and they wished to share the pupils' positive journey. As a result, the school collected testimonials from individuals involved in the pupil's journey (see Box 5). Before taking part in the AEBSD programme, the pupil was disengaged in school and would often be found withdrawing himself from lessons and refusing to communicate with staff. The pupil's story is an example of how the programme can lead to wider benefits beyond simply increasing physical activity levels.

### *Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

The school is to embed the learning from the pilot into a sustainable long-term model.

**Box 5.** Positive Journey of a Pupil identified by the school

*"The difference in Pupil since attending the after-school provision is huge. He is more outgoing. He is assured and positive. He tries out all activities and interacts more with staff and pupils more confidently. He is a lovely role model for the younger pupils and has found a skill for baseball that no one knew he had!"*

Miss Preece, Successful Futures Class Teacher

*"Pupil's personality and confidence has grown so much since starting the after-school provision. Pupil in the past was very unfit and didn't enjoy exercise. Now he attends every night, has become fitter and has made many friends. Pupil has also shown so much progress that he supports staff with a leadership role."*

Louis Johnson, Alternative Provision Manager

*"The reason that I really enjoy the after-school class is because ever since I've started going to them it has really helped me with my confidence and self-esteem, as well as making some new friends and it's also improving my fitness and is just all around a great experience."*

Pupil

*"Pupil had an interest in football when he was younger but stopped attending. Since the after-school enhancement programme began, he has joined in with a variety of sports every day. He has grown in confidence in his own ability and has developed his social skills beyond what we could have anticipated. He is an inspiration to other pupils for his dedication and commitment. Pupil encourages others to join in the sporting activities on offer and encourages those who lack confidence. Pupil's fitness levels have increased, and he is healthier and happier than in previous times."*

Tracey Young, Assistant Headteacher

*"Since attending our after-school provision Pupil has grown in confidence and maturity. He has made many new friends and its lovely to see him join in lots of new activities which he would of never of done before. The provision has really benefited him, and I hope he continues with it"*

Mrs Leckie, Behaviour and Well-being

## Sofrydd Primary School

School Focus: Collaboration between sport and youth services;  
a school as a safe space to be active



### Expression of Interest Overview

Within the isolated community of Sofrydd, situated on the outskirts of Blaenau Gwent, there are no facilities or open space within the community, outside of the school. A recent report found that 33.4% of the population in Sofrydd do not own a car, which is higher to the regional (29%) and national (22.9%) figures, meaning that transport options for residents, to travel to facilities, are limited. In response to this, Sofrydd Primary School sought to extend access to the school grounds by keeping the access gate open for extended hours. Where weather prohibited outdoor activity, or training delivery was required, indoor spaces (e.g. library, classroom) were made available. The intention was for the AEBSD funding to be spent on the following three overarching areas to support increasing the offer of the school to the community in an inclusive manner:

1. Staff costs
2. Equipment
3. Provision of workshops

### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from November 2021 to July 2022. Attendance numbers recorded by the school fluctuated across the months, with the greatest attendance in March (120 participants) and the lowest in April (51 participants). Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as dance, Taekwondo, Off the Streets provision, arts and crafts, multi-sports sessions, portable skate ramp, and play equipment.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 9.

- **What worked well:**
  - Parents wanted provision in Sofrydd area
  - Consultations with pupils
  - Physical activity levels increased
  - Engagement with Aneurin Leisure and external providers to deliver and support sessions
- **Learning points:**
  - Staff to pupil ratios were limited due to ill health which caused some sessions to be cancelled – the school is looking at additional staffing options for the future
- **Next steps:**
  - Summer holiday provision organised, using learning from previous months



**Figure 9.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

#### *Perceptions of Staff and Pupils*

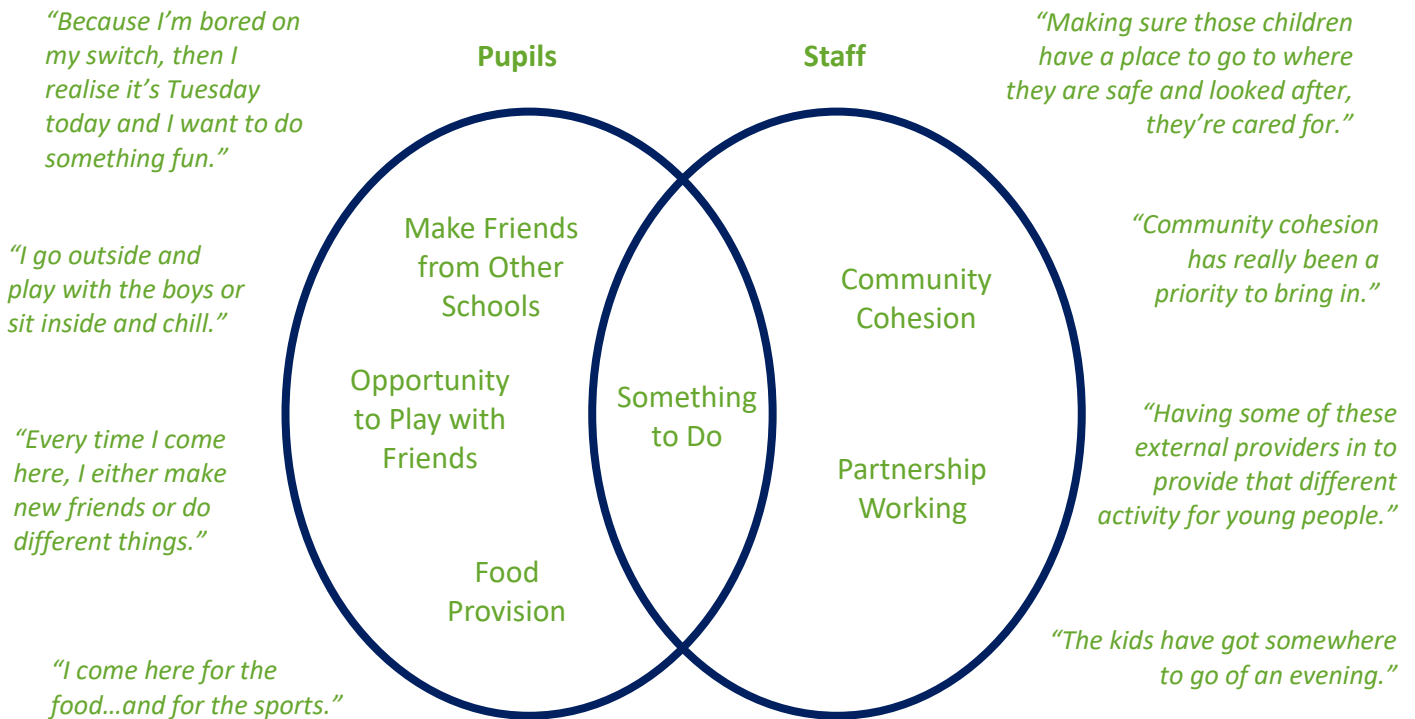
Figure 10 shows the positive experiences and the areas for improvement drawn from the focus groups and interviews with pupils and staff, respectively. Overlap between the responses from the pupils and staff was found. For example, both reported that just having something to do and somewhere to go was a positive. In addition, pupils reported positives such as making friends from other schools, opportunities for play, and food provision. The staff member noted how the community cohesion and the partnership working were positive aspects. Regarding areas for improvement, one suggestion from both pupils and staff was the need to split sessions for different age groups. Furthermore, pupils would like more structure, to try new activities, and to have themed sessions or trips. The staff member suggested the school could become a community hub and aim to improve behaviour.

#### *Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

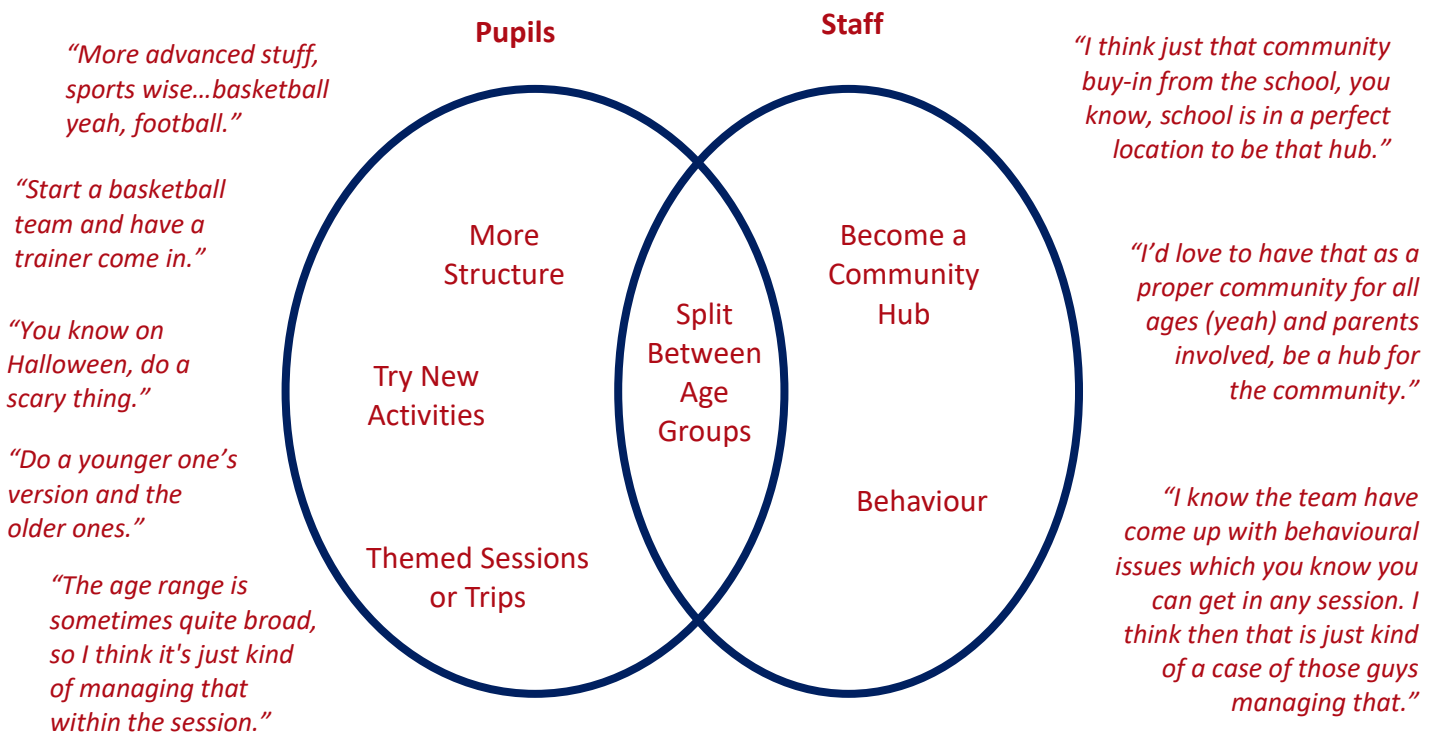
School to embed the learning from the pilot into a sustainable long-term model.

*The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Pupil's survey*

**POSITIVES**



**IMPROVEMENTS**



**Figure 10.** Positives and improvements of the AEBSD programme identified by pupils and school staff through qualitative measures

## St Anthony's RC Primary School

**School Focus:** Creation of outdoor provision through the development of teambuilding



### Expression of Interest Overview

St Anthony's, which is a primary school in an area of social deprivation in Saltney, Flintshire, is well positioned in the community as pupils live close and can easily walk (or use active travel methods) to attend school activities. Unfortunately, there has been little appetite for previously existing activities. To support pupils to engage in physical activity provision, the school planned to run a sport offer three days a week and run sessions in holidays and one day a month on weekends. The sessions were to be open to the wider community - specifically, pupils' parents and siblings to encourage family participation. They will also be delivered with incidental Welsh. The intention was for the funding to be spent on three overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Additional support for vulnerable pupils (31.5% of pupils eligible for free school meals)
2. Staff costs
3. Session provision providers

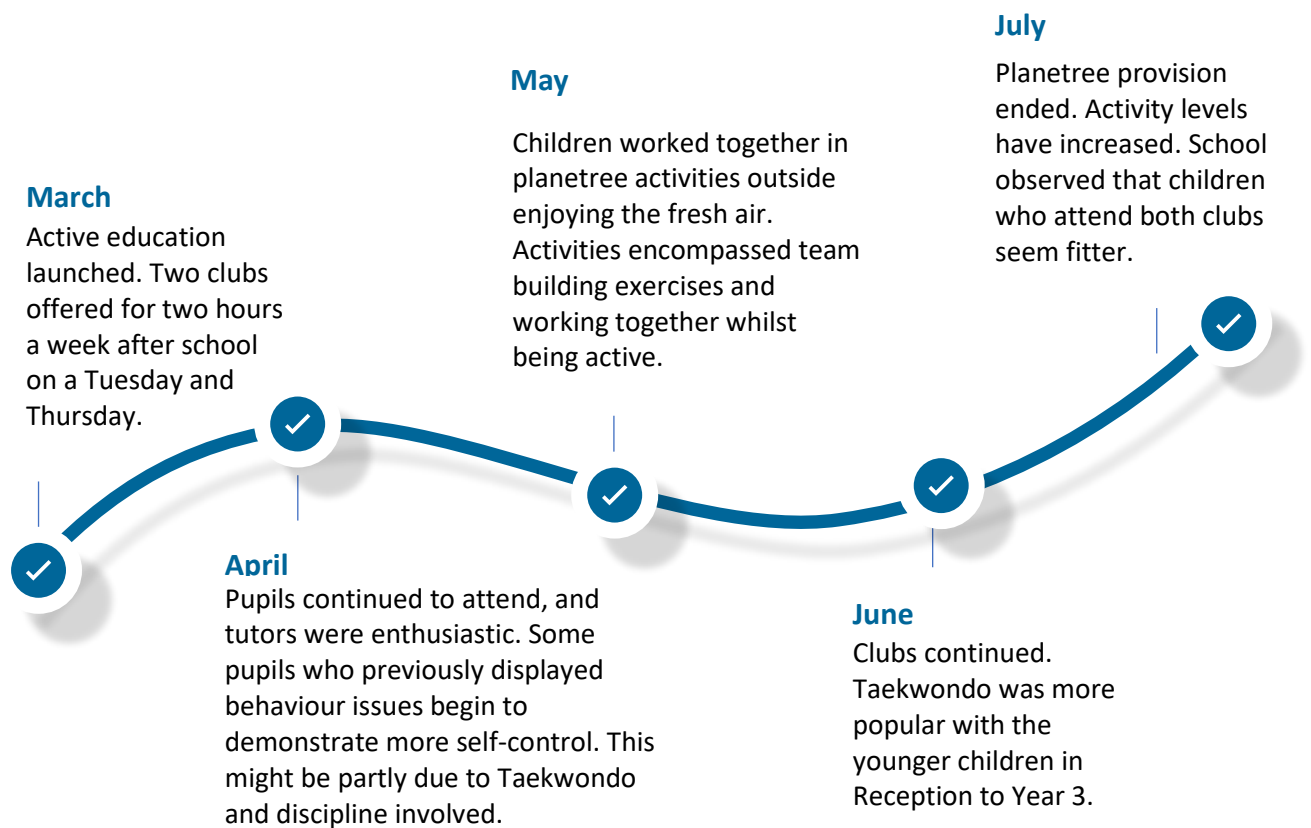
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from February to December 2022. Attendance numbers recorded by the school showed attendance fluctuated across the months, with the greatest attendance in May (82 participants) and June (69 participants). The lowest attendance was in April (32 participants), which was notably lower than most months. Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as activities offered by Planetree Adventure and Taekwondo.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 11.

- **What worked well:**
  - Whilst being a small school (75 pupils), both clubs ran for two hours a week after school and were well attended
  - Pupils really enjoyed the sessions and gave the school a lift
  - Pupils who attended Taekwondo began attending a local club, some with their parents
- **Learning points:**
  - Going forward, Taekwondo will be delivered for one hour a week with an emphasis on the younger children as the activity has been more popular with this age group
- **Next steps:**

- School in discussion with a local football team about taking sessions next term and training up a parent to become a coach through the club



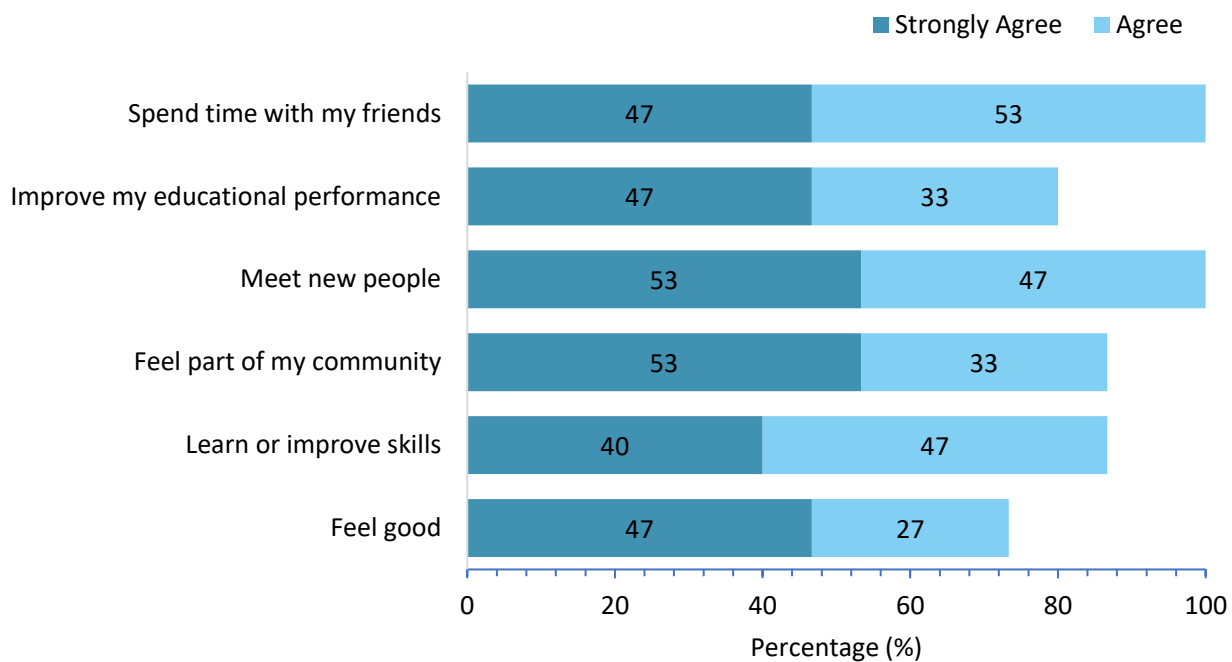
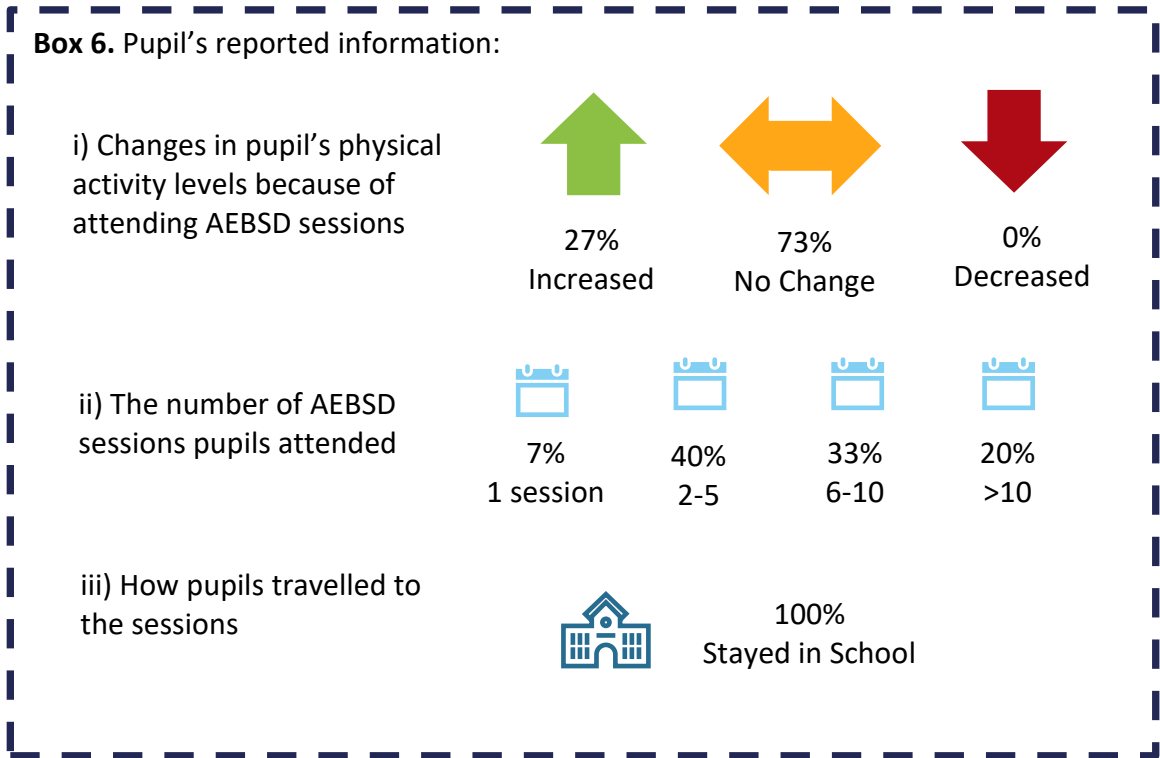
**Figure 11.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

### *Pupil's Survey Overview*

Fifteen pupils completed the survey in July. Overall, 27% of children felt that attending the sessions increased their physical activity levels, with 40% reporting they attended 2-5 AEBSD sessions (Box 6). Pupils also reported that it was very easy to travel to the sessions as they went during their lunch time/after school. Figure 12 shows all pupils found the sessions helpful to spend time with their friends (100% agreed/strongly agreed) and meet new people (100%). Most also felt attending helped them learn or improve a skill (87%) and feel a part of their community (86%).

### *Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

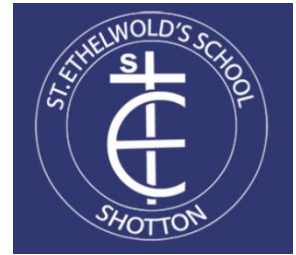
Monitoring of sessions ongoing until December 2022, when impact, if any, of the pilot project within the school community will be found.



**Figure 12.** Pupil's perception of how attending AEBSD sessions helped them

*St Ethelwold's Church in Wales Primary School*  
*Expression of Interest Overview*

**School Focus:** Develop a sustainable and generalisable programme model through facilitating staff training and building exit routes of activity into the community.



St Ethelwold's Church in Wales Primary School is in an area of high deprivation in Flintshire and despite being well positioned in the community for pupils to walk home from the school after attending after school activities, attendance is very low. However, as the offer in the community groups has been able to exceed that of what the school can offer as those offering the sessions are more qualified, the school has needed to identify a novel sporting offer to encourage pupils to attend and upskill staff to be able to deliver the sessions. Pupils voice informed that they desired a non-competitive sporting offer. The intention was for the funding to be spent on four overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Additional support for vulnerable and disabled pupils to attend
2. Staff costs including training
3. Session provision providers
4. Equipment

*Programme Implementation*

The school received funding from December 2021 to December 2022. Due to difficulties in securing sports providers to deliver the sessions, the programme has not been implemented in the original timescale. Consequently, the impact, if any, of the funding in this school has not been realised yet. As such, attendance data, monthly learning logs and pupil's survey aim to be completed in the Autumn term.

*Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

Monitoring of sessions will be ongoing until December 2022, when impact, if any, of the pilot project within the school community will be found.

*The Point of Ayr Federation*  
*Ysgol Gronant, Ysgol Trelogan, Ysgol Bryn Gwalia*



**School Focus:** Increase parental engagement and community cohesion

### *Expression of Interest Overview*

Schools within the federation serve the area of Mold, Flintshire and have recently experienced pupils engaging in anti-social behaviour in the evenings, exacerbated by being in an area of social and rural deprivation. The local Police Community Support Officers and local Town Councillor welcomed a programme for pupils to access in the evenings. The schools have only a small proportion of pupils who engage in after school activities due to lack of provision and inability to travel. The provision offered by the schools was typically competitive sport, and due to small school sizes, they struggled to maintain teams and failed to recruit girls to attend. Moreover, pupils would prefer a non-competitive sporting offer. The intention was for the funding to be spent on four overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Additional support for vulnerable and disabled pupils to attend
2. Staff costs including training
3. Session provision providers
4. Equipment

### *Programme Implementation*

The school received funding from December 2021 to March 2022, though Ysgol Bryn Gwalia continued until July 2022. Attendance numbers recorded by the schools fluctuated across the months, with the greatest attendance in March (106 participants) and May (105 participants). The lowest attendance was in April (26 participants), which was notably lower than most months. Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as balance bikes, Forest School, and Urdd sports sessions.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 13.

- **What worked well:**
  - Collaborative learning and relationship building between Federation schools: feeling of togetherness
  - Children explored the possibility of attending sessions outside of school (e.g. joining a kick boxing club)
  - It has supported well-being which is a high priority in the school
- **Learning points:**

- Look at further ways of bringing the Federation together for sessions and ensuring younger pupils can participate
- Connect with other providers to extend the range of opportunities
- **Next steps:**
  - Considering whether sessions can be supported by a transport offer rather than relying on parents

### March

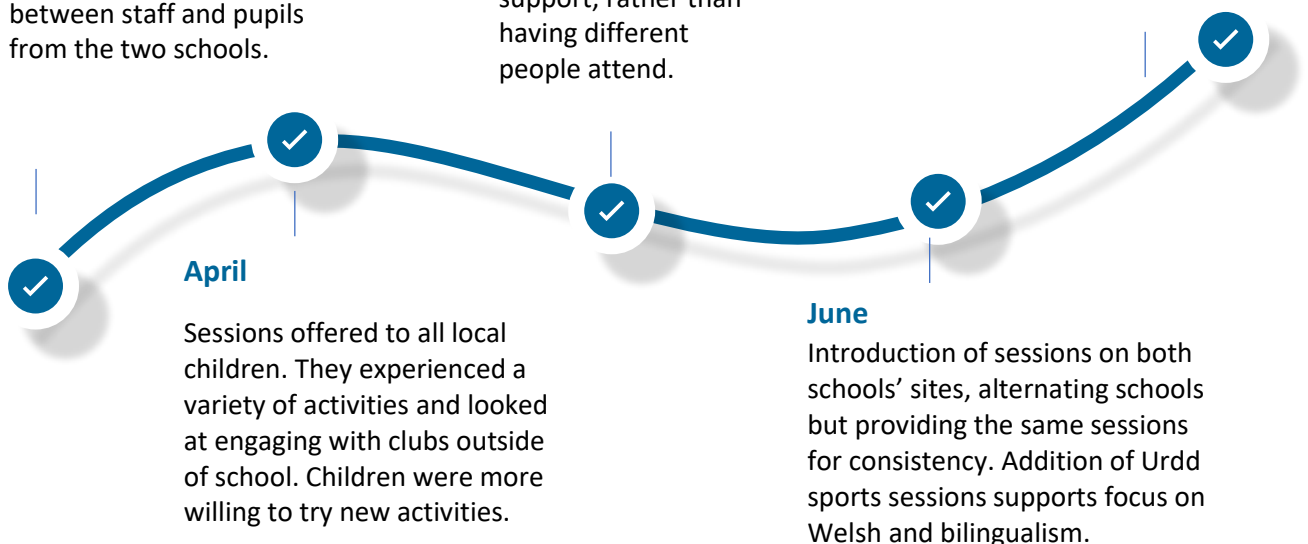
Project was underway. Good providers and the children engaged well in the sessions. Built positive relationships between staff and pupils from the two schools.

### May

Future co-ordination of the sessions was considered to establish consistent support, rather than having different people attend.

### July

Children used the balance bikes in school time, continued to develop skills and guide others. Ensured younger pupils could access forest school and bike sessions. Children from different schools enjoyed socialising together.



**Figure 13.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

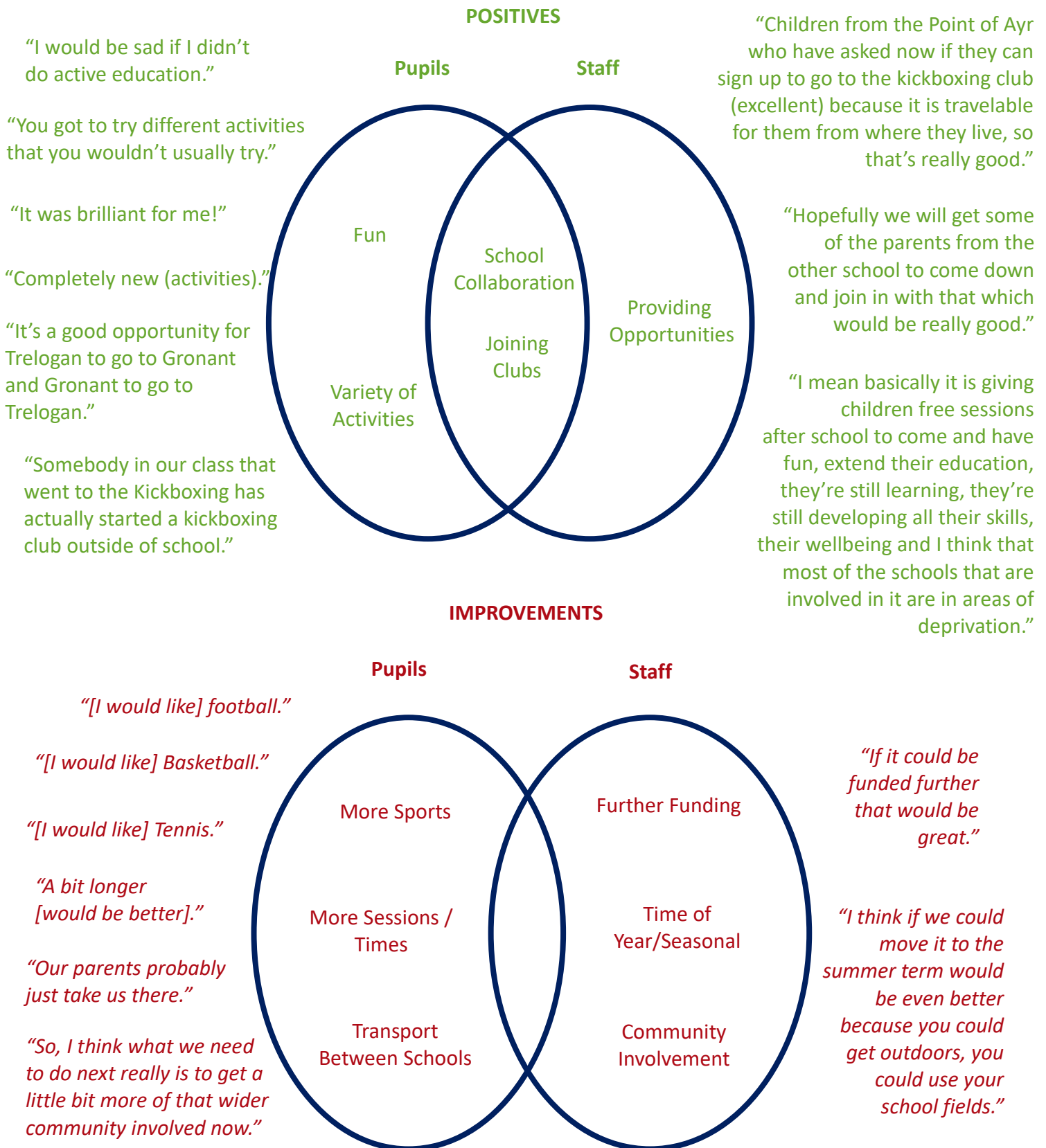
### *Perceptions of Staff and Pupils*

Figure 14 shows the positive experiences and the areas for improvement drawn from the focus groups and interviews with pupils and staff, respectively. Overlap in perceptions existed between the responses of pupils and staff, for example, both highlighted that joining clubs outside school and the collaboration between the schools was a positive. Pupils also reported positives such as the variety of activities and it being fun. The staff member also noted the benefits associated with providing opportunities for the pupil's well-being. When considering area for improvement, pupils discussed that they would like more sports, more times and sessions within the project and transport between the school sites. The staff member made suggestions such as receiving further funding, moving the sessions to the summer term, and having more community involvement.

*Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

The Flintshire Education Lead is continuing to monitor the progress of the schools and has the intension to apply the learning to support other schools in the area to embed the same approach.

*The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Pupil's survey*



**Figure 14.** Positive and improvements of the AEBSD programme identified by pupils and school staff through qualitative measures

## Welshpool Church in Wales School

**School Focus:** Support pupils with additional learning needs



### Expression of Interest Overview

There is a scarcity of physical activity promoting opportunities and resources available for young people in the community neighbouring Welshpool Primary School, Powys. The school is an established hub for education and training, providing health and education sessions to the community, therefore a progressive step was proposed to be the provision of physical activity-based opportunities. In addition, improvements to the school infrastructure improving local facilities which can be used by local community clubs (e.g. Welsh Rugby Union). The intention was for the funding to be spent on four overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Infrastructure - refurbishment of grassy area and provision of floodlights
2. Staff costs
3. Provision of sessions
4. Food during holiday clubs (as 31.8% of pupils are entitled to free school meals)

The school intended to liaise with the local community through local community groups and the School's Governing Body, however, was no mention of consulting pupils.

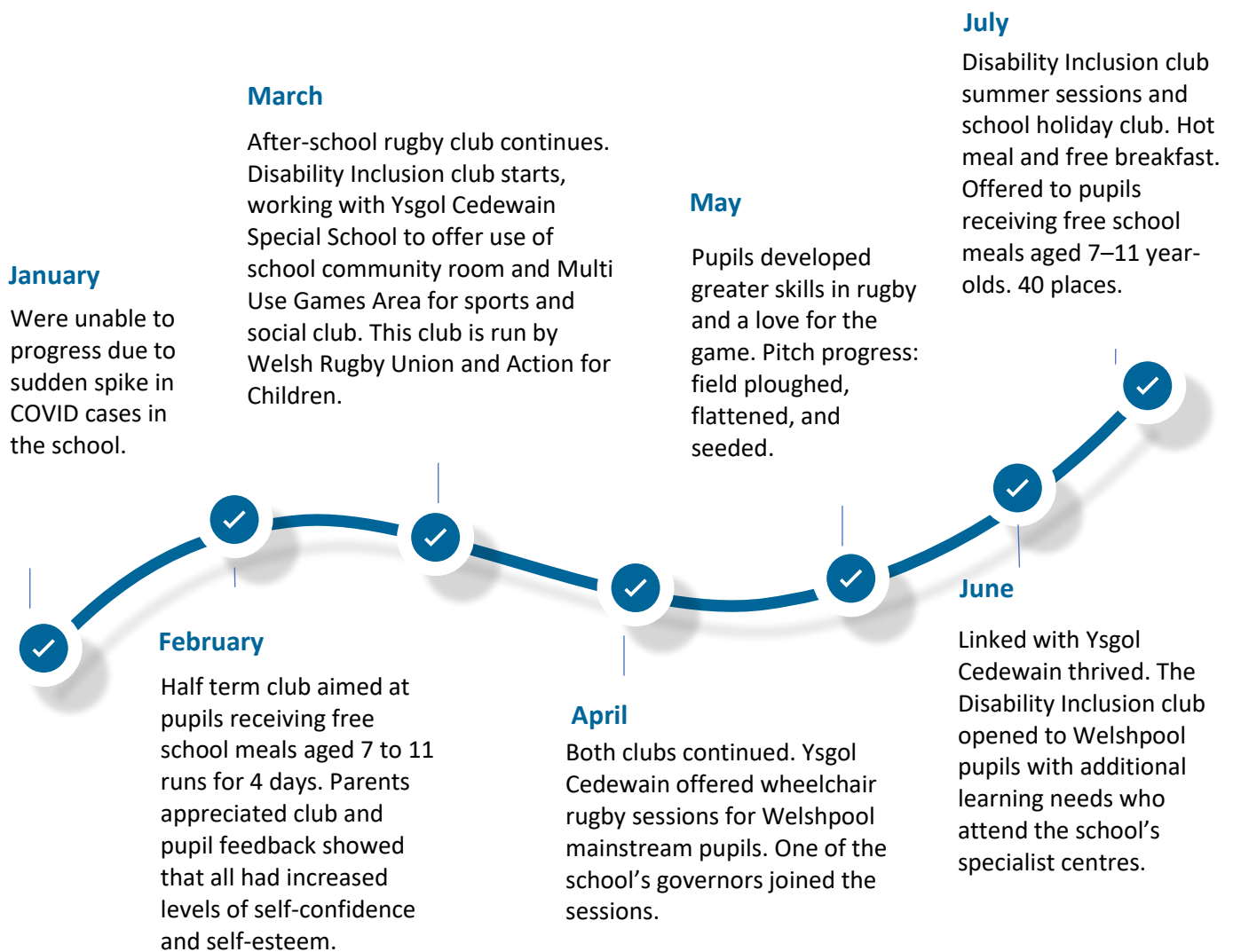
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from December 2021 to July 2022. Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as a half-term club: skateboarding, boccia, archery, curling and rugby, together with pitch refurbishment.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 15.

- **What worked well:**
  - Linking with a special education school
  - Positive feedback from the Welsh Rugby Union who struggled to find a suitable venue for an inclusive community club prior to this project (now use the school)
  - Holiday clubs are at capacity
  - Pupils felt they had attempted new experiences
  - Working with Welshpool Together Group brings community groups together and improved access to external providers who need to travel (e.g. more efficient skateboarding providers to connect with several groups in a local area)
- **Learning points:**
  - Earlier communication to community regarding pitch refurbishment plans to avoid negative perception that it was being run down

- **Next steps:**
  - Further progress on pitch
  - Rugby sessions to continue in Autumn term
  - Coach will start well-being sessions with older pupils to talk about how sport can help with mental health issues



**Figure 15.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

*Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

Monitoring of sessions ongoing until December 2022, when impact, if any, of the pilot project within the school community will be found.

The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Attendance data; Pupil's survey

## West Monmouth High School

**School Focus:** Developing dance through working with the Traveller community



### Expression of Interest Overview

West Monmouth School in Tofaen, serves partner feeder primary schools in the neighbouring electoral wards of New Inn, Panteg, Ponypool Fawr, Trevethin and Penygam. Historically, the school has offered traditional sports and drama activities. With a changing socioeconomic profile of pupils, with free school meals eligibility increasing from 17% to 32% over the last five years, there was a desire to provide a broader offering in line with the interests of pupils. There was an interest to be involved in dance, including by pupils from the Traveller community. To extend the offer, the school sought to host after-school sessions, with a view to train pupils to become dance leaders and provide dance sessions to feeder primary schools. The intention was for the funding to be spent on three overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Staff costs
2. External providers of dance sessions
3. Delivery costs

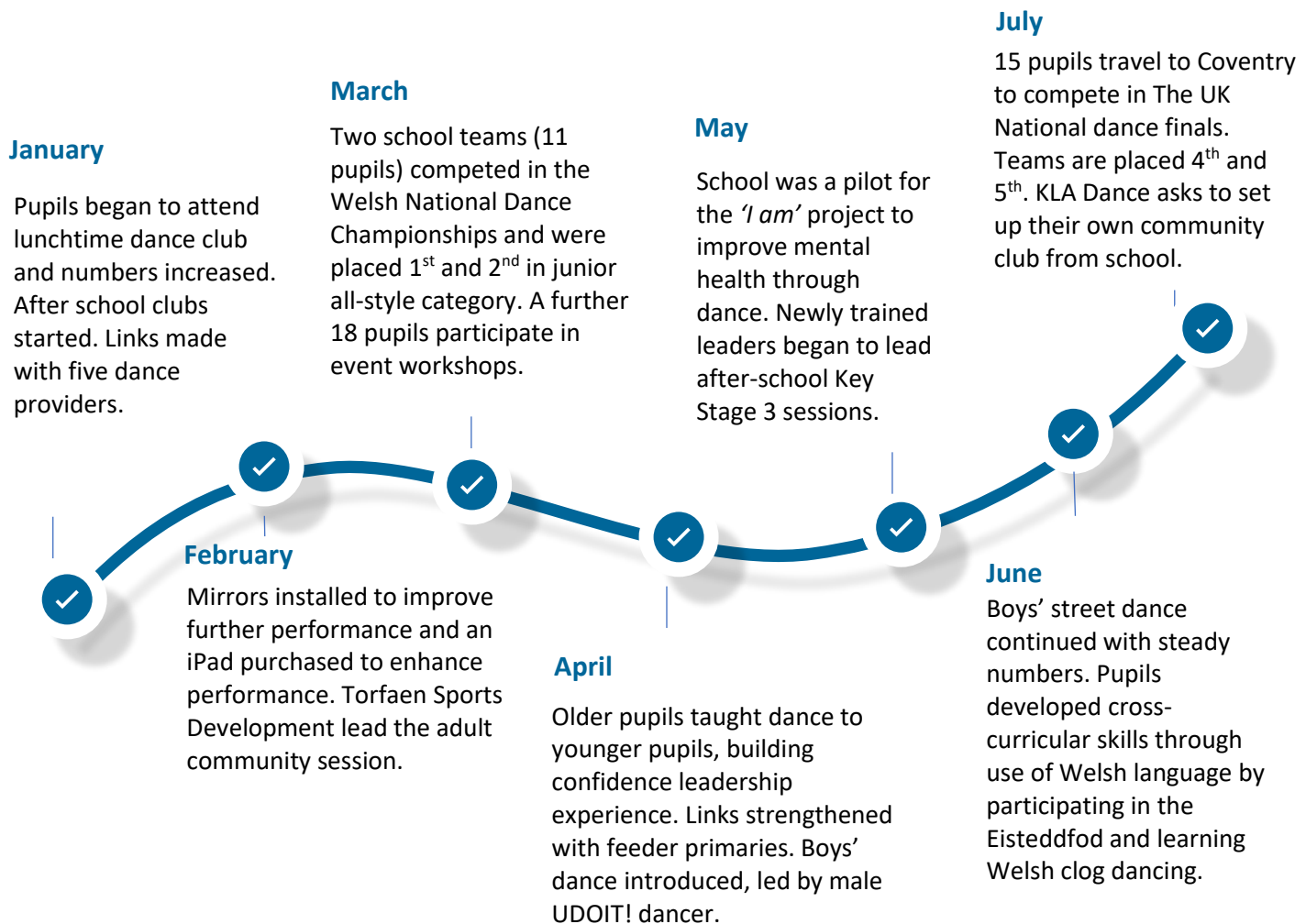
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from December 2021 to July 2022. Attendance numbers recorded by the school showed attendance varied across the months, with the greatest attendance in March (534 participants) and May (456 participants). The lowest attendance was in January (111 participants), which was notably lower than most months, thereby suggesting that attendance increased once knowledge of the sessions was disseminated. Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as pupil and adult dance activity. A wide variety of dance styles were covered (e.g. Latin, jazz, hip hop, street dance, and contemporary).

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 16.

- **What worked well:**
  - Relationships developed with external providers, Torfaen Sports Development, and feeder primaries
  - Pupils made rapid progress and accessed competitions
  - Development of dance leaders extended provision
  - The school is underway in creating a dance culture - a long-term aim with provision now available for different year groups, for boys and girls, and adults

- **Learning points:**
  - Further work to develop leaders and more time to realise overall ambitions and aims
- **Next steps:**
  - West Mon and Torfaen Sports Development team will continue to support the adult dance fitness provision next academic year
  - Continue to develop dance competitions in Eisteddfods
  - Potential for a provider to set up additional community club based at school



**Figure 16.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

*Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

Closer links with the local authority have now been established and the school plans to become a Community Focused School from September onwards with a focus upon physical activity and sport provision.

The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Pupil's survey

## Ysgol Henry Richard

**School Focus:** Develop a relationship between a school and a local leisure centre and increase community cohesion in rural villages in Wales.



### Expression of Interest Overview

Ysgol Henry Richard in Ceredigion is a school that serves pupils aged 3-16 years of age. Seasons of the year have a huge impact on physical activity levels, and ensuring facilities are equipped for the early dark nights is paramount for maximising their use. Limited access to facilities during winter months has been identified by pupils of Ysgol Henry Richard as an issue. In addition, the use of the school facilities by community groups is also difficult in the winter months. To combat this, the school sought to strengthen the provision of the school by complementing the facilities of the local leisure centre. While concerns were raised regarding the impact of the new school facilities on the leisure centre, it was identified and confirmed with local clubs that the leisure centre did not have sufficient facilities to meet the winter demand and so the school provision would be complementary and further increase community cohesion. The intention was for the funding to be spent on three overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Equipment (e.g. floodlights, batter, gazebo)
2. Security system (e.g. key-pad entry)
3. Infrastructure (e.g. electric upgrade for charging facility)

### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from January to July 2022. Due to the nature of how the funding was being spent, the impact, if any, of the funding in this school has not yet had time to be realised. As such, attendance data, monthly learning logs and pupil's survey will potentially be completed in the Autumn term.

### Next Steps – September 2022 onwards

Monitoring of sessions ongoing until December 2022. Impact, if any, of the changing room within the school community will be reported in a future report.

## Ysgol y Grango

**School Focus:** Develop a health and well-being offer aligned to the new school curriculum.



### Expression of Interest Overview

Within Ysgol Y Grango (a secondary school based in Wrexham and serves the communities of Rhos, Johnstown, Penycase, Ruabon and Rhostyllen), 27.1% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The facilities of Ysgol Y Grango have historically been used by sports teams within and outside of the neighbouring communities of the catchment of the school. Following receipt of separate funding, the school installed a new 3G football pitch and were keen to maximise its use by enabling the community increased access outside of the school day. In collaboration with the school/hub partnership and Active Wrexham, they sought to create a new term-time and holiday time programme. The intention was for the funding to be spent on four overarching areas to support the creation of a community hub:

1. Equipment
2. Infrastructure (e.g. new lockers, re-decoration, online booking system)
3. Security access and systems
4. Community development days

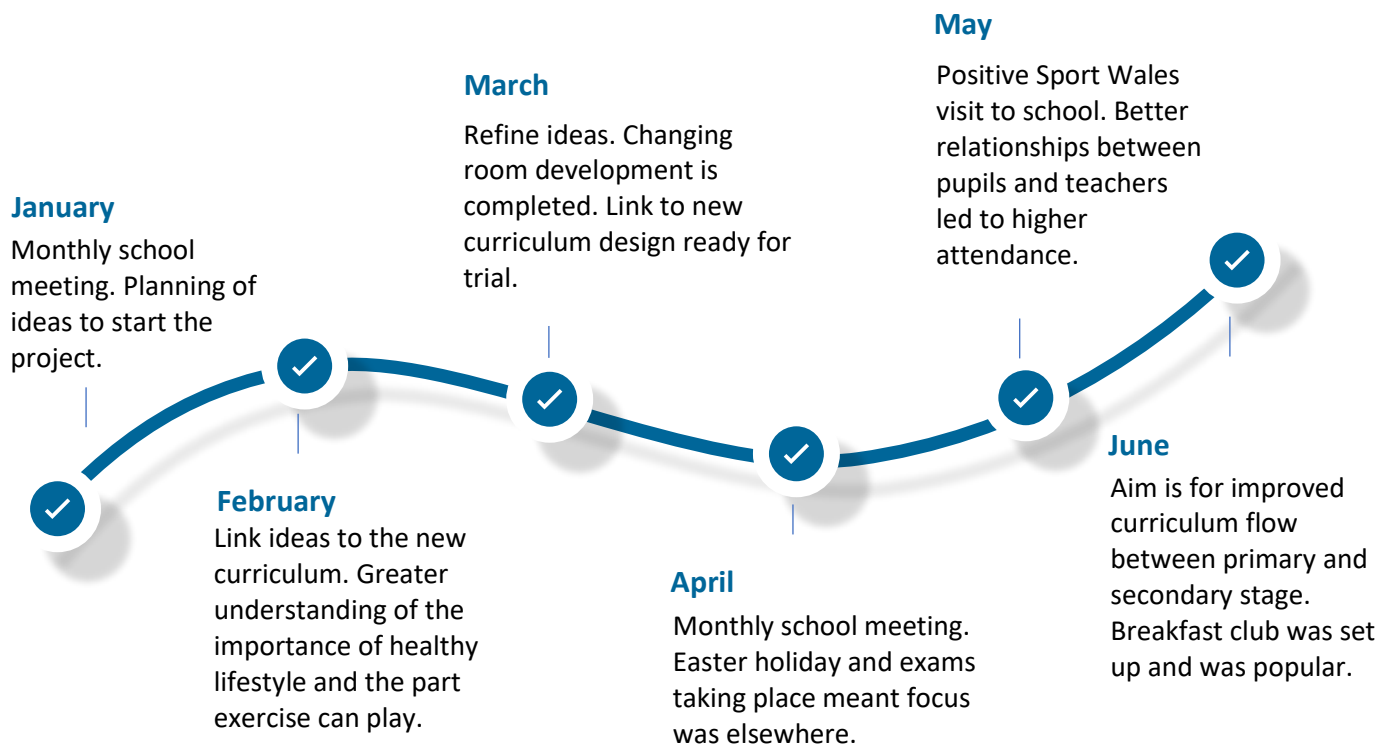
### Programme Implementation

The school received funding from December 2021 to July 2022. Monthly learning logs listed activities the school had been offering, such as breakfast club, netball festival, 'boot room' of spare boots for use on forthcoming 3G pitch. They also sought to improve changing rooms to make them accessible for the community outside of the school.

Through the monthly completion of learning logs, the following key reflective points were highlighted, and the school's implementation of the programme was documented in the timeline shown in Figure 17:

- **What worked well:**
  - Monthly school meetings and the first Sport Wales [school forum] meeting – accessed new ideas and a chance to see whether the ideas of other schools could be transferrable to their own context
  - Leadership courses which fed well into the new curriculum and could benefit local clubs
- **Learning points/areas to improve:**
  - Narrow down the school's focus for the programme and identify key focus areas
  - Consider costs of adding additional breakfast club days
- **Next steps:**

- Create links with cluster schools and communicate with clubs and primaries regularly



**Figure 17.** The school's monthly reflections on programme implementation

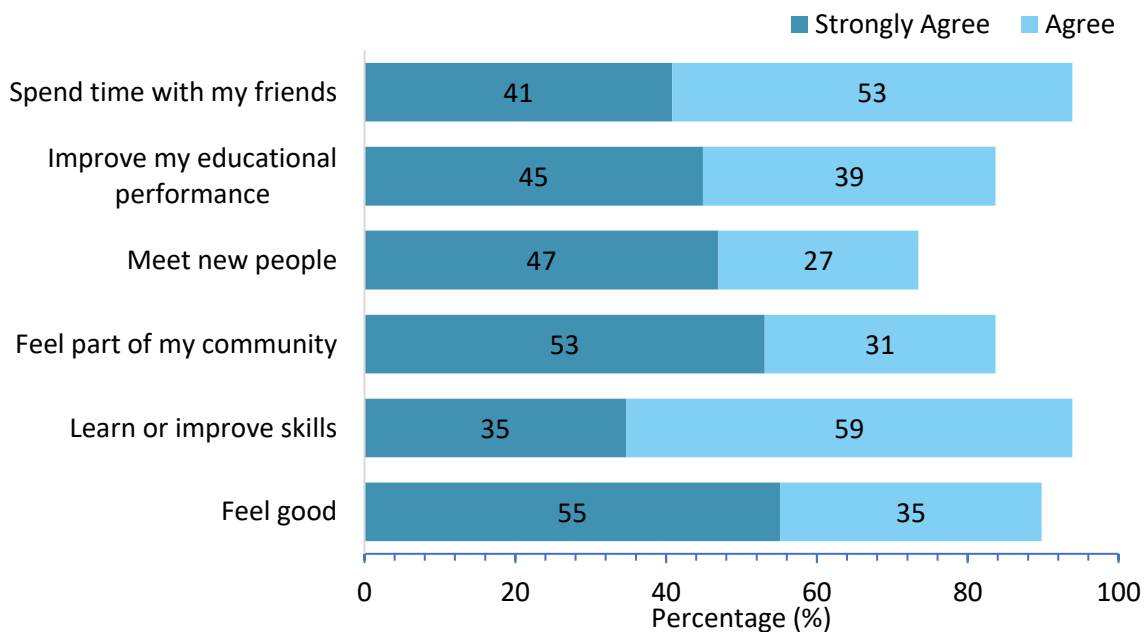
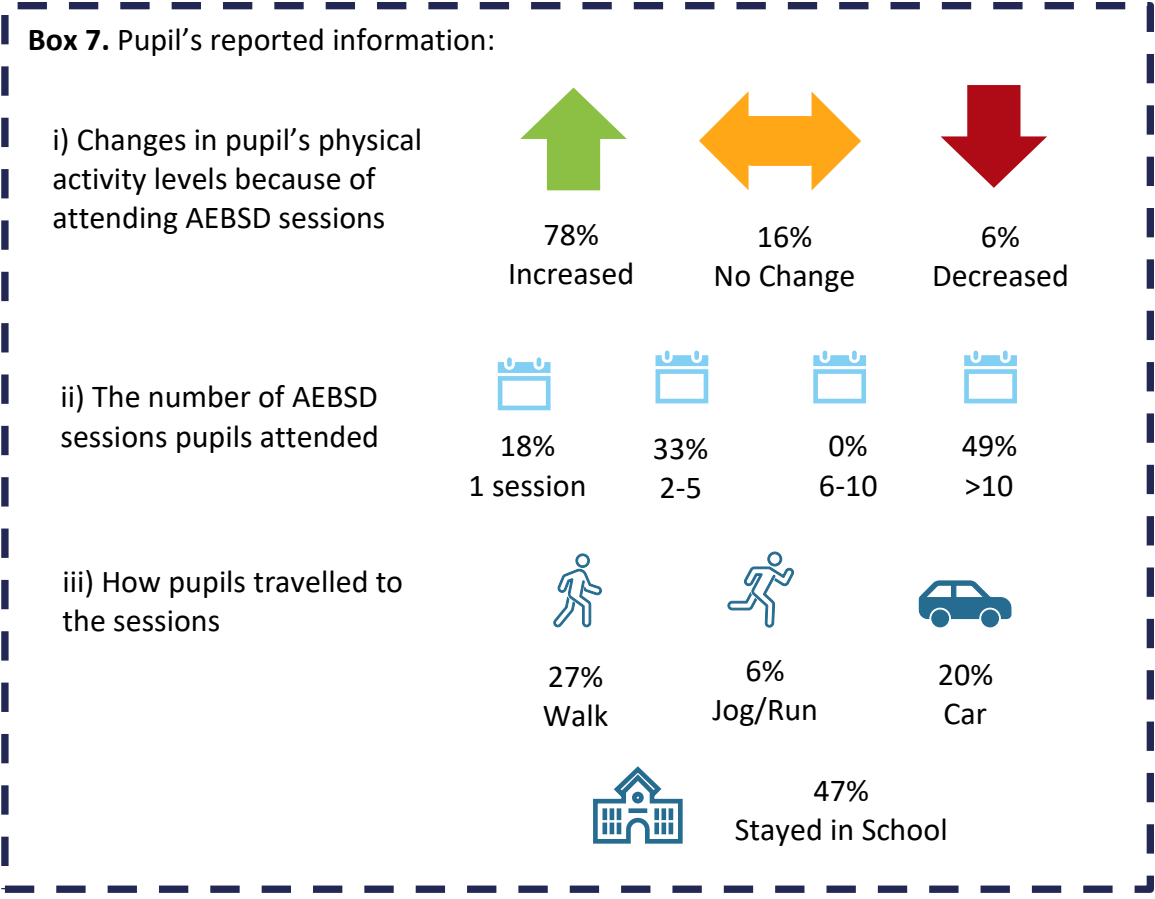
#### *Pupil's Survey Overview*

Forty-nine pupils completed the survey in July. Overall, most children (78%) felt that attending the sessions increased their physical activity levels, with 49% reporting they attended 10+ AEBSD sessions (Box 7). Pupils also reported that it was very easy to travel to the sessions as they went during their lunch time/after school or walked. Figure 18 shows attending the sessions helped most children spend with time their friends (94% agreed/strongly agreed) and learn or improve new skills (94%), feel good (90%), and improve their educational performance (84%).

#### *Next Steps – September 2022 onwards*

Closer links between the school and the local authority have been established, and the school plans to become a Community Focussed School from September onwards, with a focus on physical activity and sport provision. Pupils will also be trained as sports leaders to support the delivery of activities.

*The following data was not available for reporting for this school: Attendance*



**Figure 18.** Pupil's perception of how attending AEBSD sessions helped them





## Section Two: Combined Schools Case Study

### *Pupils Survey*

A total of 121 pupils from seven schools completed an online survey in July 2022. Whilst school level data has been provided in Section 1, the focus of this section is on the wider lessons that can be learnt across all schools.

Of those who completed the survey, the majority learnt about the sessions directly (79%): through a parent/guardian (13%), class teacher (43%) or friend and family member (22%). Whilst just over half of the children surveyed heard about the sessions passively (54%), through school assemblies (32%), social media (19%) or community advertising (2%). Some pupils learnt of the sessions through multiple sources.

Pupils were asked to reflect on their experience of participating in the AEBSD sessions. Overall:

-  **99%** of pupils rated the overall experience of the sessions as good
-  **99%** of pupils felt confident when attending the sessions
-  **100%** of pupils are likely to recommend these sessions to someone
-  **95%** of pupils are likely to continue attending the sessions

### *Staff Structured Interviews*

#### *School buy-in*

Eight school representatives took part in structured interviews to reflect on their school's participation in the AEBSD programme. Given the importance of Headteacher buy-in to the success of school-delivered programmes, the staff member was asked, on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not a priority; 5 = Essential priority), to what extent the Headteacher had prioritised the establishment, implementation, and sustainability of AEBSD. Five schools reported that, for all three aspects, it was an essential priority for the Headteacher. Three schools reported establishment and implementation were a high priority, while, for sustainability, two schools reported a high priority, and one reported a medium priority. All schools reported that the senior leadership team were happy with the programme delivery and that the programme worked well in their school. The schools each had a dedicated member of staff responsible for the AEBSD Programme.

#### *Motivations for Becoming an Active Education Setting*

With an outcome of the pilot being to create active education settings, schools were asked to select the key reasons (from a pre-determined list) as to why becoming such a setting was important to them. The top three reasons identified were:

4. To improve pupils' health and well-being
5. To give pupils access to active opportunities
6. To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of being physically active because it is an important part of their educational experience and development

#### AEBSD Funding

Schools were asked about the process they undertook to decide on how to invest the AEBSD funding. The following approaches were taken:

- 8 schools liaised with the Senior Management Team
- 6 schools liaised with pupils
- 4 schools liaised with the school governors
- 3 schools liaised with the parents, wider community, and/or 'other'

All eight schools invested the AEBSD funding as planned. Additional investment, beyond that given by Sport Wales, was also reported. Specifically, two schools received additional funding from the Local Authority, and two schools reported using their own funds as a top-up due to rising costs. Four schools reported receiving additional non-financial support in the form of in-kind contributions from volunteers, training courses and networking opportunities.

Some schools in their AEBSD Expressions of Interest specified an intent to target certain groups. Five schools targeted pupils entitled to free school meals and four schools targeted pupils with additional learning needs. Others target groups included LGBTQ+ (two schools), ethnic minorities (1 school), Travelling community (1 school), girls (1 school), and boys (1 school).

#### Physical Activity as a School Priority

To help provide context regarding how the staff viewed physical activity in their school, they were asked to consider how physical activity was prioritised and integrated within their school, as this could help schools in the future when implementing the programme. The top three approaches selected from a pre-determined list were:

1. Budget is allocated to enable a breadth of physical activity learning
2. Prominence to physical activity learning offer through school events, celebrations, parent's evenings, open dates etc
3. Dedicated member of staff responsible for physical activity learning

#### Community Cohesion

Seven of the eight schools answered the question relating to community cohesion due to the phase they were in relative to the programme implementation.

On a 5-point Likert scale, schools were asked to what extent involvement in the programme had improved community cohesion. All schools found staff wanted to be involved and that

the relationship with the wider community had improved. Given the benefits of partnership working, it is positive that five of the schools reported connecting with neighbouring schools on programme content (Table 2). Through reflections, the schools have further outlined ways that the programme has impacted community cohesion (Box 8).

**Table 2.** Extent schools agreed/strongly agreed with the community cohesion statements

Community Cohesion Statements	Total Schools
School staff have wanted to be involved in the delivery of the programme	7
The programme improved the school's relationship with the wider community	7
The programme improved community cohesion in the school	6
Parents of our pupils have been engaging in the programme	6
The school has increased its engagement with the wider community since the programme started	6
The local authority has assisted in the implementation of the programme	5
The school has connected with neighbouring schools to discuss programme offer	5

**Box 8.** Quotes from school/sport development staff outlining ways that the programme has had an impact on community cohesion

*"Our governors, in terms of things like the 3G pitch, they wanted that to support local clubs. We want to provide access to everyone and as a business manager it does offer an opportunity to generate finance from the use of facilities, and invest in our facilities, a win-win for school and local community"*



*"Community Cohesion includes links with community clubs and the goal is just to build on what we offer and doing lots of consultation with the kids"*

*"Difficult to engage clubs using volunteers. There is not a great netball, badminton, rounders offer because there aren't the volunteers to do it."*

### Next Steps

Schools were asked who their target populations are over the next five years. All eight schools reported that their own pupils would be a focus; seven schools reported neighbouring school pupils and wider community; and six schools reported parents, school staff and community groups.

To implement the AEBSD programme for the next five years, schools were asked what support they require from a pre-determined list ('other option' was also available to select). Seven schools (out of eight) reported needing further funding, three schools reported increased participation, two schools reported increased parental engagement, and one reported needing support with administration processes (e.g. insurance and risk assessments).

### Monthly Learning Logs: Cross-Cutting Themes

Eleven schools submitted reflective learning logs, which have been considered together to draw reflections on the impact schools recorded on: i) their educational priorities; ii) sport and physical activity; and iii) community cohesion.

### Impact on School Educational Priorities

**Behaviour:** Over half of the schools recorded a positive impact on pupil behaviour in school as an educational impact, with some improvements in attendance at school noted. The investment had helped to improve facilities and create a more positive learning environment. Organised after-school activities provided a safe space for pupils to go to, often where there was little else available for young people in the neighbourhood. Schools reported that pupils were getting involved in the new sporting offers and activities were generally in high demand.

The delivery of some sporting offers became an effective tool to teach pupils to manage their emotions and learn self-control. Schools often noted that having external providers to lead these activities had a positive effect on the pupils. Whilst a teacher may have been able to deliver a similar sport, having an independent person to deliver the activity who was perceived as an 'expert' enabled greater engagement in the learning experience. Pupils listened.

*"Boxing has become a tool in school for regulating emotions." (Primary school)*

*"The planetree activities (outdoor adventure-based provider) encompassed a lot of team-building exercises and working together whilst active. Some of the children who have shown behaviour issues are beginning to show more self-control. This might be partly due to Tae Kwando and discipline involved." (Primary school)*

*“The success this month has enabled one student to improve their behaviour within the classroom. Due to their success at the external club, they now feel a sense of accomplishment and are now using this to motivate themselves within school. This has been supported by an external provider/sports coach. The external provider has taken on a mentorship relationship with the student and is supporting them in choosing the correct behaviours whilst in school.” (Secondary school)*

Improving confidence, self-esteem, and resilience: The AEBSD sessions contributed to a positive atmosphere around the school, with pupils and staff enjoying the range of different provision, developing confidence and resilience from trying new things, and persevering to learn new skills. Schools reflected that pupil’s became more involved in school life after taking part, with a knock-on positive effect on their involvement during curricular time.

*“We have found that this project has had a positive impact on the schools’ educational priorities as the pupils engaged in the project are more confident, motivated, and are engaging better in school life in general. Their behaviour has improved as they feel part of the school and can see the benefit is it having on them.” (Secondary school)*

*“Pupil engagement with school has improved. Parental feedback was great, showing that the club was appreciated. Pupil feedback showed that all had increased levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. All felt they had persevered at new experiences.” (Primary school)*

Cross-curricular and collaboration benefits: Some of the project outcomes and successes have helped deliver cross-curriculum benefits, as well as collaborative learning between schools. Two schools had used activities that supported Welsh language provision; they have linked with the Urdd and participated in the Eisteddfod. Two schools were using the focus of leadership in the new curriculum and using the activities to give pupils a greater understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the part physical activity can play in achieving that.

*“Due to the success of the project and the enjoyment from students, next academic year as a school we will be prioritising student leadership across the school. Not only in Physical Education lessons but across all subjects.” (Secondary school)*

*“This developed school-to-school working as the relationship strengthened between feeder primaries through dance.” (Secondary school)*

*“Sessions being held in one school has strengthened the feeling of togetherness and has built positive relationships between the children and staff from the two schools.” (Primary school)*

*“Pupils developed their cross curricular skills through further developing their use of Welsh language by participating in the Eisteddfod and learning Welsh clog dancing.”  
(Secondary school)*

Four schools reported that the programme had supported their school’s overall well-being plans. One school commented that a school priority was to increase parental engagement, and this funding had helped by enabling them to offer adult classes, in addition to the pupil provision.

**Sport and physical activity impact:** All schools highlighted that the programme had, in their anecdotal opinion, resulted in increased levels of physical activity and sports participation. Sessions had been full and in high demand; sometimes schools had to organise additional sessions to increase capacity. Through the pilot project, new activities and tasters were introduced to pupils, providing them with the chance to try something they would be unlikely to otherwise access - either due to cost or lack of access. Some schools observed pupils passing on their new skills to peers and younger children who had not been at the sessions, thereby transferring skills and concepts from the sessions into non-session time. There was a suggestion in the school reflections that the pilot had increased interest in volunteering among pupils, as they now wanted to help provide activities, as well as participate in them.

Schools reported:

- Increased levels of physical activity and improved fitness
- Attendance of pupils who were previously inactive
- Successful engagement of pupils eligible for free school meal
- Encouraging disengaged girls to be involved and re-engaged in physical education
- Boys participating in new activities, such as dance

As a result of the opportunities, physical skills were developing and schools observed a better standard of performance, equipping pupils with the foundations that could lead them to exit routes of community-based provision. Having a positive experience and improving physical competence can support lifelong physical activity and sports participation, as highlighted by this school’s reflections:

*“The project has had a massive impact on sport and physical activity levels of the pupils in the school. We have children engaged who do not usually engage in sport and physical activity at all. We have seen them not just engage in one session but in many, and their confidence and motivation has exceeded our expectations. The instructors not only teach them skills for the activity, but they are also teaching them life skills and how the choices they make now will impact them going forward in life. They are being taught to value what they do and that they can achieve things when they work hard*

*and have a positive attitude. The project has had a really positive impact on many of the pupils, but especially the previously inactive ones. They are now not only engaged in physical activity in the programme but also during curriculum time.” (Secondary school)*

#### Impact on Community Cohesion

**Building community capacity in sport and physical activity:** One of the benefits of the pilot project has been the ability to offer new opportunities for private providers, local authority teams, and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to connect with potential participants. In some cases, the pilot project has helped develop positive and lasting relationships with local sports providers who lacked suitable facilities to offer provision in the community. In one instance, it enabled a NGB to set up an inclusive community club at a school using the school’s outdoor and indoor facilities when they had struggled to find a suitable venue elsewhere. The NGB has continued to provide opportunities through the summer holiday and aims to maintain the relationship long-term.

In one school, one of the private dance providers used during the pilot project has approached the school with an interest in using the school as a base to set up a new club for the community in the Autumn 2022. Developing relationships with other nearby community groups and schools supported the process of accessing external providers. For example, schools on the Wales/England border have accessed providers based in England, who are more likely to be able to sustain delivery in a new area of Wales if they can offer provision for several groups, rather than travel for one or two weekly school sessions. However, this was not the case everywhere. One primary school noted that, in their community, local sports clubs and providers already had their own facilities and spaces and therefore had little interest in using the school for delivery, or (as volunteers) providing additional sessions for pupils who did not go to community clubs. Therefore, using resources to upskill and train school staff and pupils to help deliver sessions may be a more sustainable approach to address gaps for those pupils unable to access community based offers.

**Improving relationships:** One of the benefits highlighted by schools has been how the pilot project has enabled them to engage with parents. Eight of the 11 schools who completed the learning logs reported that it had helped develop positive relationships with parents, who had been very supportive and sometimes actively involved. In addition, the pilot project helped the school present a positive image and engage, not just with its own pupils and their families, but with other young people and adults living nearby, thus opening the school as a community hub. One school situated in a deprived area reported that young people from across the city were coming to the primary school as a safe space based on recommendations from friends and family. Many of the young people accessing sessions were those who have difficulties in school, alternative education, or are not in any schooling. In another setting, children from an isolated community (outside of the school’s

catchment), where there was little on offer, were attending the pilot-school based sessions. One of the mechanisms used to build up these relationships has been ongoing consultation with pupils and parents to help shape the offer and alleviate concerns:

*“Engaging with parents has enabled us to reassure parents of their child’s safety when accessing clubs. Due to our catchment area, a concern for parents is safety during the dark evenings. Creating walking ‘buddies’ and utilising the late bus has improved our community cohesion as parents suggested that they felt listened to and that the school were supportive of their feedback.” (Secondary school)*

Contributing to reduced anti-social behaviour: The knock-on effects of providing additional opportunities on young people’s behaviour has been reported to be very beneficial to communities. Schools and communities found that the additional provision gave young people an alternative option, which helped tackle anti-social behaviour outside of school hours. In one school, activity providers used the sessions to alleviate disagreements between local groups in the community:

*“It was a great opportunity for the mentors to talk to young people in different groups to talk through the situation.” (Primary school)*

In some locations, the number of incidents recorded decreased once the pilot project began, as highlighted specifically by one secondary school:

*“We believe this project has had a positive impact on the community as the children are now staying in school until 6pm and are not hanging around the streets causing anti-social behaviour. We have also had positive feedback from many parents who have stated that they can see an improvement with their child’s behaviour at home. They [parents] have also seen the improvement in their confidence and motivation to actually be in school. Having spoken to the Executive head, he has been informed by the local Police that the crime, anti-social behaviour and ASBO issued in the area have reduced since the program has been in place.” (Secondary school)*

### Section Three: Sharing Best Practice

During the third online school forum (July 2022), attendees, comprised of ten school representatives and two local authority sports representatives, were asked to complete a questionnaire (anonymously) reflecting on their experience of the programme and provide comments around future sustainability. Staff shortages in schools due to COVID-19 was provided as a reason as to why some schools were unable to attend the school forum.

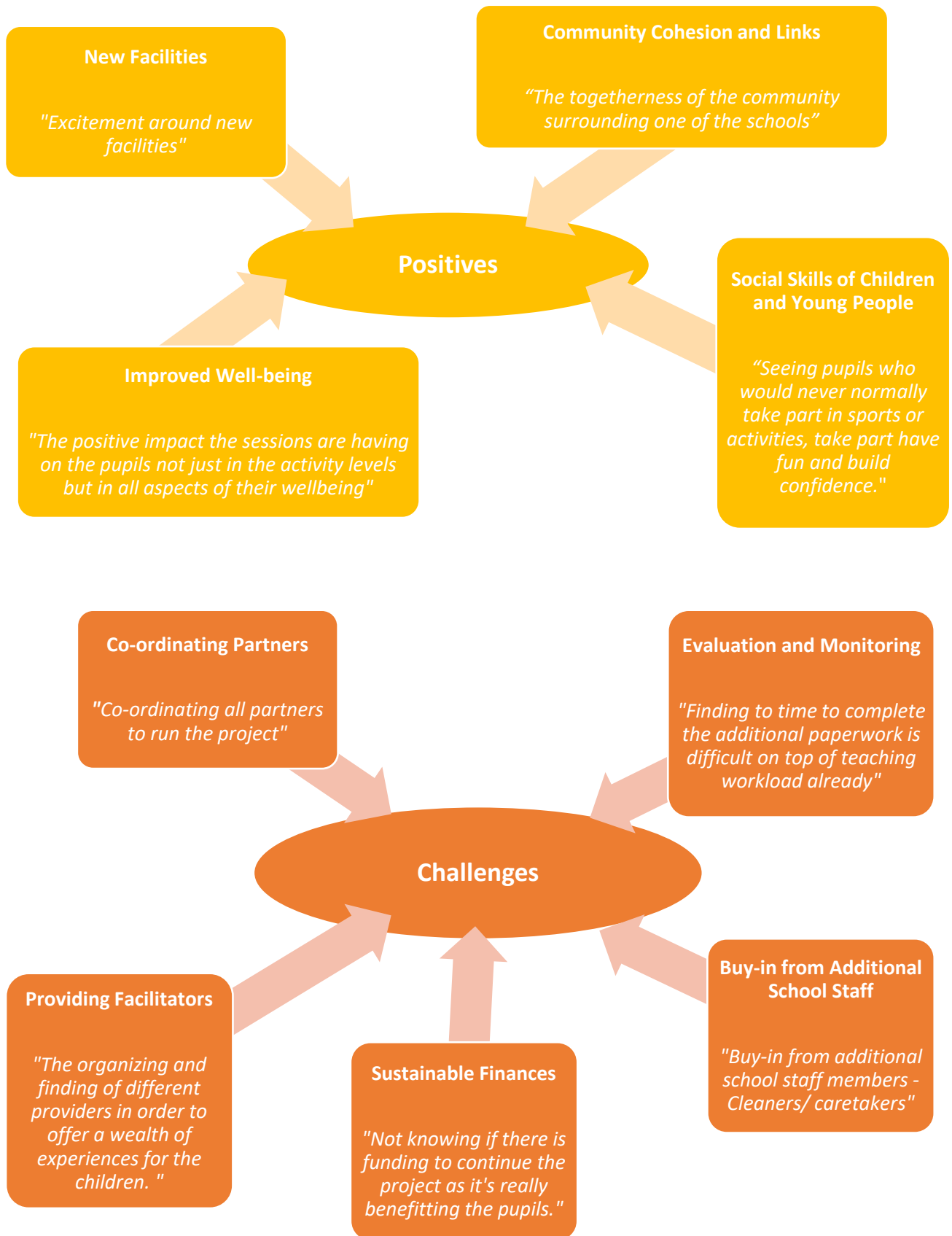
Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = difficult; 5 = easy), schools were asked how they found implementing the AEBSD programme.

- 7 attendees reported a score of 3 suggesting not difficult, but not easy
- 4 attendees reported a score of 4 suggesting fairly easy
- 1 attendee reported a score of 5 meaning easy

Due to delays in the school beginning the programme, or the equipment purchased being more targeted for autumn term, the experience for some schools has been limited and means they will be continuing in the 2022/2023 academic year. When attendees were asked if they will be continuing, 11 attendees reported 'yes', and one school reported 'maybe'. All attendees said they would recommend the initiative to other schools to participate in.

### Positive and Challenges from Programme Implementation






Using free-text responses, attendees were asked to reflect on what had worked well when implementing the programme and what challenges they had faced. Figure 19 highlights the core positives and challenges of their experiences. A key finding is the identification of improved well-being and social skills of children. Whilst some of challenges mentioned are sizeable, with an action plan in place, items such as co-ordinating parents could be more manageable.



**Figure 19.** Key positives and challenges as identified by staff involved in the implementation of the AEBSD programme

### Suggested Support Requirements for Implementation

Teachers and supporting sports organisations outlined for successful implementation to take place, the following should be considered:

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|  | Funding (e.g. for instructor-led activities and school staff support) |  | Coaching staff                              |
|  | Transport provision   |  | Regular touch-points to share good practice |
|  | Support to build networks   |  |   |

### Top tips for transforming a school in an Active Education Setting

- ⇒ Be community- and partnership-focused - undertake consultation with pupils and the community to meet their needs, and connect with local clubs
- ⇒ Consider sustainability from the outset and integrate contingency budget
- ⇒ Write a plan, review, commit and engage - be realistic
- ⇒ Work with Sports Development Teams
- ⇒ Consider allocating an initiative coordinator and getting enthusiastic staff involved

*“Finally... Don't give up! Stand back and watch – you'll be amazed [at] what you've done!”*

*Headteacher*

## Discussion

Schools are recognised internationally as a location which can influence behaviours of children and the wider community and have the potential to be a focus of the community. The concept of using the school site for more beneficial and meaningful physical activity linked to the needs of a community aligns to the ethos of the new school curriculum in Wales. In 2022, the WHO highlighted active education settings as an evidence-based mechanism for promoting physical activity. Ahead of this, however, Wales initiated this pilot project of transforming schools into active education settings through the AEBSD programme in 2021. The focus of this pilot was opening of school sites, beyond the school day, including evenings, weekends, and school holidays, with a specific focus on schools who are situated in deprived areas or who have a challenging demographic.

Many of the successful practices and challenges highlighted in a review of international evidence (Box 1), were common to those identified in this pilot project. It is important to achieve senior leadership buy-in, for the programme to be ambitious and to drive forward its implementation. To be sustainable, the programme should be informed by what the end users want to participate in and should connect with the wider community. Schools highlighted the challenge of continuing the programme from a cost perspective, particularly those who invested their funding in people and not infrastructure and equipment. Sourcing ways of continuing to deliver these programmes will be paramount to the sustained success.

The findings are discussed in line with the research questions designed by Sport Wales to evaluate this pilot project and in the context of [Sport Wales' Vision for Sport in Wales](#). The research questions were:

- What enables a school to become an active education setting?
- What is the impact of a school becoming an active education setting?
  - The impact it has on the vision for sport and sport Wales strategy
  - The impact it has on physical activity levels
  - The impact it has on education priorities including attendance
- What can ensure the active education approach becomes sustainable and embedded into school development plans?

### Question 1: Enabling a School to Become an Active Education Setting

Most schools were successful in progressing towards becoming or becoming an active education setting. Schools took very different approaches in investing the funding, dependent on their existing resources (physical and organised) and programmes of physical activity. While some schools required modifications to the buildings (e.g. changing rooms, security systems), others financed transport for after-school sessions, and/or covered staff costings through providing extra hours to existing staff or outsourcing external provision. Schools recognised the need for **consultation** from pupils and other audiences to shape the provision to make it most relevant and desired by the target audience. An issue highlighted was the

provision for younger groups due to the need for higher staff ratios. It was suggested that there is a need to ensure **equal opportunity** across the ages to make sure the programme is inclusive. **Increasing and initiating communication** earlier was highlighted as a lesson learnt as a way of promoting the sessions with the intention of boosting attendance. In addition, **communicating roles and responsibility** of those involved was suggested as an enabler of becoming an active education setting. Considering how pupils will travel from the sessions is key; whilst some pupils reported walking or running to the sessions, **arranging travel provision**, such as a late bus, was well received by pupils. Based on the experiences of many of the schools, it is evident that some schools were able to **bridge the gap between school and attendance to community sports groups**. Through the programme, schools have acknowledged the benefits of **cohesion between neighbouring schools**, which can help to provide complementary, rather than competitive, offerings.

### Question 2: Impact of a School Becoming an Active Education Setting

This objective explored the impact of a school becoming an active education setting on: i) the Vision for Sport and Sport Wales Strategy; ii) physical activity levels; and iii) educational priorities including attendance. To note, given the different timelines the programme has been implemented in different schools, the impact across each of the topics of interest will vary, and, for some schools, the impact (if any) will be realised in coming months and years.

#### *Sport Wales Strategy*

Within Sport Wales' Strategy, one strategic intent is *"to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be active through sport"*, and a key area they sought to do was to *"focus on partners in education and community settings"*. Through commissioning the AEBSD programme into schools, Sport Wales are achieving their strategic intent - a school becoming an active education setting means they are **helping to ensure everyone has access to sport**. This is in line with the [WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030](#), where a recommendation for creating active environments is to strengthen access to sports amenities by all people. Further work will involve tracking what percentage of school facilities are available for public use; an appetite among schools is evidenced in this pilot project, with schools seeking to consult with the wider communities and putting infrastructure in place to enable public access, independent of school staff.

The demographics of the schools taking part in the pilot highlighted that many were situated in some challenging areas in Wales. This is evidenced by some schools reporting a target of decreasing anti-social behaviour and stating that the police have reported a reduction in crime in a specific school. Providing opportunities to children and young people in **clean, safe, and stimulating environments is critical**. Work is underway in Wales to conduct an audit of the use of physical activity as a crime prevention tool across police forces in Wales. It will be important to put measures in place to track the positive impact the creation of active education settings has on local crime statistics.

### *Physical Activity Levels*

Pupils were asked, through a survey, whether their physical activity levels had changed because of attending the AEBSD sessions. Of the children who completed the survey, the majority reported an increase, and a small proportion reported no change. It is important to note that no change should not be perceived as a negative outcome as pupils may therefore be maintaining their current levels, which are known to decrease with age, and some children may have already be meeting, or exceeding, physical activity guidelines. However, due to the low completion number, these findings must be interpreted with caution. **Future delivery of the programme should seek to include a series of physical activity measures.** Moreover, the provision of a wider variety of sporting activities was acknowledged and valued by pupils. The quick sign-up for sessions was a positive. Within and from the sessions, staff viewed progress in pupil's physical skills and a keenness to **engage in volunteering** from participating pupils.

### *Schools Educational Priorities*

Schools reported improvements in pupils' behaviour, confidence, self-esteem, and resilience, along with cross-curriculum and collaboration benefits. For example, a positive impact on pupil behaviour in school was reflected in more than half of the monthly learning logs completed by schools. In addition, the **AEBSD sessions provided an outlet to help pupils manage their emotions and learn self-control.** Promisingly, a top reason for schools seeking to become an active education setting was to '**develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of being physically active**'. With a new area of learning and experience within the new curriculum in Wales focusing on health and well-being, the positive progress of the schools would strive towards achieving the objective of this area of learning. There is also a **need to develop children as agents of their own health** and develop health literacy, for individual and societal purposes ([Sorbring & Luczynski, 2019](#)). Schools and local authorities should be **encouraged to capture flourishing outcomes** (e.g. personal development) of children's progression learning and development towards achieving education priorities, and not only traditional measures (e.g. attendance).

### *Question 3: Sustainability of the Active Education Approach*

The third objective was to understand what can ensure that the active education approach becomes sustainable and embedded into school development plans. Schools received funding for implementing the programme within one academic year, and they are then required to consider how they continue the programme. Given all pupils who completed the pupil's survey said they would **likely recommend attending sessions to someone**, it shows a desire from children for the sessions to continue. Given the challenging locations of many of the schools, it is important that the safe and stimulating activities outside of traditional school hours continue as to not revert the positive away from the positive momentum

achieved. School staff also highlighted that school staff wanted to be involve in the programme and that community cohesion with the wider community had improved.

Schools recognised **further funding** is required to continue the programme, although many have identified innovative ways (e.g. volunteering, train-the-trainer approach with pupils) or will be allocating school budget to the programme delivery. Local authorities should work with schools to consider what resources (financial and in-kind) can be made available to the schools to help. In a school forum, where attendees were encouraged to share their practices, it was suggested that schools who used the funding to purchase equipment and/or change the school's physical infrastructure as opposed to paying for external providers would find it easier to continue the programme. Working with schools to create a toolkit on how to become an active education setting and sustain the setting could be beneficial. The suggestions of further support and top tips for transforming a school could be incorporated.

One aspect not considered within the pilot project evaluation, but highlighted within one school's expression of interest, was the concern of the impact the programme would have on existing provision and opportunities already in the communities (if they exist). For example, in a rural 3-18 year school, concerns were raised on how new school facilities would affect the leisure centre. In this instance, the concern was alleviated as the facilities were to be complementary to the leisure centre's facilities, but this would not always be the case. Programmes do not function in isolation, and the wider impacts, including non-purposeful ones, should be monitored, where possible. It will be important that schools and local facilities collaborate, with the core focus being providing communities with physical activity opportunities, to ensure the programmes are mutually beneficial and not detrimental to one another, for example, decrease in memberships at the local leisure centre.

## Recommendations

Based on these findings of the pilot project, the following **key recommendations** are suggested:

### Recommendation 1:

*Develop a clear message on the purpose of the AEBSD programme, taking into consideration the evidence presented in the evaluation as to why pupils attended (e.g. learn new skills).*

Whilst the primary outcome is currently designed to increase physical activity levels, focusing on more holistic outcomes such as social interaction, curriculum engagement, improved well-being of staff and pupils, qualities and experiences that result from taking part can motivate attendance which, in turn, increases physical activity.

### Recommendation 2:

*Undertake continued evaluation of the AEBSD programme.*

The evaluation should include objective measures (e.g. physical activity), and linking planning and evaluation together using recognised tools and approaches. This will also capture ongoing changes to the environment and developing children and young people as agents of their own health. Repetition of the same measures is advantageous to enable comparisons.

### Recommendation 3:

*Develop a systems approach to the national implementation of the AEBSD programme.*

As the school does not function in isolation, understanding the connections and impact of the programme with and on partners is important. Schools need to operationalise at a local level at the outset (e.g. with their local authority education leads), and then build to regional. This approach will also help bridge the gap between schools and community sports groups, but also consider where deficits in the community may occur as a result of the programme (e.g. local leisure centre gym membership).

### Recommendation 4:

*Develop a AEBSD toolkit for schools.*

The toolkit should set out a framework of ideas for how they become an active education setting. The toolkit could consider the following, non-exhaustive, ideas:

- Consultation with end-users, including those supporting attendance and attenders
- Create a pupil voice group
- Assessment of current provision to identify gaps
- Governance structure
- Communication methods, with suggestions of phrasing
- Arranging travel provision, including aiding active travel
- Equal opportunity across the ages to ensure the programme is inclusive
- Sustainability plans

**Recommendation 5:**

*Develop a sustainable funding model to support schools to initiate  
and continue the programme.*

As schools have autonomy on how they deliver the programme, they should have autonomy on how the funding is spent. Successful implementation has funded provision through outsourcing external provision whilst others have funded equipment.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1. Overview of data collection tools, designed by Sport Wales, to evaluate the AEBSO programme

Tool	Method
Expression of interest applications	All schools in Wales were invited, in collaboration with their Local Authority Sport/Leisure and Education Leads, to submit an Expression of Interest Form. This was an outline proposal of how their schools would operate as an active education setting to facilitate sport and physical activity sessions for pupils, families, and the wider community.
School forums	Three school forums were delivered by Sport Wales over the course of the AEBSO programme. School staff, local authority education (for participating schools) and sports development departments were invited to the online school forums to share thoughts, ideas, and opinions on the project. During the last school forum, a short survey was used to capture schools' thoughts on sustainability of the project. The school forum was a programme component as well as part of the evaluation data collection tools.
Learning logs	Using a template, schools were asked to capture monthly their thoughts on programme implementation, noting important learning points to inform continued delivery.
Attendance registers	Schools were asked to track attendance of all attendees to their sessions on a weekly and monthly basis. Attendees were not to be double counted.
Adult structured Interview	All school contact members of staff were invited to take part in the adult structured interviews. Staff received the questionnaire prior to the interview to obtain the answers and during a remote, online interview they shared the answers to complete the questionnaire.
Pupil-level survey	An online survey, using a mixture of open- and closed-questions was created to capture pupil's feelings and thoughts towards the AEBSO programme. Data was collected on the pupil's attendance at the sessions, overall experience of the sessions, confidence during the sessions, how they travelled to the sessions and impact of the sessions on physical activity.
<b>Additional measures for three longitudinal schools</b>	
Pupil's focus groups	A focus group guide was designed and used to ensure that similar routes of questioning were pursued with each focus group, whilst also allowing for flexibility to respond to lines of discussion raised by the pupils.
Adult semi-structured interview	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff involved in the pilot project from both the schools and sport development teams. These interviews captured what was being implemented, what was going well, and any improvements that could be made.

## Welsh Institute of Physical Activity, Health and Sport

WIPAHS is a pan-Wales network of all eight Welsh Universities and Sport Wales. With members based across Wales, we can capitalise on the nation's unique culture and its remarkable range of expertise, infrastructure, and facilities. WIPAHS brings together world-leading academics, with representatives from Sport Wales and Welsh Government, who are driven to answer practice-based questions, identify fundamental research questions, and ensure that findings are reflected in Welsh policy and practice. An advantage of working with WIPAHS is the access to such breadth of knowledge and resource available across the partners.

Our research expertise includes health inequalities and the use of physical activity as medicine. We are also experts in physical literacy, and the application of technology to promote physical activity or manage health conditions. Whilst working across the lifespan, many of our researchers are leading experts in using physical activity to improve short- and long-term outcomes in children and young people. Researchers have contributed to numerous Chief Medical Officer's physical activity and health expert working groups (including children and young people guidelines), Physical Activity in the National Institute for Health Care Excellence (NICE) quality standards advisory committee for childhood obesity and are a WHO HEPA Europe Steering Committee Member.

As a practice-driven organisation, WIPAHS seeks to answer the questions posed by partners working in the field, as well as widely disseminate knowledge across a diverse range of audiences. WIPAHS uses the transformative power of physical activity and sport to improve the lives of people in Wales.

Further information on projects we have led and supported can be found in our [Annual Report 2021](#).





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of Physical Activity,  
Health and Sport

## Contact Us

If you would be interested in discussing how the Welsh Institute of Physical Activity, Health and Sport (WIPAHS) can assist your organisation to answer important research and evaluation questions, or help provide your organisation with important insight, please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss.

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