



School Snapshot

Whole-School & Community Engagement

Focus: Systems & Community (Parents, Guardians, and the Wider Community)

The Challenge: Re-engaging families and boosting PA levels without a dedicated budget.



What the Setting Did

This school participated in the Active Schools in Essex pilot. Using the CAS platform and collaborating with Active Essex, they audited their PESSPA provision and identified parents as an untapped resource. Three zero-cost changes were implemented:

Leveraged Free Tools: Promoted the local 'Find Your Active' Navigator Tool to help parents locate free/low-cost PA opportunities.

Co-Delivered Workshops: Invited an Active Essex team member to lead a joint workshop on benefits of family activity.

Reinvigorated the Daily Mile: Launched a fortnightly 'Early Morning Family Mile' inviting parents to walk, jog, or run alongside children.



Ingredients of Success

The Power of Partnership: Local active partnerships provided external credibility and expert resources.

Removing Financial Barriers: Exclusively promoting free/low-cost opportunities ensured inclusivity.

Social Connection: Transitioning the Daily Mile into a community event created shared purpose and increased engagement.



Sustainability (Without Funding)

No Resource Dependency: Digital tools (like the Navigator) are externally maintained and free.

Routine Integration: Pivoting an existing routine (Daily Mile) keeps effort low.

Relational Equity: Stronger trust between staff, pupils, and parents becomes permanent school culture.



How Can I Make This Work? (Takeaways for PE Leads)

You can start using these approaches next week. Keep it simple:

- 1. Audit Your Existing Routines:** Can any current activities (Daily Mile, arrival times, lunch clubs) be opened up to parents?
- 2. Identify Your Local Support:** Reach out to your local Active Partnership for free digital resources, wider programme access and support..
- 3. Keep Barriers Low:** Focus on 'no-cost' solutions. Stick to 'walk and talk' or active play.
- 4. Co-Deliver with Experts:** Use external partners to deliver and support with workshops - saves planning time and brings fresh energy.
- 5. Focus on Relationships:** Use these moments to build understanding of PA needs, not just log activity.

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School Snapshot

Transforming Lunchtime Provision & Behaviour

Focus: School Environment & Behaviour (Lunchtimes & Playtimes)

The Challenge: High behavioural incidents during lunchtimes, paired with a playground lacking purpose and structure.



What the Setting Did

This school developed an action plan as part of the Active Schools in Essex pilot, targeting lunchtime PA to drive positive behaviour. A baseline audit revealed an average of 3 behavioural incidents per lunchtime. Zero-budget actions taken:

Upskilled MDAs: Ran two targeted training sessions for Midday Assistants and SLT in partnership with Active Essex.

Peer Site Visit: Staff visited a 'lighthouse' school to witness successful active lunchtimes and gather practical ideas.

Appointed a Play Lead: An internal staff member was promoted to champion and coordinate the new lunchtime structure.

Zoned the Playground: Re-mapped the playground into distinct activity zones to maximise purposeful play.

Crowdsourced Resources: Asked the school community to donate loose parts and play resources.

Empowered Pupils: Used pupil voice surveys to let children design and choose zone activities.



Ingredients of Success

Valuing Support Staff: Training MDAs transformed them from 'supervisors' into 'play facilitators.'

Strategic Space Planning: Zoning the playground reduced chaotic behaviour by giving children clear boundaries.

Co-Creation with Pupils: Giving students a say directly boosted enjoyment and reduced friction.



Sustainability (Without Funding)

Community-Powered Resources: Relying on donations eliminates the need for continuous budget allocation.

Embedded Internal Leadership: An internal Play Lead ensures permanent ownership of the system.

Shift in Culture, Not Cost: MDA training is a one-time investment. Knowledge and zoning remain at no ongoing cost.



How Can I Make This Work? (Takeaways for PE Leads)

You can start adapting your lunchtime provision next week. Keep it simple:

1. Audit Your Baseline First: Track behavioural incidents for a week to get hard data.

2. Formally Zone Your Space: Use benches, painted lines, cones to divide into quiet, skill and high-energy zones.

3. Involve Your MDAs in the Vision: Share why active play matters; give them specific zones to manage.

4. Use Pupil Voice: Ask children what they want to do at lunchtime - they'll engage more positively.

5. Don't Buy, Ask for Donations: Send a letter home asking for loose parts (old tyres, crates, tennis balls).

6. Conference Takeaway: Behaviour issues at lunchtime are often just boredom and unstructured space. Upskill staff and zone your playground to cut incidents without spending a penny.

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School Snapshot

Maximising Whole-Day Physical Activity & Sustainable Funding

Focus: Active Travel, Whole-School Day & Sustainable Funding

The Challenge: Identifying sedentary blind spots, improving data collection, and securing long-term funding.



What the Setting Did

This school completed a comprehensive audit using the CAS framework alongside Active Essex. The audit revealed pupils were most sedentary before school, after school and during non-PE lessons. Four key actions were taken:

Partnered for Active Travel: Active Essex connected the school with ECC Active Travel team. They launched the WOW Tracker to gamify walking, cycling and scooting to school.

High-Yield Community Fundraiser: Launched a whole-school 'Mini-Marathon' with sponsored runs and parent participation, supporting the Home Learning Environment.

Overhauled Pupil Tracking: Moved to individual pupil PA data monitoring, identifying a remaining 20% gap of less-active pupils for targeted intervention.

Relaunched Student Leadership: Revitalised Sports Leaders program, giving older pupils roles to lead active playground games.



Ingredients of Success & Key Data

External Frameworks: The county-backed WOW tracker gave active travel structure and consistency.

PA into Financial Capital: The Mini-Marathon engaged parents, improved relationships, and raised £6,000 in sponsorship.

Granular Data: Tracking every child's activity removed guesswork - the school knows exactly who the inactive 20% are.

Active Travel Impact: Baseline 50% active travel → Current 90% (+40% increase)



Sustainability (Without Funding)

Ring-Fenced Future Funding: £6,000 raised via Mini-Marathon strictly ring-fenced for future PESSPA provision.

Behavioural Habits Formed: Active travel habits and Sports Leaders require zero ongoing financial investment.

The Attendance Link: Clear upward trend in pupil attendance following the Active Schools rollout.



How Can I Make This Work? (Takeaways for PE Leads)

You can apply these strategies to your own setting:

- 1. Map Your Sedentary Gaps:** Audit the 'edges' of your school day - before the bell, transitions, after school.
- 2. Connect with Local Schemes:** Contact your county council or active partnership for pre-made tracking tools (like WOW).
- 3. Run an Active Community Fundraiser:** Frame it as a family challenge - builds community links and secures ring-fenced funding.
- 4. Use Data as a Precision Tool:** Track which specific children are missing out. Hold priority spaces for lower-activity pupils.
- 5. Elevate Student Leaders:** Train Sports Leaders with your SGO/SSP to run playground games and expand capacity.
- 6. Conference Takeaway:** PA can drive the school day. Link active travel, fundraising, and student leadership to boost activity to 90%, raise thousands, and improve attendance.

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School Snapshot

Embedding Classroom Movement & Active Learning

Focus: Active Classrooms & High-Quality, Evidence-Informed Teaching

The Challenge: Disengagement and behavioural incidents during sedentary, non-PE curriculum lessons.



What the Setting Did

Following a whole-school audit alongside Active Essex, the school identified a clear desire to increase PA within standard classroom lessons. Prolonged sitting was contributing to disengagement and low-level disruptions. They aligned with the Whole School Development Plan and implemented:

Whole-School CPD: Active Essex delivered a 'Move & Learn' workshop for all teaching staff and TAs, establishing the cognitive and behavioural rationale behind active learning.

Free High-Quality Resources: Staff accessed free Move & Learn digital resources and 'Activators' (short brain-break movement activities) from the Active Schools pilot.

Structured Movement Windows: Teachers embedded at least three additional PA segments across the school day, deploying Activators when pupils became dysregulated.

Embodied Learning: Staff wove movement into academic content (e.g. science quiz answered via star jumps, running on the spot, touching toes).

Monitored via Staff Voice: SLT and PE Lead gathered teacher/TA feedback to evaluate the trial before whole-school rollout.



Ingredients of Success

Including All Support Staff: Training Teachers and TAs ensured consistent management and gave support staff confidence to lead movement breaks.

Strategic Deployment: Teachers used Activators responsively as a regulation tool precisely when energy dipped or behaviour slipped.

Content-Linked Movement: Integrating movement into academic tasks proved PA doesn't take time away from learning - it is the learning.



Sustainability (Without Funding)

Completely Free Resources: Move & Learn framework and Activators require zero ongoing subscription or software costs.

Pedagogical Shift: Once teachers understand embodied learning improves cognition, it becomes a permanent part of their daily toolkit.

Development Plan Alignment: Anchoring active classrooms into the school's main development plan protects it as a core priority.



How Can I Make This Work? (Takeaways for PE Leads)

You can introduce active learning to your classrooms next week:

1. Align with School Priorities: Frame it as embodied learning, cognitive readiness, and classroom management - tie it to your School Development Plan.

2. Train the Whole Team: Ensure TAs are included - they work closest with children who struggle most with prolonged sitting.

3. Start with Activators: Introduce 2-minute non-academic movement breaks as transition tools between subjects or after lunchtime.

4. Gamify Academic Review: Turn quizzes into active events (answer A = star jumps, B = run on spot, C = stretch). Zero planning required.

5. Gather Staff Voice Evidence: Run a quick survey after a two-week trial. Teacher quotes are the most effective way to build whole-school momentum.

6. Conference Takeaway: Children aren't built to sit still for hours. Replace sedentary blocks with content-linked movement and brain activators to reduce incidents, improve focus, and level the playing field - all at zero cost.

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