

Dorrington Academy makes getting active a family affair

change
4 life



School context

Dorrington Academy is a three-form entry primary school in an area of Birmingham where more than a quarter of 10 and 11-year-olds are classified as obese or severely obese. The percentage of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well above average.

Dorrington Academy is committed to promoting diversity and inclusivity, and the school has been praised by Ofsted for creating a community-driven environment.

Physical activity and wellbeing at Dorrrington Academy

Using the whole school day

The school aims to promote healthy lifestyle messages to the children throughout the school day. They do this by:

- Encouraging staff to be role models for children. For example, by playing regular matches in a range of sports so the children can see them being active and enjoying participating.
- Adopting a cross-curricular approach to physical activity and health, for example by exploring lifestyle choices and life expectancy in history, or using yoga and physical activity to act out stories in English.
- Placing emphasis on support for inactive children and using its primary school sport funding to employ specialist coaches to support teachers and run clubs.

Empowering pupils

The school's Play Leaders scheme encourages less active children to take part in physical activity by playing simple games at lunch and break times. Pupil leaders organise the games and demonstrate what is involved. They also train participants to become leaders themselves, growing pupils' confidence and skills and motivating them to stay active in the long term.

"At the Academy we take a small steps approach in order to make big strides towards healthy living in the long term, so we are continually promoting healthy lifestyle messages."

John Harrison, Deputy Head Teacher, Dorrrington Academy, Birmingham

Engaging families, carers and the whole school community

In 2019, Dorrrington Academy ran a Fun and Fitness week. Pupils and parents got the chance to try out different exercise activities they might not ordinarily be able to access, such as jumping on mini-trampolines, Clubbercise (a dance class in the dark with glow sticks) and anti-gravity yoga.

For teachers, it provided a chance to showcase skills beyond those they might be known for. One teaching assistant taught the whole academy a Zumba dance, while a Year 2 teacher put on a martial arts workshop for the children.

"All my close friends and family said what a great idea it was to have a health and fitness week at our school. Our family and friends have since tried some of our healthier recipes and they have all been really impressed."

Mother of pupils at Dorrrington Academy

Positive results

Embedding physical activity throughout the school and involving families has been a great way to ensure that pupils' learning is carried on at home. It's just one of the actions that led to Dorrrington's recent Ofsted report commenting on how the school's initiatives had "raised the self-esteem and confidence" of their pupils, supporting the school's vision for all pupils to leave the gates confident in who they are, with the skills they need to lead happy and healthy lives in their wider community.

"The school's Fun and Fitness week has definitely educated my children about leading a healthy lifestyle."

Mother of pupil at Dorrrington Academy

We would love to hear how your school has been getting active. Send stories, photos or videos to partnerships@phe.gov.uk

