

Small school.... with big ambitions to lead and inspire 'Step out of the ordinary'

Background

We are an active, forward thinking school already at the forefront of physical activity enterprises and early adopters of initiatives such as the Daily Mile. We recognise the importance of activity and its benefits to learning as well as physical and emotional wellbeing. We are a small school with big plans to pioneer more initiatives to lead the way and inspire others to do the same - we want to give our children as many opportunities to feel proud.

We may be small, but we pack a lot in to ensure our pupils can be as physically active as possible throughout their school career with us. We understand that we have a huge responsibility to instil a positive approach to physical activity and active play and inspire our pupils to develop a lifelong love of being active.

We know the impact poor emotional health can have on performance in school and the importance of physical activity to aid mental clarity. We role model being active as a school community and we want to expand our programme to encourage our children to become role models for future generations.

We want to build on the good work we have already done by instilling a new ethos at our school: 'Step out of the ordinary' – be inspired, be active and see the health benefits that make you feel proud of what you can achieve.

Evidence

- 1) Gold School Games award 2017/2018 - in recognition of leading the Daily Mile in Dorset, delivering a diverse range of PE and sports, involving the local community in physical activities, inspiring our children with support from a local marathon runner and tennis coaching for the entire school culminating in our own mini Wimbledon event.
- 2) Wake and shake sessions - to get everyone moving first thing in the morning, to feel energised and ready to learn. We have seen the positive impact this whole school activity has on concentration levels in the classroom.
- 3) Daily mile initiative – each classroom takes part in the daily mile and runs, walks or jogs the course as many times as they can in a session. This whole school approach has seen significant improvements in pupils' well-being both physically and emotionally. The children tell us they enjoy the way they feel after a session.
- 4) Introduction of a Forest school programme where the children can regularly engage with nature. The objective is to place the children in the heart of the countryside and encourage them to develop an appreciation of their environment, learn to identify wildlife, differentiate between trees and develop an understanding of how natural materials perform for different tasks. They will also develop their problem solving, collaboration and communication skills and progress to building camp fires, safely using axes and knives, enjoy getting muddy, and ultimately explore the world around them with confidence.

Links to OFSTED and SEF

Outcomes: Improved mental health / Manage stress and achieve calm / Increased engagement of physical activity

“Raising attendance for all pupils in school and especially those with persistently high rates of absence” Ofsted 2018: ‘Proud to be active’ will lead to improvements in physical and mental wellbeing for our children and create healthier children who won’t be absent from school as often. Our programme will inspire our children to want to come to school, to take part and be active as they will feel better for it and be proud of what they can achieve. Ultimately, they will understand the importance of looking after themselves for life.

“Improving pupils’ outcomes and raising attainment” Ofsted 2018: Each zone offers different activities to build the body & brain, play creatively, experiment, engage with nature and recharge. Each of these activities lead to improvements in core strength, concentration, fine motor skills, imagination and above all, for every child to feel proud of what they can achieve.

“Embedding systems to develop pupils’ spelling” Ofsted 2018: The active area within the ‘Build your body & brain zone is a designated space where active lessons can take place away from the traditional school classroom environment. This is where active spelling zappers, spelling using different materials (conkers, stones, pebbles etc) and playing games with phonics will be delivered. The aim of this technique is to find new ways for all children to establish the best way for them to learn how to spell as one size does not fit all.

“Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in a range of contexts” Ofsted 2018: the creative writing area within the Creative Play zone will offer inspirational space for children to sit outside and enjoy the natural, rural surroundings. Making time and space for creative writing is key and the purpose-built area within the Creative Play zone will give the children the tools they need to practise outside of the traditional classroom environment.

With almost one third of our pupils having SEND, we are well above the national average and work hard to make it as inclusive as possible. The new zones are specifically designed to offer activities and safe play opportunities for all pupils, including those with mental and physical challenges. For example, the quiet garden in the Recharge zone is a place for children with autism to spend time quietly away from the noise of the classroom, to interact with nature, hear the birds sing, look at the flowers and plants and be ready to go back into classroom to join in with the activities. The build our core area within the Build your Body & Brain zone will be a focus area for children with physical disabilities as we help strengthen their core through specific exercises. The sensory garden in the Experiment zone will be especially relevant for children with complex needs.

Why?

It is all about **Inspiring** the children to ‘**step out of the ordinary**’, be active, see the health benefits and create **Proud** moments and **Hygge!!**

We value our school’s unique smallness and are proud in saying that each child is cared for and valued as an individual. Our aim is for all children to leave us as happy, confident and independent individuals with a positive outlook on life. We understand the key platform to enable us to achieve our aim is to

provide as many opportunities as possible for children to engage in active play, active learning and to engage with nature.

We know the importance of a child feeling proud about what they have achieved each day at school. It is those little moments of pride that create positive independence and help our children grow. Whether it is a child being able to read a tricky word, recite a complex poem, climb a piece of gymnastic apparatus, remember their 7 times table, paint a beautiful piece of artwork, understand the difference between a noun and pronoun, bake a tasty scone or simply be able to tie their shoe laces independently for the first time – every day has endless opportunities for our children to be proud of what they can achieve.

We want to give our children many opportunities through being active to stimulate physical and emotional wellbeing to have those proud moments. It is at the heart of what we do as a school: we celebrate the individuality of all our children and nurture them to be confident independent happy children.

We are inspired by Andy Cope, particularly the importance of making time for Hygge moments. The art of building sanctuary and community within our school, of inviting closeness and paying attention to what makes us feel open hearted and alive, to feeling connected and warm and belonging to the moment; these are at the heart of what we do and dovetail to our school Christian values. As adults, we know the wonderful feeling of Hygge moments and want to create as many opportunities in school for our children to experience these to thrive and flourish.

What?

We live in the heart of the West Dorset countryside and want to bring more of the countryside into our school grounds. We have a wonky, sloping playground, no playing fields of our own and no gym within the school grounds. We rely on our local community to allow us access to the village hall for indoor PE lessons, use a playing fields owned by a local landowner for football and cricket and we transport our children to the local leisure centre for gymnastics and swimming.

What we need

We are inspired by 'Proud' by Heather Small, where she sings about stepping out of the ordinary, to realise to question is to grow and the need for change: do it today.

We have a big ambition to build on our past success by developing a programme that starts with Inspiration. We want to inspire our children with stories, examples and opportunities to be active and play. We want to invite local role models, national role models and sporting heroes to come to the school to inspire our children and those within the wider community with their stories. We want to develop an Inspirational mindset and ethos in the school where children will want to take part, no matter what their abilities and will feel better for doing so.

The basis for our programme is Inspiration and this is the platform we will use throughout school life to showcase that to ask questions, to have a go and to be creative and free to play are all key to wellbeing. We want to create 5 zones within our school grounds to encourage active play opportunities for all children and allow us to build on the inspiration they will have to get active. These will feature a wide variety of stimulating, sensory, green, natural areas where everyone can play safely and comfortably. We also have a need to switch two classrooms over within the school and need to move our Early Years garden from its current location to accommodate this change.

Funding

We require the funds to allow us to develop the following:

- 1) Visitors programme (including YST sports ambassadors x 2) to the school to inspire the children with their stories
- 2) Creation of the 5 zones
- 3) Storage for outdoor play equipment, forest school and PE equipment
- 4) Spinning wheel for move of the day
- 5) Transport for other schools within the West Dorset collaboration to attend inspirational days and use our zones
- 6) Proud to be Active Co-ordinator (2 days per week)

The Zones

We want to create 5 zones to allow all our children to experience play opportunities in all weathers:

Experiment zone

Sensory garden

Let's experiment garden

Experiment zone

Creative play zone

EY garden

Mud kitchen

Construct & climb

Active Sensory Corridor (indoors)

Role play area (indoors and outdoors in summer)

Creative writing area

Recharge zone

Quiet garden

Story telling garden

Build your body & brain zone

Main playground

Daily mile course

Trim trail

Active learning area

Build our core area

Nature at the heart zone

Forest school

Hero the horse chestnut tree

Materials area

Animal visits area

How

Dorset Landscapes to carry out main school grounds development work in partnership with Learning through Landscapes.

The zones have been prioritised as we recognise this is an ambitious programme that will roll out over several months. The zones in priority order are:

- 1) Creative play
- 2) Experiment and Recharge (as these utilise current garden space)
- 3) Build your body & brain
- 4) Nature at the heart

Sustainability

The legacy we will create is for our school to become the beacon and blueprint for West Dorset and beyond for nurturing happy, active and healthy children through play and learning zones where the aim is to inspire the children to create proud moments and the warm feeling of Hygge.

We are part of the West Dorset Schools Collaboration which includes over 1600 children and we will work with our partners in the collaboration to share our resources and learnings. The other schools will come to our Inspiration days, use our zones and learn from what we have achieved to deliver similar opportunities at their own schools. This allows us to build scale and importantly create real change throughout West Dorset.

We will also encourage local community groups to use our resources: 1st Beaminster Scout Group, where the Beavers and Cubs will utilise our school grounds for their activities, and local pre-schools e.g. Wrens at Hooke Court and Bradpole pre-school (feeder pre-schools to our school).

We will also partner with Bridport & District Dementia Action Alliance to encourage local people suffering with dementia to use the sensory garden and spend time in some of the zones. The key objective of the group is to make the local community more dementia friendly and we believe working in partnership with them, we can help them towards this objective.

The Inspiration programme will be developed to provide a platform for many other initiatives within the school over the next 7 years. We want to track children in Reception right through to the end of year 6 to see how the Inspiration programme and zones creates more play opportunities for the children and how this contributes to their physical and emotional wellbeing as they progress through our school.

The theme of Inspiration will allow us to work with many partners across PE, sport, drama, crafts, disability groups etc to deliver key programmes at school. For example, we are planning a sensory loss programme where blind and deaf people will visit the school to demonstrate to the children the challenges they face and how they overcome them. In the future, with the new zones, we would then encourage the children to explore the zones blindfolded or with noise cancelling headphones to experience the world around them very differently.

The aim is for the children themselves to inspire one another through their stories and efforts. We believe in the power of Yet: 'I can't do it YET' and we see a great opportunity for the older children especially, to show the younger children how they have benefitted from being active to build their

core strength and how it allows them to be more precise when using pens etc. We also aim to encourage far more reflection time in our Recharge zone where time to read quietly or just have space to think and take in the beautiful surroundings if things are tough, to then go back to class ready to learn will be respected by all.

How we will evaluate the impact

We have 8 ways to measure the impact of our Inspiration programme:

- 1) The school has developed a unique tracking system for the children as we recognise the standard academic tracking system doesn't represent the full picture of a child. The holistic tracker measures pupils' levels of physical skill (fine and gross motor) social skills and communication and self-image and regulation. Using this tracker, we can identify common and individual areas of need and prowess and target our teaching styles and content to boost weaker areas. Working on a whole child view prepares our pupils for their future challenges whatever they may be and we have found that once the self is balanced then children are in the most receptive place to learn which in turn leads to better academic achievement.
- 2) We will monitor success against the SDP and the measurable and exact success criteria set out in the SDP. The inspiration programme is directly linked to our SDP.
- 3) We will also use the Create Development Wheel being trialled within Dorset, which allows us to see a clear visual record of the learning journey for each child in the school and evidences rapid sustained progress.
- 4) We have opted in to the Active Lives Children & Young People survey, as we see the huge value in understanding the levels of activity and attitudes towards activity now within our school community. This survey and report will become even more important when we take part in the survey again after the Inspiration programme has been launched and embedded and we can see how levels of activity and attitudes have changed.
- 5) We will also set clear objectives and targets within the West Dorset Schools Collaboration to monitor the impact of the schools utilising the zones and understanding the impact that has on areas such as concentration in the classroom. The inspirational sessions will be held across the collaboration where 1600 children will have a direct benefit.
- 6) We will also develop a 'Being active' reflection programme whereby the children will be able to think about what they learnt today in the zones, what they enjoyed most and what they need to remember for next time to make it even better.
- 7) Teachers will monitor the impact on concentration and behaviour in class and keep diaries of great moments of pride to be shared with parents.
- 8) Finally, we will measure the success of the new ethos and inspiration programme via surveys (children, parents and teachers) to understand how we are building the new ethos and what we can do to improve it further.

Link to Dorset's Prevention at Scale Programme

We have already embarked on a comprehensive whole school approach to physical and emotional wellbeing through our use of the PE & Sport Premium money and the Forest school programme. Our ambition to create an inspirational school ethos to 'Step out of the ordinary' and be proud of what you can achieve will take us to the next level. Ultimately, our aim is to inspire our children to develop a lifelong love of being active and staying healthy and in turn, for them to become role models for future generations.

We recognise the critical role primary school like ours plays in the 'Starting Well' initiative within the Prevention at Scale programme. We have a responsibility to protect & nurture the next generation; the adage: 'It takes a village to raise a child' reminds us that we are at the heart of the community in Powerstock and can be the catalyst for change throughout the West Dorset Schools Collaboration as we lead and inspire the other schools.

We believe we can also make an important contribution to the 'Ageing Well' initiative within the Prevention at Scale programme as we foster positive links with the local Dementia support group. We have discussed the bid with Dementia Action Alliance Bridport and the Memory Café in Bridport where their members will be invited to use the sensory garden and participate in the outdoor learning and singing with the children e.g. the crossover brain breaks song KS1 enjoy.

We also want to expand this to other groups within the area who would benefit from the sensory garden and build our core area, for example the local Age UK group and the local branch of the Dorset Blind Association. We have enjoyed watching the Channel 4 series 'Old People's home for 4 years olds' and recognise the connections that can be made between young children and older people. We live in an area where there is a large population of elderly people and we want them to benefit from the new zones we will create within the school grounds and to use this as a platform to establish connections between the children and older members of our community in West Dorset to aid wellbeing for both age groups.

Evidence all of this will be achieved by:

- 1) Utilising the school's unique tracking system (see evaluation section)
- 2) Monitoring absenteeism due to illness (mental and physical) targeting significant improvements for those with persistently lower attendance rates
- 3) Being part of the Dorset trial of the Create Development Wheel where learning journeys and progress can be monitored for all pupils
- 4) Opting in to the Active Lives survey to assess progress year on year
- 5) Keeping an evidence-based diary of visitors to the zones and learning outcomes e.g. Dementia groups attended x number of times in 6 months and spent 50% of their time in the sensory garden and participated in x activities with the children. How did they feel? What was the impact? What can we improve upon?
- 6) Working in partnership to monitor the impact with the local groups who utilise our zones

Summary: Step out of the ordinary

We are a small school with big ambitions to act as a leader and catalyst in the West Dorset area for real change. We want to build on the success we have had in the last 2 years and continue to be at the forefront of new initiatives. The new ethos we want to instil at our school is to 'Step out of the ordinary' – be inspired, be active and see the health benefits that make you feel proud of what you can achieve.

The investment Public Health Dorset would make in our school would have huge reach beyond our school and resonate throughout the whole of the West Dorset Schools Collaboration and wider community. Ultimately, our aim is that this investment will support our bid to help our children develop a lifelong love of being active and become role models for future generations.

What have you done today to make you feel proud?