



Torriano Primary School

Getting Girls Active

 Camden, London

What is the context of your school?

Torriano Primary School is an outstanding two form entry community school located in Camden, London with double the national deprivation indices for disadvantage. The school have developed a Physical Education, School Sports and Physical Activity (PESSPA) programme to have a holistic and inclusive approach, and offer two weekly PE lessons, an extensive extra-curricular provision with over 40 clubs, and a range of opportunities to be active at playtime and during school. As a UNICEF Right Respecting School, there is a deep commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, specifically achieving gender equality in sport is a real priority.

What was your motivation to be part of the programme/take action?

The PESSPA Coordinator and Sports Coach started working at the school in 2019 and became aware of the lower levels of participation by girls at after-school clubs, which was exacerbated during COVID. Girls were asked the reasons why and many were cited including that boys would not pass the ball to them in mixed games, especially football, and so a group were formed to help address the situation.

Who have you involved? What action have you /others taken?


The Girls Active Leaders formed in November 2023 comprising 12 identified Year 5/6 girls who utilised the Girls Active Getting Started Resources from the Youth Sport Trust website to help with the planning and delivery. One of the first ideas was to create a girls only after-school session with the girls being asked to bring a friend. This resulted in 20 girls regularly attending and participating in a range of sports, but predominantly football, from which the girls formed a team and then challenged their mums and community to a game! Following this success, the girls decided to work towards a 50:50 equal gender split in attendance at after-school clubs for Year 5/6 pupils, and realised they needed to explain why this was important to both girls and boys.





Torriano Primary School

Getting Girls Active

 Camden, London

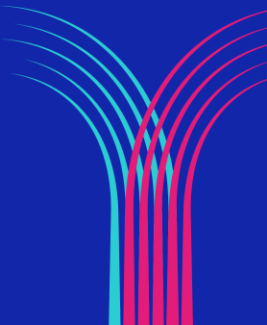
Who have you involved? What action have you /others taken? (continued)

They developed and recorded a video in support of International Women's Day (8th March 2024) to highlight the issues and concerns around gender equality. This raised awareness of the historical barriers associated with women's football, while promoting the hashtag #LetGirls Play. The video strongly advocated the need for a united approach to tackle the issue and showed strong male allies within the peer cohort supporting the pledge as well as girls. The video was shown to all pupils within an assembly focused on gender stereotyping and how this could be removed.

What have been the impacts/successes?

There is now a wider range and number of girls involved in a range of extra-curricular clubs, with some clubs such as Hockey and Dodgeball now involving more girls than boys. Previously, there was also a poor understanding about gender stereotyping by both pupils and their parents, which meant that clubs were seen more as the domain for boys. This has now been addressed with promotional material advertising that Year 5/6 clubs are open and available to all. This has resulted in the successful achievement of a 50:50 gender split with many more girls encouraged and happy to participate alongside their peers, including the boys, many of whom have become staunch advocates and allies for supporting female engagement in sports.

This year, one of the leavers (now in Year 7 attending a new secondary school), has been returning to help volunteer and lead sessions for the younger girls, sharing valuable expertise and advice to new Active Girls Leaders (4 who have been identified from younger year groups for greater longevity). On Monday evenings, a group of Year 7-9 girls (many of whom were previous pupils) now meet back at Torriano to play sporting activities in a safe and welcoming environment. Many have brought friends demonstrating the need for greater support for girls' activity sessions within their secondary school.





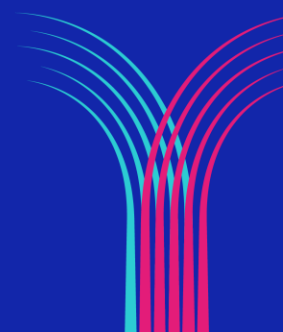
What have been the challenges?

Key challenges met were the lack of participation by girls initially with only 4 participating in almost everything.

What are your next steps?

The new Girls Active Leaders have chosen to lead their own Year 3 – Year 4 girls only multi-sports club at lunchtime during the spring term (2025) to help inspire more Year 3 – Year 4 girls to play sports and be active. The leaders will initially complete training delivered by the PESSPA Coordinator and Sports Coach before leading the sessions themselves. The girls were also involved in the co-design of an inaugural Camden Girls Active Festival (March 2025), which was offered to girls in primary and secondary schools within the Camden Borough. The festival was a success, with the majority of girls (81%) attending saying they would attend a similar festival in the future and 91% would recommend it to a friend.

During the festival, Torriano recruited schools to establish a Camden Active Girls Committee with the support of the local School Games Organiser. The aim is that this committee will involve 3 local primary schools and 3 secondary schools, and will work to motivate more girls and support transition between schools.



Feedback from the Girls Active Leaders

The Girls Active Leaders fully understand their role to help younger girls in school be more active and participate in more sports. They recognise the important role they play in being role models to influence other girls in school and meet weekly with the PESSPA Coordinator and Sports Coach for training and to plan their delivery. They share tasks between them with some undertaking consultation with younger girls while others create posters and promotional materials, and they have organised a rota for delivery of lunchtime clubs between them.

Being a Girls Active Leader has really improved their confidence levels and helped them develop teamwork and new leadership skills such as empathy and negotiation. They openly discuss feeling proud about being in the role, wanting to help other girls in the same way they have been helped by their teacher. The girls are aware of wider issues such as gender stereotyping and want to use sport as a vehicle to address social change, so that girls can be perceived as credible athletes and equal participants within mixed sports. As one leader said “we want to get to that level of equality, whereby people think why did we think that, and they look back on it and think it’s really weird that people would think that. So, it’s not a thing anymore!”.

The girls do not want girls to feel left out of sport, especially male dominated ones, and understand the importance of friends’ impact on participation, so they encourage girls to bring a friend to their clubs and encourage them to get others to attend as well. They want to stop boys from not passing to girls in mixed sports and remove the blame culture associated with them not scoring, by upskilling girls to be confident and have the ability to shoot themselves rather than passing to the boys to score.

The leaders are enthusiastic and articulate about their plans and ideas, even developing fundraising opportunities to help raise money to support extra sports equipment and kit for school.