



School Games Impact Report

2023 - 2024 Academic Year

What is the School Games?

The School Games is a national programme which puts physical activity and school sport at the heart of schools, providing young people with the opportunity to learn through physical activity and competition to achieve their personal best.

The programme aims to provide every child in year 3 to 13 across all education settings with a positive experience where the young person's motivation, competence and confidence are at the centre of every event or project.

As a national strategy and an important tool for advocating for 60 minutes of daily activity, the School Games supports the personal development of young people and ensures all events and projects have a clear intent, creating positive experiences and meaningful opportunities for the young people who need our support most.



Our approach across South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

Our ongoing priority is to tackle inequalities and create positive experiences for young people who need it the most. This impact report tells the story of how we've strived to achieve that during the 2023/24 academic year, adapting and evolving the way we do things to meet the challenges facing children in South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

To achieve **School Games outcomes** and deliver effectively across the two counties, we adopted a blended approach. We have provided localised funding to School Games Organisers, alongside delivery of several county-wide events.

Working in partnership with the School Games Organisers (SGOs) has been central to the effectiveness of our county-wide programmes where we have also been guided by expertise of a diverse range of partners. By working together, the programme is grounded in local knowledge and tailored to the specific needs of young people in our area.

To engage stakeholders from across our counties, we delivered two county-wide guest receptions and developed resources to support understanding of the School Games vision and mission. We've continued with **three county wide event categories**, designed to help teachers understand which groups of young people are best suited to each event both locally and at a county level.

All of this has maximised the impact and value of our county-wide programmes, ensuring they are as effective and sustainable as possible.

This report outlines how our strategies and partnerships contribute to lasting positive change for young people across South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

County events

Our county-wide events offer opportunities for young people to represent their district and experience the atmosphere of mass participation events, enjoying positive experiences in an inclusive and supportive environment.

The events support the county-wide network to remain connected and although taking a local approach with the funding, the SGO's and YSF come together to celebrate the achievements of young

people spanning across each of our three **School Games event categories**.

West Yorkshire School Games Cross Country Finals

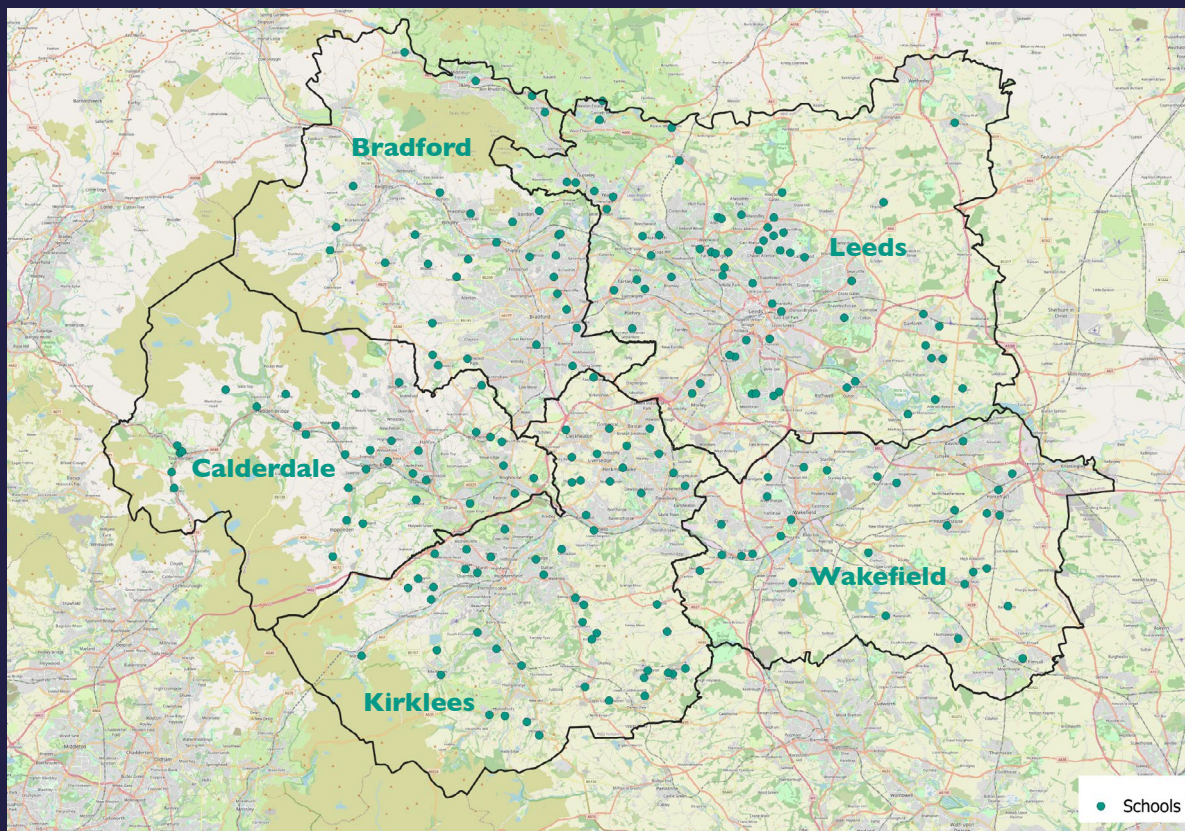
Held at Temple Newsam Park in Leeds in February, the cross country event was a competitive opportunity for children in years 3 to 6.

Following qualifying events delivered locally by School Games Organisers, 1,400 young people took part. Space was also created for children who may not have the chance to take part in cross country outside of school, supporting them to build confidence and competence, as well as experiencing competition in a supportive environment.

It also provided a platform to engage stakeholders through a guest reception that highlighted the positive impact of the School Games programme, celebrated the accomplishments of young people from across the region, and opened discussions on future collaborations. The gathering was an essential part of demonstrating how the School Games can promote physical activity and provide more opportunities for young people to get active.



West Yorkshire School Games cross country event statistics



Numbered dots represent schools who have taken part in School Games Localised Funding

Number of events

1

West Yorkshire Cross Country

Number of
participants

1463

Number of
schools

213

County events

South Yorkshire School Games

Between March and May, the network hosted a series of events aimed at promoting competition, inclusivity, and skill development across various age groups. These events took place at several locations in Sheffield, involving hundreds of young participants.

For example, the Sports Hall Athletics event for primary and secondary students was held at the English Institute of Sport (EIS) in Sheffield.

This competitive event saw 336 children showcase their talent against other schools from across South Yorkshire in a supportive setting.

On the same day, the School Games Sports Showcase for Year 3 and 4 students was hosted at EIS, with 300 children in attendance.

This event, categorised under our 'Inspire & Engage' category, was designed to involve students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in cost-effective and inclusive activities that young people and schools could take part in within their own education settings.

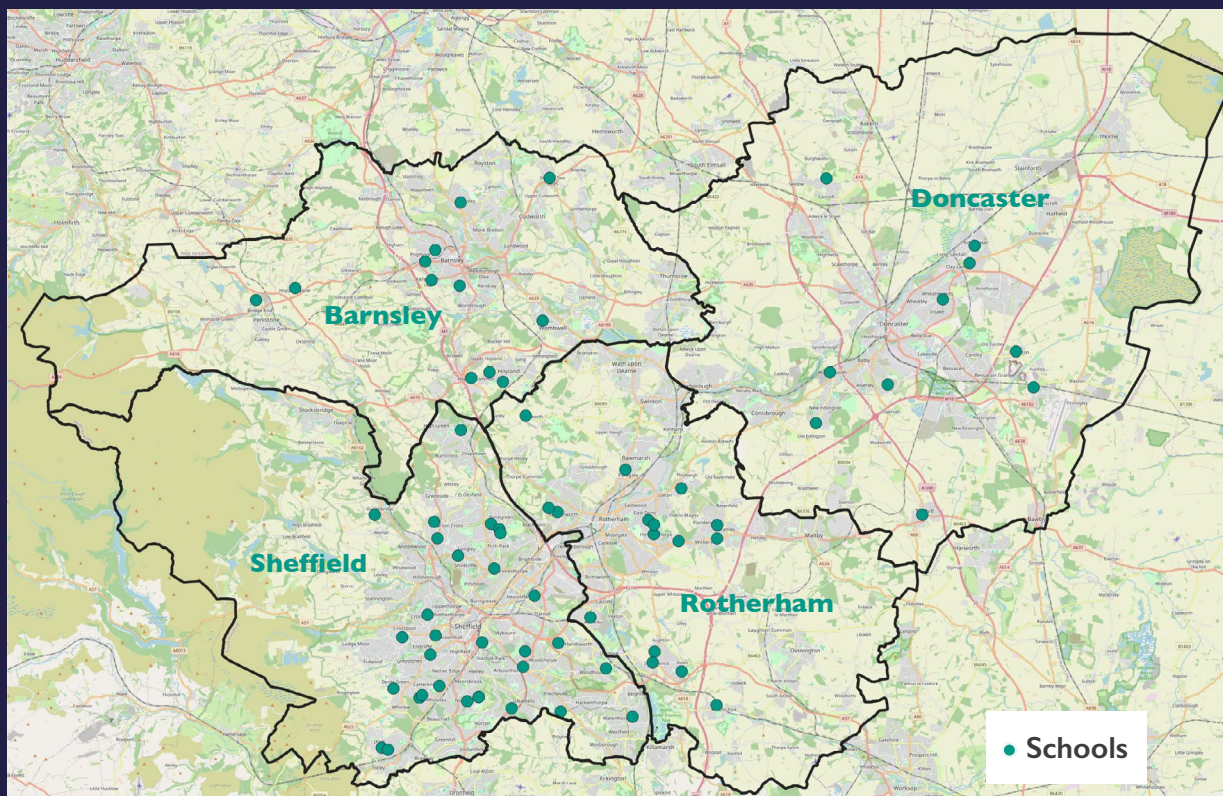
The Panathlon County Final also took place at EIS, providing an inclusive competitive platform for more than 100 primary and secondary children, specifically tailored for those with disabilities.

Additionally, the MATP (Motor Activity Training Programme) Special Olympics event was organised for primary and secondary students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex needs, involving 60 children.

Outside of EIS, a basketball event for year 4 students took place at The Park Community Arena. 120 young athletes represented their districts in a competitive environment within an inspirational setting. The event was fully supported by Sheffield Sharks and Sheffield Hatters.



South Yorkshire School Games County event statistics



Numbered dots represent schools who have taken part in School Games Localised Funding

The map shows the schools that took part in the county wide events for South Yorkshire.

Number of events

6

- Sports Hall Athletics
- School Games Sports Showcase
- Panathlon County Final
- Basketball
- Aqua Festival
- MATP (Special Olympics)

Number of attendances

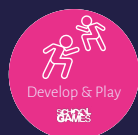
▶ 1048

Number of schools

▶ 54

South Yorkshire School Games Aqua Festival

Category:



Sport:
Aqua Festival

District:
Sheffield

Children:
276

Schools:
23

This event had a transformational impact on one young person in particular. The student was identified as needing support, with school data showing they hadn't been part of any events or competitions up to that point.

Apprehensive but proud, the student took part as a foundation level swimmer, competing with and against advanced swimmers as part of the events inclusive nature. The chance to represent the school and the support of their peers boosted their confidence and enthusiasm for future sports events, including qualification for the South Yorkshire finals.

Since then, their engagement with PE and sports has dramatically improved. They have become fully involved in PE classes, participated in extracurricular clubs, and represented their school in various events. Their transformation was recognised with a "Shining Star" award at the school's annual sports awards.

The festival highlighted the importance of understanding and supporting less engaged students. The inclusive and developmental nature of the event categories helps identify appropriate opportunities for all children. By focusing on creating positive experiences and providing reassurance, schools can better engage students who might initially be hesitant about sports.

The story of this student shows the significant impact that targeted, supportive sports initiatives can have on individual development and confidence.

“ She was really proud of herself and representing school. It was a transformation. ”

Teacher

“ This pupil is now fully engaged. You would no longer pick them out as the least confident child and they are no longer difficult to engage. They have represented school at events, take part in extra curricular clubs and join in PE every lesson. ”

Teacher

“ This has really demonstrated the power of sport in building children's confidence. ”

Teacher

National recognition for the School Games team

The School Games team - made up of SGOs and the YSF Events and Programme manager, were recognised with the 'Engaging Stakeholders' award at the School Games Impact Awards in Telford in June 2024.

It acknowledged the county-wide efforts in developing activities that engage a diverse range of stakeholders, advocating for the School Games, and demonstrating its positive impact on children's and young people's lives.

The School Games Impact Awards celebrate the achievements of a network that includes schools, School Games Organisers, Active Partnerships, National Governing Bodies of Sport, and National Disability Sports Organisations, all working toward the key outcomes of the School Games.

Our county-wide submission highlighted two guest receptions designed to engage a wider variety of stakeholders across our counties. These events provided valuable insights into our program and fostered connections to create more opportunities for the School Games to reach the children who need it the most.

The collaborative effort between School Games Organisers and YSF in engaging local stakeholders has already seen increased benefits, offering more opportunities to young people. For example, local councils have since engaged in district-wide events by supporting district-wide initiatives, and through supporting project delivery.

Our guest reception and continued work with stakeholders, showcase how the School Games positively impacts children and young people, supporting wider goals like inclusion. We will continue to highlight the programmes value to stakeholders, aligning with efforts to improve CYP outcomes across education, health and communities.

In an **episode of the School Games podcast**, we discuss the topic of engaging stakeholders. This episode delves into the success in engaging local stakeholders through a Guest Reception and listeners can gain valuable insights, top tips, and key learnings from the project.



Localised funding




 We have continued our localised funding approach following the success of taking a similar approach last year

By taking this place-based approach, we maximise the impact of our county-wide resources, supporting each School Games Organiser (SGO) to develop and deliver programmes that best suit their local need.

SGOs applied for funding



£2,000 per SGO in West Yorkshire



£1,500 per SGO in South Yorkshire

With a structured application process, we could review each proposal and provide funding where it would have the most impact. We also provided support to help SGOs develop their applications, if it was needed.

We also identified opportunities for SGOs to collaborate with us or other stakeholders, enhancing potential for successful outcomes and developing the collaborative approach across the counties.

Empowering girls through sport

Designed by girls, for girls. That was the simple idea behind #GirlsWeek in Sheffield.

What it turned into was a fantastic example of collaborative working across the district for the benefit of young girls, helping to address the fact that, according to the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2022-23, only 45% of girls meet the recommended levels of physical activity, compared to 51% of boys.

During the week there was a carousel taster day at a local leisure centre linked with community provision. A year 3 and 4 Tag Rugby session was put on by Sheffield Eagles Foundation, with support from the Eagles women's team.

Bradfield CIC hosted a cricket festival for girls in key stage 2.

The Arches School Sport Partnership schools benefitted from CPD on how to engage girls as part of their PE, school sport and physical activity offer. There were multiple opportunities to advertise and promote girls participation in sport within the city.

More than 300 girls took part throughout the week, supported by 30 female sports leaders and four inspirational local female role models. At the centre of it all was School Games Organiser, Lauren Donnelly.

"What started in my mind as a single event idea designed through the power of pupil voice and co-creation," said Lauren, "turned into a full week of events and communication to schools to engage more girls within PE, school sport, physical activity and local sporting pathways in the community."



30 Secondary
sports leaders



300 Key
Stage 2 Girls

A district-wide festival of sport linking with Rotherham's Children's Capital of Culture

Herrington Stadium in Rotherham played host to 300 children from 20 schools at the districts first 'Inspire and Engage' School Games festival of sport.

Each school selected year 4 and 5 pupils to take part in activities including parkour and BMX, aiming to improve confidence and competence in sport and physical activity. It rewarded schools who engaged in the School Games programme throughout the year, providing a positive experience for more of their children.

The event was held in partnership with **Rotherham's 'Children's Capital of Culture' project**, with those taking part provided with a branded t-shirt to raise awareness.

Ross Inglis, School Games Organiser, commented: "The event was a huge success in linking the Rotherham Children's Capital of Culture with the local School Games programme."

"We hope this is a catalyst for increased awareness of the Rotherham Children's Capital of Culture so that by 2025, children and young people will have been part of it. Throughout the remainder of this year and next, we will continue to work with key stakeholders to increase physical activity levels and develop opportunities for children to participate in a range of activities."



20 Schools



300 Children



Localised SGO funding - Leeds case study

Planning and delivering an 'English as an Additional Language Festival' to promote inclusion, integration and cultural understanding as part of the School Games

School can be a challenging experience for children, but can you imagine going to school and being taught in a language that isn't your own?

With that in mind, School Games Organisers in Leeds organised a festival specifically for children who have English as an additional language. Almost 80 key stage 2 pupils were provided with an opportunity to develop their physical literacy, alongside a focus on their personal, emotional and social development.

Language leaders from the host venue, Carr Manor Community School, supported with the planning and delivery of the festival, that included language cards at each activity station. In total, there were 27 different languages represented, with children in groups with others who spoke the same language which helped to create new connections and friendships.

Children and teachers were glowing in their praise for the event, so much so that it is planned to take place again in 2024-25.



78 young people



24 young leaders



Really enjoyed the experience, would want to come back. ”



I enjoyed meeting children from other schools, it was exciting, and I would do it again. ”



10/10 Amazing! ”

SGO Reflections: Working differently

It was important for us to understand the impact that the localised funding had on SGOs and the work they were delivering in their areas. Eight SGOs took part in two focus groups to think about what the funding allowed them to do differently, what they learned from working in this way, and how they will apply this learning to future working.

We started by asking them what they were able to do differently because we had used the funding in this way

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The localised funding afforded more opportunities to run a variety of events, especially where they were partnerships without additional funding.

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Allowed children who would not normally get involved to be involved.

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Allowed young leaders to lead events for their peers.

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Wristbands got the message of the School Games out much further to parents.

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Allowed them to purchase leadership awards.

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Enabled them to use venues they wouldn't have been able to use otherwise.

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Allowed different opportunities and different stakeholders to be engaged.

.....
Allowed more youth voice to be considered.

SGO Reflections: Learning

The impact that can be made from something that started from 10 girls in a lunch club.

Learned to make sure that the initiative and project fits the area, and that the correct group of children and schools have been targeted. Learned that the right kids are the ones that are there on the day. Ensuring the brief is communicated well helps with this.

That it was difficult to plan at the start but really valuable that the funding was so flexible, being proactive and maximising money was important and we learned to be strategic in how to use funding and where to get value from.

“ It was difficult to plan at the start but really valuable that the fund was so flexible, being proactive and maximising money was important and we learned to be strategic in how to use funding and where to get value from. ”

We learned how to run a leadership event. We started with something on a small scale but now we feel more comfortable doing it on a bigger scale. We also learned about the challenges that schools face - transport is an issue so providing opportunities that schools can walk to is an important step forward.

Learned to make sure that the initiative and project fits the area, and that the correct group of children and schools have been targeted. Learned that the right kids are the ones that are there on the day. Ensuring the brief is communicated well helps with this.

Learned that it's ok to step back and delegate and that things work and run even when you are not as involved. It's important to engage with stakeholders and providers. The right stakeholders and partners that run events well is important.

SGO Reflections: Challenges

Transport for schools is an issue – worth considering this in budget for events

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Missed opportunities – when you have **space for 300** children but only **270 attend**

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Time, resource and capacity to manage events

Timing of events is really important, trying to run events just after a school holiday isn't the best



Change of focus from compete to values, tackling inequalities and physical literacy – shifting mindsets as some people still think events are pathway to higher competitions – ensuring the right kids attend the right events.

.....

Deciding where to put the investment and ensuring that really useful data is collected from schools so the same voices aren't the ones that are always listened to.

Weather, absenteeism, staff shortages, last minute drop outs, time of year, losing facilities, costs, parental support, engaging faith settings

SGO Reflections: What they'd do differently next time

When asked to reflect on what they would do differently next time SGOs responded:

<p>Would do it on a bigger scale as have more confidence now</p> <p>.....</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <p>Collaboration and networking</p> </div> <p>.....</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <p>Getting leaders a formal qualification and allowing them to support the project a bit more</p> </div>
<p>Having more themed events and considering the School Games mark areas</p>	<p>Linking with clubs and organisations so that there are better exit routes from events</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Think about what other stakeholders could be engaged in the work</p> <p>.....</p>

Reflections of our Programmes and Events Manager

We are proud of the collective approach we have taken and the significant impact we have made across both counties for the children who need it most. By working together, we have been able to address the needs of more and different young people and create positive change.

This success would not have been possible without everyone collaborating, sharing good practice, and trusting each other to do our best in our respective areas. Teamwork has been instrumental in achieving our goals and demonstrates the power of our network coming together with a shared vision.

I am also proud of the network we are part of, which is rich with knowledge and expertise driving towards a shared goal of tackling inequalities. This network enables us to deliver meaningful and sustainable projects and events with a lasting legacy.

This approach has demonstrated the substantial impact the School Games network can achieve with the addition of resources. It has allowed us to implement projects and events that make a real difference, highlighting the importance of continued investment and collaboration into our national programme.

Building on the success of our blended approach in both counties, we are excited to continue this impactful work in the 2024/25 academic year.

As a network, we are continually learning how best to address the inequalities and needs of young people in our communities. This deeper understanding has shaped our direction, and continuing the localised funding will support us in driving this progress forward and look to achieve even more sustainable change in our areas.

We will also be re-evaluating how we deliver our county-wide events to help break down anxieties and ensure every young person in attendance has the most positive experience possible.

We are also expanding our partnerships with like-minded organisations, community groups, and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) who share our vision and outcomes. These collaborations will strengthen our collective impact and broaden the reach of our work.

As a School Games network in South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, we are committed to creating meaningful opportunities for the children who need them most. We are excited to build on our collaborative efforts to break down barriers, champion inclusivity, and deliver impactful, positive experiences.

Emma Lea

YSF Programmes and Events Manager



“ I am also proud of the network we are part of, which is rich with knowledge and expertise driving towards a shared goal of tackling inequalities. ”



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