

A young boy in a maroon school uniform is smiling and pushing a blue toy car on a gym floor. Other children and a teacher are visible in the background.

Creating Active Schools Framework South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire Insight Report

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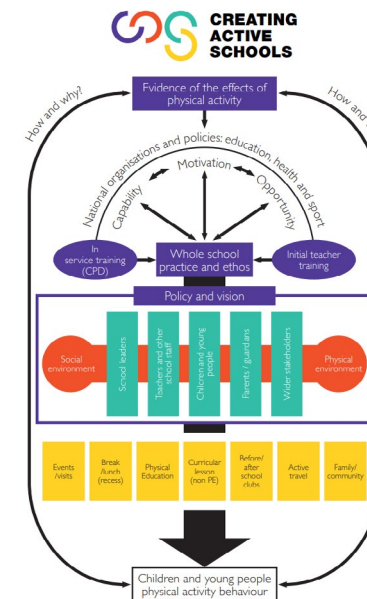
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Foreword

According to the most recent Sport England Children and Young People Active Lives Survey, less than half of children and young people are meeting the Chief Medical officer guidelines of being active for 60+ minutes per day. Even more worryingly, 32.4% of children do less than an average of 30 minutes of physical activity each day. The nation's children spend approximately 195 days and 1,170 hours a year in school. One could argue that schools are in the perfect position to try to change these statistics for the better.

Yet we know that between 9am and 3pm, in too many schools across the country, pupils continue to be inactive as policies and routines inadvertently promote sedentary behaviours. This isn't surprising when we consider the increasing pressure schools are under to achieve the best academic outcomes for their children across broad and varied curriculums, each subject fighting for their own status. So how do we overcome this challenge? Perhaps we need to reframe what physical activity can mean for schools, and provide senior leaders with a structure that not only aims to transform the culture of physical activity within their setting, but also use movement to improve both academic and holistic outcomes for their pupils.

In July 2019, the 'Creating Active Schools Framework' (CAS) was developed by an independent group of experts to address children's declining levels of physical activity in primary schools. Derived from stakeholder discussions during the development process, the most significant barriers to physical activity in school settings were categorised into three factors: capability, opportunities and motivation of children, staff and school leadership, and out of this the CAS Framework was born. This co-designed structure aimed to help schools embed physical activity at the heart of their culture and ethos and promote a whole systems approach to school improvement.



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In July 2021, we commissioned an external evaluation team to work with eleven schools across West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire over the 2021-22 academic year. This was to support our understanding of the processes and impact of the CAS Framework as well as the barriers and motivations that exist around placing physical activity at the heart of the school ethos. This research has found that the CAS Framework process has had positive impacts on the levels of physical activity in the schools, despite some schools being worried they hadn't achieved as much change in the academic year as they set out to. It details the research that MG Consultancy carried out in those eleven schools and the data reflects the views of the different stakeholders working in each setting. It also shares the insight and recommendations that they have pulled from the research. We would like to thank them for their time in doing this work.

We would also like to thank the schools who took part in this research, as well as those local partners who have supported the short and long term changes that each school prioritised.

Alongside our partners within the CAS National Team, we are calling for decision makers to strongly consider how national education policy and practices can better support schools to prioritise physical activity and encourage them to use it as a driver for whole school improvement.

We are also excited to see how this research can be used to encourage senior leaders to engage with the **CAS Framework**, supporting them to change physical activity behaviours in school and provide fun, varied, inclusive and sustainable opportunities for all pupils to be active. These positive experiences can help to lay the foundations for every child to lead a healthy and active life. Now which child should ever be deprived of that?

“

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Introduction

This evaluation report provides findings and recommendations of the Creating Active Schools (CAS) Pilot Evaluation project, undertaken by Monica Golding and associates, Philippa Youlden and Andy Martin, between September 2021 and August 2022. The report outlines the original project brief, the research objectives and methodology used, specific findings and recommendations for each key phase of the CAS Framework journey that the schools undertook. It also includes an executive summary outlining the key findings and recommendations for the CAS Framework moving forward.

Throughout the report there are examples of actions, activities and changes schools have made since starting the CAS Pilot Evaluation.

All the examples shared are reported to have been influenced by the CAS framework.

The schools engaged in the CAS Pilot Evaluation project included five schools from Doncaster, four schools from Leeds, one school from Rotherham and one school from Sheffield.

Executive Summary

The CAS Framework Evaluation Project was undertaken with 11 Primary Schools from across South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, from Sheffield, Doncaster, Leeds and Rotherham.

They were selected by Yorkshire Sport Foundation (YSF) and were all at the start of their involvement in the CAS project. A range of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to ascertain progress against a number of agreed outcomes. These included questionnaires and surveys, face

to face/virtual meetings, focus groups and Thought Cards.

All stages of the CAS “journey” were evaluated, including schools’ pre-project understanding and awareness, schools’ experiences of the training and planning phase, evaluation of the implementation

and impact of the CAS Framework in each school.

Key findings are summarised below:

- All the schools shared positive intent around using the CAS Framework to enhance outcomes for pupils and staff.
- Schools shared positive experiences of engagement with the CAS Framework, from the “on-boarding” training, the planning phase and the implementation.
- Implementation levels varied in schools depending upon other events/priorities.
- A number of schools shared concern around their own perceived lack of progress throughout the academic year compared to what they felt was the expectation.
- The CAS “on-boarding” training, CAS Toolkit, action planning and implementation had positive impacts on the levels of physical activity in the school.
- External partners/stakeholder support had a positive influence on the impact of CAS Framework.
- Schools’ views on the need for external support varied. Some commented on the positive support provided by YSF and other partners, others stated they made progress with CAS with less external support.

- Confusion exists around terminology including active learning, physical activity, school sport and Physical Education. This is especially the case with active learning, where confusion arose around the differences between brain breaks and physical activity in lessons to support learning intentions/ outcomes.
- Some schools reported impact across all year groups.
- Some schools reported impact on specific aspects and classes/ year groups.

“Pupils understood the benefits of regular physical activity, most enjoyed opportunities to be physically active through the school day and understood it can support their learning.”

- Key components of the successful implementation for elements of the CAS framework included schools having:
 - Senior Leadership Team (SLT) support at both policy and delivery level.
 - An understanding of how Physical Activity can be used to positively support other school/curriculum priorities.
 - Allocated time/capacity for the CAS Lead member of staff to take the project forward.
 - Clear and simple “quick-wins” to encourage and enable school staff to embed physical activity and active learning within their daily routine.
 - Access to support, resources and ideas to embed physical activity both in curriculum and non-curriculum time.
 - An understanding of the long-term nature of CAS to embed change in school ethos and culture.

- The main barriers to the successful implementation of elements of the CAS framework were:
 - Lack of SLT support.
 - Limited time to plan, deliver and support.
 - Workload challenges across the school.
 - De-prioritization due to other curriculum/school challenges.
 - Limited knowledge of how to incorporate physical activity including active learning across the school.
- Pupils understood the benefits of regular physical activity, most enjoyed opportunities to be physically active through the school day and understood it can support their learning.
- Parents consulted recognised the benefits of physical activity.
- Most schools reported family engagement with CAS continues to be a challenge, this reflected the ongoing challenge of school engagement with families.

Research Outcomes and Methodology

A number of core outcomes were agreed for the CAS evaluation project:

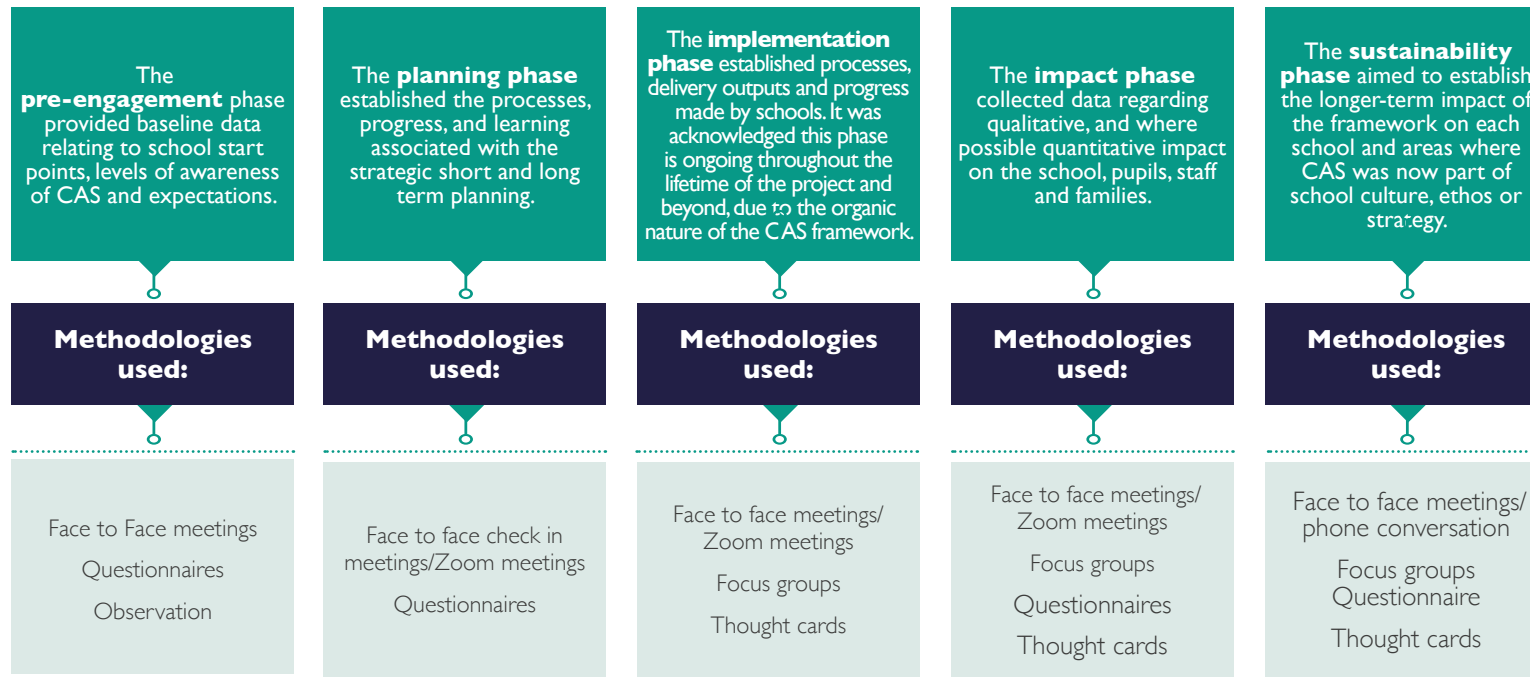
- To ascertain perceptions of pupil's activity levels and wellbeing based on physical activity being at the heart of the school's ethos.
- To understand how the CAS Framework contributes to wider outcomes identified in each Action Plan.
- To capture learning from the implementation of the CAS Framework across the schools.
- To identify outcomes from the implementation of the CAS Framework.
- Establish learning around how CAS supports whole school change.
- To identify the barriers to, and motivations for placing Physical Activity at the heart of the school ethos as well as measuring motivational change.
- To apply the COM-B model of behaviour change, to understand the role CAS has in the behaviour change process.
- To develop recommendations for sustaining positive behaviour change over the longer-term and how this can be monitored.

These core outcomes were evaluated via a number of project work streams. A variety of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods were used.



Data was collected across five phases during the agreed timeline of the project.

Research Outcomes and Methodology



The methodologies were designed specifically with schools in mind. Limitations of the time available by headteachers, staff and pupils were considered. Methods selected aimed to gain the most useful data in the least intrusive way. Traditional and creative methods were used and often designed to dovetail with each other. In some cases more than one method was used to collect data relating to the same outcomes. This was to ensure the most robust data was collected.

This report includes findings and recommendations from the five areas identified in the Research and Methodologies section.

The findings are supported by quotes and examples from the schools participating in the project. It is acknowledged that while some of these are good practice examples, it is not suggested they are suitable or viable for all schools to adopt. They are included to provide examples of actions taken and behaviours adopted by those schools as part of their Creating Active Schools journey.

1 A number of factors impacted on whether the schools were able to engage with all phases of the evaluation project. With some schools, all phases were not able to be completed or were partially completed.



Phases

Pre-engagement phase

The pre-engagement phase was the first phase of the evaluation. Consultation was undertaken with headteachers, CAS leads, teaching staff, teaching assistants and lunchtime and break time supervisors. When teaching assistants also held the role of lunchtime and break time staff they were asked to complete two separate questionnaires in order to focus on those specific times of the day.



The headteachers and/or the CAS Lead from each school met with a member of the CAS Evaluation Team for between 60-90 mins.

This pre-engagement meeting aimed to ascertain their views prior to embarking on the CAS Project. The meetings included a semi-structured interview and a guided tour around the school to

view outdoor and indoor facilities. The evaluators also observed the profile of physical activity around school including on notice boards, in the reception area, on wall displays and in classrooms.

For most schools, the meetings took place straight after the “on-boarding” training.

The CAS Lead is a named member of school staff, and responsible for coordinating and leading CAS in the school. There was one school who attached a Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) position to the role.

Findings:

- All schools had some degree of support from the SLT within school to adopt and implement the CAS Framework as part of the pilot.
- In some schools the project was led by the headteacher with support from a staff member identified as the CAS lead, in other schools the CAS lead managed the project with support from the headteacher.

- Reasons for involvement in the project included
 - Creating a culture shift of physical activity across all classes.

“ Embedding a culture of physical activity across all classes. ”

“ Hope to bring all staff along with them on the journey, achieving a shift in mindset. ”

“ Making it intrinsic behaviour. ”

- Using physical activity to address whole school issues including behaviour and attendance.
- Formalising an existing commitment to physical activity in the school and ensuring it is embedded long term.

“ Physical Activity is embedded across the school. It is part of the school culture and an expectation of every teacher. However, this is not written down anywhere. ”

- Moving towards all teachers incorporating active learning and physical activity into the school day rather than just some teachers.

- Harnessing and increasing individual staff passion, understanding and commitment to the use of physical activity resulting in a positive impact on learning.

- Schools shared concerns about bringing the whole staff with them on the journey, the potential additional time and/or workload to undertake the CAS pilot, particularly in the context of other school and curriculum priorities.

“ There is so much going on in schools right now, especially with Covid. ”

- Schools shared anxiety about the potential impact of staff changes on the CAS journey moving forwards.
- There was mixed knowledge and awareness of the current physical activity levels of all pupils across the school day and beyond.
- School staff showed varying levels of awareness of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) 2019 Physical Activity guidelines though some staff in all schools were aware of the 30 active minutes expectation for all pupils as part of the Childhood Obesity Plan (COP) 2016.

Pre-engagement questionnaire

An on-line questionnaire was circulated to all school staff via the CAS Lead (the person in school who drives the work forward) with a number of open and closed questions designed to ascertain the individual understanding of the CMO guidelines, the role of physical activity in learning and the current status of physical activity in the school from their perspective. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also provided at the training sessions, to ensure all staff had access.

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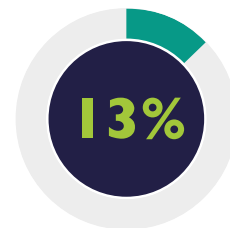
In total,
251 
teaching staff

completed the questionnaire comprising teachers, teaching assistants/learning support personnel.

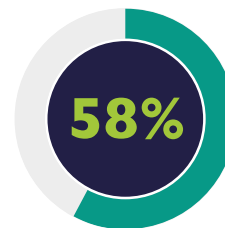
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Questionnaire Findings

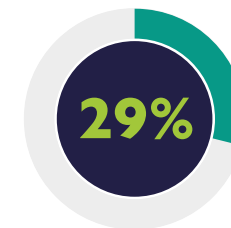
Perceived profile of physical activity in their school provided the following responses:



.....
felt it had a low profile
.....

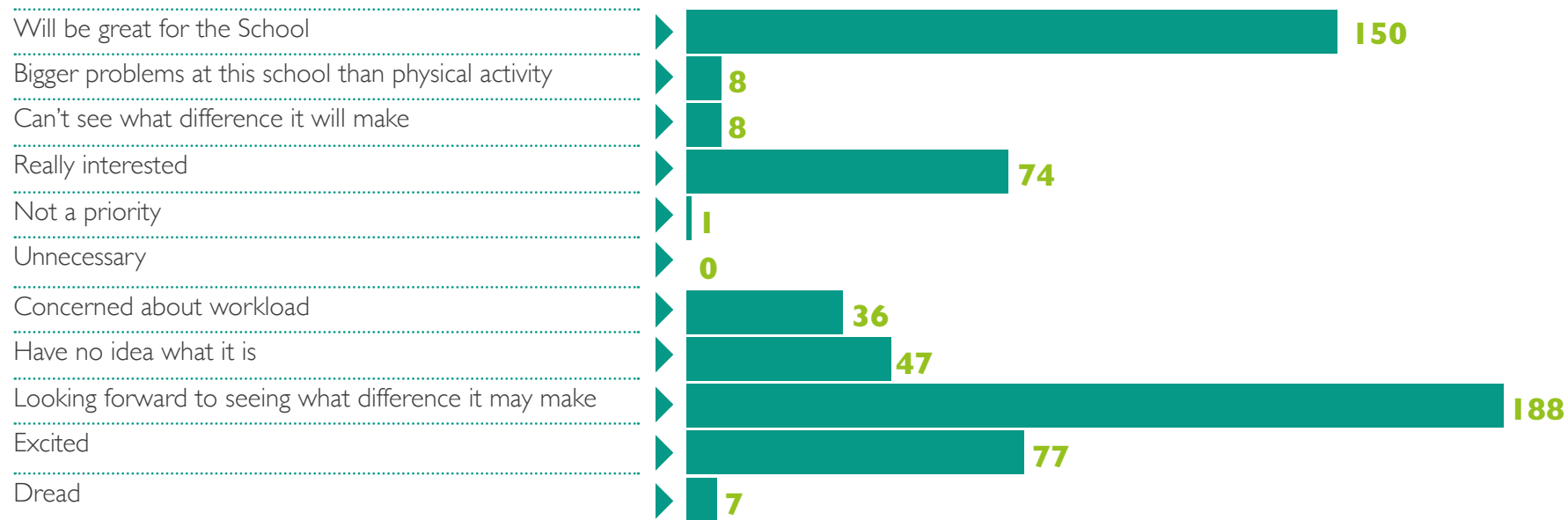


.....
felt it had a medium level profile
.....



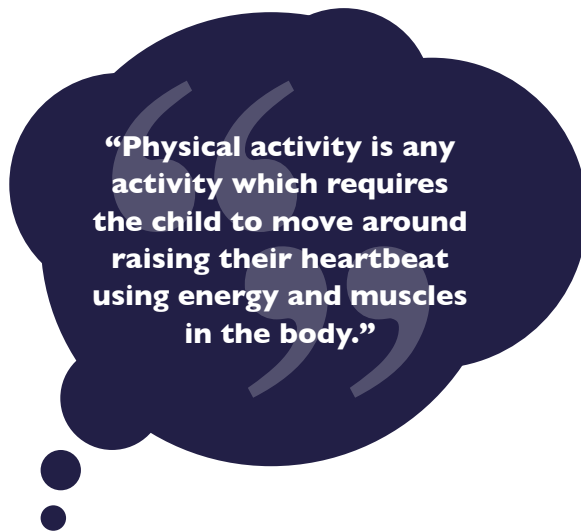
.....
felt it had a high profile
.....

When describing feelings about their school being part of the CAS project, school staff reported; (they could tick as many statements as they agreed with):



The vast majority of the answers were excited and interested about CAS being implemented in their school and looked forward to seeing what difference it may make. They felt it would be positive for their school.

There was a good level of understanding of what physical activity is - responses included:



When invited to describe what they expected to see when being shown around a physically active school, many references were made to elements within the CAS framework, including

- Equipment being in use
- Pupils being active at break times with structured and unstructured activities
- Physical activity inputted into lessons
- Outdoor facilities including climbing frames, outdoor gym, trim trails, running tracks
- Active travel

“ Lots of outdoor areas that encourage pupils to do things. Such as labels and areas for designated activity. Cards and activity areas around school that encourage movement. ”

“ Children not just sitting at desks listening to teachers but actively involved so that they have movement at their seat/at tables. Extended periods to move physically and actively across a range of activities. Regular exercise planned. Promotion of walking to school/ ride a bike etc. Extra curricular activities. Etc. ”

Teachers were asked what words spring to mind when hearing the phrase “Creating Active Schools”. This can be seen in the word cloud.



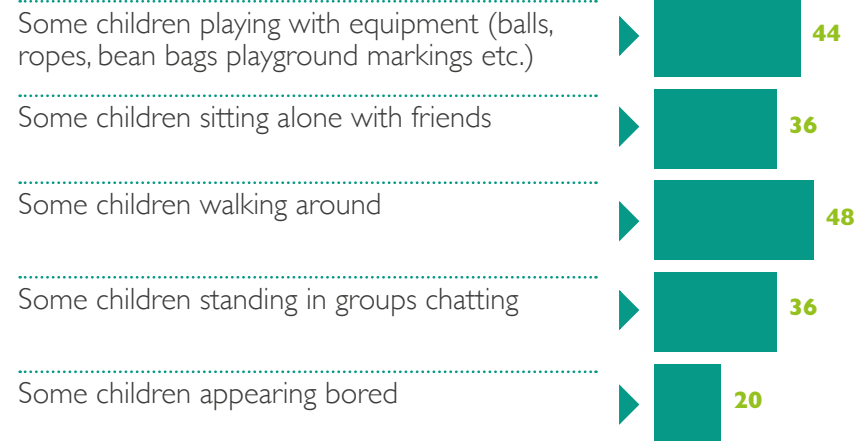
Pre-engagement phase lunchtime and break time supervisor consultation

Lunchtime and break time supervisors were invited to complete a questionnaire online or via a paper version. 43 responses were received.

Findings

Due to Covid, there had been few training opportunities in the 2020/21 school year. They were asked what they observed at break/lunchtimes, and provided with a list to choose from, including an 'other' option (they could select multiple answers)

Thinking about an average lunchtime, which of the following do you see? (Tick all that apply)

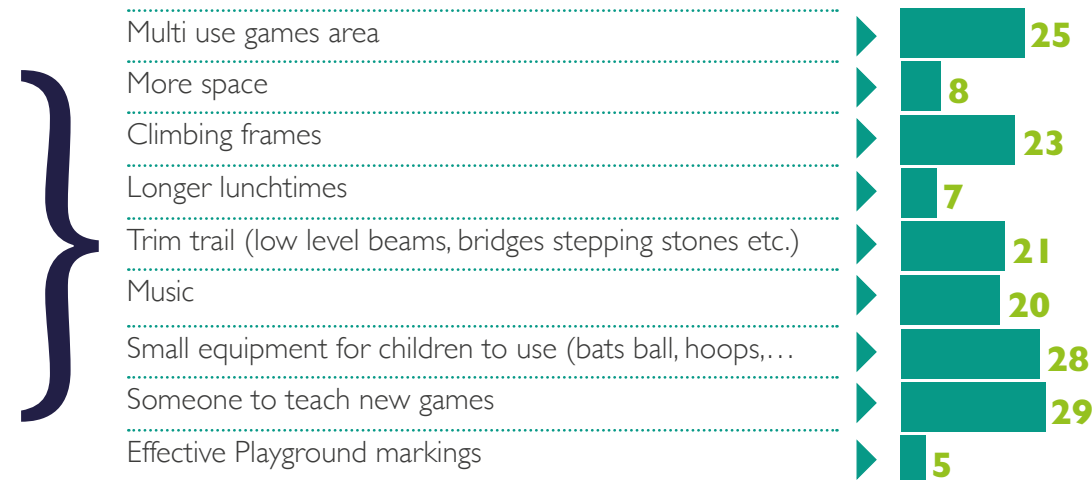


A similar level of pupils were observed being active and walking round. Both of these activities constitute physical activity.

An equal number of responses observed pupils sitting alone or standing with friends in groups chatting.

Lunchtime and break time staff were asked to share their views on what would encourage pupils to be more active at break/lunchtimes (they could give multiple answers). Findings are shown below;

**In your opinion what would help pupils be more active at lunchtimes?
(Tick all that apply)**



Equipment and outdoor facilities featured highly in the responses. This mirrors what the teaching staff mentioned when stating what they would like to see in a physically active school.

Having someone to teach new games was a popular answer.



Planning Phase

Planning Phase

Evaluation of the Planning phase covered three key components-



The Onboarding Training

The CAS Evaluation Team attended the CAS “onboarding” training as observers at ten of the eleven schools who undertook the training. They attended either the whole session if delivered as a single event, or at least one of the two sessions if divided into two.

(A discussion regarding the “onboarding” training formed part of the CAS Evaluation Check-in meeting, held with schools halfway through the project. As part of this, meeting attendees (headteachers and/or CAS leads) were asked to identify three words that summarised their thoughts on the training. These can be seen right;

inspiring motivated inclusive
 thought-provoking
 purposeful positive
 eye-opener developmental
 appropriate insightful
 immerse motivating
 encompassing engaging visionary
 informative interactive
 interesting

Planning Phase

Findings from these CAS “Onboarding” training observations and follow-up conversations included:

- Attendance at the training comprised either the whole school including teachers, TAs and support staff or all the teaching staff in the school. TAs were either paid to attend or required to attend as part of their directed hours. It was a similar approach with break/lunchtime supervisors in terms of paying them to attend.

“ Having the whole staff at those two training sessions was really beneficial for launching it and inspiring quite a lot of our members of staff that we don’t always get to talk to and don’t always get to reach with training sessions. ”

“ The fact that we had lunchtime supervisors attend the training sessions, and all of our LS’s and then teachers, it was a really clear ‘why?’ message before we started. ”

- All the sessions were delivered in-person by Yorkshire Sport Foundation staff. One school attempted to do a hybrid session with two teachers off with Covid attending the session online, but stated they missed out on vital parts of the ongoing discussion.

- Two alternative formats were used for the on-boarding training. One delivered as a single session which four schools undertook and the others were delivered across two sessions. No schools reported they would have preferred the alternative option as it fitted in with their INSET training or when they could bring all staff together. One school who had the on-boarding over one day commented:

“ If you’re thinking of the future you could probably make a full day of it for inset because you’d have opportunities (to do more brain boost/active learning activity moments). Because that would have given people things in their head to take away, and then some kind of ‘What’s it going to look like, timetabling for your class? ”

Planning Phase

- Providing a local context showing data about the physical health of the pupils in the area was useful for schools, giving further context as to why CAS is important.

“ We looked at some of the local figures. It was really eye-opening for all the staff I think. It was almost a bit shocking.....So when you think that the only chance that they could conceivably have for focussed movement is at school. That was where you start seeing the relevancy to the pupils, to the pupils in your care. ”

- There was positive feedback about the inclusion of the CAS Introductory video, how it was inspirational for them to see real life schools who have made a change through CAS.

“ It was quite surprising as well. For me, when we were shown the videos of the other schools and what they'd implemented Eye-opening in terms of what could be done, what needs to be done, how we can do it. ”

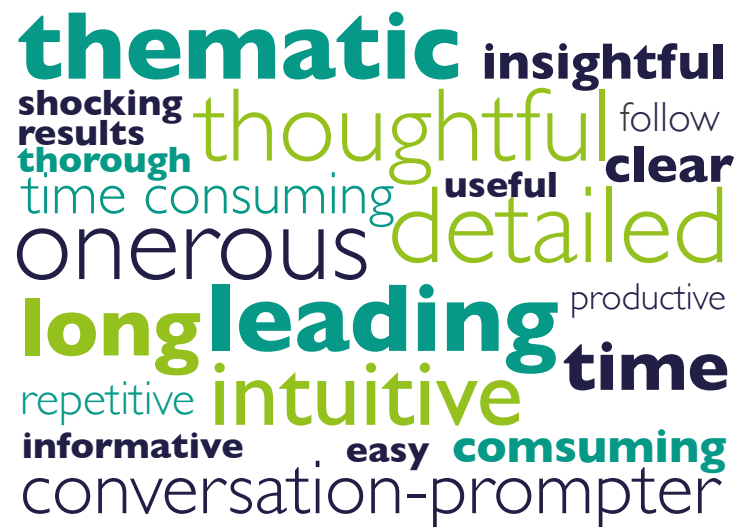
- Some consultees felt that the training was a little too theoretical for all staff.

“ I think as well with some of the questions from a strategic level, some of the information is on a 'need to know' basis. Actually the TAs or sometimes the teachers, don't need to know that strategic level of information. Sometimes too much information can cause issues. ”

The CAS Toolkit

The CAS Evaluation Team included a discussion on CAS schools' use of the CAS Toolkit as part of the mid-point review meetings with the headteacher and/or CAS Lead at the school. In some cases this included SLT.

Consultation method used: Consultees were invited to share three words to describe their experience of the CAS Toolkit. Responses are detailed in the word cloud below. They were also asked a range of detailed questions to gain more insight into their experiences.



The findings from the discussions included:

- All schools found the completion a useful process, schools said it allowed them to spend quality time reflecting and reviewing and also enabled them to identify gaps in both policy and provision. The majority found the digital toolkit clear to use.

“ We managed to work through that (questionnaire) quite clearly and that really fed into the action plan. I think it's been really clear from the 'why?' stage and now us doing, this is how I feel. ”

The CAS Toolkit

- Some commented that it was a time-consuming process, with a number commenting on the negative impact of the volume of questions to be answered- 100 questions felt intimidating to some.

“ The hundred online questionnaire...onerous! But also insightful and eye-opening. I mean yeah, it was quite laborious to go through it all, but I didn't hate it. All the conversations were good. Everything was a really good talking point and made us think about it. ”

- The 100-question toolkit was completed by the CAS lead and/or headteacher with support from relevant SLT colleagues. Some reported needing direction on how to gather the information needed for the questionnaire and needing the right people around the table who have an overview of the school.

“ If there was only one person doing the questionnaire it could be quite narrow couldn't it? It worked quite well because I'm in KS1 and my colleague is in KS2, so we've both got that different experience. I haven't seen a KS2 playtime in a long time so if it came to those questions and I had to answer those questions, I mean I could always go and ask somebody, but I'd have had to hesitate on those. ”

- The majority of schools completed the Toolkit alongside Yorkshire Sport Foundation Staff- they welcomed this support, clarification and advice during the process

“ If YSF hadn't been there, I don't think it would be as accurate, because as time goes on you'd just be choosing stuff quickly just to get it finished. ”

- Conversely, one school who carried out the process without YSF in the room said that this was preferable

“ If YSF had been there to discuss the questions, then you would choose the one that would err on the side of caution. I say that it's just we're so used to wanting to make sure that we're presenting ourselves in the best way, but for this we really need to be realistic to make sure it was going to be purposeful and make the most difference for the children. ”

-

The CAS Toolkit

- 10 out of the 11 schools completed the Toolkit on-site and felt that this was helpful because they could refer to policies and consult with relevant colleagues as required

“ I remember one question was about ‘What could you do in the corridors?’ and things like that. Obviously then we were able to answer that because at break time we’d walk through the corridors. You know, another question was ‘What sort of moveable equipment can you move around the school?’ so we showed them all that. So it was definitely relevant, better for them to be in school, for sure. ”

The one school that completed it off site felt that this enabled them to be more focused.

“ It definitely helped us, being somewhere neutral, without interruptions and distractions. Also it sent a message to school how important this project was to us as a school. ”

A small number of schools reported that they were surprised by the score (higher or lower than expected) given at the end of the process.

One reported that they found this as “overwhelming”. However, these schools self-reported as “sporty schools” and acknowledged that the low score was probably an accurate reflection of their focus on sport rather than physical activity.

Action Planning

The final stage of the CAS planning process is the development of CAS Action Plans. These aim to drive the implementation of the priorities identified through completion of the CAS Toolkit.

Consultation method used: As with the other stages in the planning phase, colleagues were asked to describe in three words their experience of the action planning (see below).

starter prioritise
 clear supportive
 clarity overlap
 flowed repetitive
 focussed useful
 prepared conversation
 time consuming
 focused exploration

The findings from the discussions included:

- The timeframes for completing the action plan varied considerably, with some schools uploading it soon after the Toolkit completion planning day while others were delayed.
- Delays reported included COVID, staff turnover, OFSTED. One school is only just completing their plan (July 2022) in readiness for the 2022-23 school year.

“ The plan was done just before Christmas. We’ve already started on some of the major areas identified in the October session. ”

“ We had the meeting with regard to looking at the action plan filling in the questionnaire, and then it went downhill. Pretty rapidly! For one reason and another, capacity was a big issue. ”

Action Planning

- The CAS Action plans were written over a period of time taking from one full day to several weeks to complete.
- In the majority of schools, the Action Plans were completed by the CAS Lead with some support from SLT colleagues and other relevant school staff.
- Once uploaded, all were reviewed and commented upon by Yorkshire Sport Foundation Staff.
- All schools were comfortable with the Action Plan templates and broadly happy with the action planning process.

“ The action planning for this took longer than my whole school plan did. It really was time consuming. ”

“ As soon as we knew we were part of this project we started implementing changes before the last school summer break so we could hit the ground running in Sept 2022, before we'd even done the 100 questions. ”

- Following on from the action planning consultation with schools, the CAS national team have since used this feedback to streamline the action planning documentation. This now exists as a one page 'Planning for Change' document allowing schools to immediately identify the synergies across interventions under each of the four areas of the framework.

“ I think the action plan flowed quite well from the questionnaire. There was more detail in a good way, from the fact that each area linked the specific question that you had maybe answered into the action plan, that was really useful. ”

- Most schools anticipated the priorities, but some were surprised by the low scores that had emerged from the CAS Toolkit (as referenced in the CAS Toolkit findings).
- Two schools reported that they were overwhelmed by the number of areas that they had to cover as a result of the issues identified as part of the completion of the CAS Toolkit.



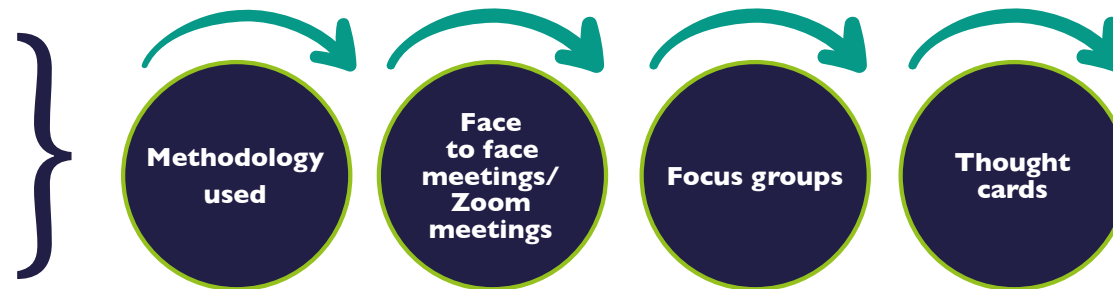
Implementation and Impact Phase

Implementation and Impact Phase

Most of the schools involved in the CAS Evaluation Project are at a relatively early stage in the implementation of their action plan. Therefore the findings and recommendations from this phase of the evaluation project should be received and interpreted in that context.

Many reasons were given for the later than expected commencement of CAS action plan implementation across the schools. These included:

- The length of time that the CAS planning phase has taken in some schools.
- Unexpected staff turnover including SLT.
- Capacity challenges across school.
- The on-going impact of COVID-19 and staff absence, risk assessments updates, lack of cover available.
- Ofsted inspections.
- Other school/curriculum priorities impacting CAS planning and implementation.



Consultation method used:

School progress was discussed with the CAS Evaluation Team at a final meeting with the headteacher and/or CAS lead and/or SLT during June and July 2022. CAS implementation was also discussed with teachers and pupils via face-to-face focus groups at the end of the school year. Qualitative data was also collected through the use of CAS Thought Cards. These A5 postcards were handed out or left in staff rooms for staff and pupils to make a note on when they observed, participated or had a thought to share relating to physical activity in their school. These were posted to all schools twice through the evaluation and either posted back to the evaluators or collected during evaluation visits. Not all schools chose to complete these.

The findings of the final meetings and focus groups are as follows-

- All schools reported progress and impact of implementation of the CAS Action Plans and included a range of creative and innovative developments, including:

- **Adaptations to school policy, planning and routines**

School Example School has written active learning into the School Development Plan. It uses PE and Sport Premium funding to support active learning CPD i.e. to help teaching staff with Active Maths. A survey was undertaken with pupils providing useful information to show staff and governors the impact on pupils.

Impact: governors, staff and pupils see active learning as a core part of the school day and all teachers are consistently using it as an approach which enhances academic and holistic outcomes for pupils.

“ CAS has been crucial in leading to policy change across the school and it has proved important that the CAS Coordinator is Assistant Head and member of the SLT. This has been key to introducing the CAS driven policy changes ”

School Example The school have included their Active School ambitions within their recruitment processes. Prospective staff are made aware of their active school ethos and expectations during advertising, the job specification, and the interview process.

Impact: Staff new to the school are aware of their active school ethos and the expectation they will need to contribute to this should they join the school. The school culture is gradually being transformed as more staff are recruited who are willing to promote and facilitate physical activity opportunities.

School Example The school reviewed in detail their existing systems and expectations of staff with regards to curriculum planning. The staff were already expected to submit a 'Creative Curriculum Plan' at the beginning of each half term to highlight to SLT the innovative approaches and resources they were going to use to teach the topics to children. SLT decided they would introduce the expectation that teachers had to communicate how they were going to specifically use the outdoor environment and fixed resources to deliver the curriculum.

Impact: Teachers are now specifically planning for outdoor learning opportunities across the curriculum and pupils are accessing outdoor fixed and moveable resources more consistently. This includes an outdoor classroom which was previously underused during the week.

“ CAS was crucial to our move towards being an active school, the expertise, experience and critical friend role that CAS played were important elements of our journey ”

- Changes to the school environment

School Example The school had new doors fitted to the back of classrooms to open onto the playground. Teachers are encouraged to take pupils outdoors for learning when possible.

Impact: Increased opportunity for classes to take learning outdoors more often. Teachers motivation to take pupils outside has increased due to transition times being reduced, as classes no longer need to walk through the school building to access outdoor spaces.

School Example The school secured funding to plant 400 new Christmas trees in unused space in the school grounds. Families were invited to buy a plot/tree for £1.00. The pupils and families look after their tree until maturation, when they can buy it for £5.00.

Impact: Many more families are now walking to school and across the school grounds, to water and look after their tree before or after school.

School Example: The school identified a large classroom which was being used infrequently across the week. With the support of SLT, the CAS lead timetabled the classroom, giving each class a 30 minute slot across the week which could be used to teach the wider curriculum through movement. A wider stakeholder was brought in to provide active learning CPD specifically using that space to increase teachers capability and motivation.

Impact: This 'active classroom' is now being used 100% of the time across the week and the physical activity levels of the pupils have increased as a result. Staff have fed back that children look forward to this session and there has been an improvement in engagement and concentration in these lessons.

- Engagement with broader networks and stakeholders

School Example The school communicated with local clubs and sports organisations to offer free use of school facilities out of school hours, bringing the community into the school. More local clubs are now using the school facilities including football, martial arts and boxing.

Impact: The profile of the school has been raised and it is now viewed as a community hub for physical activity and sport. Pupils are participating in more varied and fun physical activities and are enjoying being active. Existing stakeholder relationships have been strengthened and these providers are now aware of the school's vision and values with regards to physical activity.

School Example The school invited Dr Bike (local organisation) into school to help pupils learn how to fix their bikes. The Local Authority provided road safety support. The physical environment was audited and it was discovered that the pre-existing cycle storage at the front of the school was not fit for purpose as bikes were going missing. This discouraged pupils and parents from travelling by bike to school. New safe and more secure storage was built at the back of the school to guard against this.

Impact: More pupils from all year groups are cycling or scootering to school on a daily basis now that there is safer bike storage at the back of the school. One child is even travelling to school in a go-kart.

- Stakeholder influencing

School Example: The school now regularly evaluate their active learning interventions, using the evidence to present the impact to staff during weekly meetings. This evidence is also consistently on the agenda at school governor meetings as it forms part of their School Development Plan review.

Impact: Governors, SLT, teachers and teaching assistants are now consistently monitoring and evaluating active learning interventions and approaches from the top down. Prioritising this agenda in meetings has resulted in stakeholder groups regularly given the opportunity to share successes, challenges and discuss solutions linked to physically active learning across the school.

“ I brought the results back to the staff meeting. Any people who then were still kind of reserving judgement, it showed them that this is what their pupils are saying to them. This information was also given to the HT for when they were reporting back to the standards committee as part of the MAT, because they're reviewing the school development plans for all of the schools ”

School Example The school integrated physical activity into their existing whole school 'mini research teams' approach. These groups, made up of staff from across all phases of the school, were tasked with choosing a concept linked to movement which could enhance pedagogical approaches. Active Breaks was chosen, benefits and strategies researched and then the What? Why? and How? was presented to all staff to bring them on board.

Impact: The capability, opportunity and motivation of staff has been enhanced and all children are now participating in active breaks consistently throughout curriculum time.

School Example The school serves a very diverse community and as a result has previously struggled to engage with parents and guardians with different aspects of school life due to language and cultural barriers. The school prioritised creating an event to educate their parents on the benefits of physical activity for their children and how they could support them to move beyond the school day and in the community. Through parent consultation it was identified that Dance was valued very highly by parents as it was embedded within their cultural traditions. In order to ensure better attendance at the event, the school included a dance performance from the pupils, after which an education workshop took place which included outside agencies speaking to the parents.

Impact: Parents are becoming more aware of the benefits of physical activity and the opportunities to get their children active in the community and at home. Influenced by the education session, parents are now accessing the 'Active at Home' resources which the school sends home to parents.

“ We are holding our series of sports days at 9am to see if it attracts more parents to come and watch, offering them a cup of tea/coffee or water ”

- **Increased opportunities to be active throughout the school day**

School Example The school's sustainability coordinator runs 'Living Streets'. Children log their travel each day to school. They earn badges by being active as they travel to school. Each month, whichever class has made the most active journeys collectively win an award that they keep for the month.

Impact: Children are keen to talk about how they are arriving to school and the Park and Stride initiative. The number of pupils travelling actively to school is increasing and the school believe this is largely down to aligning the initiative with existing whole school reward and recognition processes.

School Example The school introduced an 'Every child active every 30 minutes' through the school day initiative. Some staff used a 30-minute timer; other staff report not using the timer as they can tell when pupils have been sat down for too long.

Impact: Pupils are now active during every hour of lessons throughout the school day.

“ Having a focus on planning regular active elements in lessons has had a positive impact on whole class engagement in lessons. At first this did cause disruption but has become a positive part now the class are used to it ”

- **Other findings included:**

- Despite slower progress from a few schools, they have reported significant policy and whole school developments that are due to be implemented in school from the 2022/23 academic year.
- Teachers anecdotally reported improvements in learning, behaviour and concentration amongst their pupils as a result of increased physical activity and/or active learning in the classroom.
- Teachers also spoke about involvement in the CAS project as “giving them permission” to try new things in the classroom and they felt empowered by this. Two core reasons were given for this-
 - SLT support for the CAS Project.
 - The profile of CAS and the fact that it had been developed by experts in the sector.

“ Quick wins” were identified as key to encouraging implementation of CAS with all staff, as opposed to those that were already committed to physical activity. ”

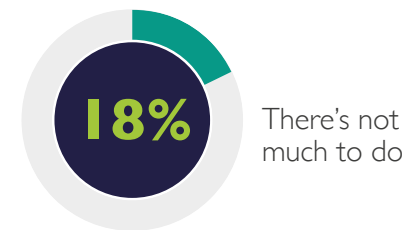
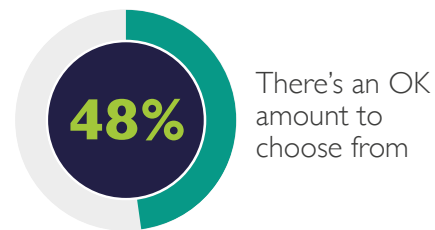
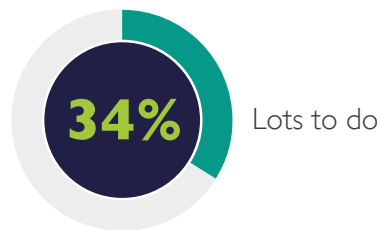
- Teachers and pupils reported enjoying incorporating physical activity into the school day.
- Pupils had a good understanding of what physical activity is and the positive impacts that it can have both in terms of health and learning.

- All schools felt that they needed to engage more with parents/carers and Governors about their involvement in the CAS Framework.
- All schools stated that engaging with families is not easy, particularly amongst communities who have a high percentage of parents with English as an additional language, though there were some good examples of how schools were beginning to engage.
- All schools were concerned that the momentum around CAS might reduce or be overtaken by other school/ curriculum priorities.
- Demonstrating and measuring impact is a challenge for schools; they are confident to discuss what they have done, but less confident in identifying the evidence for this.
- Feedback from the final Community of Learning events was complimentary, particularly how the schools were encouraged to reflect and begin to plan for the coming year.

They were also asked why it (physical activity) is good



When asked about their outdoor space, pupils answered 'My playground has...'



Pupils could only choose one answer: From both the questionnaire responses and the focus group participants, most thought that their playground area had lots to do or an OK amount to choose from.

Some pupils were asked what else they would like to see in the playground; their answers mentioned monkey bars, climbing frames, swings, obstacle courses, activity areas.

Girls talked about how boys playing football can be disruptive and rough; one school was to have a system for Y6 taking it in turns to play to minimise impact on other children

Pupils completing questionnaires were shown pictures of Active Learning/Brain Boosters, and a classroom display then asked to think about any activities that they had done or seen with their class more than once.



- As can be seen in the results, the majority of responses recall doing Active Learning/Brain Boosters more than once (see number of responses in each segment). Less numbers thought that they had a display in the classroom.
- This focus on Active Learning/Brain Boosters and how pupils knew it was happening was reinforced with the conversations with the focus groups, with most enjoying this when it took place. A small number of pupils did not like being physically active. The physical activity talked about ranged from having music and moving up from their seats through to integrated active learning e.g. incorporating running across the hall when doing Robust Vocabulary. Active Maths came up frequently in conversations e.g. Time trials, measuring, Treasure Hunt.
- One pupil talked enthusiastically about using QR codes at various points around the school to find out facts.
- The pupils were clear on what they thought was the purpose of integrating physical activity in lessons. Most agreed when others said learning this way made them focus their brain more.

“ Work is easier when acting out ”

“ Outside measurin ”

“ Having fun learning through exercise ”

“ Being active in class helped my brain to focus ”

- Brain boosters and/or energisers got many a conversation going, with pupils saying that they enjoyed it; in one school, they really liked the fact that pupils got recognised for being physically active or making the most effort during these breaks.

“ It is a break from your studies ”

“ Takes your sleepiness away ”

“ Not every day but some days. ”

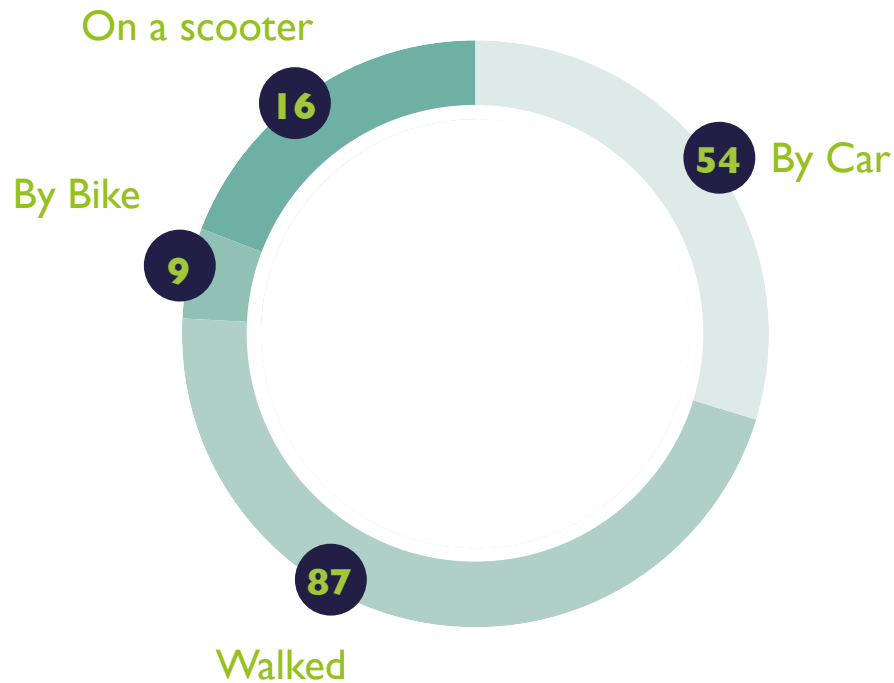
“ Opportunities to stretch their leg ”

“ Music in the morning to be active to ”

- Other methods of getting the class active that the pupils talked about included:
 - Being asked to move in lessons to collect things e.g. books as opposed to the teacher putting them on desks.
 - Lessons in the school hall.
 - Moved in lessons (answers around the classroom).
 - Drama outside.
 - Making registration in the morning and afternoon more active.

Pupils completing the questionnaire and participating in the focus groups were asked how they had travelled to and from school that week.

Those who responded:



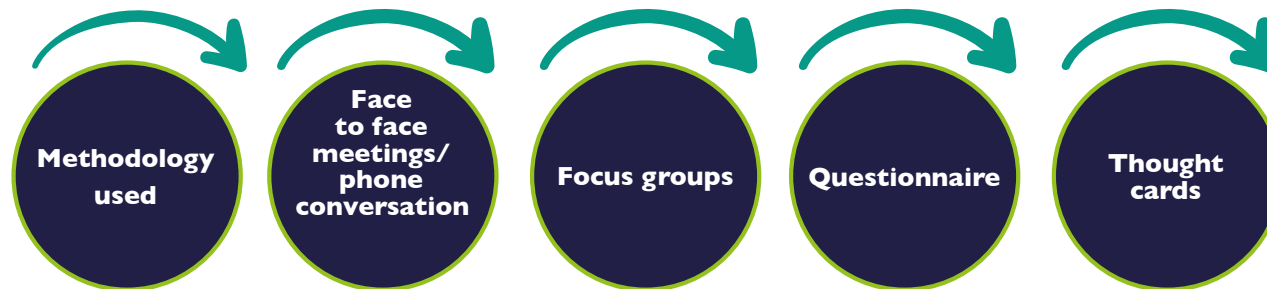
The majority of pupils had walked to school. Some in KS2 walked on their own or with friends.

Pupils talked about doing a mixture linked to the school's Park and Stride initiative, which encourages parents to park the car away from the school and walk part of the way.



Sustainability Phase

Sustainability Phase



The sustainability phase is ongoing for all schools engaged in the project. If sustainable change has been made this will be embedded into the whole school ethos and practise. Within the duration of this evaluation it is hard to ascertain how sustainable some of the changes made are. Even where changes to policy have been made, a change in headship or SLT may alter this at any point in the future. One area explored is that of behaviour change.

The COM-B model² proposes that there must be changes in one or more of the three components - Capability (C), Opportunity (O) and Motivation (M) - to facilitate long-term (B) behaviour change. It is apparent that the CAS project (the Behaviour) requires more exploration to establish how these components transfer into a school environment in order to deliver and maintain this effective behaviour change. Conversations and observations with the targeted schools indicate that the three components are present albeit to differing degrees:

- **Capability** - working to encourage teaching and support staff to believe that they have the appropriate ability to encourage pupils to be physically active. From what has been heard and observed, it is evident that there has been a shift in this component within most schools, as staff begin to understand the benefits of CAS and the positive difference it can make and they start to see how they can contribute and CPD has certainly assisted this.

“ I have adapted my teaching by adding in more active elements where possible. The CPD training I received has helped me feel more confident to plan lessons and activities. We are completing lots of brain breaks, active maths, active phonics, and adapting lessons where the pupils have an opportunity to get moving. ”

- **Opportunity** - exploring whether there are sufficient social and physical environments for CAS activities to happen in the school, it would appear that all the schools involved in the project have successfully achieved this to some level, especially where it is seen as an expectation from the headteacher, rather than a choice to do.

“ I think the biggest strength (of CAS) is that it allows you to change policy. I think that’s the biggest one by far. If you can change the thinking of a school, everything else comes with that and you change the mentality of what physical activity is and how you can improve it. The fact that we’ve implemented that into our daily timetable I think is fantastic. ”

- **Motivation** - It has been apparent from the outset that schools’ intent and motivation to engage in CAS is high. They state it is the right thing to do and believe in the benefits for their pupils and school community. However, whilst their motivation remains high there are occasions where other priorities take over. This does not lower their motivation but may reduce their opportunity in terms of time. Teachers most commonly stated that, curriculum time restrictions, covering the curriculum learning objective whilst introducing active breaks, timetabling and having time to resource lessons were barriers to implementing CAS. Other factors such as OFSTED, change in headteacher and other staff changes also feature. This can sometimes stop CAS progressing, so it

needs to be considered how CAS can remain prioritised when other elements of school life seem more important to staff and parents.

“ I think we’ve kind of hit a bit of a plateau a little bit. There’s been lots of changes within the structure of things at school. I’ve not been able to dedicate very much time to it at all. So it’s been very hectic ”

“ I think because the CAS Lead is Upper KS2 as well, this time of year in particular with the SATS and everything. It has been a real challenge. We have got some training coming up, so I’m hoping that we kind of reignite the staff’s interest in what’s happening with CAS moving forward into September, into the next academic year ”

There was considerable appreciation from schools for the support received from YSF that has been instrumental in helping them develop their action plan and begin to implement CAS in school.

This included facilitating planning sessions, providing opportunities to reflect and hear from other schools in the Community of Learning sessions, CPD and enabling the CAS Lead to free up time to work on the project.

² Susan Michie, Maartje M van Stralen, Robert West. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions.

Recommendations for schools

-  Consider a whole school approach to physical activity as an evolution rather than a revolution, viewing it as a long-term strategy rather than a series of short-term interventions.
-  Decide the most appropriate time to begin embedding physical activity more strategically, for example aligning priorities with School Development Planning.
-  Involve Senior leaders in embedding physical activity in School Development Plans and policies from the outset so that physical activity is aligned to whole school improvement strategies.
-  Create a team of colleagues from each phase of the school to feed into discussions when profiling physical activity provision using auditing tools (such as the profiling tool created by CAS).
-  Secure support and buy in from all school stakeholders to create a mindset of collective responsibility before implementing whole school approaches to physical activity.
-  Guarantee regular protected leadership time out of class, away from other responsibilities, for any member of staff who is leading on whole school physical activity priorities and interventions.
-  Develop strategies to mitigate risks associated with other priorities dominating or undermining physical activity interventions.
-  Find opportunities to regularly enhance stakeholder knowledge and insight of physical activity national policy, - e.g 60 minutes of physical activity per day and develop a deeper understanding of existing definitions of PE, Sport and Physical Activity.
-  Encourage, motivate and support staff to embed physical activity in everyday teaching, whilst ensuring all staff understand the distinction between Active Learning and activity bursts/breaks in lessons.
-  Recognise the impact of 'small wins' and 'tiny habits' when planning for change to enhance the opportunity and motivation of teachers and other school staff, particularly when embedding active learning approaches.



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