



# CHILDREN'S CAPITAL OF CULTURE.

FESTIVAL

YEAR

2025

## CHILDREN'S CAPITAL OF CULTURE 'BATON RELAY 2025'

IMPACT REPORT

# BACKGROUND

In 2025, Rotherham became the world's first Children's Capital of Culture (CCoC). It was created to change how young people felt about their hometown and create positive opportunities for children and young people across the Borough. The CCoC initiative has been split into four chapters, with Chapter 3 named the 'Festival Year' being delivered throughout 2025. This initiative is facilitated by the Council but delivered by Rotherham Cultural Partnership Board.

The Cultural Partnership Board includes ARC Cinema, Arts Council England, Flux Rotherham, Grimm and Co, Gulliver's Valley Resort, Places Leisure, RNN Group, ROAR, Sense, Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire Sport Foundation, and representatives of networks such as Rotherham Creative Network, Moving Rotherham and Rotherham Headteacher's Forum, as well as senior officers from Culture Sport and Tourism, School Effectiveness and Public Health.

Yorkshire Sport Foundation supported the 'Festival Year' by ensuring that physical activity and sport were included, as well as supporting how physical activity could be promoted to schools, communities and families across Rotherham. The Schools Baton Relay developed from this, with children across Rotherham schools running with a baton designed by young people themselves. It celebrated what's great about each community, showed pupils where they can be active, and created positive experiences and magical moments for everyone taking part. The delivery of the relay was completed in collaboration with the School Games team in Rotherham who supported with engaging schools and event delivery, even running parts of the relay itself.



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# OUTCOMES



The projected outcomes for the Children's Capital of Culture programme were as follows:

**Children and young people will:**

- Be proud to call Rotherham their home.
- Be confident that they can establish a career in Rotherham.
- Feel that their mental and physical health is improving.

**Rotherham residents will:**

- Have a stronger sense of community cohesion and connection with their local community.
- Feel that Rotherham's reputation is improving regionally and nationally.



## The outcomes of the Rotherham Schools Baton Relay are listed below:

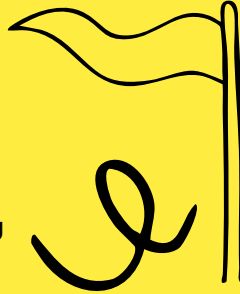
- Raise the profile of the Children's Capital of Culture through schools, pupils and families across Rotherham.
- Use the event to promote 60 active minutes for children across schools and with teachers and parents.
- Highlight local opportunities to engage in physical activity and movement.
- Further engage schools in the Rotherham School Games Programme and target schools who have previously been less engaged or disengaged in the local offer.
- Engage key stakeholders and wider partners across Rotherham in the promotion of physical activity.



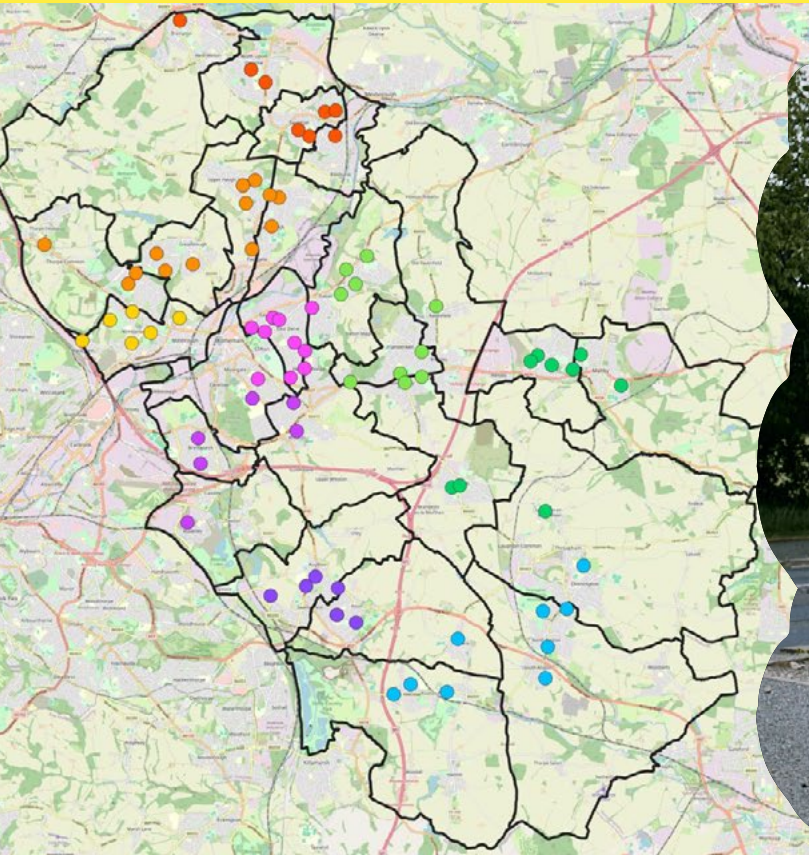
# THE RELAY

The Baton Relay  
took place over  
**9** days

★ covering a total  
distance of  
**82**  
miles and engaging  
82 schools in the  
process.



Four children carried the baton from each school, supported along the route by staff from their school. Infant, junior, primary, secondary and special schools made up the cohort of participating schools, whilst the route covered a number of landmarks including library's, parks and stadiums. Most notably, the relay route passed through Boston Castle, New York Stadium, Thrybergh Country Park, Maltby Crags and War Memorial. The map below shows the schools involved across the nine days.

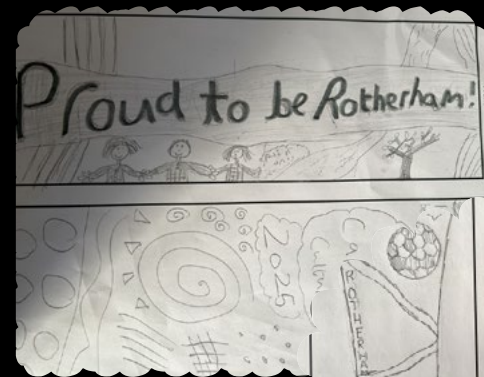


# STORY OF THE BATON

In keeping with the ethos of the Children's Capital of Culture, the baton was designed by children from Brinsworth Manor Junior School.

An assembly was delivered then all the children from every class in the school created their own designs for the baton. The winning designs were chosen by the Youth Programming Panel for Children's Capital of Culture. 70 aluminium cans were used by local supplier Casting Innovations to create the final baton.

The "Proud to be Rotherham" design wonderfully epitomises the heart of the Festival Year – instilling a sense of pride in children of their home town.



**82**  
schools took part  
in total.

  
**328**  
children ran a leg of the relay.

**2**  
new schools were connected  
with Living Streets to  
take part in their WOW  
programme by relationships  
built through the Baton Relay.

**8**  
whole school assemblies  
were delivered, helping  
children understand about  
the Children's Capital of  
Culture, the importance  
of physical activity and  
getting a minimum of 60  
active minutes a day.

The Baton relay helped to raise the profile of the School Games offer. The relay launched at the School Games Colour Run on 16th May and finished with a celebration at the Rotherham School Games Festival of Sport, with South Yorkshire Active Travel Commissioner Ed Clancy running into the finish line with students from Herringthorpe Junior School carrying the baton. This was shared in local and regional media on local tv news, newspapers and online.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Baton Relay brought together a range of key stakeholders and wider partners, uniting School Games Organisers and the CCoC team, whilst engaging local stakeholders such as local councillors, Rotherham United and community clubs like Rotherham Titans.



Every ward in Rotherham was represented.

  
**17,500**  
children and young people engaged in the event through coming out onto the playground to cheer on their classmates, designing posters and bunting, and taking part in follow on events in their school after the event.



The relay visited a variety of places of interest across the borough of Rotherham. Children were encouraged to visit these spaces over the summer holidays through an Activity Pack. The routes were designed to pass spaces to engage in sport and physical activity, such as Clifton Park, Herringthorpe Playing Fields and Rotherham Titans Rugby Club. Events for children, such as Uplift Urban Sports Festival, Rotherham Show and Junior ParkRun at Rawmarsh Rosehill Park were promoted to schools.

# SURVEY

From the 81 schools who took part, 20 completed a survey. From those 20 schools physical activity opportunities were promoted to 1900 students. Some of the activities that took place in those schools can be seen below:



## Activity promoted following Baton Relay:

- Baton fun run.
- We have promoted lots of sports events, physical activity opportunities and sign posted parents to sport outside of work hours.
- We attended the final part of the baton relay at Herringthorpe stadium with 15 children.
- Students are constantly encouraged to take part in a wide range of enrichment activities.
- We advertise opportunities in school through tutor resources.
- Sports day. Further Capital of culture events – festival.
- Adventure Challenge. Sports Days. Comets. Football Programme. BMX / skateboarding opportunities.
- We have put a notice board up of the photos from the Children's Capital of Culture Baton relay event. As our Sports days have been going on we have been busy celebrating our success though all sports in school. All St Alban's children are involved in each sporting event at some point and they have all shown that the school sporting values are very important.

## Activities connected to the Baton Relay:

- All classes made posters to hold while cheering the runners on. Class discussion about keeping our bodies healthy. Our own baton fun run.
- We made signs and posters for the relay and also our sports day.
- We made the bunting, had mini relays on the yard. It was a great experience and day!
- We shared the activity pack with students.
- Shared resources in tutor groups but we had to limit students at the front of school linked to health and safety and to ensure only students with photo consent present. It was at break so couldn't risk too many students moving to the front gates etc.
- All of the children welcomed the runners in from the other school before clapping and cheering ours setting off.
- Children's festival of sport.
- Banners were made, songs were sung and pupils cheered and danced as the runners arrived and departed.
- All our children lined the route with buntings and flags, cheering on the runners with huge smiles and enthusiastic encouragement. It was a joyful display of unity, school spirit, and community pride. We were also winners of the bunting competition and the children in year 5 received notepads, pencils and two won t-shirts.



# QUOTES AND STORIES



What an amazing event! It was so well organised. Children, and staff, were excited to be part of this.



A highlight was having our children line the playground to welcome and share the start of our journey with our runners. The children felt a real buzz for the experience setting off for the event.



It was wonderful to see the whole school cheer the children on at the start of the race. There was a real buzz around school. The sponsored run we did raised £948 for cancer research.



Thank you so much for organising and letting us be a part of it. The runners and the supporters absolutely loved it and we'd definitely be interested in anything else you've got planned in the future.



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We had an amazing time. It was a great event that brought all of our school community together. The children, who ran, all had an amazing experience and have talked about this for days in school. It was really well organised and the activity booklet enabled everyone to participate. Thank you for the opportunity. It was a fantastic event.

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We loved the activity as it linked to our topic for the term which was: We are the Champions.

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The children loved taking part in the event and the launch assembly was great to really promote physical activity.

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# QUOTES AND STORIES



Our 4 x sport councillors were really excited to take part in this event. We engaged the whole school to make a guard of honour on the playground for our return to school. It was a real celebration, with our Principal getting involved in the run with the 4 pupils and setting an example.

We would love to repeat something like this again. All students taking part had a great time from our school. Great publicity of sports in the community.



This was a fantastic experience for the children at the school. Due to the real run being in our school holidays, Daniel (from YSF) came to school to lead a whole school assembly to allow all of our pupils to be involved in the event.



Was a great event and thoroughly enjoyed by all pupils! The community spirit that came out from the event was amazing and seeing our pupils encouraging one and other as well as peers from other schools was really heartwarming.



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Whole school got involved in supporting the runners, and celebrating Rotherham as the Capital of Culture. Banners were made, and pupils sung and danced whilst cheering on pupils from Meadowview who handed over to us. We took the opportunity to engage our Hospitality team in greeting pupils and staff where drinks and biscuits were shared. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

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Students thoroughly enjoyed the event. Those who spectated asked about a repeat of the event so I've been left with thinking up a way in which Maltby schools can try to do so.

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Students really enjoyed a new challenge and having the opportunity to represent the school in a great event.

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Both staff and children involved loved it. It brought the school communities together.

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It was a really well organized and delivered.

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# SWINTON FITZWILLIAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Swinton Fitzwilliam created an incredible welcome for the runners, lining up the whole school on different levels across the school playground. All the children made signs to cheer on the runners.
- In the afternoon, the whole school were involved in a baton relay. The youngest children in foundation started off the relay with a lap around the playground and outdoor area and it was passed from class to class all the way up to Year 6.



# ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

- St Bede's Catholic Primary School arranged for a group of children and parents to take part in the Schools Baton Relay even though it was their school holidays. A visit from Yorkshire Sport Foundation was arranged to the school at a later date to deliver an assembly and whole school baton relay activity on the school astro turf.
- Once a year, the whole school dress up in orange in honour of the charity of one of their former pupils who sadly passed away. The school decided to incorporate the baton relay activity with this day, so the whole school was a sea of bright orange and CCoC yellow.
- After taking part in a whole school assembly where children learnt more about the CCoC and benefits of physical activity, every child got to take part in a baton relay themed loop of the track. One child per class was chosen to carry the baton and everyone was cheered back to the finish through a tunnel of their cheering classmates, encapsulating the joy and ethos of the Baton Relay.



# IMPACT STORIES

- One child was nervous about being selected to represent their school in the Baton relay. To build their confidence, the child and their dad went out running each week for a month before the relay. The child did brilliantly on the day and managed to finish the whole route.
- One child had a highly negative family incident related to physical activity and the school were working with them to rebuild their perspective of sport and physical activity to help the child live a healthy, happy life. Many of this child's classmates came out of the school to line the path, showcasing homemade banners to cheer the child on. This child finished their leg of the relay with a smile and the full support of their friends and teachers.



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