

Sport RCT Case Study

Getting children more active: Year 7 Swimming Intervention programme

The Year 7 Swimming Intervention Programme was delivered in Aberdare Community School through a partnership between us and Leisure for Life. The programme was created to address the fact that 46% of children in Rhondda Cynon Taf do not achieve the expected standard within the Year 6 National Swimming Curriculum. Delivered at Sobell Leisure Centre, this programme provided targeted support to young people who required additional help to develop their swimming skills and water confidence.

A key feature of the intervention is the significantly lower teacher-to-pupil ratio, reducing class sizes from as many as 30 pupils per instructor in primary school lessons to just six participants per teacher. This allows for personalised coaching, greater encouragement and a supportive environment where young people can progress at their own pace. Participants also benefit from free swimming crash courses during school holidays, helping to reinforce learning and build confidence.

The programme has had a transformative impact on four participants: Trace, Chace, Ellis and Amelia Rose. Trace joined the programme lacking confidence and carrying negative experiences from primary school swimming lessons. After six weeks, Trace graduated from the intervention and can now swim confidently in both the shallow and deep ends without floats or noodles. They can jump into the pool independently

and they are excited about being able to enjoy swimming on future holidays.

Chace entered the programme with a fear of water and a strong dislike of swimming. After nine weeks, they successfully graduated and can now swim longer distances, use backstroke in the main pool and jump into the water with confidence. Most importantly, their fear of water has disappeared.

Ellis, who only started two weeks ago, has already developed new skills, including backstroke, and can now swim without a noodle. Their confidence has increased significantly, and they describe the experience as calming and enjoyable.

Amelia Rose has progressed rapidly over six weeks, developing in front crawl and backstroke while gaining the confidence to jump into the pool independently.

“ Many of the learners who engaged regularly have really been rewarded by being challenged outside their comfort zones, bringing about significant changes in their confidence and competence in the water. It has been really heartwarming to witness and hear them speak so highly of this in the review. - School ”



18
participants



100%
are now more
active, more often



100%
will continue
taking part



100%
feel healthier



100%
feel more
confident



100%
feel happier



50%
made new friends



RHONDDA CYNON TAF