

# THE IMPACT OF DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS: 1K-A-DAY



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Chief Medical Officer's recommendation of 60 active minutes per day for young people is due to become a key priority for schools. Demonstrated by Ofsted's latest school inspection handbook which requires schools to ensure "*Children's health, safety and well-being are greatly enhanced by the vigilant and consistent implementation of robust policies and procedures*". Consequently there is a growing national focus on providing daily physical activity in schools.

Daily physical activity interventions are nothing new (Change4Life, Huff and Puff and Busy Feet are examples of programmes currently running in hundreds of schools) however a school in Scotland's concept of getting pupils to run a daily mile, backed by strong scientific evidence, is proving to be increasingly popular. Broadly similar to the daily mile, the 1K a day provides primary schools with a daily physical activity intervention which is quick, easy and low cost.

## 2 THE EVIDENCE FOR DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- A study by the University of Illinois of children aged between seven and nine found significant improvements in the mental skills of those enrolled

on an after-school exercise programme for nine months. Tests found those placed on the programme improved their accuracy on some mental capability tests by twice as much as those who were not assigned to do daily exercise.

- A 2014 Public Health England report found that the amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity students engaged with at 11 years of age had an effect on academic performance across English, maths and science, including final GCSE exam results, with active students found to achieve up to 20 per cent higher results than non-active ones.
- Scientific studies show that the level of obesity at St Ninians school in Stirling where the Daily Mile originated was up to 45% less than the national average.

### 3 1K-A-DAY

Findings from the pilot project and subsequent evaluations across West Yorkshire:

- 100% of schools recorded increased concentration levels and increases in attainment
- Other recorded benefits included: improved fitness, attendance and behaviour
- All schools would recommend the programme to other schools
- The average time taken for a class to perform the daily activity is just 10 minutes

#### Quotes

- “Immediately after completing the 1km challenge, children were more engaged and motivated to learn, therefore impacting directly on their learning and attainment.”
- “The children are definitely getting quicker.”
- “Children are extremely enthusiastic and competitive.”