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Back on Track

While we were all stuck at home (and with many people still forced into periods of self-isolation) some children have been far less active than they normally would be. We speak to the heads of some of our schools to discover how important physical education really is

chool watchdog Ofsted recently announced that, throughout the year, older children lost their physical fitness as well as reading and writing skills due to the unexpected changes to education, with children hardest hit by Covid-19 measures shown to have regressed during the pandemic. But it seems our schools have been doing all they can to help get their students' exercise get back on track.

Gordon MacLelland, Director of Sports at Aysgarth School, understands just how vital physical education is – not only for physical health, but mental wellbeing too. 'We know that when children exercise, their bodies release endorphins,' he says. 'These endorphins trigger a positive feeling, boosting productivity, enabling them to concentrate, focus and boosting their confidence to tackle their academic studies. Furthermore, regular exercise can help relieve stress and anxiety. With young people under increasing pressure, exercise is a powerful tool to combat stress.'

At Aysgarth, they offer a broad variety of sporting opportunities and activities in an effort to ensure that the boys have a chance to find sports they enjoy. 'We know that if children can find a sport that they truly love, there is a better chance of them continuing a healthy relationship with physical activity through their teenage years and into adulthood,' Gordon adds. 'Furthermore, a passion for sports is a wholesome alternative to the negative aspects of screen time.'

Participation and performance are equally valued at the school with every boy given the opportunity to represent the school on the rugby, football and cricket pitches – and some go on to play at the highest levels.

Above all, one thing is clear – all three schools are hopeful that recent events will have a positive impact their pupils' physical education and they'll continue to adapt to whatever 2021 throws at them.

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Physical education, sport and curries are highly regarded at Bun-Castle School, forming a significant part of their co-curric, offering while supporting their pupil's mental health and wellbed. This year, they called upon the support of their decicated beds staff, who have gene above and beyond to deliver sport, health, a

'Our sports staff, during the finst lockdown period in particular, an amazing job engaging with our students,' explains headmas Torry backson. From visiting our sports scholars at a social distar and hosting retaining sessions in open spares, as entirections relos to Microsoft Teams chaos with exercise videos, they ensured or purils recorded regular searchs.

'As we safely welcomed our pupils back, we have been able to uphold many of our school traditions, including our hands Barmey Run – ablest a little differently to normal. It was a welcom sight to host controlled criticat and biochy festures against assume our neighbouring schools at the start of term too, which gave us a a lift and taxe of normality.

Making the most of the situation, they've persevered and adapt to all challenges brought about by the pandemic, ensuring th pupils stay active.

year by setting regular PE-related challenges for the girls – because healthy body and healthy mind go hand in hand.

There were some creative approaches which served to sho how much the girls or NHSC prices PE and but how much the

The importance of physical education here begins in nume where the girls start to develop basic skills, and continue to ma

specialist PE trachers and introduced to competitive sport.

Our activities offer something for everyone, regardless of he 'sporty' they may consider thermselves to be,' Michael adds. 'I have therefore carefully-curred a diverse postgramme of sport activities to encourage all girls to be physically active – even if the net confidence consensing in traditional team sports and the production of the confidence of the confidence in traditional team sports and the confidence consensing in traditional team sports and the confidence consensing to traditional team sports and the confidence consensing the confidence of the co

addition, they encourage the use of transferable academic skills as learn about fitness and wellbeing, which might involve the pix taking part in research peojects to explore the topic in more detail so that healthy practices become a part of their day-to-day line. At Newscarle Pron School, they are also fully committed to need-tire

challenge which engaged students from all years, was implemented. This unusual year culminated in a thrilling series of sports days where children completed events, score boards were tallied and champions were made. Fisca explains. 'During the summon mornha our heliday activity club was able to go altraid and we we.

Having been ludey enough to host the premiership cup as welcome professional referees into their school, NPS understas

Our children's low of sport as PE and games lessons continue, the number of children walking, cycling or according to school has increased and bloep set exeals show that our children are full of energy and rating to go. 'Horn adds.' We are especially possed of unchildren who have harmeand their low of sport into chaffull's work whether it be cycling for the NHS or for a local food bank or running for the Creen North Air afmoblence Service:

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