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**Initial report for the
Devon School Sport Co-ordinator programme
using the online FtS activity questionnaire**

report prepared by

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22nd August 2003**

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Introduction

A total of 49 primary schools used the online activity questionnaire in order to provide the school with some baseline data concerning the activity levels of the pupils involved in the programme. The use of an online tool rather than a paper-based version caused a number of delays and technical issues regarding access to computers, but in general the satisfaction of the exercise, particularly for the pupils, was good. 19 of these schools then repeated the exercise during the summer term to monitor any early changes in behaviour. The following is a selection of results from those 19 schools that surveyed first in Autumn term 2002 and then repeated the exercise with the same pupils in the Summer term 2003.

Sample size:

Years 4 and 5 pupils were the target group, but where schools were small Year 6 pupils were also surveyed. The autumn sample is 727; the summer sample 634. The summer sample is smaller than the autumn sample but we are content that in most cases the same classes were surveyed in both exercises so a very high proportion of the sample would be in both datasets.

Enjoyment of PE/Games

Question	Overall change %	Autumn	(Summer)
Q6. What do you enjoy most during PE/Games in school?	I enjoy everything	39	(48)
Q7. What do you enjoy least about PE/Games in school?	I enjoy everything	23	(28)

From a list of activities, 39% of the autumn sample chose the 'I enjoy everything' option for question 6. This figure has risen to 48% in the summer sample and represents a statistically significant increase in the data. The partner question Q7 'What do you enjoy least about PE/Games in school?' also sees an increase in pupils declaring that they enjoy everything.

Comment: This could perhaps be a seasonal difference, but looking at the rest of the options chosen, the data does suggest that generally pupils are significantly more likely to say that they enjoy everything rather than just select one aspect of PE / Games as their favourite.

Has the PE/Games experience for pupils changed significantly over the past 6 months other than a seasonal change?

Girls Football

Q8. How often do you play or do any of these things in your own time or in school clubs? (NOT school lessons) - "Once a week or more"	Football			
	Girls	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
		17	13	26
		(30)	(28)	(49)

From the activities listed, there are a number that show a significant increase in the data for the summer sample: walking; bike riding; running for exercise; swimming for fun; badminton; tennis; cricket and rounders/baseball among others show clear increases. Football shows a slight increase in the boys figures but a marked increase in the data for the girls.

Comment: These are highly significant data! Why are more girls playing football? Is it because there are more opportunities for them to play in clubs, or is there a change of emphasis in the playground, which allows girls to play football?

Fitness and activity

Q10. How fit do you think you are?	Fit or very fit	71	(76)
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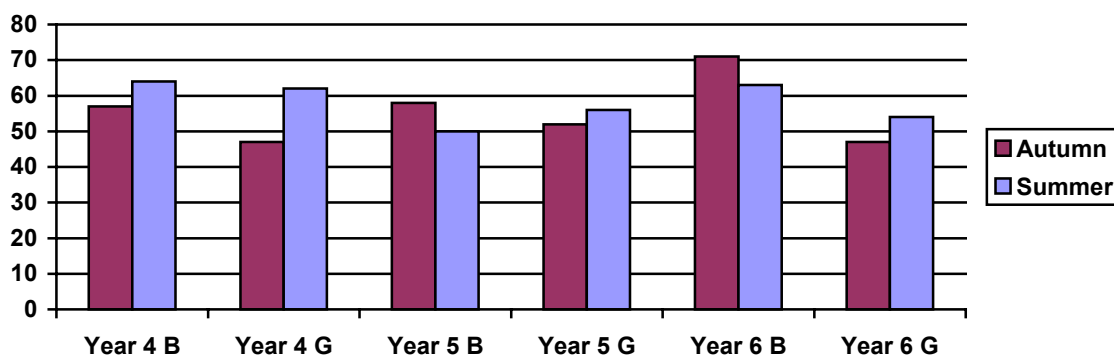
Overall the figures have increased from 71% to 76% but a closer look at the data reveals that it is the data for the girls that show a marked increase.

Comment: Is this a seasonal difference or are pupils really feeling fitter as a result of the programme?

Q11. How many times last week did you exercise and have to breathe harder?	3 times or more	55	(58)
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This is a key question for the health of young people. Can we encourage them to develop good habits for exercise while they are young? We would like to see more of the pupils exercising hard enough to benefit their health at least three times a week. The increase observed for the whole sample is not significant (at only a 3% increase) but it is worth looking more carefully at the detail for each year group and for gender differences.

Hard exercise 3 times or more last week



The data for the Year 5 and 6 boys show a downward trend. The increase in the figures for this question is marked for the girls in all year groups.

Comment: Does this reflect the seasonal lack of football in the summer period? For the question which club did you go to last week, football club drops from 42% to 27% for Year 4 boys, 48% to 37% for Year 5 boys and 60% to 26% for Year 6 boys.

Q12. How much do you think these people enjoy being physically active? - Mother	Quite a lot or a lot	45	(54)
Q12. How much do you think these people enjoy being physically active? - Father	Quite a lot or a lot	60	(69)
Q12. How much do you think these people enjoy being physically active? - Class Teacher	Quite a lot or a lot	68	(70)


It is interesting to see the different perceptions of pupils in relation to the enjoyment of physical activity of these significant adults. Significantly more pupils think that dad enjoys physical activity more than mum does. More interesting is that teacher comes even higher than mum or dad!

For all three people, the percentages are higher in the summer sample than in the autumn sample. The change in the data for Mother is statistically significant and that for Father shows a similar increase.

Comment: Again, are these seasonal differences, or are they real differences in the perceptions of the pupils surveyed? This may well be because parents are visibly more active in the summer but it might be that the impact of the programme is having an effect on the whole family rather than just the pupils in school.




Leisure time

<p>Q15. After school yesterday, did you spend any time...</p> 	Watching TV	65	(59)
	Watching videos	20	(15)
	Listening to music	30	(30)
	Meeting friends	35	(40)
	Doing homework	34	(26)
	Reading a book	30	(31)
	Playing sport	37	(49)
	Playing any computer Games	32	(25)
	Going to a club	24	(23)

Watching TV consistently comes top of all surveys conducted by SHEU for the question 'After school yesterday, did you spend any time...!'

Comment: these are most likely to be seasonal changes; less time is spent doing indoor activities although the increase in playing sport, bearing in mind there is less football in the summer term, is significant.

Breakfast

<p>Q20. What did you eat or drink before coming to school today?</p> 	Nothing to eat or drink	4	(4)
	Milk	22	(25)
	Tea or coffee	16	(14)
	Fruit juice	37	(38)
	Toast or bread	29	(29)
	Cereal	47	(52)
	Fruit	11	(17)

There is an interesting increase in the percentages reporting cereal and fruit for breakfast. It is only the data for fruit that shows a statistically significant increase and a small proportion are still having nothing at all for breakfast.

Comment: Have other messages as well as the importance of activity started to be reflected in the data? Is it just that you have more time to have breakfast in the light summer mornings and are more likely to choose cereal instead of toast? Or is the suggestion that cereal and fruit are likely to be better for you than toast in the morning changing the behaviour of pupils?



School teaching

Q22. How much does your school teach you that physical activities are good for you?	Quite a lot or a lot	75	(80)
Q23. How much does your school teach you about healthy eating?	Quite a lot or a lot	57	(65)

These questions are a good indication of the impact that health initiatives may be having within the school as well as the impact of the school curriculum. It might be expected that the School Sport Co-ordinator programme might increase the profile of the benefits of physical activity in the eyes of pupils. It is pleasing to see however, that education about healthy eating also rates more highly among. In schools that have been involved in an activity programme, we often observe an increase in the results for the healthy eating question.

Comment: These are significant increases in the data and are a suggestion that the programme is having an impact on the pupils in these schools.

Water

Q24. How much water did you drink yesterday during the day?	A litre or more	27	(40)
Q25. Are you able to get water at school? If yes, where from?	Class water bottles	9	(17)
	My own drinking bottle	36	(48)

Anecdotal reports from schools that have promoted the importance of drinking water among their pupils include quotes like:-

" Pupils are able to concentrate better in lessons".

" Pupils seem calmer in lessons".

" Parents have said that instead of flopping down in front of the TV when they get home, children have the energy to do other things".

After an initial fear over the increased toilet visits and potential disruption around having water bottles in classrooms, many schools are now seeing the benefits of better-hydrated pupils.

The data here show a marked increase in the percentage of pupils drinking a litre or more of water in the second survey. There are also statistically significant increases for those accessing water from class water bottles and from their own drinking bottles.

Comment: These results are likely to be seasonal. However, if they are also linked to a change of emphasis within the schools to encourage more drinking of water then the data are highly suggestive.



School playtimes

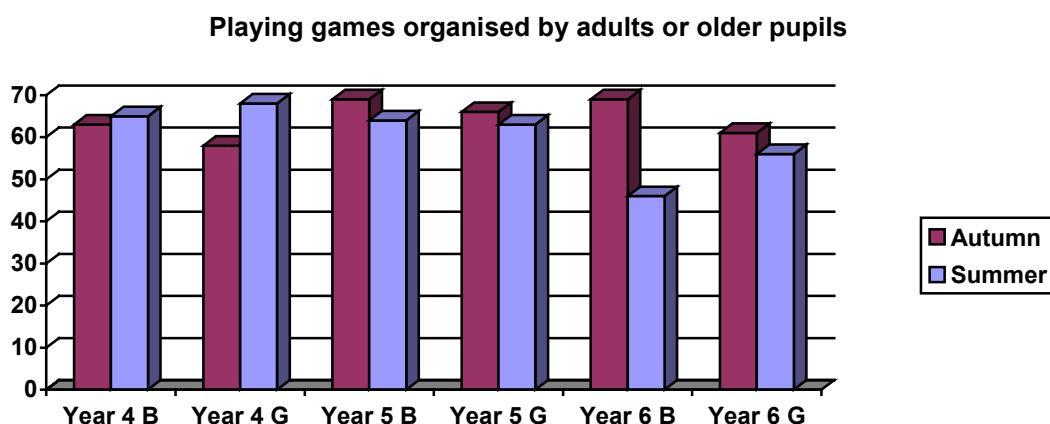
Q26. During school playtimes (including dinner times), do you spend time... - "Sometimes or often"	Playing ball games like football or netball?	75	(82)
	Playing games organised by adults or older pupils?	64	(63)

The increase in the percentage of those playing ball games is significant. Is it the girls again who are more active?

Overall there is not a significant increase in the percentage of pupils playing games organised by adults or older pupils is this a ceiling effect?

N.B. The overall summer figure of 63% is significantly higher than that of a neighbouring authority (42%) where the data would suggest that this activity has less emphasis.

Here is the breakdown of the data by year group and gender:-



Comment: Are the older pupils now less interested in games organised by adults or older pupils? Or are they the ones now organising games for the younger pupils?

These are the responses for one small primary school to the question:-

"What other activities do you do at playtime/ dinnertime?"

Year 6 GIRLS Responses

Pupil A: "i am a playground leader"

Pupil B: "Being a playground leader-organise being physically active games"

Pupil C: "ORGANISING ACTIVITIES"

Pupil D: "ACTIVE PLAYTIME SHED"

Pupil E: "organising games for yonger children"

Pupil F: "holerhooping"

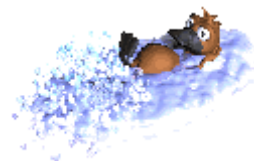
Comment: Was there an initial input of games at the beginning of the programme and now it is the older pupils from within the school that are now leading play for younger pupils?

Q9. If you could choose to take part in any more physical activities, whether or not they are in the list above, what activities would you like to do?

	Year 4 Boys %	Girls %	Year 5 Boys %	Girls %	Year 6 Boys %	Girls %	Total
Aerobics/keep fit	12 (19)	14 (27)	21 (15)	19 (19)	12 (8)	29 (31)	16 (20)
Athletics/running/jogging	24 (31)	23 (31)	29 (28)	25 (30)	21 (29)	34 (34)	25 (30)
Basketball/netball/ volleyball	27 (39)	28 (32)	29 (38)	34 (29)	23 (35)	37 (46)	29 (35)
Canoeing/sailing or other water sports	33 (44)	18 (29)	36 (37)	36 (45)	30 (43)	46 (43)	31 (40)
Circuit training/gym training	14 (22)	8 (20)	23 (17)	14 (17)	12 (22)	23 (23)	15 (19)
Cricket	36 (46)	7 (17)	41 (37)	13 (14)	32 (37)	11 (14)	24 (29)
Cycling	40 (51)	34 (43)	49 (49)	36 (46)	41 (43)	37 (54)	40 (47)
Dancing	3 (5)	39 (46)	5 (6)	41 (37)	4 (2)	31 (51)	21 (23)
Football	51 (52)	19 (27)	57 (51)	21 (25)	30 (45)	26 (43)	36 (40)
Golf	44 (54)	16 (18)	40 (38)	9 (9)	36 (35)	9 (6)	27 (29)
Gymnastics/ trampolining	17 (24)	34 (42)	16 (20)	46 (49)	18 (14)	54 (49)	28 (33)
Hockey	38 (44)	12 (16)	32 (30)	19 (15)	32 (43)	20 (14)	26 (27)
Horse riding	16 (16)	56 (56)	12 (17)	50 (46)	12 (14)	43 (37)	32 (32)
Judo/karate or other martial arts	28 (34)	14 (23)	34 (35)	23 (20)	23 (33)	34 (40)	25 (29)
Rounders/baseball	25 (39)	20 (20)	28 (34)	23 (27)	38 (39)	29 (40)	25 (31)
Rugby	32 (40)	6 (15)	35 (44)	9 (18)	39 (49)	29 (20)	22 (30)
Skating/rollerblading etc	40 (39)	31 (34)	38 (42)	37 (35)	34 (43)	23 (34)	36 (38)
Swimming/water polo	43 (54)	42 (55)	35 (41)	54 (49)	30 (39)	46 (63)	43 (50)
Tennis or other racket sport	40 (59)	26 (30)	34 (45)	30 (39)	34 (41)	37 (34)	33 (43)
Walking/mountaineering	31 (47)	26 (32)	33 (35)	28 (31)	43 (39)	34 (37)	31 (37)

It is interesting to see that there is a big increase demand for additional sports provision. Girl / boy differences are apparent in some sports like rugby, but others, like skating/rollerblading are attractive to boys and girls.

Comment: Are pupils more positive towards activity in the summer term or is this a general belief that the programme might really provide more activities that they would like to do?



Self-esteem

Q27. Do you often feel lonely at school?	No	64	(71)
Q27. Do other pupils in the school often fall out with you?	No	39	(44)
Q27. When you have something to say in front of teachers, do you usually feel embarrassed?	No	43	(48)
Q27. Do you often have to find new friends because your old friends are with someone else?	No	57	(66)

These questions are part of the set that gives an idea of self-esteem. We are aware that self-esteem does increase with age but all of these scores have increased significantly.

Comment: It would be exciting to be able to say that the changes are due to additional resources being put into playground activities although the evidence would need to be stronger before we could say this with certainty. It is certainly possible, that the development of playleaders schemes have resulted in pupils feeling less lonely in the playground, less likely to fall out with their friends and more confident talking to teachers.



What can schools do with the data?

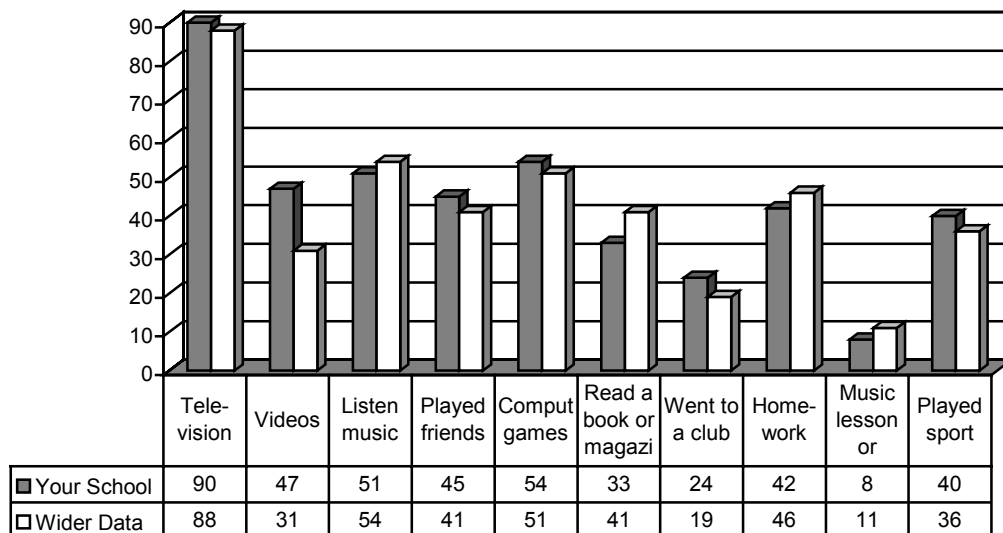
1. Each schools is able to access their own set of individual results and compare them to others:-
They can compare them their first set of results; their Year 4 results against their Year 5 results; or their school results against the whole Devon picture. They have also received reports that compare their school with their local academic council and one that compares them to other similar sized schools.
2. They can act upon the actual comments that their pupils were making in the 'free answer' text boxes e.g.

"What sports or activities would you like to do in school PE/Games that you don't normally do?"

Year 4 BOYS Responses "tag Rugby" "Rugby" "basket ball" "Athletics Tennis Basket Ball" "basketball judo boxing" "judo football basketball"	Year 4 GIRLS Responses "Ballet Dancing" "Ballet Dancing" "surfing." "swimming ice skating water polo"
Year 5 BOYS Responses "Cross Country running Baseball rock climbing " "volland" "Hockey" "hockey" "Horse riding"	Year 5 GIRLS Responses "tennis" "Football" "surfing." "swimming "

- They can use their own equivalent of the table on the previous page to encourage their local Sports Development Officers or play leaders to develop activities that pupils would be interested in taking up. They could use this evidence to bid for grants to develop activities there is a demand for.
- Schools can use some of the data to show to governors and parents meetings to engage them more fully in the programme. Schools have also received a 'Word' report comparing their school to others of similar size. This data might be a good place to start e.g.

After School yesterday



- Schools could use some of the data with pupils as a way of discussing the issues directly with them. The link to the government Wired for Health website at the end of the pupil questionnaire would have been a useful activity in its own right and pupils might like to revisit it to reinforce the messages of the type of activities that are beneficial to health.



Conclusions

Each individual school has a wealth of information about their pupils and activity levels that they can build upon. These 18 schools will be able to repeat the exercise in the summer of 2004 to see if there are additional changes in the survey data or in fact how much of the data is seasonally affected.

The schools that surveyed last autumn will also be able to survey again exactly a year on so it will be interesting to see how the data compares 'one year on'.

There are some very exciting results contained within this initial report and we look forward to the follow-up surveys to provide us with the complete picture.