

Jack Petchey Programme Impact – ADO River Valley

Theme: children and young people

Defining the Issue

Providing young people with meaningful and accessible opportunities to participate in sport can lead to many positive outcomes – including the development of social skills. ADO River Valley has witnessed the positive impact table tennis can bring through Table Tennis England's Jack Petchey Programme.

Background Information

The Jack Petchey Programme provides heavily discounted equipment and offers a competition pathway for young people aged 11-25 across London and Essex.

The programme has been supported by the Jack Petchey Foundation since 2010 and encourages involvement in a new sport, offers opportunities for regular participation in sport and physical activity, and develops various skills that young people take forward in their lives.

In 2022, ADO River Valley received two outdoor table tennis tables through the programme. ADO River Valley aim to provide a specialist setting with a vocational curriculum for their students, with equal emphasis on education and wellbeing.

Prior to the programme being introduced, ADO had no table tennis provision for their students, other than improvising on occasion with makeshift playing surfaces.

By introducing table tennis, ADO wanted to expand their Adventure Sport curriculum, as they only promote non-competitive sports. Table tennis provided an opportunity to offer an activity that doesn't require large teams and helps to promote equality and diversity due to allowing wheelchair users to also participate who are unable to access other sports.

The overall goal was to develop self-confidence and reduce self-loathing tendencies across all service users. This is key as all of ADO's young people have diagnosed Social Emotional Mental Health issues, with many also having neurological disorders and dyspraxia coordination disorder.



The Project

- ADO created a timetable for the equipment, collating mixed age and ability groups and utilising a buddy support for each individual who may lack confidence or needed specific access arrangements
- The activity was available through lunch clubs and after school clubs for vulnerable young people who otherwise would not have access to such an opportunity

The Impact

Students have seen an improvement in their confidence and ability to focus, with all students getting a sense of self-worth and feeling part of a team

“The project allowed our students to engage in a sport that is accessible to all. Table tennis has helped our vulnerable young people to trust, be patient, be kind and share mutual experiences with others. IT has been a common ground for students to talk about and experience together, bringing together long term friendships and social skills that will serve them through their communities–
Katie Palmer, Head of Service



The table tennis clubs will be continuing for future terms for education students. In addition, the equipment will be accessed by youth support groups throughout the school holidays, as well as the young people who access ADO's services for therapy.

The club has been opened up for all students who attend full days, and ADO are in the process of creating a second club for those who attend on a part time or ad hoc basis.

The students have enjoyed table tennis so much that it has been added to the Adventure Sport Curriculum through the AQA Unit Awards Scheme

“Table tennis has brought together lots of different students who sometimes didn't know how to interact with each other. It has made people be friends and be more confident. I enjoy doing table tennis at ADO River Valley –
Toby, Student

Key Learnings

1. Table tennis promotes develops key social skills which can be taken to other areas of life
2. The inclusive nature of the sport allows everyone to take part together

Further Information

For more information on The Jack Petchey Programme, visit www.tabletennisengland.co.uk/schools/jack-petchey-programme/



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