

Sports Leaders Inspiration Day, Physical Activity Champions

Final Report – April 2026



Introduction

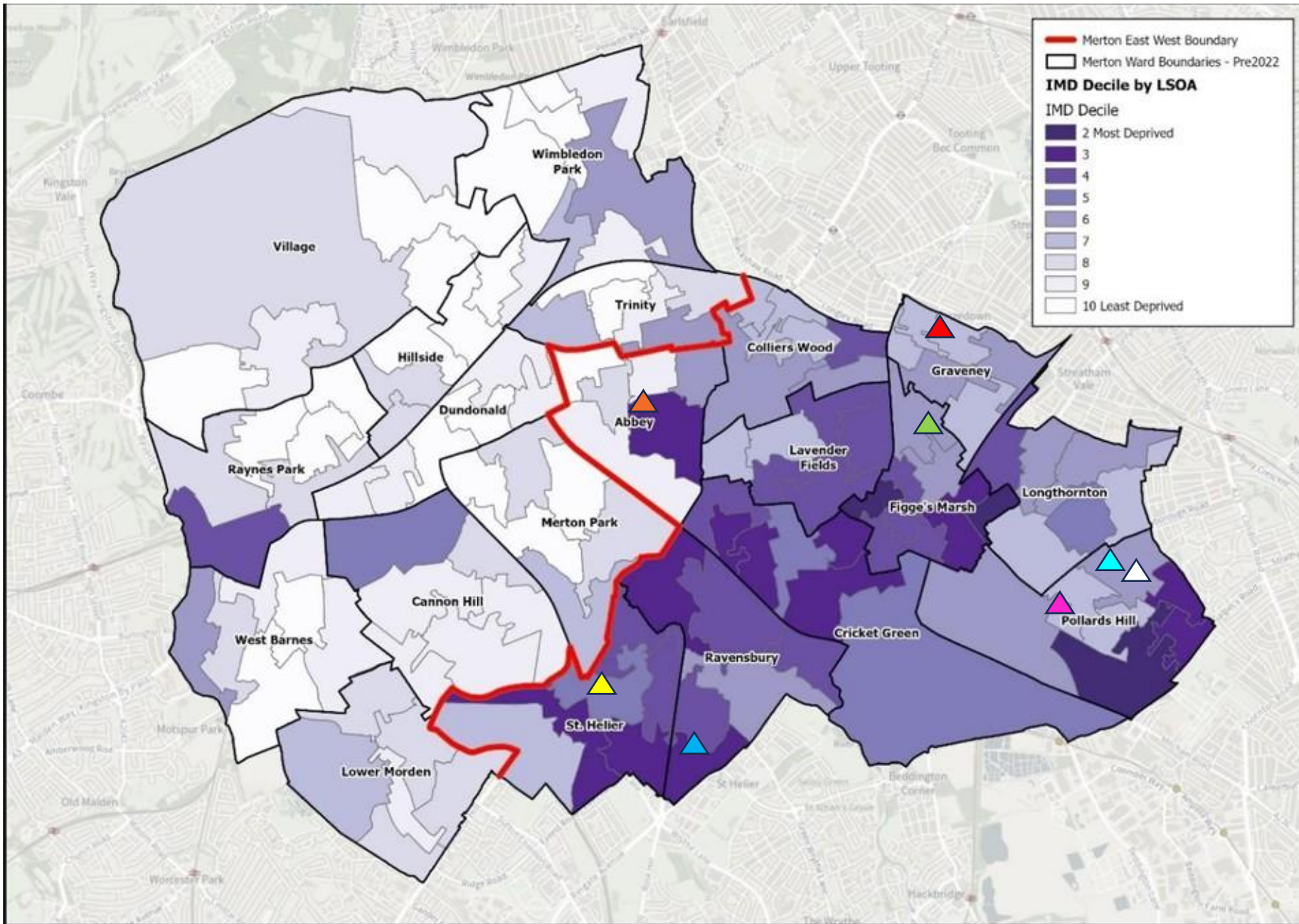
The aim of this project was to train and develop close to 400 Year 5 students, from schools located in some of Merton's most disadvantaged communities, to become confident and resilient sport and physical activity leaders. These young leaders were then encouraged to motivate younger pupils to become more active during their school day (and beyond), through the regular delivery of multi skills clubs at lunch times and other activities throughout the year.



Between October 2025 and March 2026, staff from The Merton School Sport Partnership (MSSP) planned and delivered a Sports Leaders Inspiration Day at each of the 8 selected East Merton schools. Throughout the day, MSSP staff worked with the entire Year 5 cohort (up to 60 young leaders) from each school, to develop their leadership and communication skills. The programme included both practical and classroom-based learning in the morning, followed by an afternoon leading team-building games, multi-skills activities, and inclusive sports such as Boccia for younger students. Teachers and teaching assistants collaborated with MSSP staff during the day, benefiting from peer mentoring as part of their own professional development.

The Sports Leaders Inspiration Day programme continues to be extremely well received by participating schools (*more leaders than ever before were trained this year*). Evidence and feedback gathered over the previous two years has demonstrated clear positive outcomes for everyone involved. This year also saw 24 pupils who received Inspiration Day training, going on to enhance their development as sports leaders by officiating and supporting at MSSP inter-school events and competitions.

Last year's report featured case studies highlighting the impact for one Year 5 sports leader in particular, and a group of lunchtime club participants from a single school. This year, as well as analysing how one individual benefitted from the Inspiration Day, an additional case study will look at a cohort of Year 5 Sports Leaders as a whole, with the aim of measuring the specific impact of the Inspiration Day in more depth.

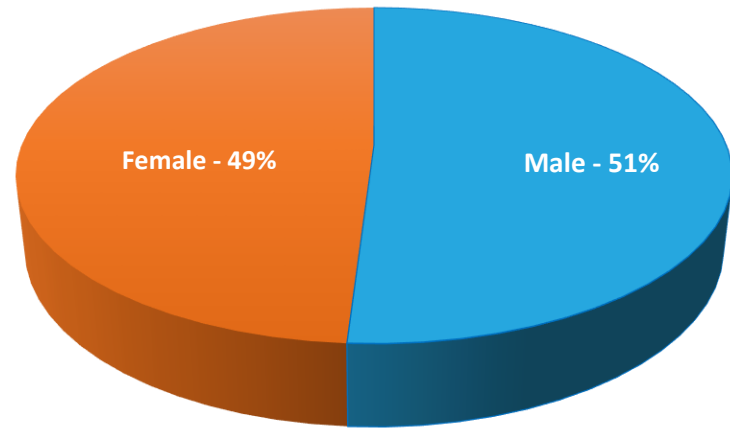




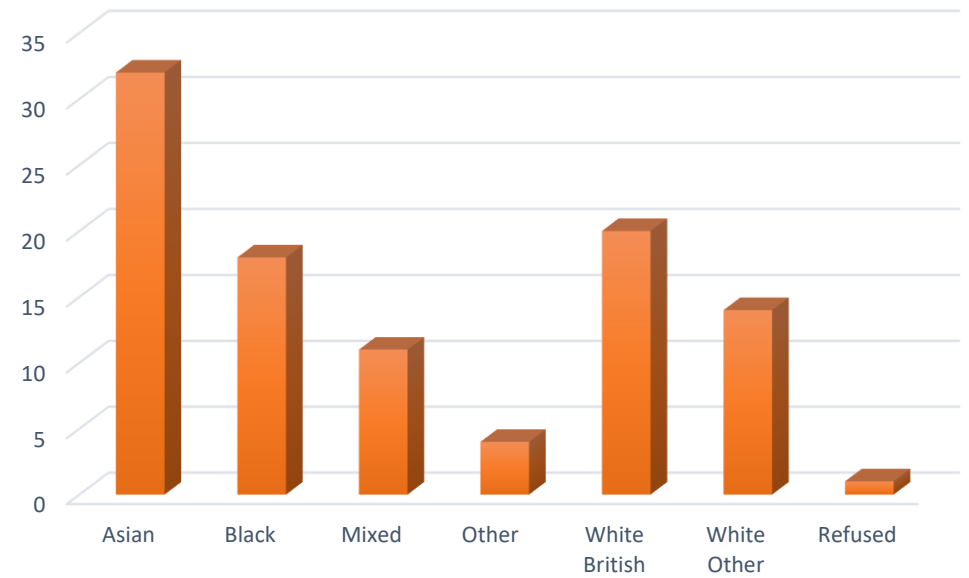
- **Abbotsbury Primary School**
(IMD – 4 FSM% - 40.9)
56 leaders trained 
- **Malmesbury Primary School**
(IMD – 3 FSM% - 39.1)
60 leaders trained 
- **Links Primary School**
(IMD – 7 FSM% - 39.3)
50 leaders trained 
- **Merton Abbey Primary School**
(IMD – 3 FSM% - 50.5)
21 leaders trained 
- **Gorringe Park Primary School**
(IMD – 6 FSM% - 26.7)
51 leaders trained 
- **The Sherwood Primary School**
(IMD – 7 FSM% - 30.8)
42 leaders trained 
- **William Morris Primary School**
(IMD – 6 FSM% - 38.7)
29 leaders trained 
- **Harris Primary Academy Merton**
(IMD – 6 FSM% - 30.3)
56 leaders trained 
- **National average FSM % - 25.7 (As of June 2025)**
- **Merton average FSM % - 26.4 (As of January 2025)**



GENDER OF SPORTS LEADERS TRAINED (% of 365 children)



ETHNICITIES OF SPORTS LEADERS TRAINED (% of 365 children)



Feedback

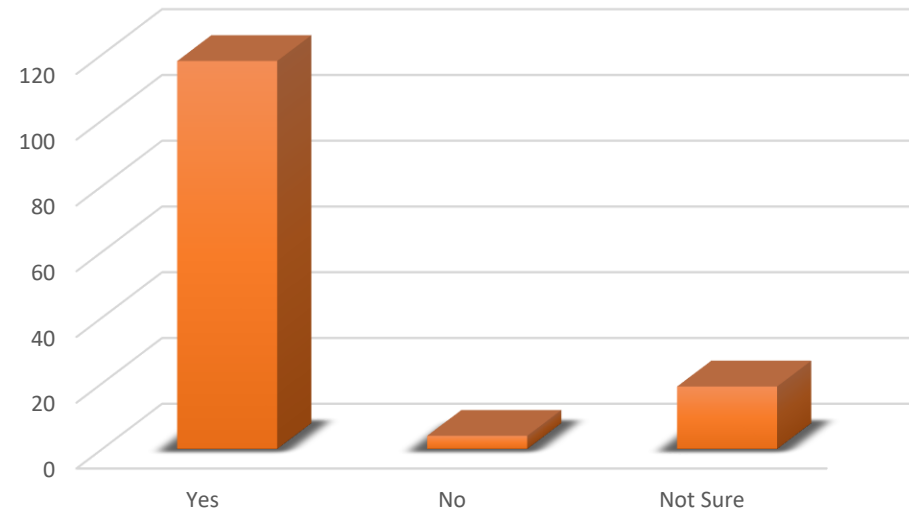
In February and March 2026, MSSP returned to 6 of the 8 schools* to speak to the children in year 5 who had been working as sports leaders during lunchtimes at their schools.

Children were asked a range of questions to help us effectively understand their experiences. We wanted to know if they were enjoying the role, the impact of the role on their self-confidence, resilience levels and which life skills they felt they had developed through being involved in the project. The following results show the responses from the 141 children that were surveyed.

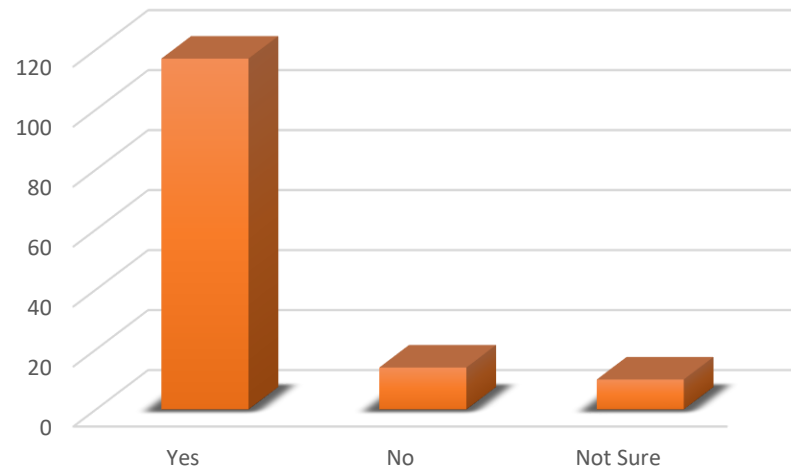




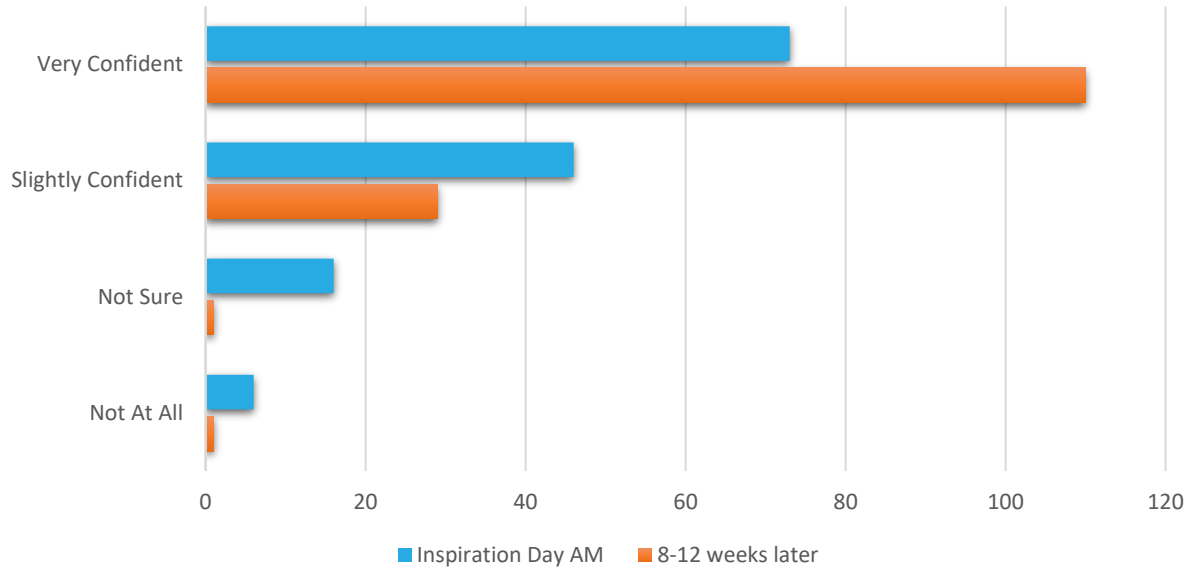
ENJOYMENT – Response to the question - *Are you enjoying working as a sports leader?*



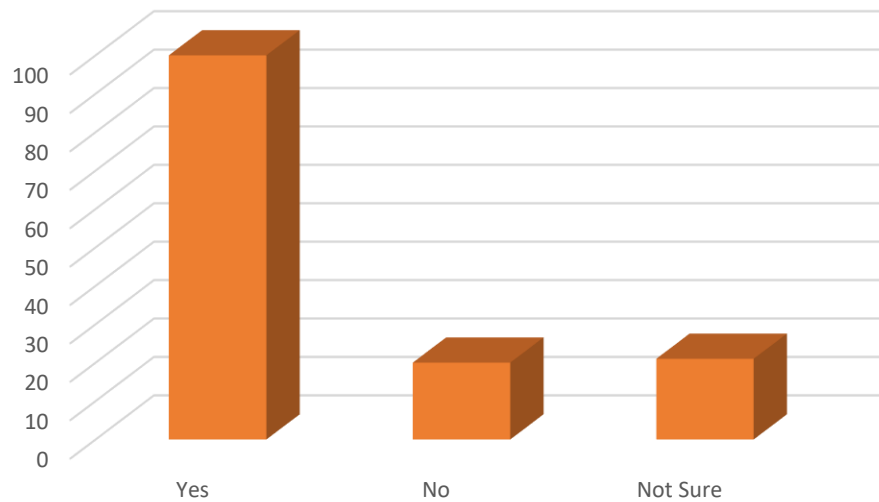
SELF-CONFIDENCE – Response to the question - *Do you feel working as a sports leader has had a positive effect on your self-confidence?*



COACHING CONFIDENCE - Response to the question – *How confident do you feel teaching younger children to play different games?*



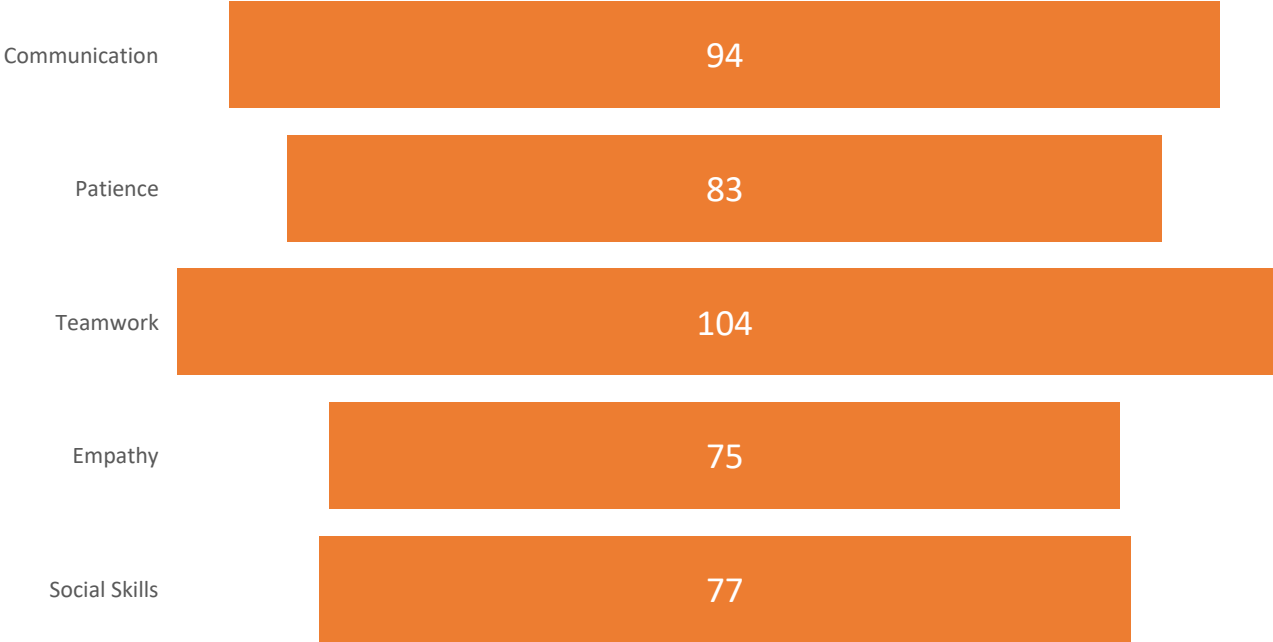
RESILIENCE - Response to the question – *Do you feel more resilient since working as a sports leader?*





KEY LIFE SKILLS

The graphic below presents the number of surveyed children (141) who indicated improvements in the following life skills.



STAFF FEEDBACK

13 members of school staff were surveyed to gather their feedback around the programme. We also wanted to hear their views on the impact on the year 5 sports leaders and the school as a whole

13 staff members said that after supporting MSSP staff during the Inspiration Day, they felt **very confident** to deliver the activities shown in a PE lesson or extra-curricular club.

13 requested that we **return next year** for an Inspiration Day for next year's, year 5 children.

12 felt that the Inspiration Day had a **positive effect on the Year 5 cohort**.

11 rated the **organisation and delivery** of MSSP staff on the day as outstanding. **2** rated it as good.

6 reported an **increased level of physical activity** at their schools during lunchtimes.

5 reported **improved behaviour during lunchtimes** when the leaders were leading their activities.





Key Statistics - Summary

3 schools received their first Inspiration Day in 2025-26.

365 sports leaders trained.

970 children involved in the 8 Inspiration Days. Y5 sports leaders and children involved in the afternoon sessions.

75 children who received the Inspiration Day training have a disability, access requirements or learning difficulties .

161 of the children who received the Inspiration Day training are identified as pupil premium.

100% of the children have acquired life skills from the Inspiration Day. Improved **communication and teamwork** were the most common.

84% of children are enjoying their role as a sports leader.

83% of children reported feeling more self-confident since working as a sports leader.

71% of children said they have become more resilient since working as a sports leader.

35% of children feel more confident to teach younger children sports and games since the Inspiration Day

141 children are working regularly as sports leaders at their schools since the Inspiration Day.

24 children who received Inspiration Day training have volunteered as sports leaders or officials at MSSP inter-school events.

Case Study 1 – Harris Primary Academy Morden

Harris Primary Academy Morden (HPAM) is a primary school in Mitcham, East Merton. Based in the ward of Pollards Hill, the two form entry school has 491 pupils on roll.

We returned to the school in March 2026 to deliver an Inspiration Day to their Year 5 cohort of 56 children for the second consecutive year. Following last year's training, the Year 5 staff had been highly engaged, proactive and utilised their new sports leaders in the key stage one playground during lunchtimes in the summer term.

The timetable for the day and a brief explanation of each session is below:

AM 1 – Welcome – Introduction, Objectives, Behaviour Expectations, AM Surveys.

AM2 – Practical Session – The qualities of a good sports leader. Why do we need to adapt activities? Gameplay & opportunity to practise being a leader.

AM3 – Theory Session – Key principles of being a sports leader. Application letter to Headteacher. Lesson Planning for PM delivery.

PM 1 – Year 2 Delivery – Children deliver games they learnt in the morning to Year 2 pupils.

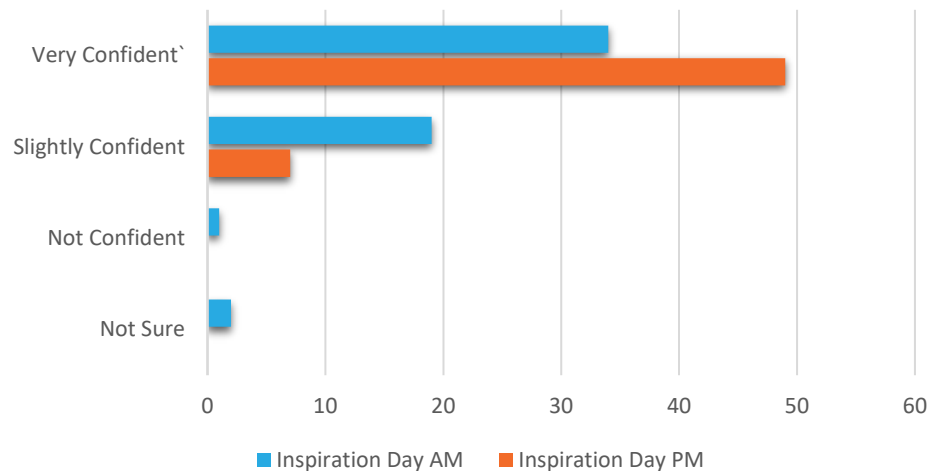
PM 2 – Reflection & Summary - PM Surveys. Feedback. Certificates.

In previous years, and with 6 of the 8 schools we visited this year, we have returned 8-12 weeks later to obtain our feedback. This year, we decided to survey the Year 5 children at HPAM twice in one day. The reasoning behind this was to assess how we had impacted the children over the course of the day.

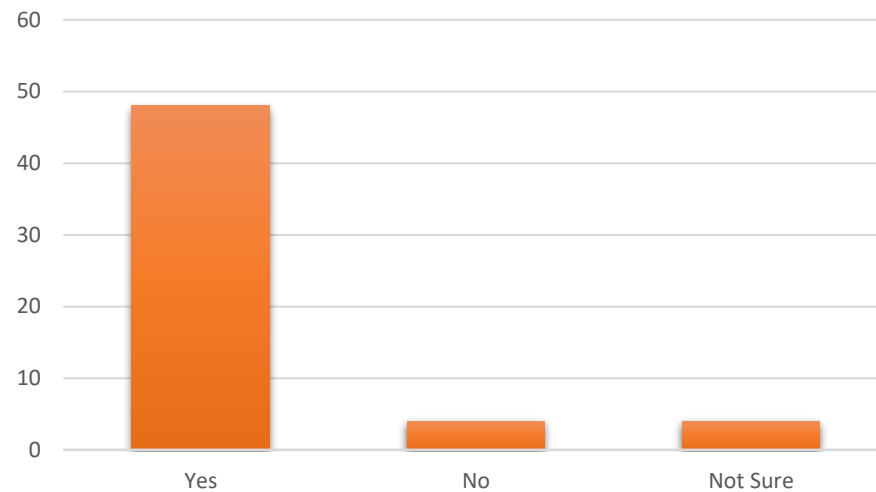
The data that follows shows the responses collected. We focused on seeing how confident the students felt coaching younger children, the life skills they felt they had gained in the space of 6 hours and to measure any changes in their confidence and resilience levels.



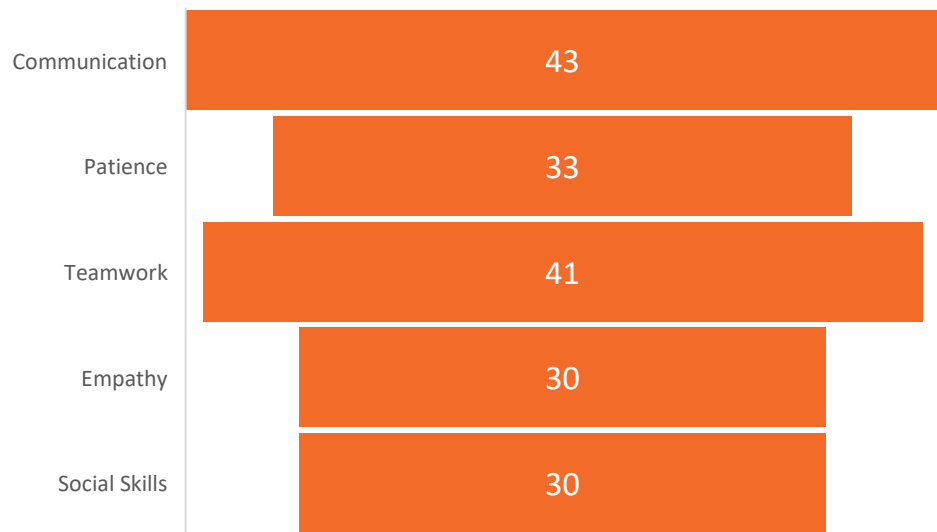
How confident do you feel leading younger children to play different sports and games?



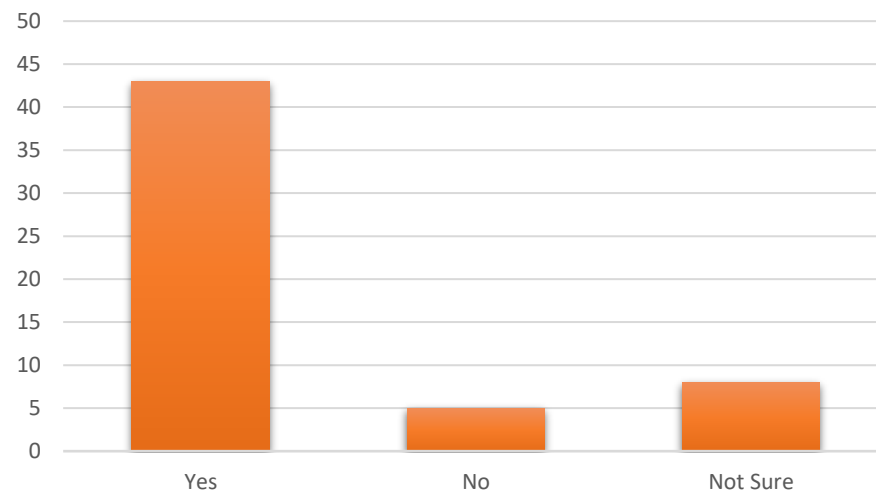
Has today's Inspiration Day had a positive effect on your self-confidence?



Do you feel you have improved any of these key life skills as a result of today's Inspiration Day?



Do you feel that you are more resilient as a result of today's Inspiration Day?



Harris Primary Academy Morden - Key Statistics

30 leaders reported an increase in their ability to lead activities to younger children

48 children stated that their self-confidence improved over the course of the day

56 Year 5 leaders trained

43 pupils felt more resilient in the afternoon compared to the morning.

In keeping with the findings from other schools, **teamwork** and **communication** were the most popular life skills developed.

Kai

AM

"I am not sure about being a sports leader because I never did anything like this before"

PM

"I have improved my skills, and I can work better with children"

Safa

AM

"I am not sure if I want to be a sports leader because I don't really like sports and I am shy if I don't get it correct."

PM

"Today was very fun and I overcame some fears about things that I couldn't do before."

Kiswah

AM

"I want to be a sports leader because I want to teach children and more people how to do sports."

PM

"I had a very great time, and I hope to do this again."

Savannah

AM

"When I am older, I want to do something to do with sports, so I can test my skills today."

PM

"It was very good and I hope I get chosen to do it on my lunch, as this is way more fun than playing."

Case Study 2 – KA



At the start of the Inspiration Day, before the leadership activities began, KA expressed uncertainty and a lack of confidence about taking on the role of a sports leader. On her initial survey, she stated that she was “not confident” in her ability to lead younger children to play different sports and games:

“I was a bit unsure that I would be good at it. I was getting really anxious that I wasn’t going to do very well.”

Early in the Inspiration Day training, KA was mentioned in a conversation between her class teacher, Ms. Bradshaw and MSSP staff. Ms. Bradshaw was impressed at how she had thrown herself into the practical activities, in an effort to improve, and referenced KA’s lack of self-belief in several areas.

Throughout the morning, KA engaged in a variety of practical and theory challenges designed to build her confidence. These activities required her to communicate clearly, support others, demonstrate responsibility, and work as part of a team. As the day progressed, KA became noticeably more comfortable with the role.

Later in the day, KA was tasked with being part of a small group to lead sports activities to children in Year 2 at her school. KA was seen by several adults stepping forward and increasingly willing to take initiative.

After the session with Year 2, all children were surveyed again so we could gather feedback on the Inspiration Day from the childrens' perspective, but also to assess the potential growth of each individual child. KA’s survey at the end of the day showed such pride and excitement at how far she had come in the space of 7 hours. She felt that she was now “very confident” in her ability to lead different activities to younger children.

We spoke to KA briefly to delve deeper into how she was feeling. Her attitude had transformed significantly, and her closing reflection showed a dramatic shift from anxiety to empowerment:

“I feel like I have all the power in the world. I feel like I can do anything, and I am way more confident”

KA’s journey demonstrates the powerful impact that the day had on her. She progressed from feeling nervous and doubtful, to feeling confident, capable, and empowered. Her reflections show that the experience helped her build essential skills while also supporting her emotional development.

KA stated on her final survey that over the course of the day, she had developed her communication, patience, teamwork and social skills. The key learning point she identified was “to be patient with others”.

Testimonials

“Pupils have improved concentration and communication skills. They are proud to say they are sports leaders and they enjoy working with different age groups”

PE Lead (Abbotsbury Primary School)

“Children are enjoying taking on the extra responsibility. They are enthusiastic about their role, and it is growing their confidence”

Y5 Teacher (The Sherwood School)

“It is fantastic for the younger children learning new games, keeping active and having fun with their friends. It also brings so many benefits for the leaders and is just a fantastic opportunity for them to lead an activity”

PE Lead (Malmesbury Primary School)

“I like working with younger children...I like it when they feel happy when I am helping them”

Y5 leader (Gorringe Park Primary School)

“Being a sports leader has taught me about being patient with younger kids and how people feel under pressure”

Y5 leader (Gorringe Park Primary School)

“It is lovely as a sports leader because it is super fun. I’ve learned lots of things – teamwork, communication, empathy and social skills”

Y5 leader (Malmesbury Primary School)

Challenges & Solutions

- One of the major challenges last academic year was the timing of the Inspiration Day delivery. 7 of the 8 days were delivered between January and April. This restricted the time that the year 5 leaders had to implement the activities during lunchtimes. This year, we delivered 6 of the 8 days before Christmas. Not only did this allow more time for the leaders to be utilised at lunchtime, but it also made the timeframe for our return feedback visits much easier to organise with the schools.
- Despite strong engagement during the Inspiration Day, a couple of schools did not fully embed the leadership activities afterwards or did so later in the year. This limited the potential long-term impact as opportunities for children to practise and develop their leadership skills were reduced. The lack of follow-up suggests that schools may have required clearer guidance, additional staff support, or more structured plans to sustain activity beyond the initial event. Some PE Leads and/or year 5 staff simply struggled due to a high workload to take on the extra task of organising the leadership programme.
- While initial interest in leadership roles was high, participation numbers declined over time. This drop-off indicates difficulties in maintaining motivation and momentum as time progressed. Contributing factors may include limited reminders and insufficient reinforcement from school staff, resulting in fewer children continuing to engage in leadership roles.
- A small number of children reported feeling discouraged by the responsibility of leading younger Key Stage 1 pupils during the Inspiration Day. For some, managing behaviour and engagement proved challenging, which negatively influenced their experience of sports leadership.
- During lunchtime sessions, some year 5 leaders experienced disruption from other children, including interference with equipment and encroachment into designated game areas. These challenges made it difficult for leaders to run activities effectively. Introducing clearly defined sports leadership zones, along with adult policing, could help reduce disruption.
- Once again, we are seeing clear benefits from this project. Key life skills were developed by 100% of the sports leaders. The number of leaders who remained engaged in sports leadership volunteering after the Inspiration Day stayed in line with the 2024-25 figure of around 40%.

Project Budget 2025-26

The £10,000 grant contribution from the Wimbledon Foundation was spent in full.

Description	Projected
Coaching - One Sports Leaders Inspiration Day per school x 2 MSSP staff (£35 p/hr) x 8 schools (8hrs per school)	£4,480
10 hrs pre and post meetings/visits/support time with PE Lead/SLT x 8 schools - 1 x MSSP Staff (£35p/hr)	£2,800
MSSP resources adapted enhanced approx. 20hours (£35 p/hr)	£700
MSSP planning, reporting and management of programme = 120 hours x £35 p/hr	£4,200
Branding design and resource production/printing (plus T-shirts)	£500
Equipment for schools to keep – approx. £220 per new school x 3 schools + £100 top up equipment x 5 schools	£1,283
School facilities - 8 schools x 8 hrs and staff time 4 x 8hrs x 8 schools (£35 p/hr)	£11,200
Total	£25,163
Grant provided / spent	£10,000
MSSP funds/in kind to cover additional costs and to develop/produce resources and plan/manage programme and School facilities/staffing.	£15,163
Difference	£0

MULTI-SKILLS

Tic Tac Toe



How to play

A Tic Tac Toe grid is made with 9 hula hoops
Two teams line up with their team colour bibs or cones (x3)
Player one from each team will race to the hoops and place their bib down, then return and 'high 5' their teammate
Taking it in turns, the team who achieve three in a row either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally wins!
Once all bibs/cones are down, players can move one bib/cone per turn until a team achieves three in a row

Equipment

- 9 hoops
- Line markers
- Blue bibs or cones (x3)
- Red bibs or cones (x3)

Skill

- Speed
- Decision making
- Focus
- Accuracy

Tic Tac Toe

Adapted

- Decrease the distance between the starting point and the hula hoops to make the game slightly easier

Challenge

- Increase the distance between the starting point and the hula hoops
- Change the object from bibs/cones to bean bags and introduce throwing the object into the hula hoops

Scoring

- The team to place three objects in a row either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally first, win the game

Social

- Are you able to take turns with your teammates?
- Can you interact with other children in a kind way?
- Can you work together to achieve the end goal?