



Why Sport Matters

The importance of sport and physical activity to achieving college objectives



"Sport is absolutely essential to the running of a modern college. It helps attract and retain students, impacts on success rates and offers a fantastic way of enriching and widening the student experience. It brings energy and enthusiasm into our college and these qualities spread college-wide. Sport is like electricity and is one of the key ingredients if you want students to be positive and engaged."

Richard Atkins, Principal, Exeter College and AoC President 2014-15

There is a growing understanding of the wider contribution sport and physical activity can make across a college. Colleges exist to enhance the life chances of individuals through education, developing social and employability skills as well as specific knowledge in subjects and industries. Sport can help colleges to deliver a more rounded educational experience and also address a number of agendas, such as health and inclusion.

An attractive sporting offer can aid the recruitment and retention of students, enable individual students to gain additional life skills and qualifications, improve grades, gain vital work experience, and as a result improve their overall employability.

Increased levels of participation in sport and physical activity among students support the health and wellbeing of the college community. As result, learners are more likely to be happier, more productive and more satisfied with their overall student experience.

The impact of sport on key college objectives

Sport and physical activity as a positive recruitment tool

A broad sport and physical activity offer encompassing curriculum, enrichment and competitive opportunities can act as a positive recruitment tool, attracting young people to colleges. One in five students said that the sporting opportunities on offer were influential in their decision to apply to a particular college (Sport England Student Survey, 2013).

Sport is also a mechanism to help promote the college both internally and externally, and create a positive image. This can be achieved through local good news stories relating to the successes of sports teams or the achievements of individuals, and by supporting local community sporting events such as fun runs and awards nights.

Sports academies play a huge role in attracting students to **Worthing College**. Recruitment has been further enhanced by writing a cross-college strategic plan for sport and physical activity, which has helped to achieve a 360% increase in student numbers.

Sport and physical activity as a tool to engage and retain students

There is a growing evidence base that suggests students in sports academies have better attendance and retention rates than their peers. In most cases, students have to succeed within both their sporting activity and their academic studies in order to stay on the programme. At Totton College, for example, football academy student attendance has been 6% higher over the course of 2013/14 (a difference of two weeks) compared to non-sport students.

"The number of sports academy students achieving 95% or above attendance is 4.47% higher than the college average. This demonstrates that if you're committed to one thing in college you're more likely to be committed to others. The reason students turn up for college is not just about academic sessions or tutorials, it's because they enjoy college, their friends are here, they like the environment and enjoy being part of a team – everything's connected."

Eddie Playfair, Principal, Newham Sixth Form College



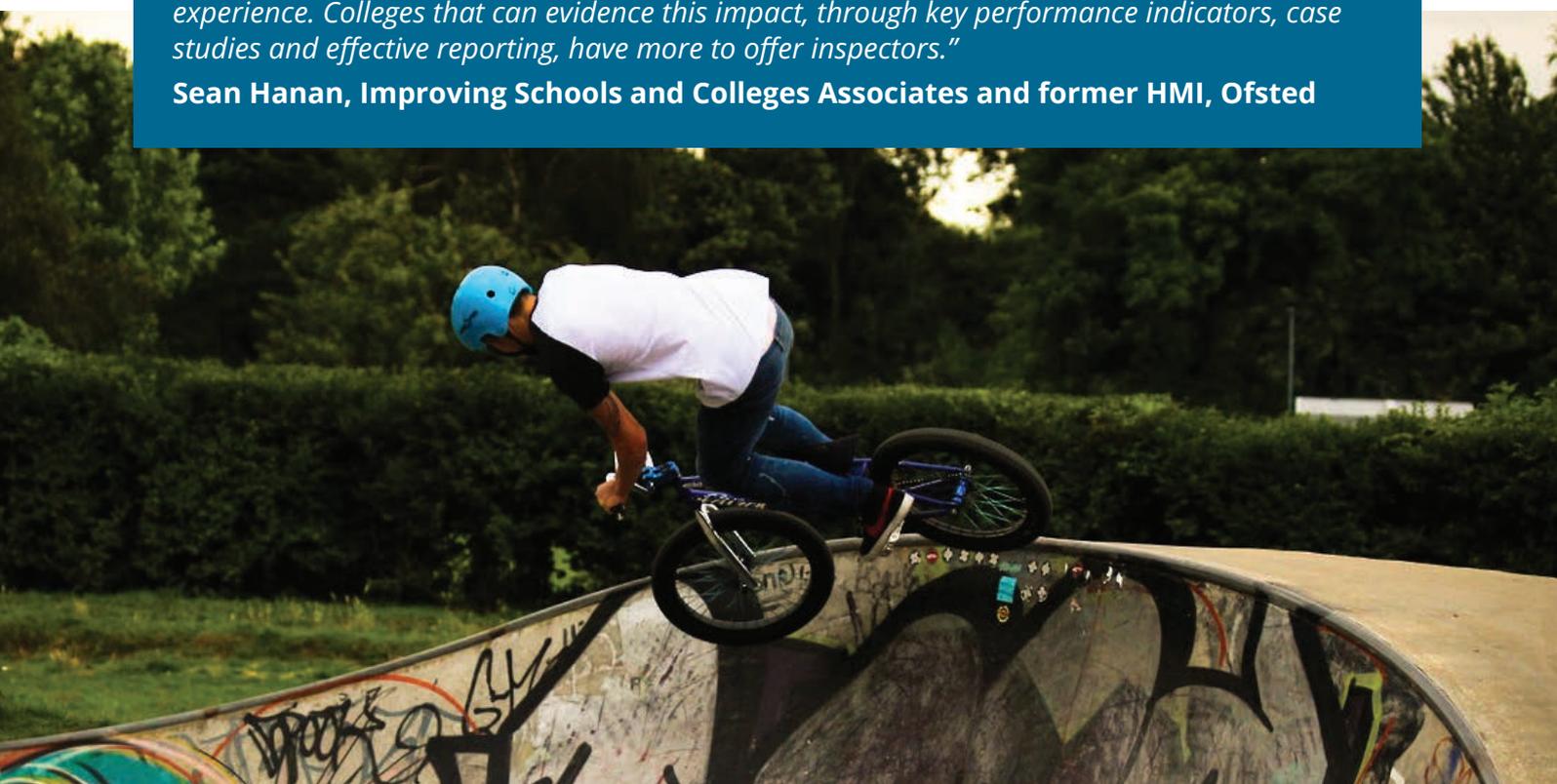
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Helping to improve Ofsted inspections

Colleges use their sport and physical activity offer to strengthen Self-Assessment Reports, assess the impact on teaching, learning and assessment, and as a result influence Ofsted judgements. A number of colleges have been judged outstanding for their sport provision under the new Ofsted inspection framework, and this has had a significant impact across the college.

“The best colleges commit resources to aspects of provision that bind the community together, such as sport and other enrichment activities. Sport helps to improve learners’ attainment and achievement, motivation and attendance by providing them with a truly holistic learning experience. Colleges that can evidence this impact, through key performance indicators, case studies and effective reporting, have more to offer inspectors.”

Sean Hanan, Improving Schools and Colleges Associates and former HMI, Ofsted



Enhancing partnerships and generating income

Sport and physical activity create partnerships with schools and colleges in the local area, and with agencies such as local authorities, local networks, County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).

Engaging with key partners and developing relationships through sport can help to bring in extra funding and expertise to support delivery at the college. Many colleges have secured funding to improve their sporting offer; for example, 81% of colleges received Sportivate or other revenue funding through their CSP, and 281 colleges are benefitting from Sport England funding through the Active Colleges programme.

The impact of sport on college students

Raising self-esteem and confidence, and improving behaviour

There is evidence that demonstrates how involvement in sport raises self-esteem and boosts the confidence of students. Participation in physical activities with social elements, such as sports clubs or group exercise, leads to improvements in self-esteem as a result of increased social interaction. Physical activity can also increase self-esteem through changes in body appearance, shape and competence, and can enhance mood and relieve depression (*Game of Life*, Sport and Recreation Alliance, 2012).

“Sport and physical activity inspire young people to believe they can succeed whilst building self-esteem, confidence and resilience. It plays a crucial role in helping students remain motivated, positive and successful. If you’re happy and confident, you’re in a better place to work hard on the things you find more difficult.”

Lyn Surgeon, Principal, South Downs College

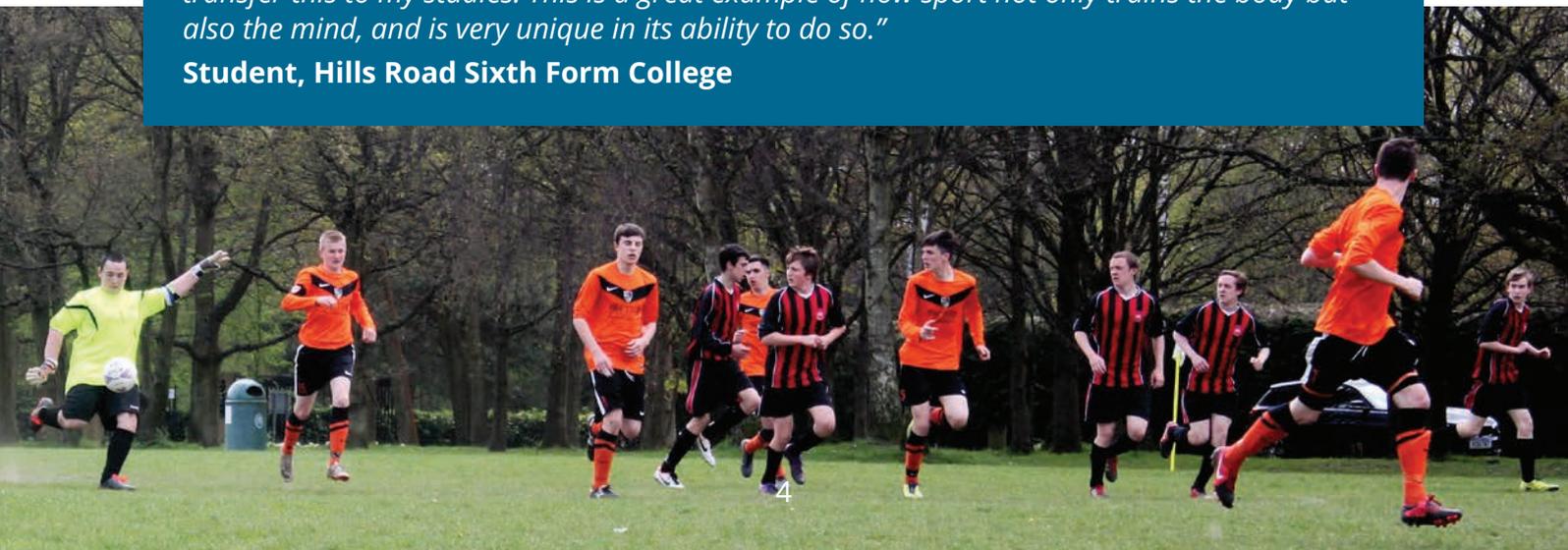
A contribution to achievement, attainment and success

Sport and physical activity are ideal mechanisms to help raise pupil attainment and achievement. The knowledge and experiences that are gained through participating in sport can be transferred to academic work. Taking part in physical activity positively affects cognition, releasing hormones, neurotransmitters and a protein responsible for learning, memory and higher thinking (*Game of Life*, Sport and Recreation Alliance, 2012).

Studies have shown positive relationships between academic achievement and both physical activity and sports participation, and many colleges have evidence to show that students involved in sport gain higher levels of attainment than their peers who are not participating.

“My organisational, leadership and people skills – as well as my ability to complete tasks and make decisions under pressure – have all greatly improved and I believe I have been able to transfer this to my studies. This is a great example of how sport not only trains the body but also the mind, and is very unique in its ability to do so.”

Student, Hills Road Sixth Form College



The impact of sport on college students

Increased employment prospects

Getting involved in sport and physical activity at college gives students the opportunity to gain leadership, officiating and coaching qualifications and, as a result, enhance their short and long term employability prospects. A person's involvement in sport increases earning potential, leads to higher increases in career earnings and decreases the likelihood of experiencing unemployment. On average, people taking part in sport once per week earn £6,656 more per year than those who do not (*Impact of sport on student outcomes*, Association of Colleges, 2013).

"A key objective is building rounded individuals and developing students who are fit for work, who can be part of a team, who can push themselves and who have the motivation to achieve in and beyond college. This is much more likely to be true among students who are involved in sport and physical activity."

Peter Mayhew-Smith, Principal, Kingston College

A strong sport curriculum also helps with skill development and provides students with vital vocational experience to enhance their CV. Sports leadership and volunteering programmes within colleges have allowed students to gain NGB accredited qualifications and voluntary and leadership hours within the community. Nine out of ten employers believe that volunteering can have a positive effect on career progression (*Youth Volunteering: Attitudes and Perceptions*, V, 2008).



"Sport can help develop many skills desired by employers including communication, teamwork, leadership, conflict management and competitiveness. It can be a great discussion point at interviews and an effective way to quantify and demonstrate measurable impact. Sport allows a greater level of flexibility for individuals to be themselves, to experience success and learn from failures."

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

The impact of sport on college students

Health and wellbeing

Sport and physical activity are integral to the development of both student and staff health and wellbeing. Evidence demonstrates both short and long term health benefits; burning 2,000 kcal per week reduces coronary mortality by between a quarter and a third and for every 500 kcal of extra energy spent per week, your likelihood of type 2 diabetes is 6% lower. Exercise can be as effective as antidepressants for those with mild clinical depression (*Game of Life*, Sport and Recreation Alliance, 2012).

“Sport and physical activity are essential for the health and wellbeing of college students. We know that taking part in regular exercise prevents diseases, such as cardiovascular heart disease, stroke and diabetes, and we’re also discovering that it can be used to help treat diseases, such as cancer, too. The mental health benefits are also huge, and evidence shows that taking part in physical activity improves concentration, energy and sleep levels, and prevents depression.”

Dr William Bird MBE, GP and founder of Intelligent Health

Sport England estimate that if the UK had an additional one million people participating in sport once a week it would save £22.5 billion in health and associated costs (*Sport’s Role in Improving the Health of the Nation*, Sport England, 2010).

“We’re taking a holistic approach to tackling some of the significant health issues we face in the local area, one that is focused on a range of factors, including sport and physical activity. We’re implementing a range of initiatives, including offering new sports (such as Pilates), targeting female students, developing a student-driven leadership academy and using students as role models and health advocates.”

Cathy Walsh, Principal, Barking and Dagenham College



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of Colleges**

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2-5 Stedham Place
London, WC1A 1HU
020 7034 9900

www.aocsport.co.uk
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