

Play up, play up and play the game...

The value of sport in connecting with 'life lessons' underpins the thinking behind the ancient Olympic games; in essence how to train for war. What are the lessons we can learn through sport in the 21st Century, and how to train for peace?

Henry Newbold's poem (Vita Lampada) on a schoolboy (future soldier) who learns from his commitment to duty in cricket matches, provides valuable reflections as relevant today as they were some hundred years ago. In this article we reflect on how visually impaired (VI) pupils at St Vincent's are connecting communities through sport, where the entrepreneurial 'spin-offs' include access technology developments. We believe the 'soft outcomes' attached to sports (ie friendship generation, sense of achievement) can lead to 'hard outcomes' measurable against Mayoral Priorities (such as providing VI access manufacture opportunities) which simultaneously offers support to the International Festival of Business (2016) the PREVENT agenda and the teaching and learning surrounding Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) and those 'British Values' attached to 'fair play' for disability groups.

Many children and young people with VI are at a disadvantage during significant social experiences such as sporting activities and other forms of physical activity (PA). People with sensory impairments (hearing and visual impairments) have the lowest participation levels in sport and PA. The benefits of

sport and PA are widely acknowledged, therefore it is vital that children and young people with VI have a positive experience during sporting and other forms of PA.

Weekend sports workshops open to all at St Vincent's School have provided opportunities for the VI and wider community to come together through sport. This has not only created a platform for the VI pupil to participate alongside their sighted peers, but to share experiences and best practice in inclusive sport. The development of self-esteem and self-confidence (SMSC) both for the sighted and non-sighted participant has been evident through the engagement of VI-specific activities such as Goalball, Blind Boccia, Athletics, New Age Kurling (NAK) and rugby.

After the most successful Rugby World Cup to date (England 2015) St Vincent pupils' went to task in supporting the development of rugby for VI. More specifically, the generation of a VI friendly ball. Cross-curricular (research and development) lessons reflected on how this could be designed to meet the needs of the VI user. Project-based learning encouraged subject specific areas to further engage such as Science, where pupils explored the study of sound, Mathematics and the understanding of distance, direction and angles. There are further ideas under development highlighting the role St Vincent's offers as a 'research and innovation hub'. The

ideas themselves have been brought to life by having 'experts in residence' JUVO designs working alongside us. Juvo designs is a start-up SME team of design engineers from LJMU (www.Juvodesigns.co.uk) supported by Liverpool's Social Enterprise Network (www.sentogether.net). They assist by connecting ideas into fully working designs and production. Currently, we are working with Rotary in collating all our ideas into the physical creation of a 'sight box'. Our aim is to send the assistive equipment we are developing to support VI sport and PA overseas. The design and manufacture of these ideas in Liverpool offers wider employment opportunities and scope to generate educational packages (and CPD) attached to innovation. A 'win win' situation with Liverpool as a global centre of excellence for VI teaching, learning and innovation. A scenario greatly enhanced by St Vincent's recent green light from the DfE to deliver the MQTVI course (mandatory qualification for teachers of the visually impaired) with Liverpool John Moores University from September 2016

If the aim is fair play, and fair chance for disability groups, come and join us and support the 'sightbox' vision. Follow us on Twitter or come and challenge us to a game of Boccia.

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David Swanston head of PE playing Boccia