

## Scottish FA Project Overview – School of Football

The School of Football (SoF) is a social and academically focused initiative aimed at S1-2 pupils in schools located in areas of social deprivation. The purpose is to use daily football coaching during curriculum time to develop and enhance skills such as communication, discipline, concentrating, time-keeping, goal setting and problem solving. The football sessions are delivered by appropriately qualified coaches (minimum level 4 holder) and hope to contribute to assisting the young person advance into a positive destination upon leaving school.

The young person will take part in the initiative for the a minimum of the first two years of their high school life. In addition to the practical work done on the pitch, the pupils also complete a portfolio of work involved in the Youth Scotland 'Dynamic Youth Awards'. Dynamic Youth Awards are peer assessed awards recognising the contributions and achievements of young people in the 10 to 14 age group. Young people are encouraged to self assess and then peer assess each other's achievements, and can use the awards as an access route to further accreditation programmes.

Dynamic Youth Awards are now credit rated on the SCQF by SQA.

Key Features of the Award:

- Peer assessed: young people assess and award certificates as part of an Award Group
- Externally accredited by ASDAN, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
- Credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at Level 3 by SQA
- Non-prescriptive: the awards complement existing quality youth work practice providing a framework, not a programme
- Encourage and support youth participation: the process encourages young people to take increasing responsibility for their own future
- Progressive: the awards encourage continuing participation and increasing responsibility.

Source: <http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/projects/dynamic-youth/dynamic-youth.htm>

There has been ongoing evaluation of the initiative since 2008. The feedback has been incredibly positive and constructive enabling a stronger, more cohesive programme to be developed.

### **Independent Stirling University review of project 2013**

- 89% of the first intake of SoF players indicated in 5th year that they took part in 5 or more hours of sport per week, thus reaching or exceeding the recommended physical activity target of 60 minutes per week
- Around 9 out of 10 participants thought that their health had improved
- Around 9 out of 10 participants thought that their confidence had improved
- 79% of participants thought that their friendships had improved
- 83% of Head Teachers felt that the school of football had a positive impact on the pupils social skills
- 95% of pupils reported an improvement in their confidence levels
- 95% of pupils reported an improvement in skills
- 77% of pupils thought that their behaviour had improved and 59% thought their attitude to school in general had improved

- Attendance at school was on average 4% higher for SoF than non SoF pupils
- 62% of pupils and 65% of head teachers thought that the programme had a positive impact on the pupils' academic abilities
- 9 out of 10 pupils said that they had no problem catching up with their school work Impact of sport on target group

#### Long term participation in Sport

General evidence is that regular participation in childhood and late adolescence makes adult participation much more likely (Malina, 1996; Hirvensalo et al, 2000). There is an agreement that the potential for adult participation can be increased by:

- Enabling a choice of sports;
- Providing inclusive opportunities which develop self-efficacy, competence and control;
- Adopting a skill-based task-orientation rather than competition (especially for girls and young women)

#### Female development

Among adolescent females psychological and emotional benefits can be maximised via the provision of a variety of activities (Bunker, 1998). Others suggest a form of 'sport-plus' in which structured educational programmes promote self-esteem and positive attitudes to physical activity (Schneider et al, 2008; DeBate et al, 2009)

#### Physiological / cognitive factors

Research in this area relates to the nature of physiological impacts of sport participation and how these might improve aspects of cognition – mental processes such as attention, memory, problem solving and decision-making, For example, Etnier et al (1997) and Lindner (1999) list the following impacts:

- Increased energy derived from fitness
- Improved cognitive function
- Increased self-esteem
- Productive diversion resulting in time away from the classroom
- Reduced disruptive classroom behaviour

Source: The social benefits of sport, Professor Fred Coutler

The science and evidence relating the impacts of sport have been well documented and the selected sections from the research paper sourced are likely outcomes from the School of Football.

The info below details research conducted by Kirk, 2013 on the School of Football with particular reference to the attendance rates of the participants in the programme. As the graphs show the attendees in the initiative have had a higher average attendance at school than non school of football pupils in every year since the scheme began. In some schools this can equate to 14 more days of teaching time for pupils.

### Attendance data

