

Fit For Life Evaluation – May 2007

Philippa Forsey – Arts and Health, nesa



Aims: Promote improved physical and mental well-being amongst children in Norton Radstock and their families

Goals	Outcomes	Comments
1. Greater confidence and understanding amongst children of how to develop healthy bodies/ability to think differently about their bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 Children participate in 22 fun events involving physical activity (physical theatre and sculpture workshops) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeded targets in no. participating • Children use bodies in ways they hadn't before – new skills • Healthy bodies, mind, mental health and stamina.
2. Children able to learn strategies for keeping fit in a fun non-competitive, non judgmental environment and able to express themselves through the arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children share findings and present to whole school, parents and outside agencies awareness of healthy living through their physical theatre and sculpture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality activity and performance • A 'Buzz' in the school • Children rose to the challenge • Increased confidence at disco! • Project influenced play in the playground • Visiting dance teacher impressed by ability and body awareness of children
3. Positive enjoyment of activities which involve movement and understanding of the process of movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of success on DVD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased self esteem and confidence in children as a result of project • Children proud of achievements • High level of excitement and engagement • High attendance • Arts in school makes learning exciting

		<p>and intensive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity leads to possibilities and further learning opportunities
<p>4. Greater understanding by parents about how to achieve a healthy lifestyle for their families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents talk about the benefits of this activity/ healthy living /exercise for their children as a result of the arts workshops. • Evidence on DVD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of parent support • 6 Parents that took part in arts workshops and experienced benefits including relaxation
<p>5. Provide a disseminable model for delivery of developing understanding about physical fitness and healthy living through arts activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Fit for Life' project seen by all partners to provide useful ways of tackling attitudes to healthy living • DVD toolkit being produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Fit For Life' offers different expertise and interests of value to teachers
<p>6. Work in partnership with the new-multi agency 'Fit for Life' initiative set up by the PCT Health Visitor Team to develop long term thinking about this work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success of project based on partnership working with access to the expertise of Health Visitors, teachers and artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential ongoing partnership for future physical activity through the Arts in Norton Radstock & B&NES

Fit For Life Recommendations

- A disseminable model that could be rolled out to other schools
- Potential to offer teachers experiential arts workshops/ training sessions to increase skills knowledge and the potential of using creative activity in curriculum in Healthy Living and other areas
- Fit For Life strengthened by art as it facilitates the spreading of message to whole school
- Progression routes identified for children and parents e.g. a dance course
- Delivery in summer term would allow some sessions to be outside
- Share physical theatre session with whole class first to show what it involves. Likely that more children would be involved in future courses if they knew what it was first.
- Consult with children in set up to facilitate children's ownership and sharing of ideas at beginning of project
- Sculpture: Parents could be involved from the beginning of project. Sessions could be shorter each week
- Recognise the mental health support this has given some children on the project
- **nesa** could host future performances and involve the community

Fit for Life Overview

Through arts activity, '**Fit for Life**' has helped develop new ways of thinking about healthy bodies, improving self image in young people at risk of becoming obese. The project ran in partnership with St Nicholas Primary School, Radstock, and the Health Visitors as an after school activity.

The children worked with two professional artists: a sculptor and physical theatre artist. The project consisted of 20 sessions of reflective arts workshops exploring issues of body image and identity integrated with discussion about healthy eating. Parents were invited to participate. The process was recorded on DVD to document and disseminate the model of practice to artists, arts organisations and health professionals.

Culminating in a production, the rest of the school, parents, other interested agencies and the wider community came to see the shared findings of 'Fit For Life'.

'There was a tangible 'Buzz' in the school' Headteacher

Project evaluation found that children learnt new physical and mental skills, rising to the challenge to reach their end product.

Children were proud of their achievements and abilities increasing self esteem and confidence. There was a high level of excitement, engagement and attendance throughout. Six parents took part and experienced benefits including relaxation.

Education through the arts made learning exciting and intensive giving an all round understanding of healthy bodies, healthy minds, and stamina.

There is potential for ongoing partnership for future physical activity through the Arts in Norton Radstock & B&NES

'**Fit For Life**' offers different expertise and interests of value to teachers.

'Creativity leads to possibilities and further learning opportunities' Arts and Health Development Worker, **nesa**

Outcomes

22 sessions, 18 children, 1 show/performance sharing ideas about healthy living,

14 permanent cast sculptures and 14 original carvings in plaster

Age range 9-10 100% very satisfied, DVD

'I feel wonderful, happy, amazed!

'Simply the best!

'I think it was great and I want to do it again'

'I love doing this!'

Children

'Amy loved every minute of the sculpture and 'Fit For Life' sessions. She has been eating healthy food and tells me off for eating cakes! I came to a sculpture session and felt really relaxed and de-stressed. I went home a new woman' Parent

'Helped gain confidence and skills he didn't have before' Parent