



CREATING ACTIVE SCHOOLS



Creating a solution that
transforms physical activity
culture in schools



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WHAT IS "CREATING ACTIVE SCHOOLS"?

The Creating Active Schools (CAS) Framework was developed by an independent group of experts and practitioners to promote a whole systems approach to embedding physical activity at the heart of primary school policy and behaviours.

Formulated in June 2019, the framework was developed over two days in Leeds by an expert group of 50 specialists from public health, education, sport and local authorities. On day one, using idea generation workshops, over 80 head teachers and school governors identified opportunities to increase physical activity across different segments of the school day.

On day two, 50 national and international experts created a draft framework using the Design Council's (2005) double diamond design approach. Following the workshop and initial feedback, a final consultation with the expert group was undertaken to produce the final CAS framework.

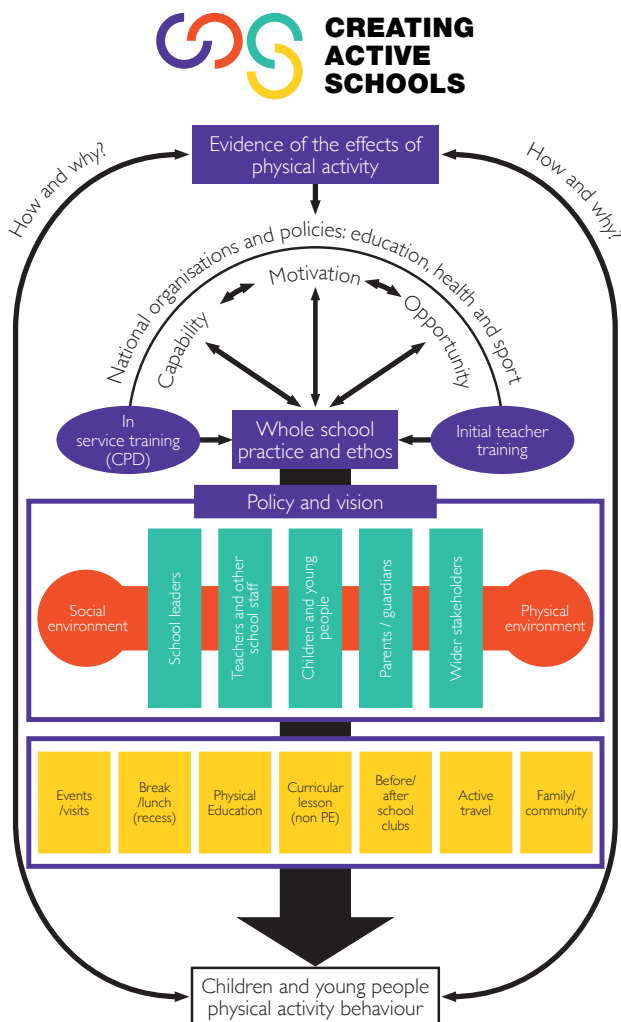


Watch the video to learn more

CREATING ACTIVE SCHOOLS EXPLAINED

The overriding principle at the heart of CAS is behaviour change. In this respect, it follows the world renowned and commonly acknowledged principles of Michie's COM-B model of behaviour change.

It identifies three factors that need to be present for any behaviour to occur: Capability, Opportunity and Motivation. These factors interact over time so that behaviour can be seen as part of a dynamic system with positive and negative feedback loops.



Read the co-design process paper

The school's strategy

The school's vision, mission and policies are central to embedding physical activity at the heart of the school culture and day-to-day behaviours.

Therefore, the framework draws attention to the importance of school leaders in embedding physical activity effectively and systemically in these strategic areas. Specifically, it highlights the importance of leaders leading the change and using physical activity as a tool to drive improvements across the school.

Environments change behaviour

Environments change behaviours, so the spaces in which we move (physical environment) and the behaviours which are promoted (social environment) are significant factors in creating impactful and sustainable change.

Stakeholders approach

Multiple stakeholders play a central role in creating a whole school physical activity approach. It is essential that all stakeholders are involved in the design and delivery of this.

Together, these stakeholders come together to form the social environment. To positively influence the work of the stakeholders, it is essential we undertake a behaviour change approach to enhancing the capability and motivation in order to enable them to engage in and provide high-quality opportunities for physical activity.

Opportunities

This is where seven specific opportunities for physical activity exist within and beyond the timetabled school day. Evidence supports that those opportunities that are closer to the central line within the framework are more impactful for improving physical activity.

To the left of the centre line are in-school opportunities and to the right are opportunities that schools can influence beyond the core timetable. The framework demonstrates that schools need to embrace all seven approaches to effectively support all pupils. This, however, is a long-term objective. Those schools starting their journey should focus on those opportunities closest to the central line to get the greatest return on investment.



When aiming to improve physical activity behaviours, any teacher or school can use the framework to guide their practice. By following the framework and mapping areas of strength and challenge, gaps can be addressed and planned to improve.

This can be completed individually, as a leadership team or whole school staff and merely requires a little prior training about the principles of CAS. However, in order to adopt a more impactful approach, an investment in time and capacity will be required for the majority of schools.

The Partnership model: The preferred route to market is via forming partnerships with local networks. This will look different in each case but will typically involve a group of influential local funding bodies with reach and influence across a number of schools in a geographic area (eg. local authorities, schools and public health).

Upon establishing a local network, consortium or partnership, training will be delivered for local 'CAS Champions' who will establish local communities of practise and drive CAS in schools locally. Also included in a partnership agreement will be website licences and other value-added services to be determined.

Individual schools: The CAS website has been built to service schools with a range of support to increase physical activity levels. An interactive profiling process links to a bespoke school action plan and subsequent relevant online CPD modules. An annual licence is either registered through a network partnership or directly through the website.

IMPACT

CAS is already demonstrating significant impact in individual schools and within education systems across England.

Lilycroft Primary School, Bradford

Lilycroft Primary School in Bradford are part of the Sport England funded Local Delivery Pilot called JU:MP. They have taken a whole school approach to physical activity by utilising the CAS framework. After completing a profiling task, the school identified four areas for change.

At a policy level they wanted to ensure that all children would benefit from physical activity opportunities through a focus on movement and play, and so introduced a "no wet play" policy. When looking at the school's physical environment, they provided open ended playground markings that are used in PE, active breaks from the curriculum and during break times, so that children know how to use them in a variety of fun ways. They also purchased waterproof clothing for every child to support the no wet play policy.

On reviewing the motivation of stakeholders, the school ensured all staff were aware of and involved in the promotion of physical activity. This manifested in providing ongoing support and training in relation to effective use of playground markings, their no wet play policy, and how to reduce sedentary time in the classroom.

Finally, at an opportunity level they have provided more frequent, inclusive and varied outdoor play. They have used PE to support the wider physical activity agenda and have also introduced active learning across the curriculum.

Through a whole school systematic approach, Lilycroft are making a difference to all children across the school. This has resulted in improvements in physical activity, behaviour, focus and stamina seen by all staff and also parents. Their headteacher is also now supporting other schools within the Priestley Academy Trust to develop similar approaches to embedding physical activity across the school day.





Academy at St James, Bradford

After engaging with the framework in 2019, the Allerton Primary school are now prioritising physical activity as a way of driving whole school improvement, linking the school's policies and routines to enhance academic achievement and improve areas such as the physical and mental health of their pupils.

The school have revolutionised their PE, school sport and physical activity opportunities and their 'Physically Active Enrichment' session represents a dedicated approach to embedding positive physical activity behaviours and ensures every child within key stage 1 and 2 receives one hour of protected physical activity time every Friday afternoon.



Birkby Infants and Nursery School, Kirklees

Birkby school implemented the CAS framework to ensure that physical activity was at the centre of the school's ethos and in particular to create a whole school approach to physically active learning; influencing school policy, environments and a wide range of stakeholders.

Using the four areas of the framework as a structure, children, teachers and other school staff were supported through a CPD programme including training, regular year group observations and team meetings.

The physical environment was adapted to enhance the capability and motivation of teachers, including classrooms being reorganised so children could be more active around the tables and chairs. Staff are feeding back that lessons are more interactive, and children are more engaged in their learning and are increasingly willing to participate and share their ideas. One teacher said: "I can clearly see it benefits the children's learning as they actively learn to read, write, discuss or solve problems throughout lessons, by introducing active learning children are now learning by doing."

This opportunity to get children active in lessons is influencing wider curriculum and subject policies at the school, and as the framework advocates, there is now an expectation that staff teach using this approach but do so knowing that they will be supported by all other stakeholders in the school, including the senior leadership team and governors.

Atlas Primary Academy, Doncaster

Atlas Primary used the CAS online profiling tool to conduct a rigorous audit into their physical environment and consider how they were utilising their indoor and outdoor space to promote and facilitate physical activity opportunities.

This led the CAS lead, who now has a teaching and learning responsibility for physical activity, to identify a spare classroom and the pockets of time that it was being unused during the week. In order to increase physical activity levels across the school day, a timetable was drawn up so each class in Key Stage 1 and 2 could access the space and participate in physically active learning across the curriculum.

In order to enhance the teachers capability and motivation to deliver this, CPD was provided by wider stakeholders to clearly demonstrate how movement could be incorporated into lessons using that particular space.

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