

What exactly has college status

Bebington High School on the Wirral was awarded specialist sports college in 2001 and redesignated in March 2005 with art as a second target setting subject.

What was the school like before sports college status?

Prior to acquiring sports college status and a new senior leadership team, Bebington High Sports College generally had low aspirations for its youngsters. It was commonly accepted that students who had failed their 11+ and entry into the grammar school were not very academic and would attend Bebington High (secondary modern). Low expectations inevitably meant underperforming students with poor results.

What were the immediate financial and infrastructure benefits?

We were part of a PFI project at the same time as we achieved

sports college status and became the proud new tenant of a sports hall, dance studio, fitness suite and ICT room.

To develop the specialism, the infrastructure for PE and sport had to change. We initially employed a director of sport, head of department, sports technician and primary liaison teacher. This infrastructure has continuously evolved over the past eight years to meet the needs of the school and local community. We now have a director of specialism, head of department, six PE staff, a community sports development officer, a community gymnastics coach, SSCo and a technician who all work alongside a multitude of sports coaches, PDM, competition managers etc.

What are the benefits it has made to sports participation and achievement?

Sports participation has grown enormously. Youngsters are

eager to learn and take part in sport in a variety of roles – as a participant, coach, official or organiser. Pupils can participate in sport and dance activities from 8am to 9pm six days per week. Sports on offer range from the traditional sports of netball, rugby and dance to non-traditional sports such as handball, cheerleading and boxing. Through our Active Playground Programme, pupils are encouraged to hire sports equipment at lunchtimes - increasing their participation levels and having direct benefits on their health, learning and a positive playground environment. The PE department are very dynamic and innovative at creating exciting learning opportunities for our youngsters. At present we have students undertaking BTEC Sport level 2 and 3, Applied GCSE (whole cohort) single and double award, Sports Leaders UK level 1 and 2, various NGB coaching awards and, from September 09, we will

be offering the Active IQ Level 2 in Leading Health and Fitness and the level 2 Fitness Instructors award. Pathways are tailored to suit youngsters needs. For example we have a Living for Sport year 8 boys group who will start a sport specific curriculum in year 9, hopefully achieving at least 7 sport related level 2 qualifications together with their core subject qualifications by the end of KS4.

How important is competitive sport at the school?

Competitive sport has its

place at Bebington High Sports College but it is not integral to our values and beliefs in regards to the benefits that PE, sport and dance can bring to youngsters. We do not concentrate all our efforts on a few youngsters who may win a prestigious trophy for the school when there are hundreds of other youngsters who wish to learn and take part in sport socially or at a lower competitive level. For these youngsters, we organize fun clubs and inter-school leagues. It's about getting the correct balance. We are trying to introduce enjoyable successful experiences to youngsters in the hope that they will buy into the lifelong participation package.

What recent achievements have you been particularly proud of?

There are many achievements but if I had to single it down to one it would be the success of our leadership, coaching and volunteering programme. The programme has helped to develop the confidence of youngsters who arrive at BHSC having indirectly been told that they are failures and not good enough to attend the grammar school. Our students are given the opportunity to develop generic leadership skills and qualities throughout their time at BHSC which help them become well rounded individuals.

How does it work?

Using a progressive leadership ladder which educates, recognises and rewards leaders' efforts, we have many competent and confident youngsters who volunteer their time to support activities within



specialist sports done for us?

our school and the local community. As part of the core curriculum, our sixth form students undertake a leadership and volunteering programme where they can opt to follow a leadership route in sport, art, literacy, MFL or maths. The leaders support our younger students with their learning within lessons. All of our sixth form sports leaders have at least one level 1 NGB award and a waiting list of primary schools wishing for them to support their extra curricular programme. At KS4, all year 10s participate in a leadership day where they choose a sports activity to extend their leadership skills. Many progress to developing their skills further as dance leaders, mini-kicker coaches, referees etc. The leadership ladder begins with sports education in the KS3 core PE curriculum. Lessons are tailored around ensuring students experience a variety of different roles and responsibilities such as organiser, coach and officiator. Students are also given the opportunity to receive organiser training in a variety of sports such as Sports Hall Athletics and Tri Golf allowing them to support primary festivals hosted at school.

What has been the benefit to education generally at the school?

Academic achievement in the areas of sport, and performance and creative arts are a real feature of our successes in school. Students are highly motivated to study in these areas and uptake at key stage 4 in sport, dance, drama and art are always high. We are also central to the local authority's Wirral wide strategy for sport

and physical education. We have led and supported key initiatives such as leadership, gifted and talented, active playgrounds, Living for Sport, BTEC Sport and High Quality Teaching and Learning.

What difference has it made to primary schools in your area?

The Wirral PE and Sport strategy group, which we are a part of, works strategically to make a difference to all primary schools on the Wirral. We have increased participation and competition during curricular and extra-curricular time. PE lessons, particularly in gymnastics, are of a higher quality as we have employed a gymnastics community coach to support teaching and learning. The Bebington School Sports Partnership, hosted at the sports college, co-ordinates physical activity opportunities in 29 local primary schools. Ninety four per cent of all young people aged 4-11 in partnership primary schools take part in a minimum of two hours per



Wirral, and Saturday Youth Night which organises sporting activities along with health and beauty opportunities. There's also MEND (Mind, Education, Nutrition, Do it), an educational healthy lifestyle programme for youngsters and their parents, and a variety of adult education classes offering opportunities to undertake vocational courses such as the Active IQ level 2 Fitness (Gym) Instructor award.

What's the most frustrating thing(s) about secondary school sport?

Too many schools still have inadequate sporting facilities while physical education v sports participation places extreme demands and expectations on a PE teacher. More qualifications equal additional marking and study support sessions. This in turn means less time to co-ordinate and lead extra-curricular activities. The BHSC PE department has had over 600 pieces of coursework to mark this year not including BTEC assignments or sports leadership logbooks and we are still looking to develop more courses in order to give our students the best possible opportunities towards gaining employment or further education.

What are your plans for the future?

To generate funding to develop our dire outdoor facilities for both school and community use. It is nonsensical that many schools close their gates at the end of the school day. We want to provide a cost effective community sports facility open all year round that will engage youngsters and the local community.

week of high quality physical education and school sport.

What about rest of the community?

The school is open to the local community from 5pm-10pm with numerous sports clubs and activities offered. Specific programmes have been introduced to target the needs of the local community such as our Saturday All Active Clubs which offer high quality coaching in a wide variety of activities, including the only Learning Difficulties and Disabilities sports club on the