Achieving High Quality Swimming outcomes in Primary Schools

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If we granted you three wishes with the focus on school swimming what would you do?
In July 2014 we visited the lowest attaining primary schools in the county for end KS2 swimming.

EXCUSES ARE LIES WE TELL OURSELVES SO THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE OUR FAULT.
Research Intentions

• Increased understanding of how to improve swimming outcomes in primary schools
• Reflect and plan strategically for change and approach to swimming

Context

• 75% of pupils meet NC expectations in County Durham
• 1 in 4 pupils leave primary school unable to swim 25m or self rescue
• 52% of pupils nationally meet NC expectations
National Facts

48% of 7-11 year olds at the end of the 2014 summer term could not swim the minimum of 25 metres

Year 4 is the most common year to offer school swimming

34 minutes spent in the water

82% of school swimming lessons are led by an external swimming teacher (a swimming teacher or a swimming teacher and a school teacher)

22% of schools tend to offer swimming over two school years

Altogether better
Achieving high quality swimming outcomes in primary education

Primary school swimming: good practice case studies

During our visits to the high attaining primary schools, we identified examples of practice that schools indicated were having a positive impact on their pupils. With their permission, we have exemplified some aspects of their work.

Areas include collaborative partnerships, effective monitoring of swimming teaching, curriculum design, assessment, and creating a climate to develop water-based confidence.

You can also read the report ‘achieving high quality swimming outcomes in primary education’

Contents
1. Kirk Merrington Primary School - 2
2. St Chad’s RC VA Primary School - 3
3. St Patrick’s RC VA Primary School, Dipston - 4
4. Lancaster EP Primary School - 5
5. Aydiffe Village Primary School - 6
6. Catchgate Primary School - 7
7. Rookehope Primary School - 8
8. Stanley Crook Primary - 9
9. Howden-le-Wear Primary School - 10
10. Tour Law Millennium Primary School - 11
11. St Thomas More Primary School - 12
12. St Cuthbert’s RC VA Primary School, Seaburn - 13
13. Finchale Primary School - 14
14. St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, Murton - 15
15. Pitbnington Primary School - 16
16. Willton-le-Wes Primary School - 17
Aim of the research:

• Share different models for swimming programmes
• Identify areas of consistency/similarity
• Celebrate and share good practice and standards
• Allow schools their opportunity to provide feedback on our service
• Raise awareness of the importance of School Swimming

Altogether better
What would you ask?

Identify 2 key questions you would ask a Head Teacher/PE subject leader about their swimming provision
Executive summary

• Importance of learning to swim & how to remain safe in and around water cannot be overemphasised.
• Unrelenting commitment from school.
• Leaders of successful schools set the right culture for learning.
• They build on confidence to develop efficient strokes and good levels of fitness.
• Leaders ensure that they fully understand the swim progress of all children.
• They have knowledge of physical activity patterns outside of school.
• Finally, high quality swimming teaching is a collaboration between the school member(s) of staff and the swimming teacher.

Altogether better

[Logos]
Although participation in swimming programmes outside of a school setting has a positive effect on the progress of most pupils, it was not recognised as the most significant factor by school leaders.
What good schools do well:

- School swimming is a high priority for school leaders
- Schools create opportunities for sustained periods of learning
- Schools monitor the progress of pupils closely
- Schools create a culture of expectation, maximising the time pupils spend swimming in lessons
- Effective partnerships with parents, carers and swimming providers is essential
- School leaders and swimming teachers use knowledge of physical activity outside of school setting effectively
- The professional learning of teachers and other adults who take pupils swimming is enhanced
- A positive attitude towards swimming is promoted through the celebration of swimming accomplishments
- Effective use of the Primary PE and Sport Funding

Altogether better
For a lot of schools there isn’t a marginal gains approach to success in improving swimming outcomes at the end of KS2.

Altogether better
Case Study: St Patricks RC

- St Patrick’s is a below average size school. The number of pupils with SEN support is significantly below average. The school deprivation indicator is broadly in line with the national average.

- Leaders in the school have taken ownership of the swimming programme. A prior lack of knowledge of pupils’ swimming progress, and the most effective ways to plan swimming provision limited the achievement of pupils in the school.
“Not to know is bad. Not to wish to know is worse.”

~African Proverb
Case Study: St Patricks RC

Key Actions:

1. All adults who support school swimming are ASA trained
2. Focused attention on Years 5, 4 and 3, maximising the swimming time (approximately 45 minutes per lesson).
3. Moved pools to a deep water facility
4. The school tracks the out of school hours participation in swimming activities, and feeds this information into the swim lesson planning
Case Study: St Patricks RC

4. The school tracks the out of school hours participation in swimming activities, and feeds this information into the swim lesson planning.

5. The school actively promote local swimming provision for children of all abilities.

6. A robust system is used to track pupils’ swimming progress. The school are no longer reliant on the information being provided to them, but have ensured that they know how well all of the pupils in the school are swimming. They will be reporting this in each pupils’ end of year written report.
Leaders in the school have made significant improvements in their provision for school swimming during the last year. The school should be commended for its honest and unforgiving self-evaluation that has led to such increases in outcomes for pupils.
Task

Improving Swimming Outcomes

Place the following strategies onto the graph. Consider the ease of implementation and the potential for change in swimming outcomes.
Improving Swimming Outcomes

How do we embed these ideas?

How do we support schools to implement these ideas?

Ease of Implementation

High Potential for Change

Low Potential for Change
The supporting role of Education Durham

• Ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good
• Support schools to engage in both intra and inter-school aquatic competitions
• Provide a robust system to ensure all secondary schools are aware of the level of swimming competency of their new pupils during the transition period
• Provide high quality professional learning for swimming teachers, school teachers and teaching assistants that encourages, challenges and supports improvement
• Develop an online ‘real time’ assessment system for schools in order to ensure pupil progress and achievement information is up to date and accessible by all stakeholders.
• Request that schools publish their swimming outcomes alongside other attainment measures or PE/sport funding at the end of Key Stage 2
• Support governors to hold school leaders to account over aspects of swimming provision and outcomes for pupils
Using the sport premium effectively

- **Upskilling teachers/support staff who accompany pupils when school swimming**
  Eg. ASA National Curriculum Training, cost approx £120 including resource pack

- **Create aquatic based after school clubs, such as water polo**
  Eg. Cluster based swimming club / water polo – share cost

- **Purchase teaching resources to help improve and support lessons and help teachers to better understand clearly, the end of key stage expectations**
  Eg. Durham Swimming Resource approx cost £50

- **Increase the intra and inter school competition attendance in aquatic activities.**
  Eg. School Games Level 2 & 3
Further Development

• Support teachers in the challenge for more able pupils

• Creation of swimming drills portfolio / DVD to compliment the stroke quality assurance materials
Conclusion

Where school swimming is given priority by school leaders the outcomes for pupils have the potential to improve significantly. There are some key facets of high attaining schools. They create the right culture to ensure success amongst all key stakeholders. There is high quality monitoring and evaluation of swimming programmes at all levels.

School leaders use additional primary sport funding to ensure more pupils can reach their potential, participate more regularly in aquatic activities and improve the quality of swimming teaching.
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