

Primary school sport and physical activity programmes

2008 / 2009

Four primary school sport and physical activity programmes were delivered in the 2008 / 2009 academic year.

Agility testing

In the 2008 / 2009 academic year, Offaly Sports Partnership developed and delivered its first inter schools programme based on the International Fun in Team Athletics model.

This initiative was an inter agency project delivered in conjunction with Athletics Ireland, Athletics Offaly, and Tralee and Athlone Institutes of Technology (with Offaly County Council funding the student placements to deliver the various aspects of the programme).

There were four components to the programme: -

1. An assessment of fundamental skills (i.e. agility, balance, co-ordination, speed and basic strength) among primary school children in the county (mid February to early May).
2. A pre season preparation for the cross country athletics season (August - September) in up to four areas not with a club
3. An endurance challenge programme for primary school children (October - November)
4. The introduction of SPORTSHALL Athletics from November with a view to improving skills based on the research at the start of the year.

SPORTSHALL Athletics

300 children from eight schools spanning 3rd to 6th class participated in Offaly's inaugural inter schools SPORTSHALL Athletics competition in December 2008.

FAST Kids

With a start up grant from Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, Offaly Olympian James Nolan established the FAST (Fun, Agility, Speed and Technical-proficiency) Kids project was established as a follow on to the International Fun in Team Athletics delivered in the latter half of the 2007 / 2008 academic year; and the Agility Testing and SPORTSHALL Athletics programmes delivered in the first half of the 2008 / 2009 academic year.

Up to 1,600 children participated on the two month programme at the start of 2009. The event proved very popular; and Offaly Sports Partnership in conjunction with Laois, Meath and Westmeath Sports' Partnerships, and FAST Kids made plans for an inter county jamboree as a first step to further expand the activity in Ireland.

Based on the success and potential of this activity, James will be making a further application to Social Entrepreneurs Ireland for support towards the expansion of this work. Offaly Sports Partnership also plans to further strengthen our working relationship with our international partners to bring new innovative programmes for children to Offaly.

School Sport Star

The first ever Offaly inter school sports star programme was staged on Tuesday, 9th June in the Tullamore Harriers Stadium with over 160 children participating. The competition which was developed by Offaly Sports Partnership and the Health Promotion Unit of the Health Services (HSE) Executive consisted of 10 different activities which tested children's fitness and sports skills; and was based on the "Superstars" competition which was very popular in the 1980s.

Four categories of competition were held on the day; 3rd and 4th class girls, 3rd and 4th class boys, 5th and 6th class girls and 5th and 6th class boys.