

Primary school sport and physical activity programmes

2011 / 2012

Four primary school sport and physical activity programmes were delivered in the 2011 /2012 academic year.

Endurance Challenge

This programme was established as a follow on research project from the International Fun in Team Athletics programme delivered in the 2007 / 2008 academic year to measure endurance and fitness levels of primary school children based on the Aviva UK Athletics Academy award programme; and establish base line data on endurance levels in Offaly for comparison with the United Kingdom.

Third level students on placement with Offaly Sports Partnership were trained in the test protocols; and 301 pupils in a number of schools were tested in September 2012. Many returned results higher than the UK norms. However when the weather deteriorated in October, this trend was reversed and resulted in the project being deferred

World Marathon Relay Challenge

The World Marathon Relay Challenge is a shared running of a marathon by teams of 32 children in remote locations, changing a baton after every 200m. In the course of the run each team is trying to record a faster time than their competitors on the day. They also set themselves a target time to beat such as a world record, a national record or a local record.

20+ expressions of interest from primary schools were received. Unfortunately, rule changes resulted in the programme becoming a secondary school (junior cycle) initiative, and Offaly was represented by secondary schools in the event in the 2011 / 2012 academic year.

SPORTSHALL Athletics

In 2011, 2,000 pupils from 18 schools participated in the SPORTSHALL Athletics programme.

In an effort to make the programme sustainable moving forward, SPORTSHALL Athletics teacher training was offered to teachers participating on the programme in 2011. 15 schools were offered three hours of teacher training which covered the 12 activities on the SPORTSHALL Athletics programme based on universal rules.

As part of Offaly Sports Partnership's commitment to increase immigrant participation in sport there was a continued direct targeting of schools with above average migrant populations.

In the first half of 2012, 250 pupils from six primary schools participated in the SPORTSHALL Athletics programme.

All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics

In 2012, 12 counties participated in the second annual SPORTSHALL Athletics Festival in Athlone Institute of Technology.

Given the large entry, the festival ran over three days during the week of the 14th to the 21st March 2012. 577 pupils participated in the event, with Offaly Sports Partnership providing the national coordination for the event with the support of Athletics Ireland.

Furthermore, Offaly Sports Partnership (leading on behalf of the network of sports partnerships) worked with Athletics Ireland in drafting a development plan for the growth and expansion of SPORTSHALL Athletics in Ireland.

Following a call for sports capital funding applications in 2012, this plan was widely distributed and used as supporting documentation by a number of sports partnerships and Athletics Ireland seeking to purchase equipment in support of the programme, thereby showing a high level of collaboration and coordination at national level. Athletics Ireland was successful in securing €100,000 to purchase training and competition kits for use nationwide.