

Action 3:30 project: Key contact school 10

[Start of recording]

INT: I'll start the tape. How do you generally feel about schools participating in research projects? What have your experiences been?

RES: My experience has been that we take part in projects and very often don't hear the outcomes. My problem with taking part is that generally people promise the school will have a full report, and it will be really interesting to see what other people's views have been, etcetera. Then we don't actually hear anything further.

INT: So, your experience has been mixed, you want to take part, but-

RES: Yeah. I'm happy to take part because I think it's important, but it feels very much that schools contribute huge amounts to the research but never actually get any feedback. It feels very one sided.

INT: What was your understanding of the Action 330 project, and what do you think your role was in facilitating within the school with the project?

RES: I don't know, setting it up; organizationally, making sure that we had time to do it after school, making sure that the facilities that were required, the expertise, the right people to run it. Liaising with the people that came, making sure that the class was available to come in and talk to them; making sure I responded to e-mails at the right time, etcetera; that sort of thing.

INT: What did you understand the project was about?

RES: I thought; it feels like a long time ago that I was involved in the very beginning of the project. It was about having a focus group who were going to receive the additional training, extra activity, and a group that didn't have the same opportunities. They were going to be weighed, measured, their fitness levels recorded, how much activity they did, with the belts, etcetera. Being really good resources were supplied for the schools that were the focus group, who received all the extra activity. It was over a year ago, it's been very busy in my life with everything else that has to take place. That's all I can faintly remember. I remember thinking it was a worthwhile thing. I'm very pro children being as active as possible.

One more thing, I would say that I was told, again, that it wouldn't be traditional sports; that it would be offering children a wide variety of different activities so that it might be more inclusive of children who tended to steer themselves away from traditional football, rugby, didn't see themselves as sports people. It would be more accessible to children who didn't always opt into sports.

INT: Do you recon that is what it was?

RES: Definitely, I think so, yes.

INT: What interested you in taking part in the project? I assume that's a little bit as you've just-

RES: Definitely trying to encourage the children to have a healthy lifestyle, all of those things I fully think are important; children's education, in a wider sense.

INT: How did you think the project fitted with the schools policy for physical activity provision?

RES: Completely, I would say. By extending the school day in a healthy way, letting children see that sports are enjoyable, and it's important to be fit and have a healthy lifestyle; all of those things that we would endorse and would be part of our whole school ethos and culture.

INT: Where did it fit in terms of your school priorities? Was it high in priority, the children being quite active; and was the project high on the list?

RES: One of our goals in our school is to teach kindness, that children need to take responsibility for themselves, and each other. Part of that goal is accepting that you have a responsibility to be fit and healthy.

INT: That's a good ethos. The project offers either some sports equipment or some money, was that any incentive to take part at all?

RES: Yeah, I would say so. If it's well-resourced and I knew that we were going to be given the resources in the end, if I remember. Obviously we try to resource P.E. as fully as possible, but it's always beneficial to us to have more.

INT: Your school was an intervention school, so you've have all your equipment. Now it's been delivered, what do you think has worked well with the project?

RES: I think the children have enjoyed it, I think it's been brilliant to see them outside, being active at the end of the school day. I think that it's been very well delivered. I think the benefits to us have been that a member our staff was skilled up in terms of delivering a very well structured program.

INT: Now that the staff have been trained; do you think it's affected their teaching skills in other classes?

RES: I would think so. The staff member that was trained is quite new into being a teaching assistant, so I think any skills or strategies that you pick up. You have the opportunity to hone your skills seeing somebody else working alongside a more experienced sports deliverer. It really helps them in terms of improving what they can do and offer.

INT: Do you know of any plans to use the new skills to the schools advantage?

RES: In terms of supporting P.E. lessons, yes. I did get an e-mail saying, are you aware that this person can now deliver your P.E., you funding the grants, the grand funding that we're getting from the government. I've already made plans for that.

INT: So you already got something lined up?

RES: Yeah, we've got that all booked in.

INT: How do you think it's been received by parents?

RES: Just positive, I don't think there's been any negativity about it. It's just positive that their children were occupied in a really worthwhile way at the end of the day, and that they were actively participating in something that was promoting teamwork, all of those things. All of the things the school endorses, really. They've been very positive about it.

INT: That's great. How do you think it's impacted the children who have taken part in the project?

RES: I think that it has further developed; they've got very good team working skills already, the children here have got really good relationships, but I'm sure it's further developed them in a really structured program. I'm sure it has benefited them in terms of their physical fitness, and in their enjoyment of P.E.

INT: Was there any negative impacts at all?

RES: I don't think so, I haven't heard of anything.

INT: That's good. Overall, do you think there was a wider impact on the school rather than those that were directly involved?

RES: Hard to judge that, really. Sorry.

INT: That's alright, I understand.

RES: I know people always want to stay, and it raised such results and things, but-

INT: Were the other children aware of it that weren't taking part?

RES: Yeah, but we have so many clubs and activities after school, literally three a night. It's very hard to- What was the question again, sorry?

INT: That's alright. If it's had a wider impact on the school, if it's had a wider impact, and you said it was hard to judge. I said; were the other children aware of it or any of the other teachers aware of what was going on?

RES: I think people were aware, I think the teachers were aware, I think some children were aware that children were staying to do Action 330. Because it's after school, the rest of the children have gone, we've got a big site. Probably other children would say, "Are you going to Action 330 tonight?" But they would have gone and left the building, if that makes sense. It's hard to say if the other children were standing and saying, "Wow I wish I could be a part of that," because of the very nature of it being outside of the school day.

INT: Is there anything you felt that didn't work about the project? If there's any challenges that the teaching assistants came across at all?

RES: We had a really good set up here in terms of that we had an outside deliverer. He already does P.E. within the school, he teaches PPA covers, so he's already well known to the children and the staff. He was able to arrive early before the end of the day, so he could set-up, get everything out and ready so that it was a seamless transition from the end of school to starting the activity. The teaching assistant then finished her day and then hurried out to join him.

I think if you have just school stuff, you would find it hard, probably, to be out at the end of the day to gather up the children. In a way, I think we had the ideal scenario, because we had somebody who was in the school building liaising, checking with

those inevitable phone calls that come in, saying, “My child can’t do it today because,” or whatever it is. She was monitoring all of the in-school side of things, the organization of things, and he was then coming in and getting things set up and ready.

INT: So the dynamics worked quite well?

RES: Yeah, really well. I would say it was a really positive team that delivered it for us. They both were enthusiastic about what they were doing. They weren’t doing it because it was a bit of extra cash, they were doing it because they felt passionate about delivering a really quality program. They had good expertise. Particularly [TA name], who had already run his own sports company; he’s got a huge amount of skills in terms of P.E. Then the teaching assistant was somebody the children particularly get on very well with. Her scene is promoting a healthy lifestyle through use of hip-hop dance and things. It was a really good combination.

IT: That’s fantastic. So you’d say you had an advantage because of that?

RES: I think so; I think we had the right people delivering it. It was a very good program, it was a good combination. Excellent program, excellent resources and an excellent team delivering it; I’m really positive about it

INT: In many schools, there was quite a noticeable drop in attendance. Would you have any idea why that would be, just in your experience in running after-school clubs and things, you know what a likely reason would be at all?

RES: I don’t know, sometimes I think children do have quite busy lives in terms of extra clubs and things they do outside school; Cubs, and brownies, and all of those sorts of things here. (sigh) I don’t know.

INT: Maybe because sort of, because the year six had SATs, they, three quarters of a way though the club. Do you think that would have affected anything?

RES: I don’t think so. The only thing I can think; if school starts to run other intervention groups or something after school, there’s a priority. People might say, “Well, they have to attend the maths intervention rather than going to the sports activity.” I don’t know.

INT: How about the frequency of the club? We had it a two times a week.

RES: No. I think that's hard, because, again, this school is unusual in the amount of clubs that it runs after school. It was hard for children who were already going to one club to go to both sessions, because they were already committed to one somewhere else.

INT: You saw a mixture of the frequency, and other clubs going on and things?

RES: Mm-hmm.

INT: Do you think that we can improve the project in any way at all? Maybe in regards of recruiting the children, the teacher assistant training, anything along those lines you think that we can improve on?

RES: I'm not particularly aware of anything. I would say that it seemed to me, and to the staff, I only ever had positive feedback about anything. From the children I didn't have any negative feedback at all.

INT: Not really anything in particular?

RES: I think it's lovely that, I think we were one of the host schools when they came to train other, and that was really positive for our staff. The member that was here, she felt really positive about that, she got very valued.

INT: That's really good. Do you think that sort of raised awareness with other members of the school? I think they did it with a year below the children that were involved in that 330.

RES: Probably. I don't know; so many things come into schools these days. We constantly have secondary school teachers coming in and delivering something, it's happening far more. I think the children say, "Oh, it's another something that's coming into school." That sounds a big vague, but we literally have either secondary school, or things that we've brought in coming into school at such a regular basis that it's hard for one project to stand out amongst so many. Nothing I can think of.

INT: Finally, do you know of any plans to continue to activity come next year?

RES: I don't know; we haven't talked about it. Sorry.

INT: That's fine. If you haven't talked about it, that's fine. That's all the questions I've got for you. Is there anything else you wanted to add at all, do you have any questions?

RES: Just looking at my notes.

INT: That's fine.

RES: I'll just say, as I've said already; it really was a quality program. It was very well structured, put together. I'll be really interested to hear the results. We really valued the fact that the staff has been trained, with good training. We really valued the fact that we gained some resources as the end of it. Everybody that came, the staff that came were very positive and active in their promotion of it. I don't know, just had a real feel-good factor about it, I know that sounds a bit wishy-washy but I'm just trying to say that I can't think of anything negative. It was extremely well done. It wasn't intrusive in terms of; well organized, well structured, even to the point of this being a phone interview rather than taking up time in a different way. People have managed that extremely well, and thought about the impact of this on schools.

It hasn't felt like some projects that we are part of feel very unwieldy; it's hard to put it into words. Sometimes you can feel regret over taking part of something. It's kind of run itself; the people who've come in have been efficient and professional, and it's just been a positive experience.

INT: Fantastic, that's great. Thank you very much, that's going to really help us with the evaluation of the project.

RES: It'd be really good to hear the outcomes.

INT: Yeah, we are planning to give you a report.

RES: Good, that's really great. That's my only gripe, as you know.

INT: It probably won't be until after the data collection, after that. It's in the plan.

RES: It would be really interesting to know.

INT: Fantastic.

RES: Excellent.

[End of Recording]