

Case study – Community Cohesion

Weymouth/Portland Dorset links

2010

Links with Schools in Weymouth/Portland, Dorset.

The Learning Trust was approached by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) during the build up to the 2008 Hackney Schools Paralympic Championships. The RYA was keen to develop links with Hackney as an Olympic and Paralympic host borough and to build upon its work in Weymouth, the 2012 sailing venue.

Jubilee Primary school had previously made a trip to the Olympic Sailing Centre in Weymouth with a cohort of Year 5 pupils. The strategy developed by the RYA and TLT was to include sailing in the 2009 Championships and then encourage participant schools to take up opportunities to develop sailing as part of their PE offer. The first step was to allow the RYA to put on a display at the 2008 Championships and offer a free days sailing to the winners of both Primary and Secondary Championships. School trips to the Olympic Sailing Centre and potential visits to schools local to the Centre have been made an explicit part of the offer. Subsequently **Gainsborough** and **Berger** primary schools have both made trips to Weymouth as part of this programme. **Stormont House Special School** have now included sailing as part of their PE offer too but have yet to visit Weymouth.

Staff from the **Royal Manor Academy** in Portland/Weymouth came to London to meet with the Schools at the Heart team and the Championship organisers. An initial visit was made to the **Bridge Academy** to begin establishing links with a Hackney school. The organisers of the Paralympic Championships then visited Portland to discuss developing links, including potential participation in the Hackney Championships. In June of 2009 a day was spent with senior management at Royal Manor discussing our work around the Paralympics and disability awareness and how this example can be incorporated into their provision. A cohort of JSLAs from the school then watched the DVD of the 2008 Championships followed by a talk and a question and answer session. Plans were drawn up for a three day visit to Hackney focused around their participation in the Championships and to include an experience of life in a Hackney school. Time was also spent at **Westfield**, a nearby special school, discussing their partnering of Royal Manor in the Championships. Due to funding constraints this planned visit was subsequently deferred to 2010.

A second visit has been made to Portland/Weymouth in March 2010 in order to strengthen the relationship and assist their potential participation in the 2010 Championships. This time the Weymouth School Sports Partnership was in attendance and in addition to planning 2010 participation in the Championships it was agreed to develop links with **Stoke Newington School**. Significant funding advice was given and the SSP agreed to make these applications which will be overseen by TLT.

We are optimistic that the funding applications will be successful and that Royal Academy and Westfield schools will take part in the 2010 Championships. Their visit will incorporate time at Stoke Newington School and a special school, probably Stormont House, alongside a cultural programme currently at planning stage.

Alan Walsh

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