Project summary

At Pear Tree Specialist School we aim to give every pupil/student equal access to sport regardless of disability. To ensure this we have to look at a wide range of opportunities, tailoring these to the individual. For our Sensory pupils/students we offer many individualized activities. Rebound Therapy (RT) is provided in our sports hall on a weekly basis. Individual programmes of work on our school trampoline are developed for each participant following a specialised assessment programme. RT has encouraged independent movement and participation in exercise for pupils with limited mobility and sensory needs. They have made huge personal achievements and gained confidence in moving, communication and socialization.

For our KS3/4/FE students, our 'Drop-in Gym' weekly sessions have encouraged fitness in age appropriate ways. The students now can use a range of fitness equipment independently, giving them skills that they can carry into adulthood. We have worked in partnership with local secondary schools to help support these activities. Both activities are embedded in our curriculum.

As a result of this work we have learned that we are able to offer and promote regular exercise for all our pupils and students, dependent on their very individualized needs.

Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

Raising standards of achievement, enjoyment, participation and inclusion through a range of physical and sensory activities, appropriate to children and young people with severe learning difficulties and complex needs.
Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

What were you hoping to achieve?

- For pupils and students who attend Pear Tree Specialist School to live a full active life, to reach their full potential in the area of PE, by accessing activities as independently as possible. This will enable them to continue to access fitness and sporting opportunities outside of school hours and into adult life.
- For sports activity to be available for every pupil regardless of their disability.
- For students to be motivated and want to participate.
- To improve our participation in PE and school sports activities in line with the PESSYP 5 hour offer.
- Success criteria from our school development plan is as follows, which we aimed to achieve through this initiative:
  - "To more effectively meet the physical and sensory needs of pupils through a sensory and physical approach".

How did you identify the need for this practice?

We identified the need for extra physical and sensory activities in school, as many of our students do not access sports provision outside of school hours. We knew this from such data collection such as the PESSYP survey. We aimed to meet the need for additional physical and sensory opportunities in two areas:

- Rebound therapy
  Pupils are mainly working within P levels and need a structured activity in a 1-1 situation with intensive interaction. Three members of staff attended a course and were trained as Rebound Therapists.

- Gym club
  Pupils/students need to work as independently as possible to build on previous knowledge and develop confidence. We needed an age appropriate sports activity in school to link with our Healthy Schools project.

Briefly describe the main characteristics of the school?

- Specialist school for pupils/students with physical and/or sensory needs.
- All pupils have Severe Learning Difficulties, many with additional needs.
- 70 pupils on roll.
- Age range 2-19 years.
- Attached to the school is Pear Tree Children's Centre.
- We run an inclusive Holiday Club for pupils from our school and from the wider community.
What did you do?

At Pear Tree we aim to give everyone equal access regardless of their disability. To ensure this we have to look at a wide range of opportunities and tailor these to the individual. For our sensory pupils and students we offer many individualized activities of which one is Rebound Therapy.

In November 2008, three members of staff attended a Rebound Therapy course to become qualified in the delivery of Rebound. We were so inspired by the course we decided to set up our own weekly sessions. To make this fully accessible it had to be held in school. Through charitable donations, the school purchased the trampoline and end beds and in January 2009 we started our Rebound Therapy sessions. They continue to run each Monday morning with identified pupils and students from every class participating on a fortnightly cycle. In Early Years the children pair up to work together. To support our pupils/ students we have created a Rebound Therapy object of reference to indicate that the session is due to commence.

We originally made our own programme and certificates as there was no ready made scheme. Twelve months ago we found the Russell Walker assessment package which we purchased and so now have a full scheme of work which is levelled in partnership with PIVATs and National Curriculum. The awards are colour coded and have achievable certificates.

On a Tuesday afternoon we operate a 'Drop-in Gym'. This is open to all Key Stage 3/4 and Further Education (FE) students. This has been running since March 2007. This initiative evolved from a project that was started following a professional development course that the joint PE Subject Leader/ Primary Link Teacher was completing. A criteria was to develop an area of need. We needed to enhance our provision for age appropriate exercise for our older students which could be run in school to be available for maximum participation and encourage independent learning. At the time we were also beginning to be part of the School Sport Partnership national programme to promote high quality PE and high quality out of school hours sport and physical activity. The Drop-in Gym met all the criteria in order to achieve our intended outcomes.

We started with an few pieces of hand held fitness equipment and an exercise bike and now have grown to seven pieces of larger equipment plus a wide range of smaller equipment. The students initially attended in class groups but this has now evolved to a 'drop-in session' where students access by choice. It is a very busy and well used facility that the students see as their own. It promotes independent learning and the majority of students use all the equipment on their own with staff only supporting for health and safety reasons. Students are taught the importance of personal safety whilst using the fitness equipment. They can run a warm up session to music and work at improving their personal fitness. One student in particular progressed from the beginning being unable to turn the pedals of an exercise bike to recently completing 1km on the same machine.
A group of our Year 13 can help set up and tidy away and have knowledge of Health and Safety checks. Students have used this learning as part of their accredited ASDAN Sport and Leisure Award. In September 2010, F.E. ran a sponsored cycle on the exercise bikes for charity.

We have found pictorial work cards are an integral part of independent learning. We have made two Pear Tree fitness award charts that students can copy the actions from. On the yoga mats there are individual picture work cards which the students can mirror the actions to make a sequence.

Over the last two years we have had students from St Bede’s Catholic High School and Carr Hill High School attending to support and we hope this to continue this academic year. Both of these projects have become fully integrated within our current curriculum and it supported the schools in achieving their own leadership and sport programmes.

Our ultimate aim is for our pupils and students to develop skills that they can transfer to adulthood. Both these projects in their own way help achieve this. Most of all the enjoyment is paramount and our students certainly do participate enjoy and achieve.

One barrier to change that we encountered was to convince staff and others that the use of a trampoline for Rebound Therapy was safe and very beneficial to the children and young people of Pear Tree School, who have a range of disabilities. We overcame this by identifying three staff to undergo the two day Rebound Therapy training course. The information was disseminated to other staff which informed them of the aspects of health and safety as well as the many benefits of using the programme with all of our youngsters.

Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

**Gym club**
Students from keystage 3/4 and our FE Department attend. Gym Club is supported by members of class staff who accompany the students for health and safety reasons. We have had role model support from two local high schools who visited on a weekly basis to support our students, helping set up the equipment and leading by example.

**Rebound Therapy**
We have three trained Rebound Therapists in school plus a physiotherapist with knowledge of Rebound Therapy.

Students from two local high schools have been into school to assist with the pupils as part of their Sports Leaders Award Programme.
Other people who have been involved include:

- staff and students from Red Marsh School, a special school in Wyre for children and young people with Severe Learning Difficulties and Complex Needs. They have attended sessions alongside Pear Tree students;
- a national Rebound Therapy trainer, whose role was to train and support the staff in the skills to deliver high quality RT;
- physiotherapists, whose role was to support the Rebound Therapists with their skills and knowledge of the children and young people and their specific physiotherapy needs;
- the Inclusion School Sport Coordinator for the Wyre and Fylde School Sport Partnership, whose role is was to encourage and support the joint PE Subject Leader/ Primary Link Teacher to develop high quality PE and School Sport and community sport links in line with the PESSYP Strategy;
- the Partnership Development Manager for the Wyre and Fylde School Sport Partnership; whose role was to support the school and the SMT with knowledge and skills relating to finance, management and specialist school status;
- school governors; whose role has been supportive and guiding.

The project has been driven by the huge commitment and enthusiasm of the joint PE Subject Leader/ Primary Link Teacher. This commitment and drive has already been recognised by the several awards the school has won for its excellent work in PE and School Sport from the Wyre and Fylde School Sport Partnership.

How has the progress of the project been monitored and evaluated?

The gym is run as a 'drop in' facility. Students can choose if they want to attend. Students now know the day/time it takes place so they come ready in the correct clothing. Attendance, attainment and progress are monitored and evaluated.

The enthusiasm of the students is evidence that they want to participate.

We have created our own Award Scheme with pictorial charts for the students to gain certificates.

As part of the summer term gym club we ran a circuit and fitness session to check students' fitness levels. Students set their own personal targets, for example, how many times they could complete the circuit.

The format for the gym sessions have been constantly evaluated and improved upon.

Rebound Therapy: we have purchased the Russell Walker Rebound Therapy assessment package which is a graded 'scheme of work' that is levelled with P scales and runs through to NC Level 2. Each participant has their own personal
sheet with tasks for their award. We also keep photographs for pupil’s assessment files.

Once students and pupils are selected, permission to participate is gained from parents/ carers. Advice from the physiotherapists and school nurse is then gained to ensure the participants whole development is understood and managed. Pupils with additional medical needs may have to be monitored in order to manage their individual mobility issues. The physiotherapists liaise with school staff constantly to ensure postural management in RT is correct and appropriate throughout the term. Any adjustments to the programme of individual pupils/ students are made as necessary.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

- We started off with three pieces of large fitness equipment and a small selection of hand held equipment such as exercise balls and hand weights. We now have a wider range of equipment including a manual treadmill, mini trampolines and differentiated hand held equipment including sensory weight balls and Dyna bands. (More information here: [www.dynaband.co.uk](http://www.dynaband.co.uk))

- We initially brought students in class groups and moved on to mixed classes to encourage working together and introduced the element of choice to attend.

- Students can now set up the equipment with supervision for health and safety reasons only.

- Rebound Therapy

- We improved the practice by introducing the award scheme. Initially we had created our own certificates as no commercially available packages were available in 2008.

- We have had inclusive opportunities with students from the local secondary schools attending to assist.

- An article was printed in LCC Tempo magazine showing Rebound Therapy and the secondary school students’ involvement.

- We made other modifications and improvements such as introducing a pictorial symbol and object of reference for participants to recognise in anticipation of what they are about to do.

What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

The success criteria from our school development plan is as follows:
"To more effectively meet the physical and sensory needs of pupils through a sensory and physical approach". This has been achieved through specific individual targets being set per term for each pupil/student according to specific individual need in each activity area.

We held a sponsored RT day in July 2010 in which everyone participated in their own way and raised funds for school.

Some participants can now independently get on and off the trampoline due to the motivation of taking part.

Participants' confidence has increased and they now know 'I can'.

Pupils who are wheelchair users have the freedom of movement on the trampoline bed and even the smallest of movements from themselves causes an independent reaction.

Pupils on the Autistic Spectrum love the rhythmic bouncing and can stay focused for longer periods.

The FE students decided to have a sponsored cycle on the exercise bikes September 2010 to raise funds for a local charity.

Students ask as they pass in the corridor; 'Is it Gym Club today?'

**What are the next stages in the development process?**

- To continue running both projects, constantly seeking to develop and amend our practice in the light of our ongoing evaluations.
- To find more Gym Club equipment that motivates learners by its diversity.
- To continue more inclusive provision with local schools.

**What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?**

There are aspects of our practice which are unique to our school, e.g. the specific health needs of our children and young people. However, other schools may be able to replicate the inclusive aspects of our practice, e.g. the collaboration with other primary and secondary schools and the use of sports leaders to assist with activities.

The main lessons we have learned are to establish positive working relationships with other schools and community partners, to have a clear vision of what we wanted to achieve based on the School Development Plan objectives, to find the funding to achieve our vision and to carry it through by careful management, training and delivery.