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**Meeting of the Select Committee – 24 March 2010**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Multi Skills Playground Initiative**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Select Committee members of the Multi Skills Playground Initiative
2. To make recommendations for further roll out of the programme

**Background**



3. The multi-skills playground initiative started in the Autumn Term 2008 and has involved 74 Primary Schools, 6 Special Schools, 9 Children's Centers and 10 Secondary Schools to date. It has been delivered through the Extended Services offer. This is an Extended Services activity which supports schools and communities to develop healthy lifestyles.
4. Dudley commissioned Education and Special Projects Limited to provide high quality playground markings for children to use for physical activity and games outdoors. The package has included installation of permanent playground markings and training opportunities for school staff, out of hours learning providers,

competition managers and other personnel. At least two members of staff from each school or Children Centre have been part of this training and currently 265 Dudley personnel have been trained to develop high quality programmes of activity using the playground markings.

5. These markings are designed to promote high quality but basic outdoor games and structured activities, using the playground as a resource to influence the following:
  - Physical activity and participation
  - Citizenship
  - Improve structured movement skills in children
  - Attitudes towards activity and learning
6. All schools and Children Centres are shown how to use this outdoor resource effectively. The training focuses on an *ages and stages* approach to a child's physical ability and provides opportunities for maximising the use of the outdoor resource within both the curriculum and out of school hours activities. Research has proven that daily Multi-Skills activity on the markings shows an increase in:
  - Physical activity levels for every child
  - Confidence of individuals
  - Leadership skills of young people
  - Fundamental movement skills for every child
  - The health and wellbeing of children

All of the above contribute to a child's health and well being and achievement and attainment.



7. In Dudley, the initial involvement in three specific areas:
  - Family workshops with children and their family/carers working together
  - A competition framework for all pupils from year 1 to year 6 to engage in competitions
  - Mothers and babies, and mothers and toddlers to access activity in their community
8. These three areas have proved extremely successful in 'Dudley' and will now be delivered nationally using the 'Dudley case study' as a model of good practice.
9. This project directly influences and supports the delivery of the Obesity Strategy and the School Sports Curriculum. Feedback from children, young people, and their families has been very positive. However, they also do want to be able to access the markings away from school and Children Centre sites.
10. We are working to maximise the benefits of this project by trying to provide further markings through working with colleagues in the Directorates of Urban Environment and Adult, Community and Housing to move forward with a joined up approach for children and young people. Provision within parks and other public spaces is a definite option but other council outdoor areas could be considered for an extension to this provision, e.g. Youth and Community Centres.
11. Play spaces which are being renovated as part of the Play Pathfinder project are having markings installed on pathways wherever possible.



## **Finance**

12. These activities have been funded from the Extended Schools Area Based Grant which was earmarked for pump priming Extended Services. The grant has been accessed during financial years 2008/2010.

## **Law**

13. The law relating to the contents of the report is mainly governed by the Education Acts.

## **Human Resources**

14. Existing staff will be used to support delivery and Education and Special Project providers will be commissioned to deliver as appropriate and necessary.

## **Equality Impact**

15. Equality and diversity issues are integral to all service development and delivery.



## **Recommendations**

16. That Select committee notes and endorses this work and encourages further development of the Dudley Multi Skills Programme across the Council as appropriate.



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### **List of Background Papers**