



Opening Schools Facility Funding- Building Skills, Confidence and Interaction



Leap has provided funding to 29 schools to support the re-opening of sports facilities for after-school clubs, summer holiday activities and external lettings. Working in partnership with community groups, schools have been able to enable hundreds of young people to get active and have fun!

“Our netball sessions are the part of my week I look forward to.”
(School After-school Club)

“These days have been one of the best days of my life and I’ve learned so much!” (Summer Missed Opportunity Swimming Programme)



“My daughter has been singing praises for the coaches who run the sessions. Normally she isn’t very sporty but she has surprised me with her positive attitude.” Wycombe Wanderers and Highcrest Academy Holiday Club

Let us tell you more about this initiative.

Schools: A Hub of the Community

Schools are a hub in the community. In providing education and opportunities for pupils, they engage with parents and local partners and receive data. As such, they are equipped to identify and respond to specific community needs.

When the pandemic prevented all but keyworker children from coming to school, the impact was felt by all. The teaching staff were great at stepping up, yet there was a void. Children and young people may have been able to access online lessons, but they were deprived of social interaction, group activities, clubs, specialist support and opportunities including school trips.

A Government report on the [impact of the pandemic on children and young people](#) shows a general increase in behavioural, emotional and attention difficulties. It also highlights that the impact was felt more intensely by SEN, Disadvantaged, BAME children.

Department of Education Funding

In March 2021, Sport England committed to Phase 2 of a £10.1million investment of Department of Education funding. This aimed to support schools to relaunch extra-curricular opportunities for children and young people and reopen facilities for community use.

As the physical activity lead in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Leap had just started engaging with schools when lockdown occurred. We maintained communication with Heads of PE, School Games Organisers and community partners which informed our plan for providing funding when schools reopened.

Leap Priorities for Funding

With established connections with schools and community sports groups, Leap was in a strong position to allocate support and funding. We invited applications from schools across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Our approach was to invite applications from all schools but to emphasise the importance of provision that could actively encourage participation from children with Special Educational Needs or who receive Free School Meals. We focused on our geographic priority areas, where levels of deprivation and inactivity are known to be high. We were also keen to ensure sport had appeal across ethnically diverse groups.

The Department of Education stated that funding conflict had to be avoided, so primary schools were unable to apply for after-school clubs, as these are covered by Sports Premium Funding.

Schools Priorities for Funding

All schools found that the need to keep everybody safe and socially distanced made the provision of extra-curricular activities and external bookings very challenging. For one thing, children were grouped in bubbles, with staggered finishing times. The need for more regular cleaning of equipment was another issue.

Many schools use funds raised from external bookings to pay for new equipment. With their doors closed, this hadn't been an option.

The funding applications were diverse and included:

Equipment for outdoor activities – with fewer restrictions on outdoor activities there was a demand for tennis and netball equipment. This could be set up on school courts and playgrounds for use by students in lessons, after-school clubs and external bookings.

Community coaches to lead sessions – teaching staff often run after-school clubs, but this was an issue with staggered finish times and the preparation of online lessons/pupil support. Hiring coaches made it possible to reintroduce clubs without causing teacher burnout.

Cleaning facilities – a barrier to use was the need to clean equipment between sessions. Some funding applications paid for equipment such as swimming pool water testing kits or covered the additional cost of cleaners.

Summer Holiday Clubs – aware that additional holiday provision could play an important role in helping children to rebuild confidence, skills and friendships before the start of a new school year. As well as addressing inequalities in swimming attainment.



Support for Schools

Leap provided funding to schools across Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes. Many of this was allocated before the May Half term. This allowed clubs to restart for the final half term of the year, as well as providing time to plan summer holiday provisions. We supported:

- ✓ **19 Secondary schools** including:
 - Additional cleaning at Cressex School enabled facilities to be opened to more afterschool clubs and external lettings.
 - Equipment for Khalsa Secondary School to hold Karate, Cricket, Tchoukball and New Age Kurling clubs to engage all abilities in sport.
- ✓ **4 Primary Schools** including:
 - Support for Wooburn Green Primary School (with 39% disadvantaged families) to run a summer holiday club.
- ✓ **3 Special Schools** including:
 - Pool cleaning & water testing kits to enable safe use (by students and community groups) of the pool at Redway School.
- ✓ **2 Independent Schools** including:
 - High March School's involvement in the Missed Opportunities Swimming Programme.
- ✓ **1 Pupil Referral Unit**
 - Gym equipment was purchased for use (with instructors) in breakfast and after-school clubs

Collaboration with Community Partners

Leap supported collaborations between schools and community partners to extend the range of opportunities on offer. We are thankful for the many positive collaborations including:

Bucks School Swimming Partnership, Neil Bailey Swimming coaches, High March Swimming pool and participating schools and parents in the delivery of the Missed Opportunities Swimming Programme. This summer holiday provision aimed to address the gap in water confidence and swimming skills because children have been unable to access lessons.

[Read the MOSP report](#)

Wycombe Wanderers Sports and Educational Trust and Highcrest Academy in the delivery of a sports summer camp for girls. This girls-only club aimed to encourage participation in a range of activities, whilst also learning about the physical and mental health benefits of sport. 43 girls from diverse ethnic groups participated, with a positive response from girls and parents.

[Read our WW Summer camp report](#)

MK Dons Sports and Educational Trust and Southwood Junior School for the delivery of a popular holiday club.

“Our coaches have done an excellent job of creating a safe environment in which participants could have fun whilst also taking part in activities and learning about important topics – such as sustainability and healthy eating – in our classroom sessions. We are extremely grateful for the funding provided as it has provided our participants with an opportunity that they otherwise would not have had.”

– Jake Butler, Schools Manager, MK Dons SET



“I’ve really enjoyed the MK Dons holiday sessions at my school. The activities have been fun and the lunch bags were cool. Hopefully, we can do this again in the next school holiday too.”

– Participant, aged 10

Outcomes of School Facilities Funding

This targeted funding provided schools with the resources and support they needed to reopen facilities for pupils and the wider community. Our data reveals that 43 after school clubs are up and running as a result of funds received. Schools have also reported an increase in external bookings, which will support longer-term sustainability.

The feedback and data received from schools indicate that our funding criteria meant that the investment benefitted children from groups most affected by the Covid-19 lockdown. 60% of the allocated funds were directed to schools in our top priority areas and children from diverse cultural backgrounds and children with special educational needs are well represented.

The summer programmes helped families to manage the long summer holiday and equipped children to start the new school year with confidence. We expect that participants will have a positive attitude to trying other sports activities in the future.

“We are delighted that, with some external support and funding, so many schools in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes were able to reopen their excellent sports facilities. Sport plays a vital role in maintaining mental and physical health; never has this been so important. It is great to see children, young people and community members being active, socialising and building confidence.” – Mark Stokes, Head of Children & Young People, Leap