



Wave Multi-Academy Trust Virtual School Games



Wave Multi-Academy Trust

Objectives:

The Wave Virtual School Games (VSG) was designed to remove structural barriers preventing pupils in Alternative Provision, medical and special school settings from accessing competitive sport. The intent was to reframe competition as an entitlement rather than a privilege, particularly for pupils permanently excluded from mainstream education and those from high-deprivation communities.

The programme aimed to provide psychologically safe, curriculum embedded competition that improved confidence, regulation, engagement and belonging, while valuing participation, progress and collective effort alongside performance.



Who were the target audience and how were they engaged?

The primary target group was pupils educated across Wave Multi Academy Trust's 8 Alternative Provision academies, 2 medical school sites and 1 special school provision.

Most pupils had been permanently excluded from mainstream education and presented with SEMH, SEND or complex medical needs, with many living in IDACI 1 and 2 communities. These pupils historically had little or no access to structured interschool competition due to suitability, transport, health and financial barriers.

What was the impact and how did it relate to the School Games priorities of Tackling Inequalities, Physical Literacy and Youth Voice?

The VSG significantly increased equitable access to competition, with participation rising from 136 to 164 pupils and over 4,800 competition points recorded. Pupils permanently excluded from mainstream education accessed structured competition for the first time. Staff reported improved regulation, confidence and collaboration, alongside increased engagement across the curriculum. The model strongly aligned with School Games priorities by removing inequality, embedding inclusion, valuing participation, and creating positive, meaningful competitive experiences for vulnerable learners.

What did they do?

The Virtual School Games was introduced as a trust-wide competition delivered onsite within curriculum time in Summer and Winter 2025 and is now embedded each term.

Activities were co-designed with Active Cornwall to align with the PE curriculum, shared in advance to support preparation and regulation, and delivered by familiar staff. Standardised scoring allowed trust-wide comparison, with results centrally collated and celebrated through flexible, emotionally safe recognition formats.

How was this made sustainable?

Sustainability was secured by embedding the VSG into the Trust PE and personal development curriculum, ensuring every pupil participates each term.

The model is low cost, equipment-light and delivered onsite by existing staff, removing transport and staffing barriers. Centralised coordination with Active Cornwall streamlines delivery and data collection. Long-term partnerships, curriculum alignment and cultural acceptance mean the VSG is now a predictable, valued and scalable entitlement across Wave Trust.

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