

ISA Awards 2024 Case Study

Outstanding Sport, Small School

Maple Walk School was founded in 2004 by the New Model School Company with a philanthropic aim to provide an excellent yet affordable preparatory education. Starting in a sports hall in Northwest London, it moved in 2010 to a purpose-built, eco-friendly campus near Roundwood Park, supported by The Craigmyle Charitable Trust. Despite limited onsite sports facilities, the school prioritises sport for physical fitness and character development by using local parks, community centres, and partnerships with nearby schools. Over time, Maple Walk has developed an inclusive sporting ethos focused on participation and excellence, strengthened by strong relationships with local schools, independent clubs, and borough-wide initiatives to ensure a comprehensive sporting experience for all pupils regardless of background or ability.



Aims

The School's sporting ethos is built on four key pillars: participation, excellence, inclusivity, and innovation. The school strongly believes that every child should have access to high-quality sports opportunities, regardless of their athletic ability. To achieve this, Maple Walk has developed a comprehensive and multi-faceted sports programme that caters to all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6.

Maximising Participation

Maple Walk ensures that every student gets a chance to engage in sport, whether through morning and after-school clubs, inter-house competitions, or borough-wide tournaments. The goal is to build confidence, resilience, and a love for physical activity that students will carry with them into adulthood. By introducing the role of Sports Lead into Year 6, they have ensured that pupils have an effective input into the sports provision and competition choice.

Striving for Excellence

While inclusivity is a core value, the school also supports students with exceptional sporting potential. Pupils with strong abilities are encouraged to compete at a higher level, whether in Brent Borough teams, national competitions, or elite academies. The school works with professional clubs and external coaches to identify and develop talented athletes.

Inclusive Sporting Opportunities

Maple Walk is committed to breaking down barriers to sport. The school has introduced disability sports, mixed-gender teams, and targeted initiatives to encourage greater female participation in sports such as football. The six-week inclusive sports programme ensures that students of all abilities can take part in adapted activities like Boccia, seated volleyball, and goalball. This approach has led to these inclusive sports being played across the borough at inter-school events, reflecting Maple Walk's ethos of innovation and inclusivity in providing 'Sport for All'.

Innovative Use of Local Facilities

Given its limited on-site resources, Maple Walk has developed strong partnerships with local sports facilities. The school uses Roundwood Park for football, rugby, and running, Willesden Sports

Centre for athletics and swimming, and St Claudine's courts for girls' and boys' football. These partnerships maximise the sporting opportunities available to students, ensuring they receive the same quality of experience as pupils at schools with larger campuses.

Outcomes

The commitment to high-quality, inclusive, and competitive sport has delivered remarkable results, both in terms of individual success stories and broader school-wide achievements. The school has developed a strong reputation in local and national sport competitions. 2024 highlights included:

Football

Three pupils represented the Brent U11 football team in regional tournaments, showcasing their skills on behalf of the borough. Additionally, a former Maple Walk pupil has advanced to the Arsenal Academy, highlighting the school's success in nurturing football talent.

Athletics

A Year 6 student won gold in the Brent 60m breaststroke championship, while another secured first place in the 80m sprint at the Brent Athletics Championships, competing against 15 other schools. Five students also qualified for the ISA Cross Country National Championships, reflecting the school's strong endurance training program.

Multi-Sport Competitions

Forty pupils took part in the Mill Hill Schools Triathlon, one of the UK's largest school sporting charity events, raising over £4,500 to support the local charity Little Village.

Inclusivity and Innovation in Sport

The school's commitment to inclusive sports has transformed student engagement: disability sports now enable pupils with additional needs to compete in adapted games, building confidence and teamwork. Girls' football has expanded from just four players to a full squad of 20, reflecting a dramatic rise in participation. The school's advocacy has also influenced the Brent School Partnership to include adapted sports in inter-school competitions, broadening access for all students.

Community and Partnerships

The school's collaborative approach to sports has strengthened ties with local and regional organisations by hosting regular football fixtures with The Lyceum School in Regent's Park and competing against a diverse range of independent and state schools, providing students with varied and competitive sporting experiences.



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