

Hunter's Bar Junior School – Teacher's Story

MLB First Pitch (2022-23)



Situated in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, Hunter's Bar Junior school supports an ethnically diverse population, with almost a quarter of students speaking a first language other than English.

I was recommended MLB First Pitch and took the opportunity to go to training to learn a new sport and collect new equipment to support delivery. I hoped that in delivering baseball, our pupils would benefit from a different type of activity that fed into our PE curriculum and make use of the physical literacy scheme that runs throughout our curriculum.

We will continue to deliver lessons to our Year 5 pupils and are hoping to set up an extra-curricular club once our playground renovation has been completed. The ability to send our pupils to the First Pitch Festival and choose pupils who hadn't had a chance to represent the school in any competitive sport was an amazing opportunity and something that we will definitely take up if the chance comes again this year or in future years.

We are currently in discussion about refining the lesson plans to make them more streamlined as there's a lot of information in the festival packs so this will make it more accessible to all staff who potentially aren't as confident in their PE ability.

The decision was made to target our Year 5 pupils as their amount of physical literacy reduces in comparison to the amount they have in Year 3 & 4 as we combine Physical Literacy with more game-based practices. We wanted to tap into the prior content knowledge of striking and fielding in other sports but enhance the opportunity to critical thinking, tactics and decision making. Pupil's feedback on the lessons were that they were really exciting, and it was easy to learn the rules when broken down by staff. The baseball lessons veered away from "traditional sports" we've taught in the past and I was able to emphasise the social aspect of teamwork and celebrating success when batting or fielding - Hi-fives became compulsory for team-mates(!)...especially after a Home Run.

We have seen a lot of success with the pupils engaging with the tactics. Learning the rules has helped to make it more inclusive. In June 2023 we were able to send 30 Year 5 pupils to the MLB First Pitch Festival: Sheffield! The event was part of a global initiative for youth baseball, Play Ball Weekend, so all pupils participating were a part of baseball events happening all around the world! It was a fantastic event and the goodies handed out (T-shirts, badges and foam baseball sets) were a brilliant finale to end the day. The pupils and staff all spoke highly of the day, and it was a highlight of many pupils year which was relayed to me by pupils and parents.

