

CASE STUDY



Bringing Bowls to Life

The Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy Inspires Hundreds of Primary School Children in Colne and Beyond

In the heart of Lancashire, something special has been happening on the greens, and in the playgrounds, of Colne's primary schools.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of the Coaches at the Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy, hundreds of local children have been introduced to the joys of bowls through an innovative Schools' Development Project that's turning heads across the sporting community.

This inspiring initiative began with a simple idea: to make bowls fun, accessible, and part of everyday school life. With the help of the Bowls Buddies activity kits (supplied to 14 local primary schools by the Academy's Charitable Organisation) the project has achieved something truly remarkable: bringing an old, traditional sport to life for a new generation of young players.



From the Classroom to the Green: A New Way to Play

The Bowls Buddies kits have transformed school halls, playgrounds, and even classrooms into mini bowling greens. Designed especially for young players, the kits allow children to experience the challenge and excitement of bowls in a fun, inclusive, and active way without the need for a traditional 'green'.

The Academy's dedicated coaching team visited every participating school, delivering 'train-the-teacher' sessions that empowered school staff to confidently lead bowls activities themselves. These sessions weren't just about technique – they were about building confidence, understanding the sport's values, and inspiring teachers to see bowls as a tool for teamwork, inclusion, and enjoyment.

While the teachers learned, the children got hands-on with the Bowls Buddies activities. The result? Classrooms filled with laughter, friendly competition, and the unmistakable buzz of discovery as pupils realised that bowls is not just a sport for older generations — it's something they can play, love, and excel at.





Community Collaboration: The Power of Partnership

A key element in the project's success has been the strong partnership between the Academy, local schools, and Fiona Callaghan, the area's School Games Organiser (SGO). Fiona recognised the potential of the programme immediately and played a pivotal role in bringing schools together to take part in a series of special events.

Held at Burnley Football Club in the Community's Leisure Box – a vibrant local venue known for hosting inclusive, community-based activities – these events brought together small groups from each of the I4 schools. Over the course of the Spring and Summer terms, more than 500 children from both mainstream and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) schools had the chance to take part in bowls-themed activities.

"The children absolutely loved it. Bowls was something completely new for most of them, but they quickly got the hang of it and couldn't stop smiling. It's been great to see lots of schools embracing the sport and seeing how inclusive and adaptable it can be."



Festivals of Fun: Bringing Schools Together at Alkincoats Park

As the school year progressed, the excitement built towards a series of 'Bowls Festivals' hosted at Alkincoats Park in Colne – home to two of the region's most picturesque bowling greens. Over several weeks, all 14 schools came together to experience bowls in its traditional setting, guided and supported by the Academy's coaching team.

For the children, it was a magical experience. Many had never set foot on a bowling green before. Now, they were out in the sunshine, rolling bowls across the perfectly manicured turf, celebrating together, and cheering each other on.

"This project has shown just what can be achieved when schools and Clubs work together," said Daryl Wright, Chairperson of the Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy. "Seeing so many children enjoying the sport and taking pride in learning new skills has been wonderful. We're already seeing teachers and pupils asking how they can do more!"



What This Project Proves

The work being done by the Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy is a shining example of what can be achieved when Clubs, schools, and local partners work together with a shared vision. It's proof that bowls is not only relevant to young people – it's a sport that fits perfectly into today's school environment.

From helping children develop balance, coordination, and concentration, to fostering teamwork, patience, and respect, bowls offers a wealth of benefits. And crucially, it's a game that can be adapted to suit all ages, abilities, and settings — making it one of the most inclusive sports around.

"It's been brilliant to see the children's enthusiasm for bowls," said Steve Clamp, Academy Development Officer and BCGBA Board Member. "The Bowls Buddies kits have given schools a simple and fun way to keep the sport going, and the teachers have been fantastic in embracing it. You can really see the confidence and teamwork grow with every session."

A Growing Movement: Bowls in the School Games

Perhaps most excitingly, bowls is now formally recognised as part of the School Sport Games offer, supported by the Youth Sport Trust. This means that schools across the country can now include bowls as part of their sporting curriculum and inter-school competitions.

The Bowls Development Alliance (BDA), the national body supporting the sport's growth, has played a vital role in this progress – providing resources, guidance, and connections that make it easier for schools and Clubs to work together. For those looking to find out how to get started or replicate the success of the Colne project, more information can be found on the Bowls Development Alliance website at www.bowlsdevelopmentalliance.com.

The Future Looks Bright

As the summer festivals came to an end and schools prepared for the new term, the legacy of the project was clear. Teachers reported that children continued to ask for bowls sessions; some schools even introduced lunchtime and after-school clubs using their Bowls Buddies kits.

The Academy coaches were thrilled with the response. For them, it's not just about showcasing the sport — it's about inspiring the next generation of players, volunteers, and community champions. Their work shows that with the right approach, bowls can thrive in schools, engage young people, and strengthen local Clubs for years to come.

In an era where many traditional sports face challenges in attracting younger audiences, the Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy's work stands as a model of how innovation, passion, and partnership can reinvigorate a sport and ensure its future.





www.bowlsbuddies.com

Making Bowls Fun For Children Of All Ages



Find Out More

For schools, teachers, or Clubs inspired by this story, visit the Bowls Development Alliance website for guidance on introducing bowls in your area, or contact the Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy directly at pwcgba@gmail.com