

Creating Active Schools (CAS) Long-Term Evaluation

Information for Schools – Comparison Schools
(Version 1.0 – 13/03/2026)

WHAT IS CREATING ACTIVE SCHOOLS (CAS)?

Creating Active Schools (CAS) is a whole-school approach designed to help schools support children to be more physically active during the school day. The approach aims to embed physical activity within school systems, including leadership, policy, curriculum, teaching practice, and wider school culture.

CAS has been implemented in many primary schools in Bradford as part of the wider Join Us: Move Play (JU:MP) programme since 2021. JU:MP is a large programme funded by Sport England which aims to increase children's physical activity across Bradford.

Your school has not been involved in the CAS programme. However, your school has been invited to take part in this research study to help us understand whether the Creating Active Schools approach leads to improvements in children's physical activity and wellbeing over 5 and 7 years.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

This research is funded by the **National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)** and is being conducted by researchers from the **University of Bradford**, working with colleagues from the **University of Cambridge**, and **University of York**.

The aim of this study is to understand whether the Creating Active Schools approach leads to long-term improvements in:

- children's physical activity levels
- children's health and wellbeing
- educational outcomes
- how physical activity is embedded within schools

The study will also examine the **cost-effectiveness of CAS** and how the programme has been implemented and sustained within schools over time.

Schools that have not implemented CAS are very important to the research, as they allow us to compare outcomes between schools that have implemented CAS and those that have not.

WHY HAS MY SCHOOL BEEN INVITED?

Your school has been invited to participate as a **comparison school**.

This means your school will continue to operate as normal, without implementing the Creating Active Schools programme, while allowing researchers to collect information about pupils' physical activity and wellbeing.

Having schools that are not implementing CAS is essential for helping researchers understand whether the programme has had a measurable impact.

Your school's participation will help provide a fair comparison and improve the quality of the research.

DOES MY SCHOOL HAVE TO TAKE PART?

No. It is completely your school's decision whether to take part.

If you decide not to participate, this will not affect your school's relationship with the research team, the University of Bradford, or any partner organisations.

If your school agrees to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

WHAT WILL THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The research team will work closely with your school to organise data collection in a way that minimises disruption to the school day. We will invite **all pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3** to take part in the study. However, children will only participate if **their parent or carer provides written consent** and the child is happy to take part.

We would ideally like to speak to children and teachers directly in the form of a school assembly or a short class presentation. This is so members of the research team can clearly explain to children and teachers the purpose of the study and answer any questions they may have.

On the same day of the class presentations/assemblies, we will ask school staff to send out information and consent forms (pre-printed) to all parents of children in Years 1, 2 and 3.

Data collection will take place during **two periods**, each school will normally have **1–3 data collection days per wave** depending on the number of participating pupils.:

- Academic Year 2026-27: September to March
- Academic Year 2028-29: September to March

Different groups of pupils in Years 1 to 3 will take part at each time point.

Pupil Measurements

Trained researchers will visit your school to collect the following information from children who have parental consent.

Children will leave class for approximately **15–20 minutes** to complete the following:

- **Physical activity monitoring** - Researchers will fit each participating child with a small device called an accelerometer. This device is worn on an elastic belt around the waist and measures the time children spend being physically active, sedentary and sleeping. Children will be asked to wear the device **for 7 consecutive days**, including during sleep, removing it only for bathing or swimming. The device does not record sound or location (see picture).
- **Height, weight and waist measurements** - Researchers will measure children's height, weight and waist circumference using standard equipment. These measurements will take place in a private space within the school and are used for research purposes only.
- **Parent / Carer Questionnaire** - Each participating child will receive a pack containing a **parent or carer questionnaire**. The questionnaire will take approximately **15–20 minutes** to complete and includes questions about: children's physical activity, sedentary behaviour, sleep, health and wellbeing, quality of life, neighbourhood and environment, family characteristics. Parents can return the questionnaire to the school once completed.



- **Teacher Questionnaire** - Teachers will be asked to complete a short questionnaire called the **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)** for each participating child. This questionnaire helps researchers understand children's emotional and behavioural wellbeing.
- **School Information** - With parental consent, schools will also be asked to provide limited pupil information to the research team, including **date of birth, gender, ethnicity, postcode, free school meal eligibility, special educational needs status**. Researchers will also request access to children's educational records through National Pupil Database.
- **School Staff Participation** - As part of the evaluation, some school staff may also be invited to participate in surveys or interviews about their experiences of physical activity and physical education within schools. These activities are voluntary and will be arranged at times convenient to the school.
- **School Resource Information** - Schools will also be asked to provide information about resources used to support physical activity, such as staff time, training or equipment. This information will help researchers understand the cost of implementing CAS.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

Taking part in this study will help researchers understand how schools can support children to be more physically active and improve their health and wellbeing.

The findings from this research will help inform future school-based physical activity programmes and policies both locally and nationally.

Participating schools will receive a **summary report of their school's data**, where possible, alongside overall findings from the wider study. This report will provide schools with information about pupils' physical activity levels and related measures collected during the study.

As a thank you for supporting the research, participating schools will receive a **contribution of £1,000 for each wave of data collection**. Children who take part will also receive a small **thank-you gift pack**.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS IN PARTICIPATING?

There are no expected risks associated with taking part in this study. Some children may feel slightly uncomfortable during measurements such as height or weight; however, these will take place in a private space and children may choose not to participate at any time.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION COLLECTED?

All information collected during the study will be treated as confidential and used only for research purposes, and data may also be used for future research analyses and publications, but only in anonymised form so that no individual child, staff member or school can be identified.

Identifiable information will be stored securely by the University of Bradford and will only be accessible to authorised members of the research team.

Anonymised data may be shared with collaborating researchers involved in the study, including researchers at the **University of Cambridge** who will support statistical analysis.

Results from the study will be reported in **scientific publications, reports and presentations**, but no individual school, child or staff member will be identified.

HOW WILL I FIND OUT THE RESULTS?

The findings from this study will be shared with participating schools and will also be published in academic journals and research reports. We will also provide summaries of findings that schools can share with staff, parents and pupils.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?

If your school is happy to take part in the study, please read the **School Consent Form** attached to this information sheet.

If you agree for your school to participate, please complete and sign the consent form and return it to the research team.

Once we receive your school's consent, a member of the research team will contact you to discuss the next steps. This will include:

- agreeing suitable dates for data collection.
- discussing how information and consent forms will be distributed to parents or carers.
- identifying appropriate spaces within the school for measurements to take place.
- arranging any staff participation activities if relevant.
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The research team will work closely with your school to ensure that all activities are organised in a way that minimises disruption to the school day.

If you have any questions before deciding whether your school would like to take part, please contact the research team using the details provided below.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

If you would like to discuss the study or have any questions, please contact:

Dr Daniel Bingham, Co-investigator, +44 1274 232102 or by e-mail d.bingham@bradford.ac.uk

Dr Anna Chalkley, Co-investigator, by email a.chalkley@bradford.ac.uk

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