

1:1 in-water support for SEND pupils in mainstream school swimming

Background

Friars Academy and Northamptonshire Sport are a partnership representing Northamptonshire for Inclusion 2020, a programme led by Youth Sport Trust and funded by the Department for Education.

Friars and Northamptonshire Sport contacted all mainstream schools in the county with a questionnaire. A number of encouraging responses were received, together with responses which identified examples for where additional support was needed to improve access to mainstream school swimming for SEND pupils.

Objective

Friars and Northamptonshire Sport set out to improve access to mainstream school swimming for SEND pupils by sharing guidance with school staff and through 1:1 in-water support.

Challenges

- Difficulty in gaining additional funding to continue 1:1 sessions.
- Progression was slowed due to limited pool space and availability.

Approach

A specific example was selected from the questionnaire responses. Arrangements were made for the Inclusive Sports Development Officer at Northamptonshire Sport, also an experienced disabilities swimming teacher, to meet and share guidance with the pupil and their SENCO.

This meeting allowed the teacher to create a support plan for the pupil to maximise their swimming experience during the first 1:1 session. As well as establishing what the pupil enjoyed and feared about school swimming lessons, including the journey to/from the pool and changing procedures, solutions were discussed to prevent or manage challenging behaviours.

Ongoing practical support and guidance was provided by the teacher until the pupil and their support network were happy to continue without assistance. This included funding advice.

Results

After the required number of 1:1 sessions, the pupil was integrated back into the class alongside their peers with the appropriate

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support they needed to enhance their swimming safely and with confidence and fun.

A successful partnership network was developed between schools and Northamptonshire Sport, where guidance continues to be shared to improve school swimming for SEND pupils.

“It is extremely rewarding to not only help a pupil get back into the pool, having refused to go in previously, but to see them enjoy the water, have fun and make progress in lessons with the right support.”

Michelle Reeves, Inclusive Sports Development Officer at Northamptonshire Sport

A cohesive approach to developing water confidence and positive pool experiences

Improved attitudes towards swimming for the pupil and their support network

Faster progression in technique and core aquatic skills

🔍 **Find out more:**

For more information, please contact schoolswimming@swimming.org or visit the Inclusion Hub at swimming.org/schools