

Childhood Obesity in Thurrock

Childhood obesity is a complex public health issue that is a growing threat to health during childhood as well as adult life. Being overweight and obese increase the risk of a wide range of diseases and illness, including coronary heart disease (CHD) stroke, type II diabetes, hypertension and some forms of cancer namely pancreatic, kidney and gall bladder cancers. Obesity reduces life expectancy by approximately 11 years. The rise in obesity levels is one of the greatest challenges currently facing our society. Within UK there are estimated, 30% of children and 61% of adults who are overweight or obese. If the trend is allowed to continue, by 2050 nine out of ten could be overweight or obese.

Since 2005, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are required to collect height and weight data for Body Mass Index (BMI) on all primary school children in reception year (ages 4-5) and year 6 (ages 10-11) as a part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

The 2008-09 NCMP data in table1 suggests, within Thurrock locality, there are 14.5% in Year R and 14.2% in Year 6 who are overweight and 11.3% in Year R and 20.8% in Year 6 who are classed as obese. Among the 47 Local Authorities within East of England, Thurrock has the third highest prevalence of obesity in Year 6 after Harlow and Luton Unitary Authority.

Year R	Year 6	
	Overweight	Obese
Thurrock	14.5%	11.3%
PCT	13.1%	10.0%
England	13.2%	9.6%

Table 1. NCMP 2008-09 coverage for Thurrock

There are various programmes commissioned to tackle Childhood Obesity in Thurrock:

Health Schools Programme

The National Healthy Schools Programme (HS) leads changes, at both a national and local level, in school environments, curricula and the wider school community that shape and develop schools as health promoting schools, with direct effects on the children and young people and staff within. The programme has 4 key strands that schools are required to address in order to be accredited as a 'Healthy School'. These are: Nutrition, Physical Activity, Personal, Social and health Education (PSHE) and Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

Thurrock has already achieved its healthy schools LAA target and currently has achieved 98% HS status. The HS coordinators are currently working with the last remaining school, pupil referral unit to ensure 100% HS status is achieved within Thurrock Locality.

Food for Life

Ockendon (Secondary) School has become a flagship school for the Food for Life Programme and has achieved the bronze award. In essence, this means that it has achieved a kite mark for the approach to Food in Schools and has received funding and ongoing support (from the Food for Life Programme) to enable this to take place.

The school will be working in partnership with the Food for Life Programme/partnership to promote an event to a number of schools in the autumn term 2010.

The purpose of the event is to promote the Food for Life programme and encourage additional schools to take part and register to commit to working through the award.

One of the aims of the Food for Life Programme is to increase the uptake of school meals. The healthy schools team has met with the regional co-ordinator for the Food for Life programme and will support this work in partnership with the Soil Association through the Food for Life Programme and the local flagship school.

Thurrock Catering Services has also just been awarded the Bronze award under the provision element from the Food for Life Programme. Standards to achieve the award cover many areas including the amount of freshly prepared foods and the amount of local produce used etc. The catering provider is also required to demonstrate its commitment to making links with local farms/providers of foodstuffs.

Enhanced Healthy Schools

Currently four Thurrock schools are engaged with the enhanced model of Healthy Schools. This work started in April 2010 and there is a structured timeline for working through the model designed to take up to three years to ensure measurable outcomes.

Within the enhanced programme schools are required to choose an area of work that they would like to prioritize.

The four primary schools engaged are:-

Benyon Primary School
Abbotts Hall Primary School
St Clere's,
The Ockendon,

All these schools have stated their school priority related to Emotional Health & Well-being citing the work of Weight Management & Healthy Eating respectively.

The schools will be working in partnership with the healthy schools to consider the outcomes/success indicators that they have chosen to evidence. The schools have already stated they would like to consider:-

- Tackling childhood obesity by improving awareness of good nutrition
- Improving the number of opportunities for children to exercise

- Consider provision – re: Eating environment
- Review out of school hour's provision for pupils in relation to breakfast clubs etc.

In terms of the remaining Thurrock Schools, there are six schools (all achieved HS status in 2006) who are currently working through the Annual Review element of the Healthy Schools Programme. The annual review is the process used to maintain Healthy Schools Status and requires schools to audit their provision through the Whole School Approach.

The nine areas relate to:-

1. Leadership & Management and managing change including Governors
2. Policy Development
3. Learning and Teaching, Curriculum Planning and Resourcing
4. School Culture and Environment
5. Giving Children and Young People a Voice
6. Provision of Support Services for Children and Young People
7. Staff's Continuing Professional Development Needs, Health & Welfare
8. Partnerships with Parents/carers and local communities (covers parental support and community access from Extended services)
9. Assessing, Recording & reporting Children & Young People's Achievement

Within these areas there would be many aspects of Healthy Eating and Health & Well-being embedded through the questions/prompts auditing process for schools to consider their approach to weight management/physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

We have planned a phased approach to ensuring all school that are required to complete the annual review are given the opportunity to gain support from the Healthy Schools team.

Bike It Project

Bike It is focused on increasing cycling, in the knowledge that many children would like to cycle to school, but barriers may need to be overcome. In order to overcome these barriers Bike It Officers need high level support in the schools where they work and need an active school champion, as well as a supportive local authority. The project primarily focuses on Years 5,6 and 7. Bike It Officers select schools carefully and work in schools by:

- explaining the benefits of cycling
- contributing to classroom work
- addressing concerns about safety and liability with the help of the local authority and other partners
- sharing good practice with school management teams
- organising practical cycling activities; and
- generating positive publicity.

Bike It Officers encourage and support cycle training that is provided by local authorities and are active in encouraging schools to adopt Bike ability the new national standard for cycle training.

Hands Up surveys were conducted at schools in Thurrock at the start of (PRE) and at the end of (POST) the academic year 2008-2009 and total number of pupils surveyed was 807. The data for 2009-10 will be available by October 2010.

Based on Hands Up surveys conducted at Chafford Hundred, Quarry Hill, Warren Primary and Woodside Primary schools in 2008-09, figure 1, shows 34% of pupils cycle to school regularly (Everyday and once or twice a week or more) compared to 21% before Bike It project. The results for 2009-10 should be available in autumn 2010.

Due to financial difficulty Bike It was unfortunately decommissioned from the current financial year (2010-11)

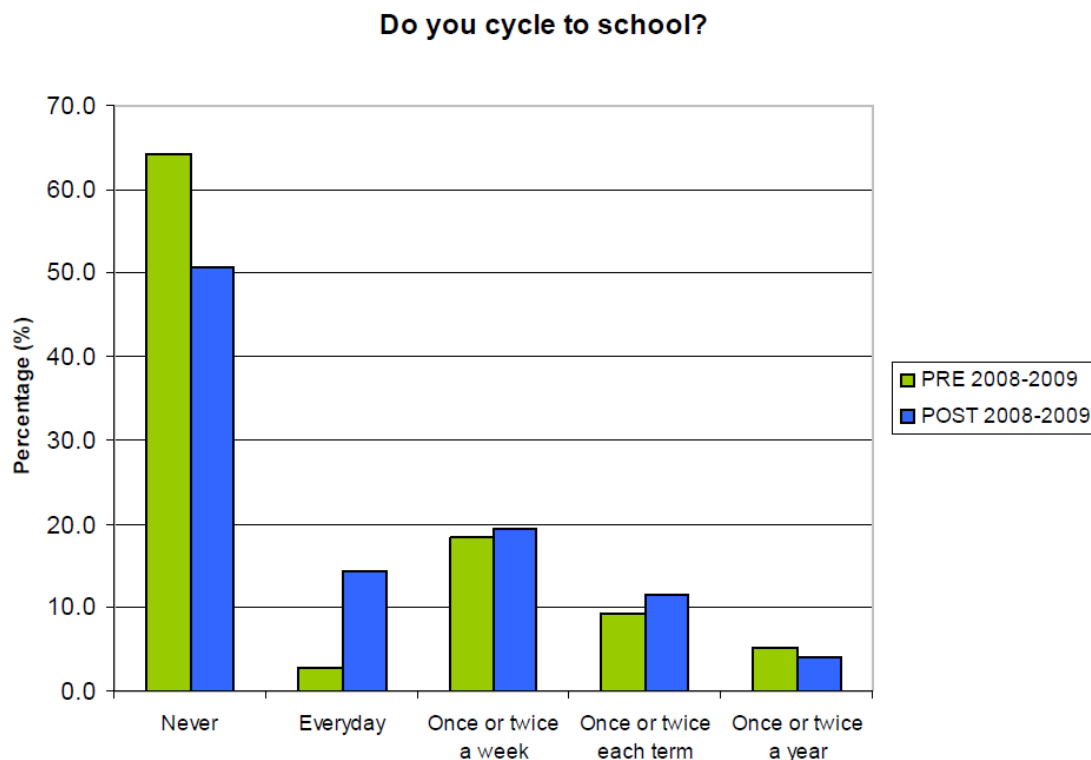


Figure 1 Survey results for 2008-09

MEND Programmes

MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do it!) is a social enterprise dedicated to reducing global overweight and obesity levels among children. Children and their families become fitter, healthier and happier by attending healthy living programme in the local community. Established in 2004, the MEND Programme was devised at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and the University College London

Institute of Child Health. MEND has three components – MEND 2-4, MEND 5-7 and MEND 7-13. NHS South West Essex commissions all the three components.

MEND 2-4s

Since January 2009, the Change4Life Team have co-ordinated and delivered 23 programmes across Thurrock. So far 103 families have completed the programme (attended 8 out of 10 sessions).

The number of sites that the programme is being delivered from is growing, thereby reaching a wider variety of families. Sites now include children's centres, toddler groups, church halls and school nurseries.

MEND 5-7s

MEND 5-7s is a relatively new programme, offering a supportive package for families with overweight children. Many of our referrals so far have come from the National Child Measurement Programme, where children in Reception year (and Year 6) are weighed and measured, with the results being sent to parents. MEND 5-7s offers a solution for parents who decide to take action upon receiving the weight information about their child.

2 programmes were delivered last year (April 2009 – March 2010), with 5 children completing the programme (attending 8 out of 10 sessions). A further 3 programmes are planned for delivery before April 2011.

MEND 7-13s

The MEND 7-13 LAA target was met in March 2010, with 152 families completing the programme over the 3 year period. Since January 2010, 5 programmes have been delivered in Thurrock, with 25 families completing the programme (attending 16 out of 20 sessions). Delivery sites include Impulse leisure centres, local Secondary schools and an outdoor activity centre (Grangewaters). The Grangewaters programme is open to 11-13 year olds and provides a more appropriate service to this age group, who were likely to drop-out of the standard course. Retention rates for 11-13 year olds has also improved.

MEND Graduates

After completing the MEND 7-13 programme, families move into the MEND graduate programme, which provides a reduced level of support for families to continue with their healthy lifestyles.

Families currently receive a free three month family leisure pass for Impulse Leisure centres. We are planning to trial a three month offer at Grangewaters as an alternative to the gym membership. The activity is monitored to determine whether families prefer this opportunity.

Children are also offered school holiday activities. For example, six Thurrock MEND graduate families took part in "Can Cook Will Cook" at Ashlyns Farm in July, where families spent a day cooking dishes with fresh ingredients

Children are re-measured throughout this period of support as a MEND graduate.

DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years) are then calculated as a measure of longer term health benefit gained from improving weight status. The MEND DALY target was met with a cumulative total of 25 DALYs calculated from the measurements taken.

Chef in Schools

Five Thurrock schools took part in the family-based cookery programme during the previous academic year (September 2009 – July 2010); Tilbury Manor, Somersheath, St Marys Tilbury, Herringham and Chadwell St Marys. These schools were offered the programme as the schools were in the most deprived quintile and had achieved Healthy Schools accreditation.

Each school received two programmes lasting six weeks of family-based cookery, with eight families attending each programme.

Initial feedback is positive. The short-term evaluation data is currently being analysed, with a further impact evaluation being planned for next academic year. This will include determining whether the schools will sustain the positive work started by Chef in Schools. The schools are given sustainability support (they are given the cooking equipment, a variety of suitable recipe ideas and signposted to funding possibilities e.g Lets Get Cooking through the Thurrock Food in Schools group).

The project has been commissioned for a further five schools during the current academic year (September 2010-July 2011) The first Thurrock School to receive the programme during the Autumn term will be Quarry Hill Junior School. The school has been chosen due to obesity prevalence figures, and complementing the “Total Place” work

Teen Weight Management

A healthy lifestyle project for overweight teens will be piloted in October 2010 at Gateway Academy. The course is being developed in-house using expertise from within the Change4Life Team and the wider Universal Services.

Key concepts of the programme will include self-monitoring (using FitBug technology and pedometers), inclusion of exercise that will be appealing for this age-group (e.g street combat and dance) and healthy eating advice tailored to the audience.

21st Century Playground Project

NHS South West Essex commissioned the ‘The Multi-skills Training Package’ (MSTP) Primary school resource designed by Education and Special Projects Ltd (ESP) to promote high quality fundamental movement skills (FMS) and structured activity within a playground environment. The scheme was implemented across 162 schools in south west Essex locality including 51 schools in Thurrock. The resource provides a variety of permanent playground markings, professional development opportunities for teachers, and associated resources to facilitate the delivery of playground activities. The ‘Talent Development in Physical Education and Sport’ (TDPEs) team at Leeds Metropolitan University were commissioned to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the MSTP.

Initial evaluation was carried out among 15 participating schools across south west Essex including three within Thurrock locality namely; Woodside, Stifford Clays and Lansdowne. A detailed evaluation is due in October 2010.

The results show that the installation has been associated with increased physical activity among active children. Further, more children were more highly engaged during playground time, including those who had previously been only lightly engaged.

Figure 2 illustrates that there has been 14.8% increase in Pupils engaging in high quality physical and 6.6% rise in girls being engaged in high quality physical activity since the installation of the project.

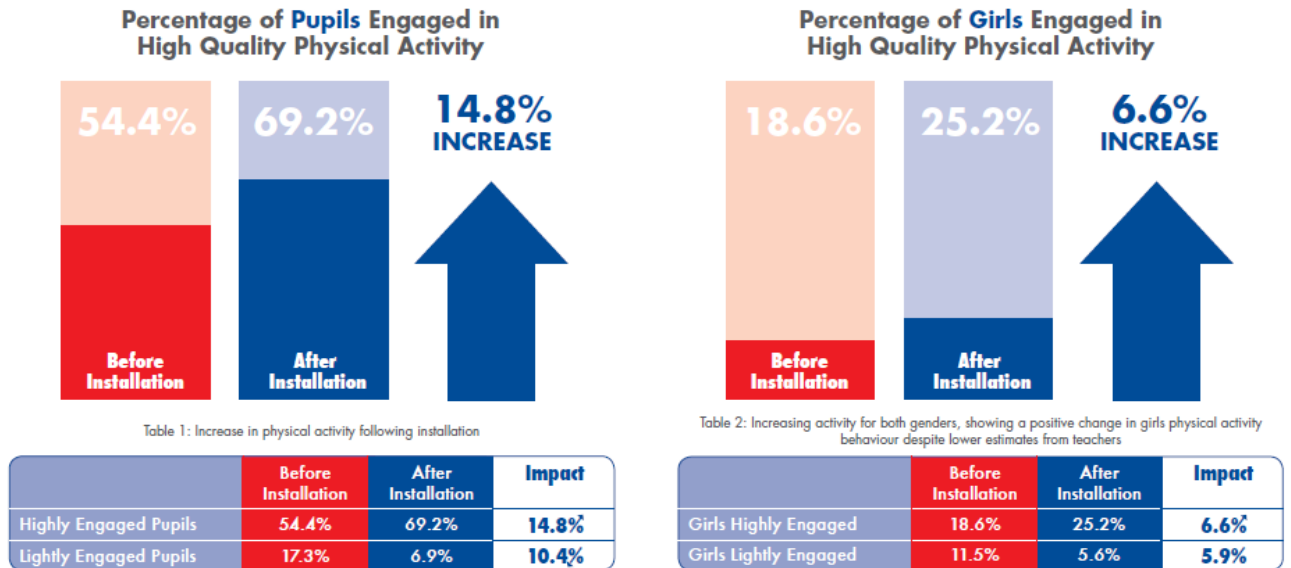


Figure 2 Increase in physical activity