



FIT FOR LIFE

A winning formula at Westbourne House helps pupils make the most of sport, says head of boys' sport, *Kevin Smith*

Here in the glorious Sussex countryside, just outside Chichester, we are passionate about sports. For Westbourne House, it's not just about encouraging children to excel but also to love sport – and all kinds of activity – throughout their lives. There are nine pillars on which our platform rests, and just like players in a team, these concepts work together to create a winning formula. So how do we do it?

1. CO-OPERATION: Team sports help children develop a special skill in co-operation which is a key foundation for good working relationships and friendships. Playing sport is one of the best ways to develop children's skills in working together for a common aim as they learn to communicate clearly, listen to each other, encourage everyone to join in, and be a leader one day and a follower the next.

2. PERSEVERANCE: Our ethos in sport helps children learn to keep a positive mindset, even in the face of setbacks. Children work towards goals, without giving up, whether this is endeavouring to win more hockey matches, to get a personal best in a cross-country event or develop a fantastic spin bowling technique in cricket.

3. WINNING: Do we have a healthy approach to competition or is it all about the winning? As well as aiming to take first place, our children are learning there are other advantages to games and matches. These include visiting

different schools in this and other countries (Holland and South Africa), meeting new people and becoming friends, enjoying doing your best and having fun along the way.

4. BEING MODEST WITH SUCCESS: While we celebrate our achievements and enjoy them, we encourage our pupils to be proud but modest with their success. It can be hard to be humble when you've just scored an amazing goal. However, in life, being modest is a great skill, twinned with confidence in yourself and your abilities.

5. COPING WITH ADVERSITY: Our children don't fail, they learn. It is often said

that when you experience difficulties, you are one step closer to succeeding. Losing never feels great, but we encourage children not to dwell on the disappointment. By looking at what we could do better, we can learn from it then adapt and improve.

6. BEING AN AMBASSADOR AND HOST:

Our pupils really look forward to the match day experience. This includes meeting and greeting our opponents, playing hard and fair, and enjoying the post-match debriefing and tea. Additionally, when our children go to other schools for sports matches, they represent Westbourne House. We often receive positive feedback about our good sporting behaviour.

7. LEADERSHIP: Inter-house competitions provide an excellent chance for many different children to try their hand at leadership. It is wonderful to see the captains taking their role so seriously and rallying every member of the house with incredible warm-up routines and well thought out plans for rotating players and ensuring there is fair play.

8. CONFIDENCE: We believe in sport for all. Our experienced coaches work with our pupils across the age groups day in day out and know their skills extremely well. The coaches rotate through the teams to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to improve.

At Westbourne you can be a hero in any of our teams, perform well at any level and the whole school celebrates the success.

9. LIFELONG LOVE OF BEING ACTIVE:

At the end of the day, being active is healthy and being outside in the fresh air is important for children's mental and physical health. Every day our children take part in sport lessons, running around, having fun and getting fit which we hope will inspire a love of activity to last forever.

Kevin Smith is Head of Boys' Sport, Westbourne House School, Chichester ■

