

Little Sticks Research (2025)

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary presents the key findings from Sheffield Hallam University's (SHU) second year of research into the Little Sticks programme. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, including 30 qualitative interviews with teachers and Mentors, an online survey of 36 school staff, and case studies in three schools. This data was analysed alongside Majesticks GC programme-wide survey responses from 50 schools, including 969 post-reflective surveys and 357 pre/post comparisons. Aggregated results provide a reliable picture of programme reach and impact across 191 participating schools in 2024-25.

Programme Impact

The Little Sticks programme continues to generate substantial and wide-ranging benefits, emerging as a highly valued and sustainable part of school PE. Evidence from SHU interviews, school surveys and Majesticks' quantitative data shows strong gains in confidence, resilience, communication, and social skills, alongside improved behaviour, motivation and engagement.

Pupil engagement is consistently high. Teachers report that golf appeals to pupils who are less confident in traditional sports, including girls, EAL pupils, and those with SEND. The format, including small groups, individual progress, and clear routines, reduces pressure, supports calm behaviour, and allows all pupils to experience success. Schools report that the values underpinning Little Sticks, including respect, resilience, and fairness, are consistently demonstrated by pupils and often transfer into classroom learning and wider school culture.

Majesticks' programme-wide assessments show marked improvements: confidence to achieve goals (+20%), resilience (+12%), teamwork (+12%), interest in new things (+13%), and persistence in problem-solving (+15%). Post-reflective outcomes reinforce these findings, with pupils reporting increased confidence, patience, inclusion, and listening skills, and one-third expressing an interest in continuing golf beyond school. Teachers also note improvements in communication, creativity, independence, and self-reflection, particularly among SEND cohorts.

Teachers also benefit. The structured resources and supportive mentoring build confidence to deliver unfamiliar content, help diversify the PE curriculum, and support wider school priorities such as inclusion, personal development and wellbeing. Overall, the impact of Little Sticks extends beyond PE lessons, contributing positively to the whole school.

Programme Delivery

Little Sticks has been successfully adopted across a variety of contexts, reaching 20,628 pupils in 2024-25. Schools use a mix of approaches: curriculum lessons, clubs, and taster events, with many integrating golf directly into PE. The programme is seen as easy to deliver due to its clear structure, high-quality equipment, and fit with Complete PE. Teachers highlight strong pupil engagement, particularly when lessons emphasise ownership, clear routines, and visible progress.

Practical delivery is flexible and adaptable. Schools use indoor and outdoor spaces creatively, from rolling and putting stations indoors, to multi-hole courses outdoors. Equipment quality is consistently praised, and schools often train pupils to support setup and pack-down. Where digital access is limited outdoors, teachers rely on printed lesson cards, showing adaptability and confidence in using the materials.

Mentor support plays an important enabling role, helping schools get started, modelling sessions, and providing reassurance to staff new to golf. SHU survey data shows that 91% of staff feel supported by their Mentor, and 100% feel supported by Majesticks overall. Some schools request additional modelling and occasional refresher visits, though most feel the existing level of support is appropriate.

Curriculum Embedding and Sustainability

Many schools now embed Little Sticks directly into their curriculum, supported by the structured Complete PE schemes of work, senior leadership approval, and strong pupil demand. SHU survey data shows that 61% of schools see the programme as embedded, with key enablers including equipment quality, staff confidence, and consistency of resources. Schools report that golf aligns well with curriculum aims, especially in relation to personal development, inclusion, and core skill development.

Challenges remain, but they are manageable. Staff turnover can reduce confidence, some schools have limited storage or outdoor space, and timetable pressures occasionally restrict delivery. However, schools address these through clear routines, pupil sports leaders, printed reference materials, and careful planning. Overall,

most teachers consider Little Sticks to be highly sustainable due to its simplicity, enjoyment factor, and strong alignment with school values.

Use of Resources

Resources are central to the programme's success. The SHU survey highlights that teachers use equipment and lesson plans extensively, with 97% stating that these materials are essential for delivery. The Complete PE plans are viewed as easy to follow and well-structured, allowing staff with no golf background to teach confidently. The professional feel of the equipment contributes significantly to pupil engagement.

Schools suggest potential enhancements, including more video demonstrations, simple one-page lesson summaries, additional resources for SEND and younger pupils, and occasional extra equipment for larger groups. Despite this, very few items go unused, and the resources are regarded as high-quality, durable, and impactful.

Partnership Working

Many schools work with external partners such as School Sport Partnerships (SSPs), local golf clubs, and coaching organisations. These partnerships provide technical expertise, CPD, event coordination, and pathways into community golf. While helpful, partnerships are not essential for delivery; most schools emphasise that sustainable implementation comes from teacher-led sessions supported by strong resources and Mentor guidance. The most effective model is a balance, where external partners complement, rather than replace, school staff.

Youth Voice

Pupil voice plays a strong role in shaping delivery. Pupils provide feedback on activities, help design courses, and take on leadership roles such as equipment setup and scoring. Schools note that pupils, especially girls and less-active students, find golf exciting and inclusive. Pupil leadership strengthens both engagement and sustainability, creating ownership.

Key Recommendations

The research identified a number of opportunities to strengthen the programme:

- Enhance outdoor-friendly teaching materials, including one-page lesson summaries.
- Increase Mentor modelling, particularly in early stages, through model lessons and optional refresher sessions.
- Develop a Mentor pack to ensure consistent support across regions.
- Introduce a Young Leaders programme to formalise pupil leadership roles and support sustainability.
- Expand inclusion resources for SEND pupils and younger learners.
- Provide clearer guidance on equipment maintenance and replacement to support long-term planning.
- Strengthen community outreach and signposting, with Mentors serving as regional links to local golf clubs and facilities.

Conclusion

The Little Sticks programme is now a well-established, inclusive and high-impact component of school PE. It engages a wide range of pupils, develops valuable life skills, and supports schools in achieving curriculum and wellbeing priorities. Its strengths lie in its clear structure, high-quality resources, adaptable delivery, and values-driven approach. With consideration of the recommendations above, Little Sticks is well positioned to continue delivering significant and sustainable impact in the years ahead.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report from Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) provides a detailed insight into the research findings from our second year of impact research into the Little Sticks programme. The research aimed to evaluate the programme to better understand the processes and impact of the programme, in particular the integration of Little Sticks into the curriculum and also the impact of the addition of regional Mentors on programme delivery.

2. METHODOLOGY

The mixed methods approach on which our research findings are based is outlined below:

- Qualitative interviews conducted by SHU with key stakeholders (school delivery staff and Mentors) involved in the programme delivery across schools (n=30).
- An online survey of school delivery staff distributed by SHU (n=36).
- Case studies conducted by SHU across three different schools involved in the programme.
- This report also incorporates data that has been collected by Majesticks GC from 50 schools using standardised surveys, with 969 post-reflective survey responses and 357 pre/post comparative responses completed by 96 of the 191 schools participating in the Little Sticks Programme across the 2024-25 academic year. Programme-wide totals have been calculated by applying the average impact percentages from responding schools across the full cohort of 191 schools to provide an estimated total reach and impact.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1. Programme Impact

The impact of the Little Sticks programme is wide ranging and is the most significant theme reported by schools. Evidence shows clear benefits for pupils, staff, and whole school culture. This section draws together detailed findings with quotes to show the depth of change taking place, including marked improvements in confidence, resilience, communication and social skills.

Impact on pupils

Teachers consistently describe high levels of pupil engagement. Pupils who are usually less active or reluctant to take part in PE often engage with golf. The individual focus and small group nature means there is less pressure and more opportunity for success. School staff highlight improvements in confidence, social skills, and willingness to try new activities. Pupils also develop core physical skills such as hand eye coordination, control, and balance, whilst some schools report calmer behaviour in golf sessions compared with team games.

“Children who never join in football are active and smiling in golf. They finally feel part of PE.” Teacher

“Confidence grows quickly. Even those who struggle in PE succeed when they see progress in hitting targets.” PE Lead

“Behaviour is calmer. Pupils know routines and respect each other’s turns.” PE lead

Pupils also benefit from the values embedded in the programme. Respect, resilience, and fairness are highlighted by school staff as key outcomes. Pupils show greater sportsmanship, celebrate each other’s successes, and handle setbacks more positively. Several schools say the values are carried into other lessons and whole school life.

“We hear pupils using the word resilience in class now. They link it back to golf.” Teacher

“Respect is visible. Pupils cheer each other on, which is not always the case in PE.” Teacher

“The values fit our school ethos. Golf has reinforced what we already try to teach.” Headteacher

Development of life skills

Schools highlight the way golf builds life skills. Resilience is the most cited, with pupils learning to try again after missed shots. Teamwork grows through paired and group activities, while respect is reinforced through routines such as waiting turns and celebrating others. Staff note that pupils become more reflective, understanding how effort links to progress. These skills are seen as transferable beyond PE into classroom learning and social behaviour.

Majesticks' programme-wide pre- and post-assessments show notable progress, including a 20% increase in pupils' confidence to achieve their goals, a 12% rise in resilience, a 13% increase in interest in new things, a 12% improvement in teamwork, and a 15% uplift in problem-solving persistence. Post-reflective survey results further reinforce these gains: 78% of participants reported feeling confident in achieving their goals, 77% recognised that patience leads to success, 85% felt that golf is an inclusive activity, 78% recorded improved listening skills, and 36% expressed an intention to continue playing golf in the future.

SHU survey responses echo these findings, highlighting high engagement from EAL and SEND pupils, strong improvements in communication, independence and creativity, increased interest in golf beyond the school environment, and noticeable developments in behaviour and self-reflection. These outcomes align closely with qualitative feedback describing calmer behaviour, inclusive participation, and meaningful personal growth in resilience and respect.

"They learn resilience every lesson. If they miss, they try again. That is powerful." PE lead

"Teamwork comes through clearly. Pupils support partners and give advice." Teacher

"The respect element carries into class. Pupils listen better and share more." Headteacher

Inclusion

One of the strongest impacts is how inclusive the programme is. Staff repeatedly say that girls engage strongly and often outperform boys. Pupils with SEND also take part successfully, especially when activities are adapted to focus on coordination and control rather than power. Teachers describe golf as a leveller where different abilities can succeed side by side. The adaptable equipment allows for safe play indoors and outside, so no group is excluded.

"Girls really enjoy golf. It is less intimidating than big team games." PE lead

"Our SEND pupils thrive. They can roll and aim in ways that give them success." SEND teacher

"Golf feels fairer. Pupils who are not sporty find they can achieve." Teacher

Several schools provide examples that illustrate impact. One primary describes a Year 6 pupil who usually refuses PE but became fully engaged in golf, later joining a club. Another SEND school reports that golf helped non-verbal pupils engage socially, using signals and turn taking. One PE lead noted that golf engaged pupils who disliked competitive games, giving them a sense of achievement.

"One pupil who refused PE now asks when golf is next. It has changed his attitude." Teacher

"Our SEND pupils used golf to interact when they normally stay separate. It gave them a shared activity." SEND PE Lead

"Golf reached pupils who do not enjoy competitive sports. They left lessons feeling successful." PE Lead

Impact on teaching and school priorities

The programme impacts teachers by increasing their confidence to deliver new content. Staff feel supported by resources and appreciate that golf broadens their PE offer. Schools also report that golf helps them meet wider priorities, such as inclusion, wellbeing, and personal development, with some linking it directly to inspection frameworks by showing how it provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Others note that golf adds variety, which keeps both staff and pupils motivated.

"Teachers who were nervous about new sports now feel able to deliver. The plans give them confidence." PE Lead

"Golf supports our whole school priority on wellbeing. It calms pupils and gives them success." Headteacher

"This shows Ofsted that we have breadth in PE. Golf is part of our evidence." Deputy headteacher

Overall, the programme has a clear and positive impact. Pupils are more engaged, more confident, and more reflective. Teachers feel supported and see golf as adding value to their curriculum, whilst schools describe golf as a sustainable and inclusive activity that reaches pupils traditional sports sometimes miss. The combination of skills, values, and enjoyment means the impact of Little Sticks extends beyond PE into wider school life.

"The impact is clear. Pupils are active, engaged, and learning life skills." Headteacher

"Golf has become a key part of our PE offer. It is here to stay." PE Lead

3.2. Programme Delivery

Schools across primary and SEND contexts continue to successfully embed Little Sticks using a variety of methods, with some beginning with small pilots before rolling it out across year groups, while others place it firmly in their PE curriculum from the outset. This interview feedback aligns with Majesticks' programme-wide participation data showing that the programme reached 20,628 children across 191 schools in 2024/25, with an average of 108 pupils per school.

Schools are using three main approaches: timetabled curriculum blocks, extracurricular clubs, and whole-school tasters or festivals. Many combine these models, using clubs to practice routines before delivering full curriculum lessons. Several schools launch the programme during National Sports Week, creating visibility and excitement. Majesticks' programme-wide quantitative data supports the popularity of club-based delivery, with 41% (77 schools) delivering Little Sticks extra-curricular clubs involving 1,974 pupils. Sample quotes have been added in below to emphasise these findings.

"We introduced golf to Year 4 and 6 as part of their PE curriculum and also ran an after-school club every Friday, which was oversubscribed." Teacher

"We started with a trial club for one year group, then built it into the formal curriculum the following term." PE Lead

"We trial a club first, then teach the unit with my Year 4 class, finishing with a little championship. The club helps us get routines sorted before whole class delivery." Teacher

Staffing, timetabling and the role of Mentors

Delivery is most often led by class teachers or PE leads, sometimes supported by SSPs, Mentors, or external coaches. In many cases, Mentors model an initial session or provide CPD before handing school delivery to staff. Where schools already use Complete PE, integration is straightforward because staff simply swap out a previous unit for Little Sticks. In smaller schools, PE leads often share training through staff briefings and create easy to use lesson folders so colleagues can teach confidently. While some note small barriers such as survey administration or equipment storage, most resolve these through routines like pupil helpers, or pre-packed slimline kits with the essential equipment needed for that lesson.

"I map it into the summer term from Year 3 upwards, and our TA now uses the kit in multi sports clubs too." PE lead

"We run a staff meeting CPD outdoors, then team teach so the class teacher can take the reins the following week." Mentor

"Complete PE makes it seamless. We change the overview, slot golf into Year 4 and 6, and run an after school club that is oversubscribed." Teacher

Engaging young people through delivery

Teachers consistently highlight the way Little Sticks engages pupils of all abilities. SHU survey data reinforces this, showing strong feedback from pupils, including those who do not typically enjoy PE, who were "very engaged and successful" with golf. Many teachers also noted strong engagement from girls, who enjoy the small group format and values-based activities. Successful approaches build on three elements: pupil

ownership, clear routines, and visible progress. Pupils take responsibility by designing holes, setting up and packing away equipment, and rotating as guides or scorers. This ownership shifts teachers into the role of facilitators rather than constant instructors. Clear routines, such as safety zones and hand signals, keep behaviour calm and focused, often leading to smoother lessons than in other sports. Visible progress is evident through personal bests, hole by hole challenges, and class competitions.

"We step back. Pupils take ownership of setting up, rotating, scoring. Behaviour is the best we've had in PE, especially with Year 6 post SATS." Teacher

"Every child I speak to enjoys it because they have ownership of setting up. It becomes their activity." Mentor

"Starting with rolling and target games in the hall builds confidence. Then we move outdoors to bigger holes. Social skills and turn taking improve a lot." Teacher

Practicalities, spaces and adaptations

Little Sticks works effectively both indoors and outdoors. Indoors, staff focus on rolling and putting with clear lanes. Outdoors, they run longer launches and multi hole courses. Equipment is consistently praised for quality and durability, though learning to pack efficiently takes practice and a bit of extra time than anticipated in many cases. Many schools address this by training pupils to manage the equipment. Where digital screens are unavailable outdoors, teachers adapt by printing lesson cards and moving values discussions to tutor time. Schools with limited space or uneven grounds adapt with staggered tee times, zone based courses, and creative use of cones and hazards. Smaller schools often extend access through lunchtime sessions, allowing younger pupils to experiment and older pupils to take on leadership roles.

"Indoors we focus on rolling with clear lanes. Outside we scale to multi hole courses. Pupils also learn to pack the flags, and clock faces back into the bags." Mentor

"Where screens aren't available outdoors, we shift the values discussion to pre lesson briefings and keep field time for activity." PE lead

"We create a pack in hand folder: printed lesson plans and key values so teachers can run sessions without needing devices." PE lead

3.3. Mentor Support

Mentors play an important role in helping schools build confidence with Little Sticks, although the amount of direct contact varies. In some schools Mentors model a first session, provide CPD, or share advice by email and phone. In others, support is lighter, with schools able to deliver independently once training and equipment are in place. Where Mentors are available, school staff value their reassurance, especially when golf is new to them. Mentors also help schools adapt lessons to their spaces and suggest ways to link activities back to school priorities. SHU survey data reinforces this, showing that 91% of teachers feel supported by their Little Sticks Mentor, and 100% feel supported by Majesticks overall.

"We ran a staff meeting CPD outdoors, then team taught so the class teacher could take the reins the following week." Mentor

"Jordan sent follow up emails after training to check in and offer support if needed." Teacher

"Our School Games Organiser has been our point of contact. If we are unsure, they are at the end of an email." PE Lead

Most staff report that the level of support they receive is enough. The combination of a good training day, clear resources on Complete PE, and reliable equipment means schools can usually manage without heavy ongoing input. Where staff already have some golf experience, they feel especially confident to deliver. However, teachers who are less familiar with golf sometimes ask for more structured follow up, such as Mentors coming in to model lessons or observe delivery. The option of extra input is seen as a safeguard even if not always taken up.

"The training was really good. Equipment arrived quickly and we got started straight away." Teacher

"Because the programme on Complete PE is clear, it has been easy to set up in school." PE Lead

"I have a golf background, so I feel confident. But I know staff without that might need more support." Teacher

The most common suggestion for improvement is for Mentors to spend more time modelling lessons with school staff, particularly in schools where teachers are less confident with golf. School staff also suggest occasional refresher sessions or regional CPD days to share practice. A small number mention that Mentor visits could also include observation and feedback to strengthen teacher confidence. Others propose Mentors help link schools with local golf clubs, widening the pathway for pupils beyond school.

"If Mentors could come in and model a session for staff that would be ideal." Deputy headteacher and PE Lead

"Some in house training would help those who do not have a golf background." Teacher

"It would be good if Mentors could help set up links with local golf clubs for pupils who want to continue." PE Lead

3.4. Embedding Little Sticks into the Curriculum

Feedback shows that many schools now embed Little Sticks directly into their PE curriculum, with 61% of SHU survey respondents stating that Little Sticks is embedded in their curriculum. Teachers report that the structured lesson plans in Complete PE make the integration simple and allow them to build golf into long term planning. Some schools use it as part of their summer term PE sequence so that outdoor space can be used to full effect, while SEND schools focus on core skills like coordination, turn taking, and resilience.

"We replaced Tri Golf with Little Sticks in our scheme of work. The equipment and plans made it easy to make the change." PE Lead

"We plan golf into the summer term for Years 3 to 6. It sits alongside athletics and rounders as a key outdoor unit." Teacher

"In our SEND school we use the programme to build simple coordination and teamwork skills. The structure helps staff know where to start." SEND PE Lead

Success factors for integration

Key success factors include leadership support, clear lesson plans, and high-quality equipment. Staff note that because equipment is ready to use and resources are easy to follow, they feel able to teach golf even without prior experience. The values focus also links well with wider school aims, giving staff confidence to justify the unit in curriculum plans. Another success factor is the adaptability of activities, which can be scaled up or down depending on class size, ability, and space.

"The equipment is high quality and easy to set up. That makes staff less nervous about trying something new." PE Lead

"The values link directly to our school vision. We highlight respect and resilience in assemblies and lessons." Teacher

"Because the activities are adaptable, we can use them in the hall or on the field without losing the main focus." PE Lead

Barriers to integration

While most schools integrate the programme smoothly, several recurring challenges relate to logistics, space and staff confidence. Limited or uneven outdoor areas make it harder to set up full courses, and large amounts of equipment can extend setup and pack-away time, particularly for staff who are new to the programme or less confident with golf. Timetable pressures, especially where PE time is already constrained, can make it difficult to fit golf alongside core areas of the PE National Curriculum, and limited internet access outdoors often leads teachers to rely on printed resources instead of digital materials. A few schools mention the need for ongoing encouragement from Mentors to keep golf on the agenda. Where leadership support is weaker, programmes are slower to embed.

Staff turnover can also disrupt continuity, requiring additional induction or refresher training. Weather conditions add another layer of unpredictability, and behaviour management becomes more demanding in larger classes. Despite these barriers, many schools address them effectively by training pupils as sports leaders, adapting activities to smaller spaces and using printed lesson cards to support delivery.

"Packing away takes a while until pupils know the routine. We solved it by teaching them how to do it." Teacher
"Online access outside is patchy, so we print off lesson cards." PE Lead
"Time is always tight. Golf sometimes competes with football and athletics for space on the timetable." PE lead
"We have limited flat space outdoors, so we adapt with cones and shorter holes." Teacher
"When staff leave it can set us back because new teachers have not had the training." PE Lead
"Some staff do not feel confident with golf. The training helps but follow up would make a difference." Teacher
"Without the head pushing it, it would have been harder to prioritise." PE lead

Feedback on Complete PE

Feedback on the Complete PE schemes of work is positive, whilst the SHU survey highlights that 92% rate the Complete PE schemes of work as "excellent" (36%) or "good" (56%). Teachers find the plans easy to follow and value the clear progression. Many highlight that the golf unit fits naturally with the other PE content, so it doesn't feel like an add on. Some schools suggest adding more video examples and visual aids for younger pupils or staff less familiar with golf. A few requested simpler one page lesson guides for quick reference during lessons.

"The lesson plans are clear and step by step. I can pick them up and deliver without much extra prep." Teacher
"Complete PE is strong, but more video demos would help when introducing a new skill." PE Lead
"We would like single page summaries so staff can refer to them quickly in the lesson." Deputy headteacher and PE Lead

3.5. Participation

Schools take part in the Little Sticks programme for a mix of reasons. Leadership support is one of the strongest drivers. Where headteachers and senior leaders value the broadening of the curriculum, golf is quickly adopted and supported with timetable space and staff training. Another factor is the appeal of the content. Many schools say golf feels fresh compared with traditional sports and offers an inclusive activity that pupils may not otherwise experience. Resource availability also plays a role. The fact that equipment and lesson plans are provided removes barriers that might stop schools introducing a new sport. Several schools mention that the link with Complete PE reassures them about progression and alignment with curriculum goals.

Participation in Little Sticks is driven by strong pupil enthusiasm, committed leadership support, and the appeal of golf as a new and inclusive sport. Majesticks' programme-wide data demonstrates substantial reach, with 20,628 pupils taking part, including 28% eligible for free school meals, 24% with SEND, and 22% from ethnic minority backgrounds.

"Our head was keen for us to widen the sports offer. Little Sticks fitted perfectly." PE lead
"Golf is new for our pupils. They enjoy that it is different from the usual sports." Teacher
"Having the kit and plans ready made it a lot easier to get started." Deputy headteacher

Furthermore, a strong motivation is the chance to engage less-active pupils. Teachers report that children who may not join in with football or netball often enjoy the different format of golf. The small-sided nature and focus on individual improvement makes it less intimidating. Another motivation is the link to values. Schools want to teach resilience, respect, and fairness, and school staff see golf as a strong vehicle for this. In some areas, schools are motivated by opportunities for festivals or links to wider sporting events, which add excitement and recognition for pupils.

"Some pupils who never engage in team games love golf. It gives them a chance to shine." Teacher
"The values match what we are already trying to build in school." PE Lead
"Festivals give pupils something to work towards and celebrate their efforts." PE lead

Overall, participation is strongest where leadership, staff, and pupils all see value in the programme. Once a school commits, the combination of good training, strong resources, and pupil enthusiasm helps overcome most barriers. The desire to broaden opportunities and engage all pupils is a shared theme across schools. Whilst some logistical challenges exist, schools show creativity in adapting activities and making golf part of their offer.

“Once we decided to do it, it became part of our school identity. Pupils look forward to golf lessons.” Headteacher

“We see Little Sticks as a long-term part of our curriculum, not just a short project.” PE Lead

3.6. Engagement with Resources

Schools make regular and extensive use of the Little Sticks resources, with 97% of SHU survey respondents reporting that these materials are important for enabling delivery. The equipment packs and the Complete PE lesson plans are consistently highlighted as the most valued components. Teachers use the equipment in nearly every session, adapting it for both indoor halls and outdoor spaces, with flags, targets and putters featuring across PE lessons, clubs and enrichment activities. The lesson plans are frequently printed for outdoor use or accessed on tablets indoors, while activity cards help staff differentiate tasks for mixed-ability groups.

“We use the equipment every week in summer term PE. The flags and targets are easy to set up, and pupils love them.” PE lead

“Complete PE gives me a clear structure. I print the plans so I can take them outside.” Teacher

“We share the kit across the whole school. Each class gets a block in the timetable.” PE Lead

SHU survey feedback strongly reinforces the importance of these resources. Teachers describe the equipment as “fantastic”, “high quality”, and “an excellent hook”, noting that the professional feel of the kit encourages pupils to take golf seriously. Quantitative data reflects these views: 92% of SHU survey respondents report using the Complete PE resources, 69% use the activity booklets, and 97% consider the resources essential for delivery. Many teachers emphasise that without the structured plans and ready-made equipment, they would be unlikely to teach golf at all. The durability and clarity of the materials reduce planning workload, support teachers who lack prior golf experience, and contribute to consistent, well-organised sessions.

“The equipment is brilliant. Pupils are excited to use it, and it makes set up quick.” PE lead

“The resources guide you clearly. I can pick them up and deliver confidently.” Teacher

“The lesson plans cut my planning time. I can walk into a lesson and feel prepared.” Teacher

“The values give the programme a clear purpose beyond sport. We link them to our school ethos.” PE Lead

Although highly valued, teachers also suggest additions that would further strengthen the resource offer. Many request more visual aids, especially short video demonstrations of techniques, alongside simple one-page lesson summaries that are easy to use outdoors. Some schools would welcome extra equipment to run larger groups or share kit with partners, while others ask for activities tailored to younger pupils or those with additional needs, featuring simpler targets and shorter distances.

“Video examples would help a lot, especially for staff new to golf.” PE lead

“A quick reference sheet for each lesson would be handy outdoors.” Teacher

“We could use a second set of equipment so more classes can use it at the same time.” Deputy headteacher

“Some extra activities for younger years would help us include them more.” PE Lead

Only a small number of items are used less frequently. Certain warm-up cards are sometimes replaced with teachers’ own routines, and not all targets are used when space is limited. Online surveys and digital tools can also be impractical outdoors where internet access is restricted, leading staff to adapt or simplify these elements. However, schools report that very little goes unused.

"We do not use all the warm-up cards. Sometimes we use our own activities instead." Teacher
"Space is limited so we do not always set up every target. We pick the ones that fit best." PE Lead
"Online surveys are tricky outside. We adapted by printing simple versions." Teacher

Overall, the resources are central to the programme's success. They lower barriers, increase teacher confidence and make golf engaging and accessible for pupils. The combination of high-quality equipment and structured lesson plans allows golf to become a meaningful part of the curriculum rather than a one-off activity.

"Without the kit we would not run golf. It makes the difference between thinking about it and actually doing it." Teacher
"The resources are the reason we can run the programme confidently. They turn an idea into a reality." PE Lead
"Pupils respond to the quality of the kit. It makes lessons feel important and valued." PE Lead

3.7. Partnership Working

A number of schools have developed partnerships with external organisations to support their Little Sticks delivery, drawing on the expertise of local golf clubs, SSPs, Active Partnerships and external coaching organisations. Some schools benefit from taster sessions led by golf professionals, while others use community coaches to run lunchtime or after-school clubs. Partnerships with school sport networks often provide practical support such as coordinating training, distributing equipment and organising festivals. Although not all schools work with external partners, those that do generally value the additional expertise and capacity they offer.

"Our local golf pro came in to run a taster day. Pupils loved it and staff picked up tips for their own lessons." Teacher
"We work with our School Games Organiser who supports delivery and connects us to events." PE Lead
"A coach runs a lunchtime club using the Little Sticks kit, which keeps interest high outside curriculum lessons." Teacher
"The golf coach gave us new ways of explaining grip and stance. That made a real difference." PE Lead
"Working with the School Sport Partnership means we do not feel isolated. We know help is there if needed." Teacher

SHU survey findings highlight a range of partnership models, including SSP-led training, twilight sessions delivered by Mentors, taster days provided by golf professionals, and event coordination through School Games Organisers (SGOs). However, partnership effectiveness can vary. Some schools find that external coaches are not always consistently available, making long-term planning difficult, while others prefer to keep delivery in-house to ensure staff develop the confidence and skills needed for sustainable implementation. Many schools adopt a balanced approach: external partners contribute to taster sessions, festivals and occasional enrichment activities, while teachers lead curriculum delivery. This model allows schools to draw on specialist expertise without becoming dependent on outside providers.

"It is important that our own teachers deliver so that pupils see golf as part of their normal curriculum." PE Lead
"The external coach inspired the pupils, but now we continue it ourselves." Teacher
"A blend works best. Coaches add expertise but staff keep it sustainable." PE Lead

Overall, partnerships add value but are not essential to core delivery. Schools that use them appreciate the technical knowledge, inspiration and community links they provide, yet most emphasise that the programme is most sustainable when embedded within regular PE provision and led by school staff. External partners are most effective when they complement, rather than replace, teacher-led delivery.

3.8. Youth Voice

Many schools actively involve pupils in shaping how Little Sticks is delivered. Teachers ask for feedback during and after lessons, and pupils are encouraged to share which activities they enjoy most. In some schools, pupils help design mini courses or suggest rule variations, giving them a sense of ownership. Pupil leaders are often given responsibilities such as setting up equipment, recording scores, or demonstrating activities to younger classes. This not only builds leadership skills but also ensures that delivery reflects pupil interests.

"We asked pupils what they enjoyed most, and they said creating their own holes. That shaped our next set of lessons." PE lead
"Pupils give feedback at the end of sessions. They tell us what works and what they would like more of." Teacher
"Our sports leaders set up the kit and explained games to younger pupils. It gave them real confidence." PE Lead

Feedback from pupils is highly positive. They enjoy the novelty of golf compared with traditional sports and value the chance to try something different. Pupils comment that the equipment feels professional and makes the sessions exciting. Girls in particular say they feel included and enjoy the format, which often involves pairs or small groups rather than large competitive teams. Pupils also note that they like the values focus, and understand how respect, resilience, and fairness link to the games they play.

"It is different from football and netball. We get to try something new." Pupil feedback, reported by teacher
"The clubs are fun because we play with friends and make our own games." Pupil feedback, reported by teacher
"I like the respect part. We cheer each other on even if we miss." Pupil feedback, reported by PE lead

Teachers act on pupil voice by adjusting lesson content and delivery style. If pupils enjoy certain activities, those are repeated or built into competitions. Where pupils ask for more challenge, staff increase distances or add scoring systems. When feedback highlights a need for more time on basics, lessons are adapted accordingly. Schools also use pupil leaders to run lunchtime golf clubs or taster sessions for younger classes, extending the reach of the programme and building an approach where pupils shape the experience.

"When pupils asked for more competitive games, we created a mini league." PE lead
"Younger pupils now have a lunchtime club run by Year 6 leaders. That idea came from pupil voice." PE Lead
"We slowed down the early lessons because pupils wanted more time on putting before moving to long shots." Teacher

Youth voice strengthens delivery by making lessons more engaging and relevant. When pupils feel they influence activities, they are more motivated to take part. Teachers see pupil leadership as a major benefit, with older pupils modelling skills and values for younger ones. Involving young people also supports sustainability, as enthusiasm from pupils encourages schools to keep the programme in place.

"Pupil enthusiasm drives this forward. When they ask for golf, it keeps it on the timetable." Headteacher
"Youth voice makes the programme stronger because pupils feel it belongs to them." PE Lead

3.9. Embedding and Sustainability

Schools identify several key factors that help establish and sustain Little Sticks, with leadership support emerging as particularly important for securing timetable space and prioritising staff training. Curriculum-wise, the programme integrates smoothly when lessons align with existing curriculum frameworks such as Complete PE, allowing golf to be planned as a long-term component rather than an add-on. Pupil enthusiasm also plays a central role; when children actively request golf, schools are more motivated to maintain regular delivery.

Early Mentor support helps build staff confidence so that teaching can continue independently, and SHU survey data reflects strong indicators of sustainability, with 61% of teachers reporting that the programme is already embedded, and noting staff enthusiasm, equipment quality and reliable access to kit as major enablers. Strategies such as staff CPD, sports leaders assisting with setup, consistent mapping across KS2, school-wide golf events and printed teaching folders for new staff further strengthen continuity.

"The head's support means golf has a fixed place in our summer term. That makes it sustainable." PE Lead
"Pupil demand keeps it alive. They want golf, so we keep teaching it." Teacher
"We have a folder with everything ready. Any teacher can pick it up and deliver." Headteacher
"Golf is now part of our Sports Week every year. It is embedded in the calendar." PE Lead

Challenges to long term sustainability

Some challenges remain. Staff turnover can lead to gaps in training, with new teachers less confident. Limited storage space for equipment is an issue in smaller schools. Funding for replacement kit in future years is also raised as a concern. A few schools worry that without continued reminders from Mentors or networks, golf might slip down the priority list.

“When staff move on, we have to start again with training.” PE Lead

“Storage is a problem. The bags are large and space is tight.” Teacher

“Funding for new kit in future years is something we need to plan for.” PE Lead

“Without reminders from the partnership, golf could be squeezed by other sports.” PE Lead

Despite these challenges, most schools believe the programme is sustainable because it is enjoyable, easy to deliver, and valued by pupils. Schools see it as an activity that meets curriculum needs, engages pupils, and fits with school values. While practical issues exist, these are generally manageable. The overall view is that golf is not a short-term project but a sustainable part of school sport provision.

“Little Sticks is now part of our identity. It will stay in the curriculum.” Headteacher

“The programme is sustainable because it works for pupils and staff. It has a clear place.” PE Lead

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthening resources for teachers

One of the clearest recommendations from schools is to make resources even easier to use in outdoor settings. While Complete PE provides strong lesson plans, staff often ask for one-page summaries and quick reference cards that they can carry onto the field. Providing these resources would give staff extra confidence, especially those without a golf background, and would reduce the amount of preparation time needed before lessons.

Build teacher confidence through Mentor support

Although most school staff feel confident after training, some express a desire for more direct modelling of lessons. Mentors could spend more time in schools, particularly at the start of delivery, to show staff how sessions look in practice. Teachers suggest that Mentors could run a model lesson and then debrief with staff, giving them practical advice and reassurance. This approach would help overcome initial nerves and would ensure that teachers without a golf background can deliver successfully.

Developing a Mentor pack

Linked to the above, a number of staff feel that the role of Mentors could be clearer. Producing a standard Mentor pack that sets out expectations, key messages, and a menu of support options would ensure consistency across regions and would help schools know exactly what support Mentors can provide. The pack could also include checklists for first visits, and advice on linking to curriculum priorities.

Introduce a Young Leaders programme

Several schools describe how older pupils already take informal roles in setting up equipment and leading activities. A formal Young Leaders programme designed specifically for Little Sticks would build on this enthusiasm and provide a clear pathway for pupil leadership. Such a programme could include training materials, badges or certificates, and structured roles for setting up lessons, supporting younger pupils, and running lunchtime clubs. This would give pupils responsibility, develop their leadership skills, and help sustain delivery by reducing workload for staff.

Expanding inclusion resources

Some school staff would like to see more activities tailored for younger year groups and for pupils with SEND. Additional large targets, simplified scoring systems, and alternative grips would make golf even more inclusive. Most schools value the adaptability of the current programme, but some feel more tailored activities would ensure that every pupil can experience success.

Planning for sustainability of equipment

Provide schools with clearer guidance on equipment maintenance and replacement. Teachers want to know how long equipment is expected to last and where to source replacements at affordable cost. Offering a replacement guide, approved suppliers, and storage tips would reassure schools that they can sustain delivery over the long-term. This would help schools plan financially and avoid any interruption to delivery once the initial kit wears out.

Strengthening community outreach and signposting

Schools are clear that pupils need visible pathways to continue golf outside school. A recommendation is to create a simple community outreach plan that maps local clubs, driving ranges, and sessions. Schools could be given signposting materials to share with parents, as well as ideas for taster events that involve local coaches. Clear signposting would ensure that children who develop an interest in golf through Little Sticks have the chance to pursue it further, supporting both participation and long-term impact. Although a community outreach plan may be straightforward in concept, the practical work involved would be substantial, and Mentors could provide the crucial regional link needed to make it happen.

5. RESEARCH SUMMARY

The Little Sticks programme is proving to be a valued and sustainable part of school PE. Across thirty SHU interviews, schools and Mentors describe a programme that is easy to deliver, highly engaging for pupils, and strongly aligned with whole school priorities. Its greatest strength lies in curriculum delivery, supported by clear lesson resources and high-quality equipment, which allow schools to integrate golf alongside other core units. Clubs and festivals add motivation and visibility, but it is the day-to-day lessons that deliver the biggest impact.

The impact on pupils is evident in raised confidence, calmer behaviour, and the development of life skills such as resilience, teamwork, and respect. Golf provides an inclusive platform where girls, SEND pupils, and those less engaged in traditional sports can also succeed. Teachers note that the values transfer beyond PE, influencing classroom behaviour and wider school culture. The programme also benefits staff, who gain confidence in teaching new content and feel supported by Mentors and resources.

Sustainability is supported by leadership commitment, integration with Complete PE, and the enthusiasm of pupils themselves. Where schools empower pupils as leaders, the programme embeds quickly and becomes part of long-term provision.

Challenges remain around staff turnover, timetable pressures, and the need for clearer community pathways, but these can be addressed through the recommendations set out in this report. Little Sticks is not a short-term initiative, but a practical, inclusive, and values driven programme that strengthens school sport. With continued attention to resource development, Mentor support, pupil leadership, and community links, it has the potential to deliver even greater impact in the years ahead.