

The Impact of Little Sticks at Rossmore Primary School

Best Practice in Delivering the Programme

Little Sticks has rapidly become a popular and exciting opportunity for primary schools looking to diversify their PE offer and give children access to a sport they may never have tried before. Rossmore Primary School stands out as an example of strong and engaging delivery, thanks to teachers Tom and Ashlea, supported by local Mentor Mark. Their approach highlights how Little Sticks can be embedded across a whole school, how teachers can successfully deliver it with confidence, and how pupils can thrive when exposed to the skill-based, highly inclusive programme of Little Sticks.

Getting started: training and building confidence

Teacher confidence plays a huge role in effective PE delivery. For Tom, the initial CPD from Majesticks provided exactly what was needed for immediate implementation. He described the training day as "*a great day... a really good experience*" where he and other teachers were taken through "*the whole curriculum in a nutshell*", beginning with simple activities and progressing to more advanced putting and course-building. Crucially, Tom noted that once he had physically handled the equipment and tested activities with adults, everything clicked. "*Once you actually get the equipment out... I felt quite confident with it really*", he explained, adding that delivering a staff meeting to colleagues further cemented his understanding and enthusiasm for whole-school uptake.

For Ashlea, teaching PE for the first time, the programme was accessible and unintimidating. She admitted she had been worried about teaching PE, as she had not often get to observe it as a student, but golf turned out to be the perfect starting point: "*it's been really nice... not too technical. It was nice to give them a calm activity instead of the usual high-energy sports*". - *Ashlea*

Effective teaching practice

Both teachers highlighted the importance of clear modelling, visual explanation, and a calm, structured delivery style as critical to success. Ashlea relied strongly on visual representation and step-by-step demonstrations: "*I'll always explain the game on the whiteboard first, draw the tee, draw the activity, then demonstrate it. That visual really helps them... so when we go outside, they already know what to do*". This approach prevented confusion and maximised practical time, a best-practice principle that other schools can easily adopt.

Tom also emphasised the impact of small group working, something built naturally into the Little Sticks activities. With lots of equipment across the playground, Tom found himself "*standing back and just watching them getting on so well*", as the children worked independently and collaboratively in their groups.

The nature of golf itself supported this. Ashlea discovered that Little Sticks "*takes the pressure off*" the teacher because the calm pace allows pupils to coach each other. This peer coaching became a highly valued part of the culture around Little Sticks at Rossmore, which was a really positive unintended outcome.

Making the most of the equipment

The Little Sticks kit is eye-catching and exciting. From inflatable targets to bright cones and multi-surface balls, it's safe to say the pupils love it. Tom recalled children's reaction to the equipment instantly creating a "*buzz*", especially because golf was entirely new to most of them. Ashlea echoed this: "*some of them have never played golf or mini golf... they were amazed and excited just to hold a golf club*".

While both teachers agreed the kit is excellent, they also acknowledged it can be time-consuming to set up. This was reinforced by mentor Mark, who noted: "*there is a lot of equipment... it's quite technical and it's very time-consuming packing it away*". Mark recommended schools consider "*an outdoor lock-up*" to keep equipment accessible and reduce set-up time. This practical insight is a strong piece of best practice: schools delivering Little Sticks most effectively are those who plan ahead for equipment organisation, ensuring there is sufficient time to set up and pack up the equipment.

Embedding Little Sticks in the curriculum

Rossmore's success stems from thoughtful long-term planning. As PE lead, Tom ensured the programme wasn't treated as a one-off project. Instead, it became part of the school's annual curriculum offer: "*every Key Stage 2 class last year had Little Sticks. Year 6 did it weekly for about six weeks. It's now on the long-term plan... I've got no intention of taking it off*". This creates consistency and ensures every child benefits, regardless of teacher preference or other curriculum pressures.

Mark, observing across ten schools, noticed the same pattern elsewhere: those who embed it effectively tend to implement it in Years 3 and 4 first, but "*you could use it across different classes too*", and many chose to extend into Year 2 or Year 6. This flexible, inclusive design is a major strength of the programme.

Impact on pupils' skills and confidence

Pupils were able to clearly articulate what they had learned. Their language, direct from the focus group, shows strong understanding of the fundamentals of golf:

"I learned to control the ball and aim using the putter".

"I didn't have good focus at first, but now I'm more focused and the ball doesn't go everywhere".

"I used to be bad at aiming... now I'm better at aim because of practice".

These are core physical skills transferable far beyond golf. Children repeatedly described feeling calm, happy and confident after sessions:

"It makes me feel calm because it's only you taking the shot".

"It's relaxing... easier because you have more control".

"I feel confident because you have to believe you can do it and stay calm".

This aligns closely with Tom's reflections that teamwork, behaviour, and resilience had significantly improved. He noticed children *"helping each other out, giving suggestions... working nicely because they're in small groups"* and that Little Sticks reinforced wider school values like respect and perseverance.

Ashlea observed remarkable improvements in communication: *"it's such a good sport for conversations... I can stand back and listen to them helping each other out"*. She stressed that the skills transfer into other lessons, another unforeseen benefit.

Opportunities, enrichment and pathways

One of the most powerful impacts came from experiences beyond school. Rossmore pupils attended the national Little Sticks event at St George's Park, a highlight described by Tom as *"a fabulous day... such an opportunity"* with professional golfers supporting the children's learning.

Mark also saw significant potential in linking Little Sticks with community golf clubs. He explained how one school used Little Sticks as *"a Year 6 SATs intervention"*, which *"went down really, really well"*, and how local clubs were now looking to expand junior provision, making Little Sticks *"a great pathway"* into community sport. This emphasis on accessibility is vital for schools with high levels of disadvantage. Tom captured the value simply: *"a lot of our children will never get the opportunity to use golf equipment or go to a golf course, so having the equipment for free is fantastic"*.

Key best practice principles

From Rossmore Primary School's successful rollout, the following best-practice themes stand out:

- **Strong teacher preparation:** make use of CPD and run internal staff training to build confidence.
- **Promote calm, collaborative learning:** encourage peer-to-peer coaching and use golf's slower pace to improve focus and behaviour.
- **Plan for equipment logistics:** prepare in advance and consider storage solutions.
- **Embedding in the curriculum:** place Little Sticks in long-term planning to guarantee access for all year groups.
- **Connect with enrichment opportunities:** attend events, competitions, and develop club links for ongoing participation.

Conclusion

Rossmore Primary School demonstrates how Little Sticks can thrive when teachers embrace structured delivery and prioritise calm skill development. With support from Majesticks GC and local Mentor Mark, the school has embedded golf into its curriculum and culture, transforming it from a novelty into a valued, enriching experience. Most importantly, the pupils themselves say it best: *"I love to challenge myself and have fun"* and *"it makes me feel calm and happy"*. Their confidence and enjoyment are the clearest evidence of Little Sticks at its very best.