

School Case Study

Deal Parochial C.E. Primary School

By Karen Hodgson, School Sports Coach.



ABOUT THE SCHOOL

WHAT DOES TENNIS LOOK LIKE AT YOUR SCHOOL?

Since 2016, Deal Parochial Primary School has grown an extensive, inclusive year-round tennis programme, in collaboration with the local Deal Indoor Tennis Centre (DITC). During non-COVID times, this programme routinely provided:

- Weekly curriculum tennis PE lessons for Years 1 - 6 (rotating termly).
- Extra-curricular tennis clubs (both before- and after-school sessions).
- 'Additional Needs' and 'Gifted and Talented' tennis sessions during school-time.
- Supervised tennis at lunchtimes.
- Numerous competitive opportunities, both in and out of school.
- Inspirational tennis trips (Wimbledon, Eastbourne and the O2).
- Annual School Tennis Awards that embrace Outstanding Achievement, Improvement, Commitment, Sportsmanship and 'Top Effort'.

The growth of our tennis programme was aided by increasing our in-school tennis capacity by the marking of 3 mini-courts on our playground in 2018 (following grants from the Tennis Foundation and local organisations).



These mini-courts, together with myself becoming an accredited Level 2 Tennis Coach in 2019, meant Deal Parochial Primary School could provide enhanced, free-of-charge, in-school tennis provision during 2020's COVID restrictions, so enabling us to sustain our tennis programme.

WHAT INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE WAYS HAVE YOU USED TO KEEP PUPILS ENGAGED IN TENNIS, ESPECIALLY DURING COVID-19?

During the initial lockdown in April and May, six Deal Parochial Lockdown Tennis Videos were made especially for our pupils, between them covering all our age groups and tennis abilities; these videos were accessible to everyone through our school website. We also linked the LTA's Home Activities Hub to our school website.

Following partial-school return in early June, PE lessons were focused on tennis with each of our five KS1 & 2 bubbles receiving weekly sessions. As well as enabling a socially-distanced sporting activity, we felt that tennis promoted a sense of normality for our pupils, increasing their physical and mental well-being.

In July, we ran our inspirational Tennis Marathon, which raised £1000 for charity. Our Marathon, which took place on what should have been Ladies' Semi-Finals Day at Wimbledon, lasted 11 hours and 5 minutes (– the length of the longest tennis match in history, which was played at Wimbledon in 2010 between John Isner and Nicolas Mahut). It meant that our keen and experienced tennis players who were in school (and who had missed out on so many 2020 tennis events) had a chance to make some unique and fulfilling school tennis memories. Staff enjoyed participating in the Marathon too!



Following full-school return in September, we ran daily after-school tennis clubs to ensure year 2 – 6 bubble groups all had a weekly session. We also organised a virtual LTA Team Challenge for girls in years 4, 5 and 6, re-commenced our tennis sessions for additional needs and gifted and talented pupils, and ran before-school Fitness ABCs sessions for Year 1 and Year 2 bubbles.



We introduced 'Tennis-Related Science' in Autumn 2020. Children have enjoyed engaging, fun science sessions on tennis-related topics such as backspin, inertia, and momentum. These sessions were initially devised as bad weather cover for curriculum tennis lessons. Tennis has also been incorporated into after-school science club. By combining tennis and science, we are providing relevance to the science topic, as well as providing knowledge to our tennis players to enhance their on-court problem-solving.



To see a video of our Tennis-Related Science in action, please go to:
<https://youtu.be/mSN7p-SXwdg>



Additionally, our new ActivAlls have proven extremely popular since our full return to school. These enticing reaction walls (which were partly funded by our school's PTFA) improve children's co-ordination, concentration and fitness, so benefiting our tennis programme.



WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF TENNIS DELIVERY AT THE SCHOOL AND TO THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY?



Tennis creates a buzz around Deal Parochial. The children always express great excitement and enthusiasm for playing tennis. We are immensely proud that our inclusive tennis programme enables any child to play tennis, no matter their age, ability or background.

During our memorable Tennis Marathon in July 2020, we utilised an on-line fundraising page, so allowing all families to be part of our Marathon effort. It was lovely to read the encouraging messages of support that we received on our fundraising page. These messages really demonstrated how important tennis is to our school community.

Children gain valuable life skills in their tennis journey at Deal Parochial Primary School. Younger children tend to develop perseverance and co-operation when beginning to learn tennis with their peers, whereas older players develop in their resilience, self-esteem, concentration skills, teamwork, sportsmanship, and leadership. Also, following full-school return in September 2020, extra-curricular tennis in year group bubbles provided the children with a vital opportunity to do some exercise whilst having fun with their friends outside of the classroom environment. Additionally, younger children learn essential FUNdamental sports skills through tennis, such as agility, balance, and co-ordination, which are the foundations blocks to most sports.

Looking beyond our own school community, Deal Parochial Primary School has undertaken several instances of tennis outreach, in order to encourage local primary schools to embrace tennis similarly to ourselves.

YOUR TOP TIPS

- *Utilise your Sports Premium Funding to provide resources (personnel and equipment) for your tennis programme.*
- *Identify an enthusiastic staff member as your 'Tennis Champion' to organise and run all your tennis activities with the full support and engagement of your school's leadership team.*
- *Forge links with your local tennis venue / coach to build tennis into your school's PE provision and curriculum.*
- *Take out free School Membership of LTA Youth; this gives you access to lots of schools' tennis resources including £250 of vouchers for local LTA tennis coaching, as well as access to the Schools' Wimbledon Ballot!*
- *Use tennis as an intervention tool. Also, use tennis to build confidence, resilience, and concentration levels in children with additional needs.*
- *Incorporate lots of fun internal and external tennis tournaments into your programme; these can be in the form of matches or based on tennis skills. Such competitions will excite your parents as well as enabling the children to feel like champions.*
- *Source and utilise the LTA's Team Challenge materials (which are free-of-charge) for some of your tournaments.*
- *Form a link with your County LTA so you are notified about their forthcoming schools' competitions.*
- *Build further excitement and enthusiasm for tennis by linking it into other parts of your curriculum, e.g. science.*