

Grange Academy – Club Development Award

The SVA club development grant received by the school has allowed us to continue to give pupils at Grange Academy the opportunity to participate in extra curricular volleyball giving us the funds required to purchase a much needed new net that is the correct size for our new games hall.

Extra-curricular volleyball at Grange academy has been a real success over the past couple of years. We have been successful at attracting a large number of pupils to the sport and this is demonstrated through excellent attendance at both our lunch time and after school clubs.

As a result of these clubs we have been able to enter a large number of national festivals and tournaments including the Scottish schools cup and the Junior National League.

These experiences have proven to be really well received by the pupils who have thoroughly enjoyed competing against other schools and have found the overall experience of these events very rewarding.

The clubs that we run focus primarily on maximum participation but through this we have been fortunate to develop a number of good level players who have been able to be relatively successful in the tournaments that they have entered.

The success of our clubs has led to links being established between the school and our local volleyball club which is Kilmarnock volleyball club.

Through these links a number of our pupils have been given the opportunity to develop within the sport through regularly training with Kilmarnock with the biggest success story being 4th year pupil Mark Lawson.

Mark first starting playing volleyball in 2nd year at Grange Academy where he demonstrated an excellent aptitude for the sport. Through our school/club link Mark was given the opportunity to start practising with Kilmarnock out of school. This has led to a huge increase in Mark's performance level and has resulted in him regularly playing national league volleyball and being part of Kilmarnock's second team who recently won the Scottish 2nd division.

Marks success has not only been at club level volleyball however as he was also selected to represent Scotland West in the UKSG. This was a great achievement for Mark as not only was he in the squad but was a starting six member of the team that reached the final of the event.

In addition to these successes Mark has also been selected for the Scotland U20 training squad and through this was selected for an U20 international against England. Despite not getting on in the game this was an excellent achievement as Mark was the youngest player in the squad.

Marks experiences and success demonstrate the opportunities that are created through not only our extra-curricular club but also the links established with Kilmarnock VC.

His participation though has not been the only benefits of this link. Further benefits have come in the form Kilmarnock VC coaches Martin McMullen and Gordon Black delivering coaching sessions to P7 pupils in our associated primary schools and also running a transition volleyball festival. This proved to be a great success with many of our current s1 pupils benefiting and now regularly participating in our s1 club.

A further link with the club was created with the club this year with head coach Stuart Edgar delivering volleyball CPD for teachers not only in our school but other local primary and secondary schools. The course delivered was a real success with thirty teachers and coaches attending.

In the future we hope to develop our links with Kilmarnock VC and eagerly await to find out if an Awards for All bid submitted by the club will be accepted that will result in further partnership work that will see younger pupils at the school given the opportunity to join a Kilmarnock junior club that will encourage further participation in volleyball outside of school.

The extra-curricular volleyball in the school is continuing to move from strength to strength as we plan to repeat the last years successful transition project in partnership with Kilmarnock VC again this year and hope to increase the number of pupils participating in our clubs in the future.

Next year we hope to be in a position to enter tournaments and festivals once again and hopefully give more pupils the opportunity to follow in Marks footsteps and experience success as a volleyball player.

Stuart Edgar
Grange Academy