

Case study:

St Andrew's Academy, Derby



- **11-19 specialist provision serving Derby City and the outlying area**
- **Supports a wide range of learning profiles, typically young people with Autism, Severe Learning Difficulties and a broad range of other additional needs**

Funding from the Opening School Facilities programme has supported children and young people at St Andrew's Academy to access swimming sessions throughout the school year by funding:

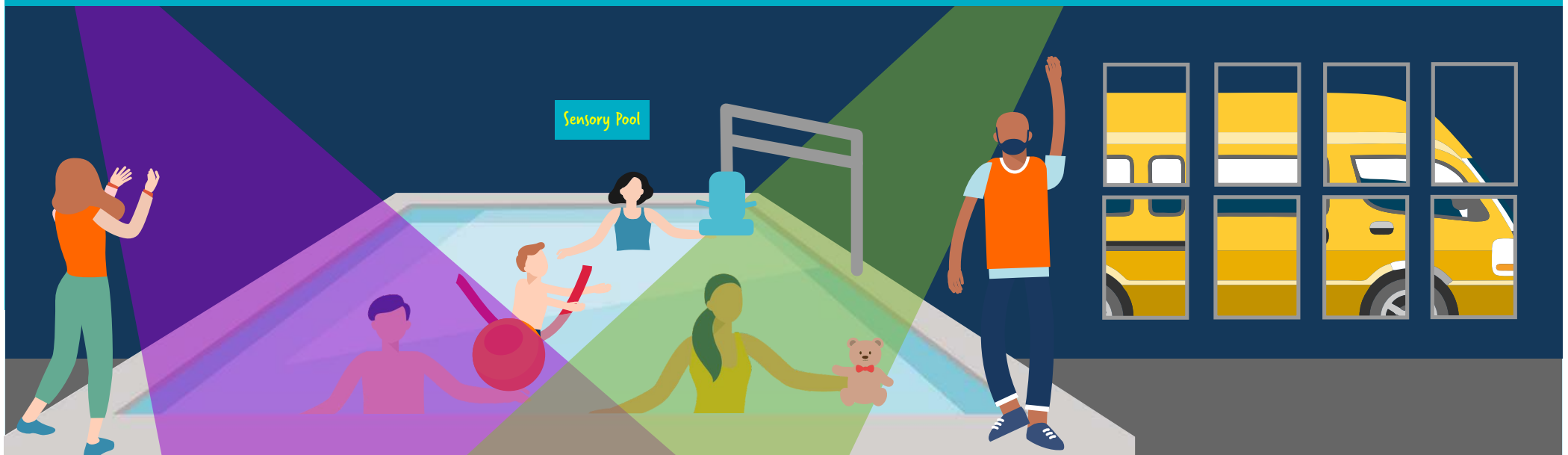
- Specialist transport to get the children and young people to the leisure centre
- Pool hire and lifeguards
- Professional development opportunities for school staff

Benefits:

- 78 Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students have been able to take part in an activity that wouldn't normally have been available to them
- The young people have enjoyed the activity and learnt a life skill, benefitting their health, wellbeing and water safety

The swimming lessons are about so much more than teaching the children and young people to swim. The sessions also:

- Meet their sensory needs
- Support them to develop communication skills
- Provide them with opportunities to spend time in the community
- Support them to develop functional skills in numeracy and literacy
- Help to build their confidence and independence



One of the student's to benefit is 'B', in year 11, who has previously found accessing swimming difficult, due to his additional needs, which can sometimes affect his behaviour. He has struggled with the busy and noisy environments of larger school swimming sessions, resulting in challenging and sometimes aggressive behaviours. The sensory swim session is a much quieter calming environment, meeting his sensory needs and allowing B to still develop important personal life skills.

B looks forward to his swimming sessions and it is now a positive activity he can access with support and a possible activity that he can work towards accessing in his own time outside of school. He has been able to enjoy this activity in a way that is right for him, and with the right support and in the right environment, B is now enjoying his time in the water and gaining additional benefits from time spent being physically active.

Once a week, B leaves school to go to swimming sessions at a local leisure centre, using transport provided by the school. Once at the leisure centre, he has to organise himself and behave in a way that is appropriate for the setting. With support, he is getting to spend time in the water, developing his confidence and swimming skills.

The school uses three pools at the leisure centre. B uses the sensory pool, which has low lighting, soft music and a warmer pool temperature. During the sessions there are opportunities for fun as well as swimming, interacting with friends and playing games. Some of the young people access daily physio, so the movement in the water allows them time to move and be free.

Once the sessions have finished the young people are encouraged to think about their personal health care routines, which are often linked to their targets on their Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) and help to develop their life skills. For example, taking a shower before getting dressed, and getting ready to leave the changing rooms with all their belongings.

When everyone is dressed, the young people visit the onsite café to buy a drink or snack. Having the chance to interact with the wider community and use money to buy something in the shop offers the young people a chance to develop their life skills.

The hour in the pool contributes to B's Duke of Edinburgh physical activity requirements and helps him work towards many of his medium targets on his EHCP.

Swimming is not easily accessible for young people with additional needs, especially if they haven't experienced it from a young age. By attending these sessions, B is now able to move in a way that is right for him and keep himself physically active. From this it is hoped that he can carry on with this activity once he leaves education and starts to make his own choices in life.

