

Last Saturday saw the first event in this year's "Stand Tall " project and what an amazing day it was.

Stand Tall is now in its second year. The project is aimed at year 7 female students and consists of a programme of weekend events in school.

It focuses on helping students develop confidence, determination and demonstrate grit. These are the attitudes and skills that research has shown to underpin success in school and work, as well as contributing to children's wider development, well-being and readiness for life beyond school.

The Stand Tall project launched last year to huge success and made a real impact on the students involved. We made a presentation about the project at the "Youth Sports Trust Conference" in Coventry, as well as having our findings published in the YST magazine.

This year we have over 30 students participating. As well as the year 7 girls, we were able to develop the programme further, by having year 8 mentors who had gone through the programme the previous year.

The day was split into three stages. We first presented the foundational elements of the programme and gave the students time to understand and reflect on the ideas shared. These were

- This Girl can – Breaking Down barriers
- Benefits of Exercise - The more you burn the more you learn!
- Resilience and GRIT – Yes you can!

We then explored these ideas in more detail through different physical activities, such as the final session on GRIT which saw the girls doing a sponsored skip for the British Heart Foundation.

The girls go on to reflect upon each stage of the day, and here below we share some of their comments:

Year 7

- Even if you don't think you are good at something, give it a go, and enjoy yourself
- I feel more confident about doing new things
- It's great to have "GRIT" it's great to push yourself and know you've made a difference either to yourself or to other people

Year 8

- Being a mentor is challenging, as it's working with people I don't know. But it's amazing - I have new friends that are hard-working and confident - I'd definitely do this again

- It was so fun and I loved it so much. I hope I can help again. It was nice to see the year 7's having the chance I had, because "Stand Tall" really helped me to be more confident

At the end of the day we asked the girls to think about how they could transfer the positive experience they had into a series of next steps and personal goals; here are some of their ideas

- I'm going to try to be more happy and smile more. I will also try hard in every lesson, even geography
- Be more confident when facing new tasks
- I am going to try to be more confident when I am working with people I don't know and be more brave to ask the teacher if I need help or put my hand up to answer a question

It was so much fun for ourselves too, and such a privilege to work with the girls, and we are very pleased to see that it has seemingly already begun to have made an impact.

As one student commented:

"It has made me more confident and helped me Stand Taller"

We look forward to continuing to work with the Stand tall girls throughout the year

**Ms Graney and Mrs Wallis Tayler**