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SHOREHAM ACADEMY GIRLS GET INTO SPORT AT LONDON'S OLYMPIC PARK

Year 7-12 students from Shoreham Academy last week helped celebrate the United Learning X-Elle Programme at London's Olympic Park.

24 girls from the school took part in a special awards ceremony held at the Copper Box on Wednesday 15 June 2016, where they joined peers from eight other schools which are also part of United Learning – a national group of academies and independent schools.

The event was a celebration of the girls' achievements over the academic year as part of the Group's X-Elle Programme; an initiative which aims to encourage girls into sport and to become leaders within their own schools.

As part of the programme, Shoreham Academy's This Girl Can team came up with an initiative to plan an event and break the United Learning record for the amount of girls we could get physically active and involved in an event. Our aim was to create an event which was very individual and different, aiming to use a variety of activities to really engage all girls. In preparation we tie dyed our team t-shirts, carried out cake sales to raise funds to go towards the activities and completed assemblies to publicise the event. The event consisted of bubble football, clubbersize, yoga, roller skate derby, human skipping and an art work section where we created a huge flag to symbolise the large number of girls that took part in the event. Alongside this, the event was supported by Olympic Athlete Abi Oyepitan.

Tilly Coles in year 10 won an award for the best X-Elle leader. Tilly is an inspirational girl who has the ability to motivate all people around her. Her confidence and drive to succeed has been evident throughout this project. Tilly's continued support has enabled the event planning to run smoothly. The effort she put into making her section of the video shows her commitment to sending a message that "All Girls Can". Finally, alongside this project Tilly has been helping out in other areas of the school and I think this shows the determination and commitment she has to inspiring others to be physically active and shape the values of all girls in Shoreham Academy.

At the event, the students also helped the Group launch its national Spirit of Rio festival – a four-week cultural and sporting celebration of the Olympic and Paralympic values and South America across its schools.

Some of the celebrations planned over the course of the festival include a virtual torch relay, Carnival-style community events across the country and themed learning based on the Games' values and South American history and culture. As part of the festival, schools are also fundraising for the ABC Trust, a charity which supports disadvantaged children in Brazil.

To celebrate the Spirit of Rio in Shoreham Academy we linked the Olympic and Paralympic values to our event. The girls displayed ambition, determination, respect and courage throughout the day and it was really inspirational to see the girls being successful. Throughout the event the Brazil theme was evident by large flags with the students wearing a colour from the flag. We created a large artwork flag which consisted of handprints of all students who took part in the event, this was to symbolise the link between The Action for Brazil's Children Charity.

Claire Power (Teacher of PE and Dance) said

"Since joining the X-Elle This Girl Can campaign, it has been a very exciting time. There was a total of 30 students who created a working party to aid the organisation, planning and implementation of the event. I could burst with pride when I think about how many Shoreham Academy students were physically active and enjoying a variety of activities. It is important to note, we chose the activities very carefully as we really wanted to motivate all girls and

not just cater for sporty girls. Bubble football, Clubbersize, yoga and skate derby was new to most students and they did not even realise they were exercising. I hope that the positive attitude and confidence of the This Girl Can X-Elle team can be transferred to the overall ethos at Shoreham "The Best in Everyone".

Kayleigh Bristow (Head of Dance) added

"This was a fantastic event and it was great to see so many females active. There was a real team spirit on the day and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The students were talking about this in the corridors which shows this has been a great influence on our students".

Connie Mace, Year 12: "I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the This Girl Can X-Elle team. My favourite experience was helping to coordinate the event with Miss Power and learning new activities like Clubbersize, it was so much fun".

Holli Lindley, Year 9: "I am not really a sporty girl but this made me think about doing some of the activities outside of School. I had so much fun making our campaign video and I have loved working as part of the This Girl Can team."

Abi Oyepitan, Olympic Athlete: "Being part of and witnessing so many girls taking part in sport and activities with such enthusiasm regardless of ability was simply inspiring. I thought Shoreham ran an amazing 'This Girl Can' event and just reinforces what the campaign is all about."

Jim Coupe, Head Teacher: "I am immensely proud of our staff and students for such a fantastic event. The variety of activities on offer meant there was something for everyone and the buzz throughout the day was truly inspiring. To be awarded the United Learning National X-Elle School of the Year was a great endorsement of everyone's hard work and enthusiasm."

Shaun Dowling, UL Director of Sport:

"The United Learning X-Elle programme was designed to develop girls' confidence in and through PE and sport. It is hard to think of a better example than the 'This Girl Can' event which Shoreham ran last month. It was a shining example of empowered girls having a fun and fulfilling experience of physical activity and sport. But not just participating – the X-Elle girls also helped to organise and lead activities on the day. To see 400 or so girls having such a brilliant time together in a range of activities was a joyful and uplifting experience."

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