

# FOUNDATION VOICE

The Arsenal Foundation has helped nearby Gillespie Primary School buy new sports equipment and football kit. PE teacher Hassan tells us how it has helped children improve their skills and grow as individuals

## ARSENAL ACTS

**I'm a Year 6 teacher, the PE and Science Lead at Gillespie School. I've been working in education for the past eight years in Glasgow, Scotland, which is where I'm from, and London.**

“At Gillespie, we offer children a wide array of sporting opportunities including football coaching at lunchtimes and specialist gymnastic coaching, as well as introducing the children to a variety of sports with the opportunity to enter competitions. We've worked with Arsenal in the Community this year to deliver blocks of lessons at Gillespie and, going the other way, take children to The Arsenal Hub.

It's fair to say our old sports equipment wasn't in line with our ambition for the children. We played in old, mismatched football kits in the local Islington Football League and tournaments, and within the school our gym mats were extremely well used. The money from The Arsenal Foundation allowed us to buy a brand new football kit for the boys' and girls' football teams, complete with the Gillespie logo, and new gym mats.

The gym equipment is in heavy rotation – it's used daily during PE lessons as well as by before/after school clubs, and the new mats have been an excellent addition to our gymnastics and dance lessons. The children have been able to attempt more sophisticated and higher-level skills, which

will help when we attend a gymnastics competition next year!

In terms of football, Year 6 children take part in an after-school league that spans the school year, as well as the Islington schools' competition. They were very excited about playing in the new kit, especially because they could choose their own number for the season and because the kit had the Gillespie badge.

In particular, the girls' team has been really popular, and they chose numbers based on their favourite players. I've seen an increase in the amount of interest shown by girls in football – watching, playing and competing – during my career so far.

Physical activity is absolutely paramount to children's general overall wellbeing and in developing key skills individually and with others. With my 2023/24 class, playing in a team together really helped to deepen friendships and develop leadership skills. When facing teams who were taller or stronger, we spoke a lot about playing as a team and being resilient, and I heard children being very supportive and talking to each other.

I think it's essential that children see Arsenal being active in the community, especially as the school is so close to the stadium. Having the name Arsenal attached to competitions or events inspires and encourages children to take part, and they love it.” ■

For more information visit [www.gillespie.islington.sch.uk](http://www.gillespie.islington.sch.uk)



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A PE teacher Hassan shows off the Gillespie School football kit that money from The Arsenal Foundation paid for

