

## **School-based interventions to increase health and wellbeing**

The health and wellbeing of school children is a pressing concern in England, with a growing prevalence of obesity and diabetes in childhood. It is also widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and mental wellbeing in adulthood.



These increased concerns, aligned with a better recognition of the emotional and mental health needs of children, led the Greater London Authority (GLA) to develop and co-ordinate a school based health programme to improve health and wellbeing for all pupils in London.



## About Healthy Schools London

Healthy Schools London is an Awards Programme that will reach out to every London child, working with schools to improve children and young people's well-being.



About



Map of Healthy Schools London



Get an Award



How healthy is your school?



Resources



### 80% of schools signed up to HSL

1883 London schools are now part of Healthy Schools London.

[See more...](#)



### Eat Like A Champ Resource

Eat Like A Champ is a free, evidence based healthy eating education programme aimed at Year 5 primary school children.



### Healthy Schools London Evaluation

Published in November 2016, the findings were extremely positive with a strong recommendation for the continuation of the programme

The result was the development of the GLA's [Healthy Schools London programme](#) (HSL) launched in April 2013 and co-ordinated by the Greater London Authority (GLA). The programme encourages schools to adopt a whole school approach to combat the specific health and wellbeing needs of their pupils by developing their policies and procedures. HSL recognises and rewards the schools' endeavours through a system of awards: Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

A CLAHRC North Thames project recently completed a two-year evaluation of the programme. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the contribution of the programme to improving educational attainment, and health and well-being, among schoolchildren in London. It was funded jointly by the GLA and the CLAHRC, and was conducted between 2014

and 2016 by Dr Harry Rutter and Dr Andrew Barnfield from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

We conducted literature reviews, focus groups in 20 schools, interviews with 6 directors of public health and directors of children's services, focus groups with borough leads, interviews with the GLA core team and borough leads, and two assessment visits to special schools. We also conducted an online survey across all participating schools, with a total of over 450 responses.

## **Was HSL effective in its aims?**

Our evaluation

- Assessed the potential for the HSL programme to influence educational achievement, promote healthy lifestyle behaviours, and reduce health inequalities in London
- Investigated the extent to which becoming a Healthy School is associated with changes in school-level policies, and activities.
- Assessed the nature and level of engagement with the HSL programme by schools, including any differential uptake by socio-economic factors, and to understand the drivers and barriers to becoming a Healthy School
- Provided recommendations to inform the ongoing development of the HSL programme

The evaluation concluded that HSL provides a valuable mechanism to encourage change at school level. Among a suite of recommendations, the evaluation suggested that:

- HSL would be strengthened by encouraging schools to work more closely together.
- A mentoring programme could help to spread best practice between schools,
- There is scope for stronger links between school and local communities.
- The implementation of a programme to enhance health and wellbeing provision in early year's settings could provide an additional mechanism for health improvement, and promote school preparedness among the capital's children.

[Read the full report and recommendations](#)