

## Visually impaired awareness workshops

Blind children need sport as much as any others. Kim Mead explains how 'goalball', or blindfolded football, can allow visually impaired children to enjoy competing on the same level as their peers.

**Government campaigns like Change4Life and Every Child Matters promote integrating exercise into everyday life. But encouraging all children to play sport can be difficult - particularly if they lack confidence, have physical disabilities or special education needs.**

Motive8 is a gym design company which runs school activities. Practitioners can help with PE and with extra-curricular clubs for all abilities – including disabled children.

Motive8 encourages integrating SEN pupils into mainstream sessions - and delivers programmes solely for SEN pupils. Free places are available for lower income families.

Motive8 has developed a 'Visually Impaired Awareness' session - which was delivered to six year groups at Marshgate School in Richmond during their "equal opportunities week".

The workshop aims to teach children to interact with disabled people and experience life as they do - to develop empathy in a fun



and active setting.

The children learn the importance of clear communication with a game called 'Goalball', or blindfolded football. It was invented for blinded war veterans, but has since become a sport in its own right. The game allows visually impaired and sighted people to play on equal terms.

The game enhances the sighted children's sport skills – when sight is removed, the children are forced to compensate with their hearing.

Schools can use this course to fulfil curriculum requirements. It can also promote inclusion - reducing bullying and encouraging friendship building.

The workshop is delivered as either class sessions or a half day. All coaches are CRB-checked.

Katie Bentham, the deputy head of Marshgate primary school, said: "The visually impaired workshops were fantastic as part of our disability equality week. It gave the children a chance to play a new sport, while learning to use different senses."