

ISA Awards 2025 Case Study: Award for Outstanding Sport (Small School)



MYLNHURST PREPARATORY SCHOOL

APRIL 2026



Background to the School

Mylnhurst Preparatory School is a small, single-form entry independent school for approximately 145 pupils, plus 54 pupils in the nursery, set within 140-year-old grounds in Ecclesall, Sheffield. Originally built in 1883, the school has evolved into a thriving, inclusive community with a strong sense of heritage and identity. Today, Mylnhurst is widely recognised as a “hidden gem” within the city, combining tradition with ambition.

Sport plays a central role in school life. Despite its size, Mylnhurst offers an exceptionally wide and ambitious sporting programme, supported by specialist teaching staff and excellent facilities including a 25m swimming pool, sports hall, all-weather pitch and extensive playing fields.

The school benefits from a uniquely close-knit environment, where small class sizes enable staff to know each pupil as an individual. This personalised approach allows teachers to identify talents early, nurture potential and support pupils in developing confidence across all areas of school life. As a result, children feel valued, supported and motivated to engage fully in opportunities offered to them.

Mylnhurst places strong emphasis on the development of the whole child, with equal importance given to academic progress, personal growth and wellbeing. A culture of encouragement and high expectation underpins daily life, ensuring that pupils are both challenged and supported in reaching their full potential. This holistic approach fosters independence, resilience and a strong sense of belonging within the school community.



Kirsty Holland
Headteacher



The school also maintains strong relationships with families, creating a partnership that supports pupils’ development both in and beyond the classroom. Open communication and shared values between home and school contribute to a nurturing environment in which children thrive. This collaborative ethos extends into all aspects of school life and helps to sustain a positive, ambitious and inclusive culture.

<https://www.mylnhurst.co.uk>

Aims

Mylnhurst Preparatory School aims to create a fully inclusive sporting culture in which every child is encouraged and supported to participate, regardless of ability or background. Central to this is the development of resilience, confidence and strong personal character, with an emphasis on effort, determination and sportsmanship rather than simply outcomes. The school seeks to foster an environment in which pupils feel confident to embrace challenge, take risks and support one another, developing both independence and a sense of belonging.

A further aim is to provide a broad and ambitious programme of opportunities, exposing pupils to a wide range of sports and experiences, while ensuring that provision is carefully adapted so that all children, including those with SEND, can engage meaningfully. Through high-quality teaching and inspirational role models, the school strives to instil a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity and a positive attitude towards health, wellbeing and teamwork.

In addition, the school is committed to continually reviewing and developing its provision to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs and interests of its pupils. This includes fostering curiosity and a willingness to engage with new challenges, encouraging pupils to recognise their own potential beyond perceived limits.

By promoting a forward-thinking approach and nurturing a positive attitude towards personal development, Mylnhurst aims to equip children not only with physical skills, but also with the mindset and adaptability needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Outcomes

Outstanding Sporting Achievement

Mylnhurst pupils have achieved remarkable success at local, regional and national level, demonstrating the strength and ambition of the school's provision. In a single academic year, pupils have been crowned British biathlon champions, secured medals at ISA national swimming finals, and achieved titles in cross-country and athletics competitions across the region. These accomplishments are particularly notable given the school's small size, highlighting the effectiveness of its approach to coaching, opportunity and participation. The breadth of success across multiple disciplines also reflects the school's commitment to developing well-rounded athletes rather than focusing on a single sport.



A Fully Inclusive Sporting Culture

A defining outcome of Mylnhurst's approach is the creation of a genuinely inclusive sporting culture, where every child takes part and feels valued. Participation is universal, ensuring that all pupils experience a sense of belonging and achievement through sport. Success is recognised in many forms, from representing the school in competition to achieving personal milestones and overcoming individual challenges. This inclusive ethos ensures that sport is not reserved for the most able, but instead becomes a shared experience that strengthens relationships, builds confidence and reinforces the school's core values.

Pupil Development and Personal Growth

Through sustained engagement in sport, pupils develop key personal qualities that extend far beyond physical performance. Children learn resilience by facing challenges, determination by striving to improve, and teamwork through collaboration and shared goals. They become more confident in their abilities, more willing to take on new experiences, and better equipped to manage both success and disappointment. Over time, this contributes to a strong sense of self-belief and independence, supporting pupils not only in sport but across all areas of school life.

Recognition and Wider Impact

The success of Mylnhurst's sporting provision has gained recognition beyond the school community, with pupils' achievements featured in local media and celebrated across the region. This visibility has strengthened the school's reputation as a centre of excellence for sport and has reinforced its position within the local community. In addition, the school's outreach and partnerships have enabled it to share facilities and opportunities with others, extending its impact and demonstrating how a small school can play a significant role within a wider educational landscape.



Next steps

- To further expand opportunities in non-traditional and emerging sports
- To strengthen partnerships with local schools and the wider community
- To continue developing inclusive provision for all pupils, including SEND
- To build on current success while maintaining a focus on participation for every child

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