

Thornton Grammar School

In this Q and A session, John McGinnis, Finance Manager at Thornton Grammar School, gives his honest appraisal of the developments undertaken by Pulse.

Q Why have you chosen to work with Pulse on all of your leisure developments?

A Pulse has always done everything they said they would do at the outset of any project. They have provided us with the support and back-up that we have needed on both training and service. Ultimately they have never let us down or given us any reason to change our leisure partner.

Q What benefit does the school get from the three developments Pulse has been involved with?

A During school hours our students are permitted to use the facilities free of charge. This includes children from ages 11 up to 18 as we also have a sixth form college on site. The facilities are also offered to our staff, at a discounted (off-peak) rate, outside of school hours. The junior gym that we had installed approximately 18 months ago caters very well for the majority of our students with some of the older students using the standard facilities. We also have a number of students who have purchased their own membership and use the facility out of school hours.

Q Does the wider community also benefit from the facility?

A Absolutely. In addition to general users we have a number of patients

who are referred to our gym from Bradford Royal Infirmary with specific heart problems. We also have a number of disadvantaged groups from the local community who are able to use the gym during the day at vastly discounted rates.

Q Did the introduction of leisure facilities at the school result in more work for the staff?

A No. Because our gym is operated by Sport and Leisure, part of the local council, we have no operating costs or additional pressure put onto our leisure team at the school. This was an ideal scenario for the school as we have a fantastic facility that our students have access to during school hours, a facility that is heavily discounted for our students and staff outside of school hours but no running costs or staffing issues.

Q Have you seen demand for leisure facilities increase since the introduction of the first gym?

A Before the development we had two very under-utilised squash courts. Once we had converted one it became abundantly clear that there was a massive local demand for a gym. We have seen demand increase and completed the addition of a junior gym around 18 months ago.

“£1.4M investment including three leisure developments, all with no capital outlay by the school, during the successful ten year partnership with Pulse”

Pulse Involvement

- £1.4 million investment
- Design and build
- Fitness equipment supply and service
- Sales and marketing support
- Membership services

Results

- New facility meets Government objectives
- Helps to encourage children into exercise
- Over 5,000 members in the life of the partnership
- Introduction of junior gym aimed at children aged 11 and upwards
- GP referrals

Thornton Grammar School

leisure and academic targets met with exciting new self-funding sports facility at Thornton Grammar

John McGinnis, Finance Manager at the school said, “Pulse has always fulfilled our requirements in the fitness arena. We have superb facilities that are used by our students and the public alike. We can offer state-of-the-art equipment that fits with our mission for the school.”

Thornton Grammar School is a Specialist Sports, Science & Applied Learning School, that caters for students aged 11-18. Founded in 1673, the school has known three different homes. The current building was opened in 1944 by Clement Atlee. The school has a mission statement relating to its specialist sports status that says that the school will help its students to unlock their sporting and academic

potential. It will develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and qualities essential for good citizenship and will, working in partnership with the local community, maximise the opportunity for participation and success in sport for all.

Pulse Fitness was called upon back in 1997 to work in partnership with the school to provide facilities that would not

only encourage the students at the school to develop an interest in health and fitness but would also provide the local community with a high quality, value for money fitness facility. The result of this initial partnership was to see Pulse Fitness and Thornton Grammar School working together over an 11 year period to deliver fitness and sports to the students and local community alike.

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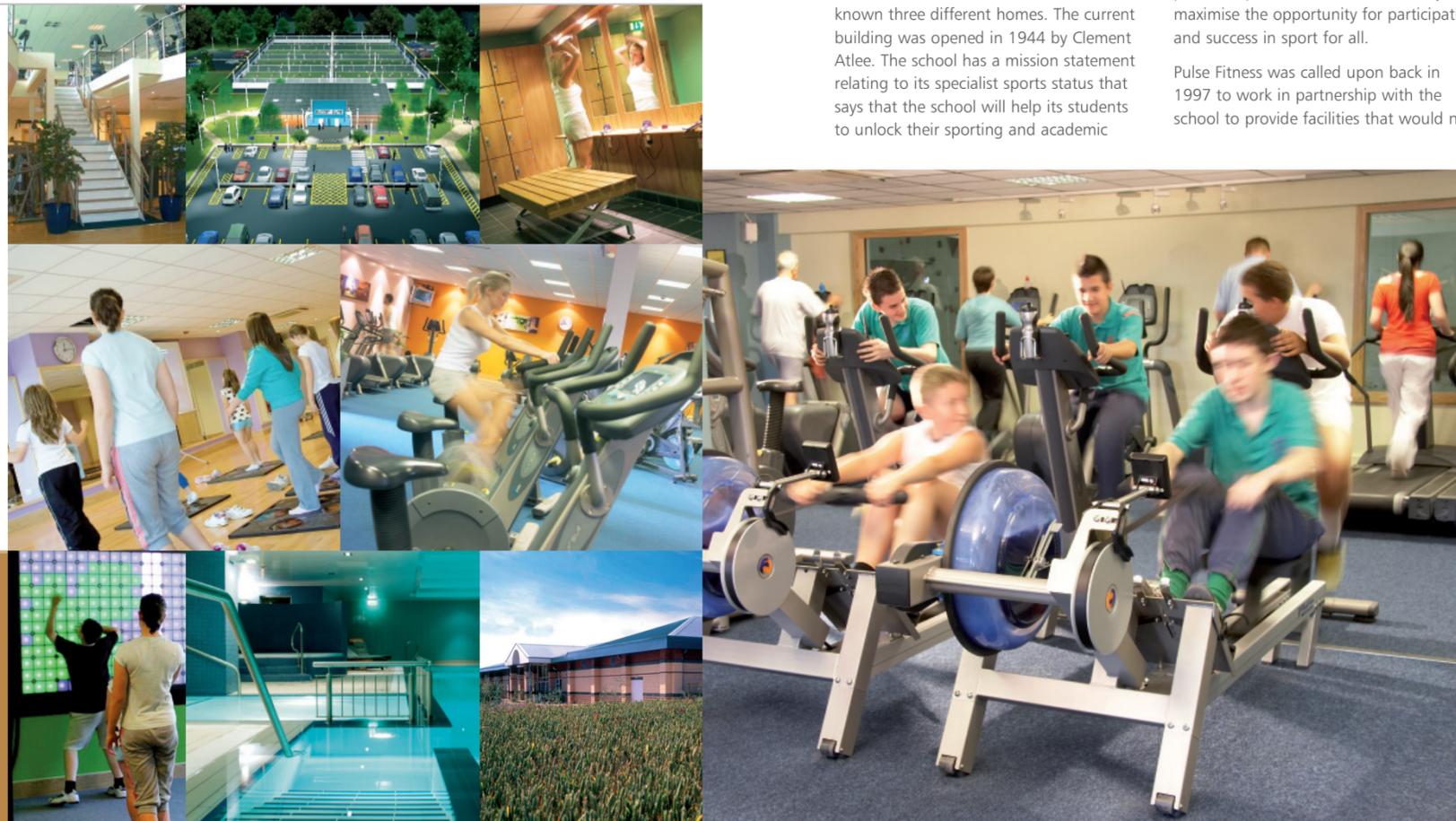
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three phase leisure development

The first phase of the development was a squash court conversion where Pulse installed a second floor giving the school twice the floor space. This was then used to accommodate 30 pieces of fitness equipment in a state-of-the-art fitness suite for the students to use during school hours and to be open to the local community outside of this time.



the wider benefits

Later developments at the school in 2001 and 2006 had to take into account the new targets introduced by the government to encourage children to participate in more regular physical activity. Pulse was challenged to provide a facility that could keep pupils interested and engaged in sport, allow for cross-curricular learning and encourage pupils to learn and adopt a healthy lifestyle that will become a blue print for their adult life.



The solution was a 78 station state-of-the-art gym, containing Pulse' latest revolutionary ranges of fitness equipment. Designed to be versatile, durable and simple to operate, the equipment, enables children from 11 years plus, to workout and improve their fitness in line with their ability, whilst features such as full colour TFT screens provide the motivation, fun and excitement.

Pulse' freedom cardiovascular range also features polar heart rate monitoring and reads out data on calories, distance, resistance level, speed, time and watts. This generation of accurate data allowed Thornton Grammar to increase coherence and relevance across the curriculum linking their practical workout with science, numeracy, ICT, food technology and PSHE.

"Key stage 4 and 5 pupils discussed in science, the body and heart and then recorded their own heart rates during PE. This data was also used for analysis as part of a maths lesson. There are many opportunities to integrate sport across the rest of academic studies, we use our working gym in many classroom activities" comments John McGinnis.

"Equipment is becoming increasingly versatile in education establishments, many sites are looking at how information can be provided to compliment other areas of study. Recognising how important this

feature was to Thornton Grammar we have now gone one-step further and introduced the Pulse Smart Centre. Now students and teachers can readily access workout data, body statistics via a computer integrated with the equipment".

The gym environment created at Thornton Grammar School allows pupils to feel comfortable in a club setting and as a result, be more likely to continue participating in physical activity once they leave school.

The outcomes

- Introduction to sport that pupils can take with them throughout their life
- Increase pupils awareness of healthy living
- Profile of gym equipment has been raised
- Literacy, numeracy, ICT, science and PSHE curriculum links introduced
- Developed pupils confidence and competence in sport
- Contributed to attendance, behaviour and attainment
- Well received and enjoyed by pupils

junior gym

In phase three Pulse provided extra car parking, new high tech front elevation to the building with a new reception area, upgraded all the corridors and doors to solid wood finishes, plastered and decorated the walls instead of painted breeze blocks and added on the extension to the building. The 220 square metre extension incorporated a separate junior gym and separate public members

dry changing facilities. Pulse also gave the existing fitness facilities a face lift, redecorating and re-carpeting the existing gym, replacing all the fitness equipment with the latest from the Pulse Freedom and Evolve ranges and redecorating the dance studios. The latest development involved an investment of £800,000 from Pulse.



"the latest development involved an investment of £800,000 from Pulse."



High quality vanity space



Stylish, durable solid oak lockers



Individual shower cubicles

sales, marketing and staff training support

Pulse put together a comprehensive sales and marketing programme to ensure that the centre continues to attract new members. Pulse employs a full time sales person who is responsible for selling memberships to the local community and aiding the operational staff at the site. Pulse also provides staff training, both internal and external, and marketing promotions including the use of promotional material that is provided to the site on an on-going basis. This level of support will continue throughout the life of the agreement.



fitness for all in the local community

In 2001 Pulse were asked to extend into the second squash court and to convert a bar area. This created a 55 station gym with a 120 square metre dance studio and a 50 square metre spinning room.

In the summer of 2006 Pulse provided the initial design services to consult with the school for an additional development. Working with the school, Pulse produced a design that would fulfil the schools needs. The scheme needed to be self-financing so Pulse integrated community usage into the design which helped the school to fulfil its objectives set by the Government of providing resources for the local community as well as the student body.

