Light Pass Primary School’s involvement in the *eat well be active* – Primary School Project gave us the incentive to review our physical education offering to our students. French research undertaken many years before had remained in a corner of my brain. This study reported the positive effect of exercise on the brain. Present day research has also confirmed the French findings that exercise does increase brain activity. Also around this time Taroona Primary School (Tasmanian) offered a DVD of their Daily Fitness programme which sparked interest amongst the staff and provided a way in which we could organise our program. These three factors became the driving force to reform our physical education program.

Light Pass Primary is a small school in the grape vine area of the Barossa Valley South Australia. We certainly have a delightful backdrop of vineyards. The first big innovation was to employ a physical education teacher for one day a week. Her brief was to introduce the skills of sports other than the traditional Australian Rules football, netball and tennis. She was also allocated the task to improve team spirit and a variety of activities that children could play in their breaks. Over the past two years students have been exposed to basketball, hockey with ball and puck, badminton and modified rugby.

The next innovation was the introduction of a daily ‘fitness’ program for 30 mins each morning. The older students at our school ran the Taroona School concepts of the activities. This concept was discussed with the older class and the most of the students were very keen to come on board. They were shown the Taroona DVD and given the task to adapt it to this school. Several meetings were held and it was decided to conduct the fitness sessions 4 mornings a week as Tuesday had already provided physical education lessons for students.
The programme begins and ends with a 5 minute warm up and cool down session to which younger students are invited as presenters of a stretching movement.

Mondays: Circuit Training: (1).Big Run (2)Skipping (3) Line jumping (4) ball skill e.g. soccer dribble (5) target practice
Wednesdays: Games :(1) Octopus (2) Dodge Ball (3) Chain tag (4) chasing partners shadows. (5)
Thursdays: Pentathlon; (1) long jump (2) Chest and bounce along line (3) Dribbling around markers (4) line jumping (5) Shuttle run
Fridays: Health Hustle

Swimming lessons for Receptions to Year 5 have been put back into the curriculum and aquatics for the 6 & 7s. A ‘sporting news’ section has also been included in all assemblies which encourage alternate forms of physical activity e.g. gymnastics, taekwondo. Local sporting clubs have also been encouraged to conduct clinics and provide a link for children and their families to participate in local clubs. The school also heavily subsidises a dance group and a local tennis coach to run 5 weeks of lessons.

We are working towards older students organising special activities during breaks. Teacher enthusiasm and leadership is necessary to support flagging student interest. Some students are natural born leaders while others need ongoing training and support. Alongside increasing physical activity we are trying to improve the nutritional value of lunch boxes. A regular newsletter item, the chaplain running cooking lessons and the school vegetable plots are working towards this aim. A variety of fruit trees that grow on the school grounds also supplement students’ healthy food intake when in season. A peer training course for the upper primary students in healthy eating through the Gawler Health Services provided the incentive for change as the students spoke to their parents and ran a series of lessons across the school for all other years. From this beginning the school chaplain takes cooking lessons with the focus of creating healthy snacks. The recipes are then included in newsletters.

Staff enthusiasm remains high after attending the after school ‘eat well be active’ workshops and the support of Rick Baldock the very active and zealous coordinator. Jenny Pike, Principal, Light Pass Primary School

dl.0223.info@schools.sa.edu.au
eat well be active - Primary Schools Project, a joint SA Health and Department for Education and Child Development project from 2008-2013.