



 **Class of 2020**

**EAST OF ENGLAND
APPRENTICESHIPS**

■ INTRODUCING JACOB CASSIDY

Jacob initially began an Early Years Apprenticeship at Woolenwick School before realising that it wasn't right for him. As a massive sports fan with an interest in how the theory of sport was applied within schools, he opted for a sideways move and joined Sporting Futures on a Level 2 Activity Leader apprenticeship programme, still at Woolenwick Infant School, allowing him to remain close to home and work in a setting with which he was already familiar. Initially hesitant with the move due to uncertainty around committing to another course that just 'didn't feel right', Jacob is proud to say that in hindsight, applying himself to the course is one of the best decisions he could have made for his career.

A primary part of Jacob's role is organising events that focus on getting young people active and involved with sport. Through the Stevenage Sports Partnership, they organise an array of competitions, from football to basketball and even 'mini olympics'.



JOB ROLE

Teaching Assistant

COMPANY

Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

COMPANY SIZE

1001+ employees

APPRENTICESHIP

Level 2 Activity Leader



Unfortunately, due to the implications of Covid-19, a lot of events had to be cancelled and they were tasked with inventing creative ways to keep children active and motivated from home. This led to an online programme of competitions, where leaderboards were created and children asked to send in footage of themselves completing different physical exercises.

The Sporting Futures Training programme consisted of a range of units, all available to tackle at Jacob's convenience. He found this straightforward and easy to digest, noting that being able to tackle the modules at his own pace was a huge advantage of the programme. He did find that there was a need to develop his time management skills to effectively juggle the workload, as he balanced his daily responsibilities with the programme coursework.

Initially nervous for the observational element of the programme, Jacob quickly felt at ease during the actual assessment and grew to really like them - stating that the targets to work towards and feedback received gave him clear and actionable objectives. He now has the confidence to try different approaches to keep the children motivated, and understands how to modify classes on the fly, making tasks easier or more difficult in line with the classes ability. He also stated that his behaviour management has come a long way, as managing a whole classroom was one of the key 'pain points' when he first undertook the role. Although Jacob doesn't mind admitting that this is still a challenge to this day, he feels much more comfortable asserting his authority when required.

He found that asking for help at work was something that made him uncomfortable at first, but with time and experience has grown to learn that this has only helped him develop into the role. Upon beginning to ask for help, Jacob found that he was getting the answers that he needed to better understand the role and from then on out, if anybody approached him with a question, he was much more comfortable to answer confidently.



Moreover, Jacob was initially given the responsibility of leading warm up and cool down sessions - allowing him to build his confidence right through to present day, when he is comfortable planning and delivering full sessions.

The best thing about the programme, he found, was that being a Teaching Assistant allowed him to assume the position of a 'role model' to a large group of children, which understandably comes with a degree of responsibility Jacob wasn't accustomed to. Additionally, seeing the positive impact of the classes and lessons he had created was rewarding, and also helped build his confidence around the role. He recalls Mr Barnes, a PE teacher Jacob looked up to as a youngster, who pushed Jacob to enjoy football the way he does today. He is proud to be in a similar position and hopes he can have a positive influence on the children in the same way.

In terms of highlights from the programme, Jacob noted that winning The Stevenage Sports Partnership 'Apprentice of the Year' was a huge milestone for him personally and he takes great pride in the achievement today. This gave him a really positive perspective on his development since school, as he felt the hard work and effort was finally paying off.

In hindsight, Jacob is extremely proud of himself for his achievements and successfully completed his Activity Leadership Apprenticeship. He asserts that the apprenticeship programme has opened up a range of opportunities for him moving forward with his career. He is both considering an additional apprenticeship programme and exploring university courses that align with his experience to date. The programme definitely taught Jacob that he wants to stay within the sports industry, as well as giving him a firm grasp of operating consistently in a working environment. From growing in confidence to making friends with other staff members, Jacob says that the entire experience has been a positive one.



■ TODAY

For anybody considering a similar apprenticeship, Jacob would highly recommend researching and understanding your options before going ahead — so to not make the same mistake that he did. Now a much more confident communicator and eager to learn more, he said there programme made a huge difference to his attitude and he has changed substantially since school as a result. The biggest sole impact is on his future, and Jacob will always be grateful for the doors and potential career pathways that the experience has opened for him.

**“THE DIFFERENCE I SAW IN MY
CONFIDENCE FROM SCHOOL
NOW I’VE COMPLETED AN
APPRENTICESHIP IS LIFE
CHANGING”**



Class of 2020

CELEBRATING APPRENTICESHIPS

CELEBRATING APPRENTICESHIPS

FIND OUT MORE TODAY
EASTOFENGLAND.AAN.CO.UK