



ON THE RUN Pupils leave Swindon Academy on one leg of their Olympic "marathon"

Pictures: ALAN OWENS Refs: 216271-3/4

IT'S THE SPIRIT OF THE OLYMPICS

by Sarah Hilley
Education reporter

shilley@news.wilts.co.uk

Working up quite a sweat in 12 hours

IT WAS an intense day at school even though teens got a break from the books.

Everyone in Swindon Academy was running, jumping, throwing Frisbees and kicking balls for a 12-hour marathon of action.

Pupils started at 7am, running between the Academy's three sites in Headlands Grove, Alton Close and Beech Avenue carrying torches.

All three sites were involved in the day, which aimed to build on teamwork between children, parents and pupils. Teachers finished off the exhausting day with a game of rounders up until 7pm.

Maths teacher Didi Simpson organised the special day - dubbed the 7-7 event - to encourage endurance.

She said: "We are trying to get everyone involved with exercise and having a healthy lifestyle. We are working on endurance. We

are hoping to establish a tradition in the school and extend the event to 24 hours. This was a build-up. Most of the students were doing something."

Younger students took part in an obstacle course at 7.30am while other pupils played basketball from 8am.

At one stage aerobics was available for everyone.

A five-a-side football tournament kicked off at 3pm.

Everyone was encouraged to wear sports clothes.

"The school is being united across all three sites," said Didi. "It also provides entertainment and is very sociable. I have had kids coming up wanting to participate for lots of activities. They have never had something like this before. It is all about participating. Doing exercise is an ab-

solute must for pupils."

The event was part of an Olympian-drive programme running at the Academy called Be The Best You Can Be.

David Hemery, winner of the 400m hurdles at the 1968 Olympics, and gold medallist Darren Campbell visited the school in January to launch the programme.

The sporting stars urged youngsters to break through self doubt and follow their dreams.

The programme is being piloted at the Academy - it is one of 10 schools in the south west taking part.



FLEET OF FOOT
Right, Denis Thapa with his Olympic torch. Far left, Sam Doherty. And left, Luke Thompson

Refs: 216271-2/5/6