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OzBox scheme gets Olympic approval as new classes start in Ilkeston area

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A police-led scheme that encourages young people to keep fit through boxing-based activities is taking to the ring in Kirk Hallam.

Since 2003, OzBox has been playing an active part in schools across the county and sessions have now started at Dallimore Primary School.

The sessions – which take place every Friday for children aged 10 and 11 – aim to encourage young people to have a positive impact in their community and boost self-confidence.

Lucy Haywood, the school's PE co-ordinator, said: "The children are really enthusiastic and it's going really well.

"OzBox has been integrated into our PE lessons as an extra session, where the children do various skills such as warming up, speed trials and pad work.

"They enjoy having the boxing gloves on and getting awards such as wristbands. The lessons cost the school nothing and we will definitely have it again next year if the funding is there."

The Dallimore Primary sessions come as OzBox was recently praised at a school awards evening, attended by former Team GB Olympic swimmer Joanne Jackson and ex-professional footballer Carl Dickinson.

William Allitt School, in Newhall, hosted the awards at Burton Town Hall to praise the sporting achievements of its pupils, many of whom have been involved in the boxing fitness sessions led at the school by trainer Mark Smith.

One of the awards was dubbed 'most committed to OzBox' and was clinched by year 10 pupil Georgia Moore.

Mark Smith, who runs the sessions at the school, said: "I was delighted to be given the chance to present an award to recognise the hard work this group of young people put in.

"It's a great session to instruct and it wasn't easy to decide an overall winner but Georgia works her socks off, helps others in the group and thoroughly deserves it.

"It's also great for the scheme to be up there with the likes of football and netball."

The OzBox fitness classes, which run around the county, were founded by former Derbyshire police officer Steve Osbaldeston.

The programme combines circuit training and boxing skills to improve confidence, discipline and fitness.

It also helps local officers to build relationships with youngsters and offer them something positive to take part in.

Derbyshire police run the classes to enable young people to have fun but to also teach them to take pride in themselves and in their community.

They are delivered by more than 300 trained volunteers including police officers, PCSOs, youth workers, students, fire fighters and members of the public.

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