



Paul Mitchell coaches a youngster



Caren Mitchell, Kane Rowlands & Andrea Moore



Paul Mitchell Golf Academy at Bristol & Clifton GC

Inclusive golf coaching is thriving in Bristol

The Paul Mitchell Golf Academy at Bristol & Clifton GC aims to help all golfers develop their game, but in 2013, embarked on the specific task of improving its disability provision. Under the leadership of Caren Mitchell (Business Manager) and with support from the club, its members, North Somerset Council, the local community and the Golf Foundation, over **300 disabled people** have been given the opportunity to play golf since the programme started.

To begin with, the academy staff were sent on inclusion courses, in order to increase awareness and understanding of the participants' considerations. Local special schools were subsequently invited to attend free sessions at the golf club and 10 youngsters from Kingsweston Special School were the first to take part in the programme. Inclusive coaching was offered in blocks of four weeks, and was open to all ages and abilities, then word of mouth saw this provision quickly extended to other groups and schools.

With interest growing, and a desire to get even more disabled people playing regular golf, the academy applied for and received, extra funding from organisations such as England Golf's *The Play More Golf Fund* and North Somerset Council's *Sportarray* disability initiative. A recent Golf Foundation *Feel Inspired* grant saw 19 pupils coached at Kingsweston Special School, and children at Belgrave Specialist Dyslexic School will shortly be benefitting from this support too. Generous donations from two golf club members and the individual effort of Andrea Moore who cycled from Bristol to London raising £900 (pictured above) also enabled the academy to purchase equipment (e.g. Golf Xtreme and Tri-Golf) and offer free coaching to more schools. The golf club supports the inclusive provision by allowing disability sessions to have exclusive use of the driving range, and there are plans to further improve facilities by adapting a practice ground area into a 6 hole academy course suitable for disabled attendees (with a view to introducing a unique disability practice membership at the golf club in the future.)

According to Caren Mitchell the academy's aim is to *"provide sport for all, where the current provision is lacking,"* and with the support of inspiring members of staff it's evidently fulfilling this objective and is committed to expanding this offering to many more disabled people.

Main achievements:

- The club is truly inclusive, it accepts ANY type of impairment with carer assistance.
- There is no age limit for the groups, ages 3 to 65 years are all welcome.
- Saturday morning inclusive golf sessions are regularly attended by **24 disabled children**.

Quotes:

"My son loved his sessions at the golf academy, the staff were patient and sensitive to his needs which really helped his self-confidence. He loves having the opportunity to try all the different activities and the friendly, fun atmosphere."

Sally Hare, parent of an inclusive golf coaching participant

"Our pupils have thoroughly enjoyed the golf coaching from Bristol & Clifton GC. It has made a real difference having a qualified outside agency delivering the coaching."

Ben Pickett, Teacher, Kingsweston Special School

