



David Farmer, deputy headteacher from St Josephs Primary School, Pudsey, cycling
Image: submitted



David Farmer, deputy headteacher from St Josephs Primary School, Pudsey, on the rowing machine

Teacher travels to Africa virtually

By Claire Lomax

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A TEACHER has travelled virtually from Leeds to Africa to raise funds for a special school.

In 2023 students and staff from St Mary's School, Menston, visited South Africa as part of a trip organised by the Menston based charity the Bambisanani Partnership.

It was their first visit to Thembimfundo School - a school dedicated to children with special educational needs. A very special relationship was immediately created with the children relishing the opportunity to learn through movement and sound.

Unfortunately, there was a lack of resources to promote these aspects of learning and a teacher on the visit, Matt Harvey, wanted to make a difference and ensure that additional equipment was provided. Tragically, over the summer Mr Harvey passed away and

never had the opportunity to raise the required funds.

Mr David Farmer, deputy headteacher from St Josephs Primary School, Pudsey, who was part of the Bambisanani team who visited South Africa took up the mantle and decided to travel virtually from Leeds to Africa to raise funds by running, swimming, cycling and rowing the equivalent distance.

To do this he: ran 274 miles - the distance from Leeds to Dover; swam from Dover to Calais 31 miles; cycled from Calais to Gibraltar 1,442 miles and rowed across the Gibraltar Straits to Africa nine miles; a remarkable total of 1,756 miles.

The journey has taken almost a year of visiting the gym and pool; recording distances meticulously throughout.

Mr Farmer has raised approaching £1000 with the Gift Aid included, which will enable the Bambisanani Partnership charity to purchase items

such as a sound system, play parachutes, netball, football and boccia equipment and jingle balls for the blind.

David Geldart, from the Bambisanani Partnership, said the children at Thembimfundo will enjoy using the equipment and no doubt Mr Harvey will be looking down with a smile on his face.

"This is an absolutely amazing feat of endurance and commitment from David Farmer and indicative of his tremendous enthusiasm and commitment for the Bambisanani Partnership," said Mr Geldart.

"We are now working very closely with the principal, local community and other agencies in South Africa to develop sport and the creative arts at Thembimfundo Special School. This has become a major focus for the charity and will be a lasting legacy to Matt."

To donate to this project visit www.bambisananipartnership.org



The visit to Thembimfundo School in South Africa Image: submitted