



## NATIONAL SUCCESS FOR SPORTING CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE TEENAGER



A Year 9 student coached at North Norfolk's Sporting Centre of Excellence has smashed through to finish 22nd in the English National Cross Country Championships.

Abi Durand of Aylsham High School competed in the Under 15 Girls race against 426 competitors finishing in a time of 17.01, just 1.14 off the top slot.

Abi, 14, represented the North Norfolk Harrier Athletics Club at the Championships held in Nottingham on 25th February. She has been attending specialist coaching at the Sporting Centre of Excellence (SCoE) established in the autumn of last year by North Norfolk District Council working with Gresham's School in Holt.

Cllr Maggie Prior, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing said:

"Congratulations to Abi. This is an amazing achievement and shows how having specialist coaching, talent and hard work can bring fantastic results.

The Centre is already helping so many youngsters, improving their skills and their confidence.

The feedback from the young people and the coaches is incredibly positive, with many participants improving their skills by a very large margin."

Earlier this year, Abi also won the Norfolk Schools Cross Country Championships Junior Girls category, held at Norfolk Showground. The project brings together talented children with professional coaches, to help them maximise their sporting talent to the full. The first academic year of the project is providing top-class coaching in netball, hockey, cricket and running.

Coaches have also identified youngsters with other county standard potential, including in cricket.

Cricket coach Tom Davies said: "Some players have shown huge improvement from the first week until now. Since the start of the project we have had one participant selected for Norfolk Under 14s boys and one selected for Norfolk Under 13 girls. We also have County Team potential and will strongly recommend their clubs put them forward for trial next season."

Plans are also in place to add Boccia to the list of sports for the second year of the project. This is a precision ball sport, which has featured in the Paralympic Games since 1984.

The team which manages the Centre will visit schools later in 2017 to discuss bringing on new Year 7 entrants who may wish to join the programme from September 2017.

The project is running at Gresham's School in Holt for children aged 11-14 years. North Norfolk District Council is providing £20,000 in funding and supporting the project through the council's sports and leisure team.

