**Press Release**

Friars Academy crowned National Netball Champions

A Special School in Wellingborough are celebrating after taking the National Title at the Great Britain Special Olympics Netball Championships at Leicester on Saturday 26 April.

Friars Academy, entered the Competition for the first time after winning their Regional Competition. As a Project Ability Lead School with the Youth Sports Trust, Head of PE Miss Rhian Turnbull ensures the students have plenty of opportunities to compete in School Sport Competition.

A squad of 10 pupils represented Friars in the National Championships held at Soar Valley Netball Centre. Starting with an Opening Ceremony, Friars were delighted to lead out all the teams as host Region for the Championships.

The Athlete Oath similar to that held at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games was read out by Charlotte Evans from Friars. The pupils also took part in a Special Olympics Torch Relay around the venue, culminating in Rachel Durman having the honour of lighting the flame. To complete the Opening Ceremony, Tina Smith from Friars walked in with the Special Olympics flag supported by three other competitors.

During the competition, Friars Academy came up against the Southern region and Scotland West. They beat the Southern region 6-3 and Scotland West emphatically 11-1.

In the Closing Ceremony pupils waited nervously to hear their finishing position and were ecstatic when they were called out in first place to become National Champions.

Head of PE and Project Ability Lead, Miss Rhian Turnbull said:

“I was very proud of the team, we were delighted to even qualify for the National Competition. To play against teams like West Scotland and come out on top was something quite special. Friars Academy places a huge emphasis on the importance of Physical Education and School Sport, so this represents a massive achievement for the School.”

Tina Smith was named as the Umpires Player of the Team, she added:

“I really enjoyed myself and loved winning! We worked really hard as a team to prepare for the Competition and it all paid off!”

Headteacher Mrs Ijewsky said:

“Every student made me exceptionally proud. It was an incredible experience for the students and one which they will never forget. The students were a real credit to the Academy. The excellent result reflected the hard work of both the staff and students.”

Friars Academy were named ‘School of the Year’ in the Northamptonshire Sport Awards in 2013. To find out more about School Sport and Project Ability in the County, visit the new website which launches on 2 May at [www.northamptonshiresport.com](http://www.northamptonshiresport.com)