



Using Dance in The Primary Curriculum



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This resource has been developed by Solihull Cultural Education Partnership (CEP), following delivery of a practical CPD session lead by Beth Veness at John Henry Newman Catholic College.

It offers guidance, lesson plans, activities and advice on how to integrate dance into the existing Primary School curriculum.

Solihull CEP is a network of education providers, cultural organisations and individuals, who come together to seek out opportunities for children and young people to access the arts in the Solihull borough.



John Henry Newman
Catholic College
Heart speaks to Heart

1 Physical Health Benefits of Dance for young children

- Improved condition of heart and lungs
- Increased muscular strength, endurance and aerobic fitness
- Better coordination
- Better agility
- Better flexibility
- Healthy blood pressure
- Improved overall balance
- Improved spatial awareness

2 Other Health Benefits of Dance for young children

- Increased overall physical confidence
- Improved mental and psychological well being
- Greater self-confidence
- Greater self-esteem
- Greater self-motivation
- Improved mental dexterity
- Better social and collaboration skills
- Improved creativity and imagination skills





3 Lesson Structure

- Warm Up/Ice breaker
- Movement material (TREGGB)
- Rehearsal
- Choreography or creative task
- Performance
- Feedback
- Cool down

4 The 5 Basic Actions

TRAVEL



Step, run, skip, gallop...

ROTATION



Arm circles, head roll...

ELEVATION



Jump, leap...

GESTURE



Clap, wave, kick, spin...

BALANCE



One leg, suspension...

5 Where Can Dance Happen at School?

Wake Up & Shake Up

Enable children to start the day feeling energised and ready to learn; Increase the amount of physical activity in your school without impacting curriculum time.

Dance as a Reward

This could be a dance game or something related to the subject you are currently learning. It is a motivational tool for the whole class that prevents certain children being singled out with stickers for example, and creates a feeling of achievement as a whole group.

Mood Boosting

Teachers can use dance activities when pupils might need a boost in energy to help them regain confidence and motivation to take part in everyday activities. This type of activity can open up possibilities to challenge ourselves and the focus we need to complete tasks successfully and pursue new interests.

School Plays/ Class Assemblies

Keep your plays and assemblies fun and engaging by using dance! Your students will need to rehearse too, giving more time for them to get moving.

Dress up Days- Romans, World Book Day etc.

Any day where you get to dress up is exciting, so keep the momentum going with dancing to celebrate! You could make a whole class dance based around a specific book, or children could explore the characters they are dressed as by creating mini solos.

Charity Days (Children in Need/ Comic Relief)

Dancing is a great opportunity to raise money for charity. It could be a fundraising performance, raising money through ticket sales. It could be a sponsored danceathon, where you and your students aim to dance for the whole school day (or a few hours)!

Brain Break

When students have been focusing on a tricky subject for a long time, give their brains a quick break with a 2 minute dance blast to reenergise.

During PE lessons

It is the perfect way to learn exciting physical education!

Additional Resources

[BBC Mood Boosters:](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/moodboosters)

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Dance Class Lesson Plan

This lesson can be used in PE but also work with English skills, focusing on words and letters as the prompt for dance moves

This lesson is for 1 hour

Warm up (10 mins)

1. Pulse raising - running, jumping jacks
2. Mobility- Arm, wrist, ankle circles
3. Stretching- lunges, reaching
4. Dynamic movements- leg swings, kicks, hip circles
5. Skill rehearsal- Spell out their name with their hips.

Activity 1 (10 mins)

Start by playing a dance game. This will get all the children excited to join in with no pressure to create anything at this point. It could be:

Number game- children walk round the space. Numbers 1-4 have an action assigned to them (jump, touch the floor, balance etc.), the teacher calls them out at random and the children respond with the corresponding moves..

Pass the move- in a circle, one person does a move, the next person copies their move and then does their own and so, on. the same concept as 'I went to the store and bought...'

Emoji dance - the teacher shouts an expression and children have to dance like the emotion.

Activity 2 (10 mins)

Children choose a letter from the alphabet and explore how they can use their body/ parts and levels to show the letter. The class will stand in a circle and mirror each child's movements, guessing which letter they are trying to portray.

Activity 3 (15 mins)

Children will split into groups of 3/4 and choose a letter of the alphabet.

They will create a sequence of 5 moves using the 5 basic actions to create a sequence that represents the letter. They can be creative in this, as the letter is just the inspiration. They could:

Mimic the look of the letter

Explore the sound of the letter

Use words that start with the letter

Draw the letter

Create the letter with their bodies

For example, letter S:

Travel- Slithering like a snake

Rotation- Swinging arms

Elevation- Superman jump

Gesture- Hands clasped together, draw an 'S' moving from low to high level

Balance- Arms out, standing on one leg as a flying Seagull bird.

If they finish quickly, ask them to think about how to include:

DIRECTIONS, FORMATIONS, CANON & UNISON

Each group perform their sequence of 5 moves (5 mins)

Activity 4 (10 mins)

Cool Down:

Gentle movement- bringing heart rate gradually back to normal. Walking round the space

Stretches- remove lactic acid from the body and prevents muscles aching.

Rehydrate

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Using dance in... MATHS

Dance naturally lends itself to working with maths. It uses numeracy and the counting of beats and other rhythm and time structures, as well as sequences, repetition and shapes/formations.

We phrase our music in counts of 8, 16 or 32.

We can use angles to describe the positions of the body, like holding your leg at 90 degrees.

Getting into groups of different sizes, we can then add and subtract bodies to increase or decrease the group size.

Additional Resources

Activity ideas connecting Maths & Dance

<https://danceteachingideas.com/connecting-dance-and-mathematics-in-primary-school/>



Activity

Chance Choreography (learning fractions and percentages)

Allocate the 5 basic actions to each number of a dice:

- 1 = TRAVEL
- 2 = ROTATION
- 3 = ELEVATION
- 4 = GESTURE
- 5 = BALANCE
- 6 = STILLNESS

With each roll of the dice, you will add a new move into your dance that corresponds to the action listed against the number rolled.

Start by making 10 rolls and creating 10 actions.

From here, you will be able to work out what fraction of your dance is made up of each action

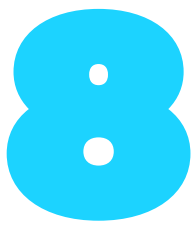
For example, you might have $2/10$ gestures. This means 20% of your dance is made of gestures.

Increasing the difficulty

You can build the complexity of this exercise by rolling more or less times with more difficult numbers.

For example, you could roll 13 times to make a fraction $X/13$, and increase the difficulty of calculating the percentages.

You could also start with multiple numbers of the dice representing the same action, and calculate the probability of the action occurring before rolling.



Using dance in... PSHE

Identity & Cultural Diversity

Students could learn, create and perform dances from a range of cultural and historical backgrounds, not only focusing on cultures represented in their local community, but linking to work in other subjects such as history and geography

Bullying & Discrimination

Students could create and perform dances based around sensitive and challenging issues in a more abstract and less personal way.

Healthy Lifestyles- Mental & Physical Health

Championing the role dance can play in maintaining healthy lifestyles, referring to the previous sections 1 & 2

Additional Resources

Emotions lesson plan:

<https://primaryschooldance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ALL-ABOUT-ME-Emotions.pdf>



Using dance in... SCIENCE

Science lends itself to creating movement as it is often about different stages of a process.

You could explore Matter, investigating chemical and physical change, using contrast as a choreographic device in dance to illustrate solids, liquids and gasses.

Naturally, like all physical activities, dance can also provide a great opportunity to learn more about the anatomy and physiology of the human body.

Warms ups and cool downs can be used to explain how muscles are prepared, and how lactic acid works. Dance helps us explore how our bodies can move and the range of movement in each body part. For example the ball & socket of a joint.



Additional Resources

Free Lesson Plans

<https://danceteachingideas.com/free-dance-lesson-plan-ideas/>

Science lesson plans/ activities

https://knilt.arcc.albany.edu/Lesson:_Integrating_Dance_into_Science

Activity

The Body

Each person is allocated an internal body part. For example, heart, blood, intestines, Skeleton etc.

Each person must research their body part, the way it moves, its function, how it connects and responds to other body parts etc.

Once they have researched, they must position themselves in the appropriate place in proportion to the others as if they were in the body itself. They could either do this themselves, or a teacher can place them in their positions.

Each person will begin moving using the characteristics of the part they have learnt about.

For example, the 'blood' will move quickly and smoothly around the other dancers, using flowing movements. It will respond to the 'heart' when they come into contact.

The 'heart' will stay in the same position, perhaps using big staccato movements that reflect the beat. It will push the 'blood' forwards when it comes into contact.



10 Using dance in... ENGLISH

Phonics

Dance can be integrated into learning phonics. Children are able to dance the actions as they learn the sounds.

Kick

QUick

hIGH

mOOnwalk

lEAp

lunGE

English as a second language

Dance workshops can be especially good for children who might not have English as a first language. You can turn a story into movement which everyone can easily understand and enjoy.

World Book Day

Dance is a great way to celebrate world book day!

You could be Oompa Lumpa's from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, or turn into bears from 'We're going on a bear hunt'!

Additional Resources

English lesson plans/ activities

https://knilt.arcc.albany.edu/Lesson:_Integrating_Dance_into_English_Language_Arts

How Dance Can Teach Literature

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/articles-and-how-tos/articles/educators/dance/how-dance-can-teach-literature2/>

Activity

Dance in Poetry

Finding Rhythms

With each new poem that is read, ask your students to clap along to identify the rhythm. They can develop this with different moves as you go e.g. stamping, waving, clicking, jumping etc.

Finding Rhymes

As students recognise which words of a poem rhyme, ask them to perform a movement as the word happens. When the word that rhymes is read out, they must perform the matching dance move.

For example:

Hey diddle diddle **[jump]**,
The cat and the fiddle **[jump]**,
The cow jumped over the moon **[turn]**.
The little dog laughed to see such fun
And the dish ran away with the spoon **[Turn]!**

