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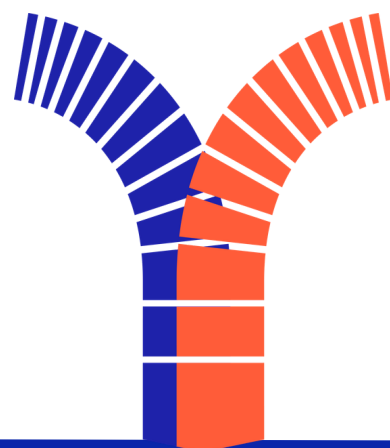


Embedding Physical Activity into the Curriculum – Holly Grove Primary School

Brief Summary for School Leaders



Move Well.



This resource has been designed based on the Well Schools Move Well pillar.

The school's approach

Holly Grove has rethought how learning is organised so that physical activity is not viewed as an extra, a reward or something confined to PE. It is used purposefully within curriculum delivery to help pupils engage, regulate, participate and learn.

This approach has been shaped around the pupils the school serves, including children with a wide range of SEND. Leaders began by questioning whether long periods of sitting and traditional classroom routines were helping every pupil to succeed.

Why this matters

The school serves a community experiencing significant disadvantage and high levels of need. Leaders recognised that some pupils found extended sedentary learning, transitions and conventional classroom expectations difficult. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the school's recovery curriculum created an opportunity to think differently about what pupils needed in order to reconnect with learning.

The starting point was not simply, "How can we make pupils more active?" It was, "How can we deliver the curriculum in a way that better meets the physical, emotional, social and learning needs of our pupils?"

How they approached change

Made physical activity part of curriculum delivery:

Teachers use movement to teach and reinforce curriculum content. Examples shown in the video include pupils building number bonds through active tasks and learning about the body by identifying and labelling parts through movement.

Started with the school's own context:

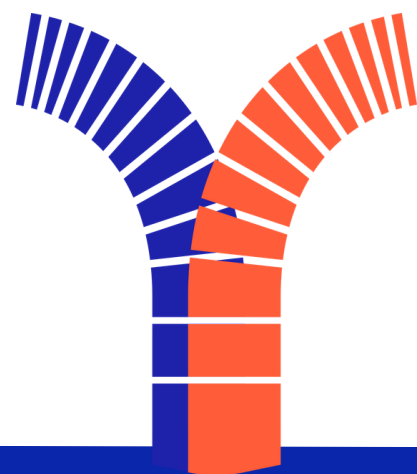
The approach was developed in response to pupils' needs, staff knowledge and the school's values. Leaders resisted following a ready-made model and recognised that effective practice would need to be context-specific.

Created space for staff to shape practice:

Staff were given permission to experiment, collaborate and adapt activities. Protected planning time and professional development helped teachers build confidence rather than feeling they had been handed another initiative to deliver.

Used a gradual approach to change:

The school began with manageable changes rather than attempting to transform every subject at once. Leaders used data, observation and community feedback to understand what was working and where further adaptation was needed.



The difference it has made

Holly Grove reports positive changes across learning, wellbeing and school culture, including:

- increased participation in sport and physical activity across the school community
- greater engagement and attainment across curriculum pathways
- improved self-regulation for pupils and staff
- positive effects on attendance, behaviour and inclusion
- a stronger sense of belonging and a more inclusive school climate
- greater staff confidence to respond to pupils rather than relying on fixed routines.

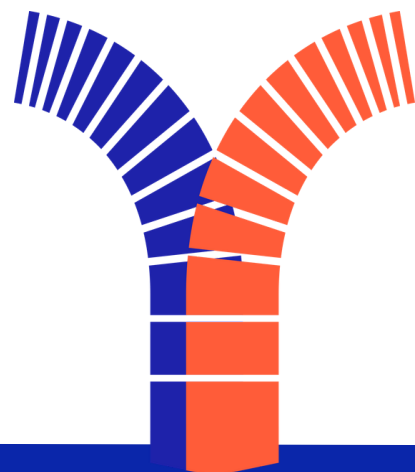
The school's experience suggests that active learning is not about making every lesson energetic. It is about using movement deliberately when it can remove a barrier, deepen understanding or help pupils feel more ready and able to learn.

Key learning for school leaders

- Consider how long pupils are expected to remain sedentary and whether this supports the needs of all learners.
- Treat physical activity as a possible method of curriculum delivery, not an addition to an already crowded timetable.
- Begin with one subject, class or curriculum challenge and learn from it before extending the approach.
- Give teachers clear intent alongside the freedom, time and support to adapt practice.
- Use attendance, behaviour, engagement, inclusion and learning evidence to understand the difference being made.

Reflect

Where in your school day might the way learning is currently delivered create unnecessary barriers for some pupils?





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