

Insight driving innovation and impact

Healthy Movers Cornwall Case Study: Roskear Primary and Nursery School

Engaging children in a deprived area through Healthy Movers and exploring parental links

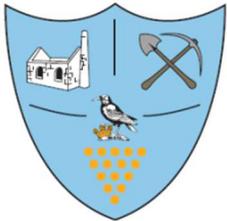
July 2022

Introduction

Roskear Primary and Nursery School is located in Camborne. It is part of The Crofty Multi-Academy Trust; the pre-school caters for 48 children and the nursery for 60 children.

Roskear joined the Healthy Movers programme in 2021. Healthy Movers is delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST), in partnership with Active Cornwall and Public Health Cornwall. The programme is designed to support two to five year olds' physical literacy, self-esteem and wellbeing, helping them gain a better start in life.

Background



Roskear is located in an area of high deprivation¹. The children are below the national average when it comes to physical development, in particular gross and fine motor movements, and they also struggle with their personal and social development, including speaking and listening, and managing their emotions.

The nursery mainly relies on outdoor play as they have a spacious outdoor area with climbing equipment. Before Healthy Movers, however, they did not have a designated time every day for physical activity. The nursery teacher highlighted that as a result of Covid-19, children have missed out on important social and physical experiences, for example not going to the park as much.

The nursery teacher hoped that Healthy Movers would help to improve children's physical literacy, along with their personal, social and emotional development. Roskear liked the idea of an "easy to follow" programme that focuses on increasing physical activity.

Activities

Both the pre-school lead and PE lead of Roskear attended the Healthy Movers training. The nursery teacher thought this was beneficial as the pre-school lead is now about to start Healthy Movers with the two-to-three-year-olds, and the PE lead understood more about what needed to be taught ready for reception at school.

The staff that attended the training course have then cascaded their knowledge onto other members of staff at the nursery, and they emphasised that the resource cards make it very easy and straight forward for other members of staff to deliver Healthy Movers activities. Three members of staff are now doing Healthy Movers regularly in the nursery room, and the 5 members of staff in the pre-school room are hoping to start delivery soon. The setting chooses one card a week, and then uses it for the entire week rather than "dipping in and out" of activities.

Roskear now delivers Healthy Movers activities every day in the morning for around 30 children, and then again in the afternoon for around 27 children. Some children that are at the setting all day do Healthy Movers twice a day – which they love. In fact, they like to show and model the activities to the other children.

¹ Roskear Primary and Nursery School has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 2
Healthy Movers Cornwall Case Study: Roskear Primary and Nursery School

Engaging parents through Healthy Movers

It was important to the nursery teacher at Roskear to engage the parents in Healthy Movers activities to maximise its impact on the children. Due to Covid-19, this has not happened in-person yet, but virtually through the e-learning platform “E-Schools”. Every week, the nursery teacher uploads a Healthy Movers card and adds a video link.

In addition, the nursery teacher invented “Wow” moments, explaining to parents that if their child does something great at home linked to Healthy Movers, to fill out a short paper form. The nursery then displays these on a “wow moment board” for all to see. This has helped to promote the programme with the parents and increased interest. Healthy Movers has helped to strengthen the setting’s relationship with parents.

“Helps to keep the whole family more active as a group activity.”

PARENT



All children received Healthy Movers backpacks to take home with them, including the resources for the activities. This was very well received. As the setting is located in a deprived area, the nursery teacher said that “the children’s faces were like it was Father Christmas” handing out the backpacks. Indeed, the backpacks had a “really big impact” on encouraging children to take part in Healthy Movers activities. Parents have reported back to the nursery teacher that their children are eager to do activities at home, also with their siblings.

“I am so excited that we have two scarves, my daddy can play with me.”

CHILD

Benefits

Increasing knowledge and understanding among practitioners



The staff at the nursery highlighted that Healthy Movers had improved their knowledge and understanding of holistic development and physical literacy.

The nursery teacher explained that although she already understood how activities can support wider development, Healthy Movers sparked her curiosity to do wider research. In particular, she learnt how poor physical development impacts on speech and language and bowel and bladder control, something the children at Roskear have a problem with. Healthy Movers has helped develop the practitioners’ knowledge on the wider benefits of physical development.

The programme has also highlighted the importance of modelling the exercises in front of the children. Before Healthy Movers, the nursery teacher would put dance exercises on the screen instead of demonstrating it herself, so she could tidy up the setting in the background. As a result of demonstrating the activities, the children are showing higher levels of engagement.

Enhancing children's physical literacy



The nursery teacher highlighted that the ball control activities in particular led to a “massive improvement” on children’s gross and fine motor skills as a result of the cross-body movements. This is especially important as the setting’s physical literacy data² showed that the children were below average on gross and fine motor movements prior to taking part.

“I’ve just done the physical development assessment for the year and I’ve got the highest score I’ve ever had. That says a lot.”

MANDY LAWRENCE, NURSERY TEACHER & FOUNDATION 1 LEAD AT ROSKEAR

The nursery teacher in particular reported that the children showed great levels of resilience when it came to trying the activities until they were able to do it. Even though most children struggled at the beginning of each activity, they persevered and were all able to do them towards the end.

“Rolling the ball up and down their arms was just a huge ‘no’. When we first started, I thought we’re never going to be able to do this. But now we do it on the floor, standing up, and walking around.”

MANDY LAWRENCE, NURSERY TEACHER & FOUNDATION 1 LEAD AT ROSKEAR



Supporting children's engagement at nursery

Healthy Movers helps to engage all children in activities and had a positive impact on all, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The nursery teacher highlighted two examples here:

One boy at Roskear is nonverbal and shows traits of Autism. He used to come in and run straight past staff members – now when Healthy Movers activities go on, “he stands and he watches”, and he lets them know “that he is involved in his own way”.

One girl at Roskear shows traits of Autism, she falls a lot and runs into things. As she is sensory seeking, she used to bang her head and thump into doors. The nursery teacher reported that the girl takes Healthy Movers activities outside with her and makes her own game around the activity. As a result, behavioural improvements have been observed.

“She was able to use what she’d learned to help herself cope, and she doesn’t hit herself anymore and she doesn’t smack her head onto anything anymore. I think part of that is due to Healthy Movers.”

MANDY LAWRENCE, NURSERY TEACHER & FOUNDATION 1 LEAD AT ROSKEAR

² Roskear completed a physical literacy assessment tool for the children at the beginning and at the end of the programme to track its impact.

Supporting children's social development



Healthy Movers has encouraged children to co-operate and work together. Older children explain to the younger ones what to do during the activities and model it for them.

Moreover, the nursery teacher highlighted that the children's listening and attention skills have improved significantly. She explained that she did some of the sessions with talking as little as possible, so that the children had to watch and copy, which worked well. In particular, the nursery teacher said that the tracking activities, for example having to track with your eyes where your scarf goes, had a great benefit to the children. This is not only important for attention skills, but also for writing and painting.

Future

The nursery teacher highlighted that they will continue delivering Healthy Movers every day in the nursery. They are also going to start Healthy Movers in the Pre-School with the 2–3-year-olds starting in September 2022. They are hoping to engage more children in the activities and encourage more staff to deliver the activities. The nursery teacher also plans on inviting groups of parents to come into the setting and watch Healthy Movers activities in-person.

“Everyone nationally should be doing this [Healthy Movers].”

MANDY LAWRENCE, NURSERY TEACHER & FOUNDATION 1 LEAD AT ROSKEAR

Top Tips

- ✓ Ensure the resources for all activities are ready to be used every day. This includes ensuring that the setting's leadership is aware of the resources necessary for the programme.
- ✓ Ensure that all staff members take the programme and its activities seriously, this includes senior leadership acknowledging the time that is needed to spend on the programme, including the time needed to collect data.
- ✓ Ensure there is a member of staff who maintains momentum of the programme and regularly checks on the programme's progress, communication with parents, etc.
- ✓ Don't let the programme dwindle away during busy periods, keep it in the forefront.



Youth Sport Trust
SportPark
Loughborough University
3 Oakwood Drive
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3QF

01509 226600
research@youthsporttrust.org
www.youthsporttrust.org



Registered Charity Number 1086915
Registered Company Number 4180163