

### Whole School Improvement

Bensham Grove Community Nursery School

Hilary James (Early Years Professional)

## MEETING THE CHALLENGE

### WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

As a nursery school team we moderated our 2015-2016 nursery data in all areas of learning and development. We identified 'physical development' to be an area of learning and focus as part of our Whole School Improvement Plan and Healthy Schools Programme as we noticed a pattern of decline. 63% of our children were below age related expectations for Moving and Handling compared to 51% of Health and self care. Physical development is one of the three Prime areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Curriculum which are "crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive". Dfe Statutory Framework for EYFS (March 2014). We believe 'The Early Years' to be an important period to promote high levels of physical activity and in doing so establish a foundation for future health and well-being.

Some of our nursery children have no access to gardens or have limited outdoor play space. The most significant increase in the Acorn Profile in 2014 of the school was in the young hardship category at 29.8%, and the young families in low cost private flats at 26.2%. This rise continued in 2015 Acorn profile. Some children may also travel to nursery by car, so in promoting and increasing physical activities in nursery we can support the development of motor skills, balance and co-ordination, maintaining a healthy weight and working together with others.

### WHAT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN?

Physical development became a focus of our School Improvement Plan, our Healthy Schools and Early Years Pupil Premium Action Plan. We bought into the Gateshead School Sports Partnership for advice and support. The following areas of physical activity were developed and co-ordinated by EYP Hilary James

- Ensure weekly physical PE activity was planned for by staff
- Provide more challenge in the outdoor learning environment
- Development of the outdoor environment
- For staff to increase the use of TOPPS Sports Bag
- Engagement of families in Sports Relief
- Participation in the Gateshead Schools Dance Festival for the 'first time'
- Engagement of families in the North East Cancer Research Run Mini Mile May 15th 2016
- Engagement of families in the "Go Run for Fun Event" at Saltwell Park May 27th 2016

## WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE?

### WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The impact was evident in the aspirations, participation and continuing development of children's physical skills. At the beginning of the year 63% of our children were below age related expectations and 37% were at age related expectations whereas now 96% of our children are working at or above age related expectations and only 4% below.

Positive feedback from staff, children and parent/carers and local community included:

The voice of a four year old child following the Dance Festival:  
"When can we do it again?"

Parent: "My child couldn't skip before he started joining in dancing for the dance festival, now he skips everywhere!"

"I have never felt as proud as when I saw my little boy dancing on the huge stage at The Sage with all his friends-it was one of the nicest experiences i have ever had. He loved the performance and wanted to do it again! He has said he will miss dance at nursery so it would be lovely if he could be involved in another dance project!

"The nursery provides wonderful experiences for us to be involved together in our children's development; we loved joining in the Cancer Run and Go Run for Fun Event.

Member of the public – "your children were the best. How did you get such little children to do that?"

Member of staff "when you see the parent and child having fun together in a Fit and Fun session it makes it all worthwhile!"

### HOW HAS THIS BENEFITED PUPILS?

- Having fun! Children are able to demonstrate their confidence and new skills in physical development locomotor skills – (skipping, hopping, jumping, running, galloping) and expressive arts through music and dance.
- Stability – (balancing, riding bicycles, scooters, climbing) taking risks with physical challenges
- Object control skills (kicking, catching, throwing and rolling a ball) Using hoops and beanbags
- Increased physical activities and energetic experiences.
- Engagement of families in a 'Fit and Fun Course' which enhanced their parenting skills, nursery partnerships and promotion of healthy lifestyles. A parent commented that "my child now eats healthy foods that she wouldn't even try at home"!
- Some children are able to talk about the importance of healthy foods and drinks, warm-up and cool down before and after exercise.

# Case Study (2015/16)

## Gateshead School Sport Partnership



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## WHY DID IT WORK?

### CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The involvement and engagement of families in children's learning and development have had a very positive impact on the importance of physical activity and in promoting health and well-being.

Increased development of physical skills through our indoor/outdoor enabling environment which foster, encourage and provide opportunities for physically active play experiences.

Events such as the 'Dance Festival', 'Cancer Run Mini Mile' and 'Go Run for Fun' have promoted and enhanced the development of our community partnerships within our nursery school.

### TOP TIPS

- Working in partnership with parent/carers in the Early Years impacts positively in supporting the development of physical skills and promoting health and well-being.
- Identify the priority and ensure targeted within all action plans eg Early Years Pupil Premium, Healthy Schools, School Improvement Plan.

## HEAD TEACHER COMMENT

*It has been an absolute delight seeing the focus upon Physical development this year – the high level of motivation from children, staff, parents and the local community. I have been moved to tears on several occasions – when a single mum managed to get herself and her 3 year old to the Gosforth Park cancer run on public transport, when another young single mum who attended one of our Fun and fit classes, enjoyed strawberries with her child from a picnic made by herself for one of Fun and fit events – previously her child would not try fruit and one of the highlights of the year was the children performing at the Sage dance festival! The parents and staff were so proud of our children's achievements but what was so moving was our young children being a part of our wider Gateshead community and the sense of pride and belonging of all that took part – it was a very special experience indeed! The structure of the dance teaching really enabled the children to focus and develop their physical skills such as balance, posture and co-ordination, and the festival itself widened our children's and indeed parent's experiences and developed their self-esteem. The whole school focus upon Physical development has not only had a significant impact upon the children's development as the data illustrates but also on theirs and the parents' self-confidence, sense of community and belonging which will prepare them so well for their futures. I know Gateshead School Sport Partnership has worked in this way in many schools but for us it has been a first year and a very successful one because recognised the need to involve our parents/carers and embed the focus upon Physical development across all we do with our young children.*

**Denise Henry (Head Teacher)**