



ATG

**Creative
Learning**



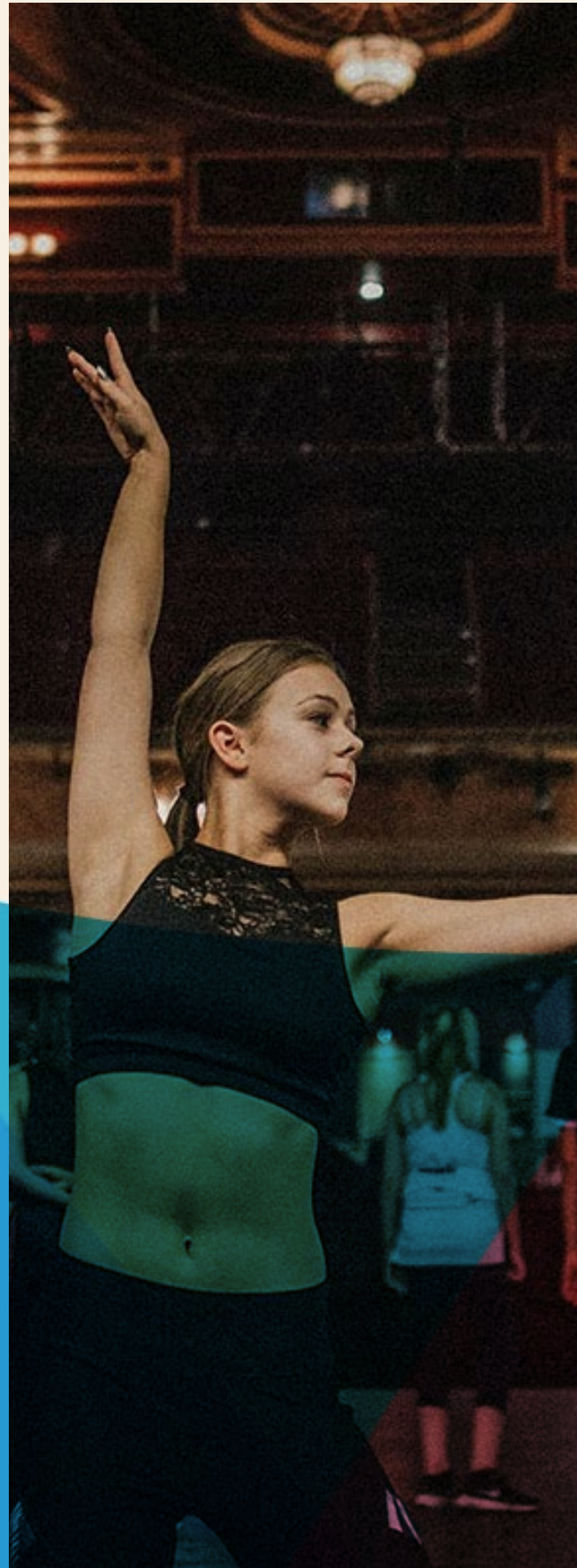
Dance

**Teaching
Resource**
Primary Schools

Introduction

Teaching dance in school is an excellent way to combine creativity with physicality for children; allowing them to explore a variety of themes whilst developing coordination, musicality, confidence and social skills. The development of dance skills also requires practice, discipline and focus; three skills that help young people succeed in all areas of their learning at school.

This resource is a taster of just some of the ways we can support primary school teachers to deliver high-quality dance, with confidence in the classroom.



Ten Tips for Delivering Dance

1 Keep it simple...but creative

Don't try and teach complicated routines or attempt to achieve too much in one lesson. Children will feel the rewards of mastering simple but fun movements and feel confident to repeat them and add their own creative touches!

2 Create a dance playlist

Come prepared with some music that offers different moods, speeds and styles. Include some fun, well known tracks for warm-up activities.

3 Keep the volume low

Whilst children are working creatively with a partner, they will need to focus and communicate their ideas to each other, so try not to play the music too loud.

4 Comment on what you see

Describing the children's work will increase their movement vocabulary and encourage them to keep being engaged with the task.

5 Encourage variety

When asking them to show you a shape or jump, don't stop at one! Challenge them to find another; the more the children get used to doing this, the more creative they will become.

6 Encourage independence

Find a balance between demonstrating and standing back to observe. This will allow the children to build confidence and independence in their creative explorations.

7 Teamwork

Vary the group sizes that children work in, anything from 2-4 works well. It will also encourage a greater variety of responses and support the less confident child.

8 Warm-up & cool-down

Incorporate a simple warm-up and cool-down into all your lessons to ensure safe practice but also as a way to teach children about the benefits on their bodies.

9 Leadership opportunities

If children take dance classes outside of school, you could use this as an opportunity to develop leadership skills. Can they help you deliver a warm-up or game? Or even teach a short phrase to the class?

10 Don't be afraid to ask for help

Speak to your local Creative Learning and Community Partnerships team about further support including resources, workshops and CPD opportunities.



Outcomes and Skill Development

By participating in these activities, children should:

- Gain an understanding of how their bodies move and build some fundamental vocabulary and technique to coincide with this
- Have increased spatial awareness and understanding of how their bodies move in space
- Have developed their musicality and appreciation
- Continue developing their agility, physicality, balance and motor skills
- Have an understanding and appreciation of working as part of a team, exploring creativity with others
- Have increased concentration and listening skills



Curriculum Links

- **SPOKEN LANGUAGE:** Development of spoken vocabulary
- **SCIENCE:** Identifying body parts / discussion around humans being made up of skeletons and muscles
- **SCIENCE:** Understanding of the importance of exercise for humans.
- **SCIENCE:** Identify and name parts of the human circulatory system linking to warm-ups and cool-downs.
- **MUSIC:** Listen with concentration and understanding to a range of music
- **PE:** To master basic movements, as well as developing flexibility, strength, agility, balance and co-ordination in a range of activities
- **PE:** To be physically active and confident for sustained periods of time
- **PE:** Perform dances using simple movement patterns
- **PE:** Compare their performances to previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best
- **PHSE:** Respecting of others and working collaboratively with them
- **PHSE:** Working towards shared goals and expressing our feelings



Activity Guide

Warm-Up Ideas

Top Tips for Wonderful Warm-Ups

- A good warm-up is a great way to get the class energised and engaged, ready to take on the lesson objectives.
- It also helps to ensure participants are able to move freely and reduces the risk of injury during physical activities.
- The warm-up can link directly into the main activities of the lesson, encouraging the class to start considering the vocabulary or terms, physicality and practices used in dance from the very beginning.
- The warm-up should get the heart rate up but shouldn't be too strenuous as to tire the class out before the main activity.

Warm-Up 1 - Weaving



Ask the children to walk around the room at a steady pace. Encourage them to weave through one another moving freely around the space, trying not to bump into others and avoiding walking in a circle.

Repeat, changing the speed and frequency of commands, and incorporating new commands throughout. You could then pick up the pace into a gentle jog, or develop this further by having children move around the room in different ways such as backwards, on the floor, hopping etc.

This could be repeated asking the children to freeze and then changing the command style to incorporate shapes that they can make with their bodies. For example: a line shape, stretching as much as possible, or a round shape, encouraging the children to start thinking about the different shapes their bodies can make.

Increases heart rate and focuses attention on the lesson.



Warm-Up 2 - Copycats

 **10-15**
mins

Start this exercise sitting on the floor and work your way up to larger, physical movements standing up. This is a simple 'Follow the Leader' game. Explain that you're going to be the leader first, but other people can have a turn later too.

Move your body using simple gestures such as touching your head, crossing your legs or more obvious warm-up movements such as shoulder rolls, side bends etc. Try to use a variety of levels and body parts. Once the children are feeling more confident copying you, try increasing the pace, difficulty and speed of movements.

To develop this further and encourage creativity within a warm-up setting, ask for a volunteer to have a go at leading the group. The ideal target is for each child to feel confident choosing a move to demonstrate for the group to follow. This can all be developed week on week throughout your sessions.

Encourages movement and focuses attention on the lesson and their peers.



Warm-Up 3 - Body Rhythms

 **10-15**
mins

First ask the group to clap in time with a piece of music. Encourage their musical understanding by counting out loud in phrases of 8 and when confident, remove the counting and test their musicality, keeping time with just hand claps independently.

Next, give the group a simple movement to do on count 1 such as throwing their hands in the air, supporting them to keep time and work as a group to achieve the movement in unison.

Extension A:

Split the group in half with one group performing the movement on count 1 and the other on count 4. You can develop this further by splitting into more groups and moving on different counts.

Extension B:

As you feel the children gain confidence with this, bring them back to being one group and add in extra movements. The goal is to work up to 8 movements in a repeating pattern.

If you feel the children are achieving this easily, you could extend further by creating 16 counts of movement, or split into groups, starting at different times and performing as a round.

Children should be taking care to think about the way they are performing these movements for example, adopting good posture for the knee bends and ensuring they are jumping safely.

Increases heart rate, develops musicality and understanding of how patterns and phrases are learnt in dance.



Creative Task 1

Mirroring

This activity explores how well the class is able to mimic and recreate the movement of one another. An important aspect of dance is the ability to learn choreographed movement and recreate this with accuracy and precision. This activity also stresses the importance of control and concentration when performing dance.

Main Activity



For this exercise, children will need to work with a partner. It is also a good idea to demonstrate this first, either with a TA or child.

Ask the group to stand in front of their partners and decide who is A and who is B. Demonstrate and explain how they will be acting as if they are looking in a mirror, taking care to copy each other's movements exactly and learning to make precise movements with their bodies.

Person A will be the Leader and will start first, slowly moving their body and Person B will be the Mirror and copy their movements closely. After a few minutes, ask the children to swap so the other person can be the Leader.

Encourage the children to explore different levels, reaching to the ceiling and moving down to the floor, creating exciting shapes with their bodies. Once confident, you can ask them to increase the speed and even incorporate movement around the room.

Extension

Ask the children to decide on their 5 favourite mirrored movements and remember them, repeating them in a phrase. Remind them that they do not necessarily need to be facing each other, they can have moments where they are back-to-back, developing their memory and teamwork. The children could then add in two points of contact, as if they were touching the mirror, and encourage them to be as inventive as possible! This could be hand-to-hand or foot-to-knee etc.

Performance



Split the class into two or three performance groups, encouraging all children to participate in the performance. Whilst one group performs, ask the children to watch closely, thinking of a Wish and a Star to give as feedback.

Wish – something you 'wish' they can improve for next time

Star – a 'star' moment you enjoyed

You could offer suggestions such as "Next time, can you see if you can stretch even further? But I loved all the different levels in your dance and how you worked together."

Creative Task 2

Line & Curve

This task enables children to explore the use of line and curve in their bodies to create different shapes found in dance – particularly ballet and contemporary. Music can be introduced to explore how different styles link with different movements and shapes of the body.

Main Activity



Explain how we can make straight-line shapes, or curved shapes with our bodies – show some examples and demonstrate how using different levels affects how they look.

Ask the children to show you a straight-lined shape with their body and then a curve. Encourage them to explore further, using different levels and linking the shapes together.

Putting the children into partners or small groups, ask one person to create a line shape and the others to create a curve shape that connects to this. Ask the children to swap around, taking turns to create lines and curves.

Ask the group to create and remember three or four with their partner/group, creating a short sequence - reminding them to consider use of levels.

Extension

Extension A: Choosing a starting point in the room, ask the children to decide how they will enter and exit the space.

Extension B: Play the group different styles of music and ask whether they think staccato/strong line shapes or softer curved shapes suit the music style. Demonstrate some of these shapes yourself and encourage the children to participate with this.

Performance



Split the class into two or three performance groups. Whilst one group perform, the others watch closely so they can give a star and a wish as feedback.

If you have time, they can perform again, taking on the feedback of their peers.

Creative Task 3

Exploring Names

This activity explores how different parts of the body can be used to create a piece of movement or dance. It allows children to think creatively about how they can use their bodies to convey a message.

Main Activity



Start by asking the children to write their name on a piece of paper or provide them with a large print out of their name to provide a visual stimulus. If children have a particularly long name, they can choose to use a shortened nickname instead. Can they trace their name in the air with their finger? How about their nose? Or elbow?

Next, play some fun music and ask them to walk around the room. When the music stops, call out a body part and ask them to write their name using it. Try a few different body parts, before asking them to choose their favourite. Ask them to remember this version of their name movement and encourage them to practice repeating the movement pattern.

Extension

Extension A: Ask the group to think about how they can incorporate the use of levels and dynamics within their short movement sequence. Does this make it more interesting?

Extension B: Play the group some different styles of music and encourage them to think about how they would perform the same sequence of movement to the different music. For example, a classical piece of music would call for softer, more fluid movement, whereas some modern pop would encourage faster, more dynamic movement. Ask the children which they prefer and encourage them to explain why.

Performance



Split the class into two or three performance groups. Whilst one group perform, the others watch closely and try to guess which body part their friends are using and offer a star and a wish as feedback.

If you have time, they can perform again, taking on the feedback of their peers.

Cool-Down Ideas

- Ask the group to walk around the room at a steady pace, gently bringing the energy levels down
- Bring the group into a circle so they can easily see you and their peers – ask them to follow your actions. Lead them in some slow circles of shoulders, arms, wrists, hips and ankles. Take some gentle side stretches and leg lunges.
- Ask the group to sit down and repeat the warm-up activity of copying gestures but make them calm and stretchy!
- You could also take the opportunity to lie them on their backs with some relaxing music – focusing on breathing and relaxing their minds.

Music Suggestions

- **Happy** - Pharrell Williams
- **I Like to Move It** - Will.i.am
- **Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)** - Shakira
- **Can't Stop the Feeling** - Justin Timberlake
- **Dance Monkey** - Tones & I
- **We are the Dinosaurs** - Laurie Berkner
- **The Entertainer** - Scott Joplin
- **Dance of the Knights (Romeo & Juliet)** - Prokofiev
- **Nocturne op.9 No.2** - Chopin

Video Resource

This is a fun video with dance styles and music across the ages:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-rSdt0aFuw>

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Dance Vocabulary

Movements

Line	Leap
Curve	Bend
Turn	Stretch
Jump	Run
Roll	Clap
Spin	

How can we format these movements?

Pathways	Formation
Transitions	Speed
Spatial Awareness	Dynamics
Patterns	Levels
Direction	

Alignment	Correct placement of body parts in relation to each other
Balance	A steady or held position achieved by an even distribution of weight
Control	The ability to start and stop movement, change direction and hold a shape efficiently
Elevation	The action of 'going up' without support, such as in a jump
Extension	Lengthening one or more muscles or limbs
Strength	Muscular power
Sustained	An even flow of energy resulting in motion that is ongoing and smooth
Artistry	Creative skill
Coordination	The efficient combination of body parts
Execution	Carrying out actions with the required intention
Flexibility	The range of movement in the joints (involving muscles, tendons and ligaments)
Focus	Use of the eyes to enhance performance or interpretative qualities
Musicality	The ability to make the unique qualities of the accompaniment evident in performance
Performance	Acquisition and development of physical and expressive skills
Rhythm	The placement of sounds and/or movements in time
Style	Characteristic way of dancing
Technique	The fundamental dance movements that form the basis of a dancer's training

Choreographic Elements

Choreography	The art of creating dance
Canon	When the same movements overlap in time
Costume	Clothing worn by dancers in performance
Solo	One performer
Duet	Two performers
Trio	Three performers
Improvisation	Exploration or generation of movements without planning
In-The-Round	A performing area with the audience seated on all sides
Levels	Distance from the ground: low, medium or high
Motif	A movement phrase encapsulating an idea that is repeated and developed throughout the dance
Narrative	Dance that tells a story
Proscenium	The frame or arch separating the stage from the auditorium, through which the action is viewed
Repetition	Performing the same action or phrase again
Staging / Set	The presentation in the performing space including set, furniture, props, projection and backdrop
Structure	The way in which material is organised to create the whole
Unison	Two or more dancers performing the same movement at the same time
Phrase	A short sequence of linked movements
Unity	A sense of 'wholeness' or harmony



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Get In Touch

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