

Skip 2B Fit Pilot Project – March 2004

3 Medway Schools, 4 classes, approx: 103 Yr6 pupils

Evaluation of effect on pupils learning across the curriculum: -

Attitudes/Behaviour

All the schools have reported improvements in the pupils' attitude to their learning in the classroom.

"At first, there were quite a few in the class who felt they would be no good at it, but they amazed themselves at how well they did. They then took the "skipping view" when trying new activities in class. If they were unsure or worried, we talked about the improvements in skipping and the 'try it and you never know' approach. This was in evidence in the lead-up to SATs when many children were obviously less worried about the tests. They could see that they could link the improvements they had made in skipping with improvements in the classroom"

"In the main, the biggest effect was on their self-esteem and as this grew it positively affected their relationships within the school. There was a visible change in their body language showing a new confidence in themselves. As I had expected, the release of physical energy had a huge impact on concentration, it left the children physically comfortable and ready/receptive to listening and concentrating on their literacy work."

"The enthusiasm for the project continued long after the trainer input sessions. The children practised at lunchtime, keeping them focused and the rest of the school responded by joining them, especially the infant children. This had a very positive effect on behaviour, with the children keen to participate.

Academic Progress:

All the schools have reported improvements in academic progress and attainment over the 5-week programme:

"This manifested itself in an improved performance in spelling, handwriting and reading (sight vocabulary and comprehension of text)"

Mental arithmetic SATs style tests pre and post sessions:

Class a: Up to 17 out of 26 bettered their scores

Class b: Up to 23 out of 31 bettered their scores

"The children enjoyed each session learning about the heart and pulse rate as well as improving their mental maths"

"Tests were given to the class before and after the programme and there were noticeable improvements in achievement across the board. In my opinion, the Skip2Bfit programme played a part in these improvements, 7 of 29 pupils demonstrating an improvement of a complete national curriculum level in writing.

This would imply that other pupils have improved within a level but unfortunately these finer statistics are not available.

"The children have developed in both academic and personal, social and health areas."

"This had a direct impact on their academic learning. They could see the links between their skipping and mathematical work we were doing on mean, median and mode. They were able to work out their own mean scores over the programme and compare them with those of the class and comparisons were made with the median and mode scores to highlight links".

Gender Gap

Using a male role model to lead the programme has challenged the stereotypes. This is of benefit as a teaching tool to challenge boys' expectations of their capabilities in other areas of the curriculum:

"The positive male role model of John was also a factor in the programme's success."

"Initially it was felt that the boys may not be as enthusiastic about the skipping concept because of historically perceived stereotyping of the skipping issue. However, by the end of the project, on balance, they were more enthusiastic skippers and were matching the girls' achievement level. Another gender barrier has, therefore, successfully been removed by this project, resulting in equality of achievement"

"All the children were equally encouraged to participate in the activities, boys as well as girls. In fact, the boys almost seemed more eager to participate at times"

In conclusion

It would appear from this very short pilot, that encouraging pupils to improve their fitness levels has a beneficial effect on progress and attainment across the curriculum.

By being physically fitter, pupils are more alert and can concentrate for longer. Improvements in self-esteem have a positive effect on behaviour and attitudes to learning.

In addition to the direct links the programme makes with the Maths and Science curriculum, pupils raise their expectations of what they can achieve physically, which can directly link with changes in their learning across the curriculum.

Education though, is about more than academic attainment. This programme enhances learning. It teaches pupils how to take care of their minds, their bodies and their environment as part of a happy, healthy fulfilling lifestyle.

Heidi Taylor
June 2004

Thanks, Dawn.
Sherwin Knight J.S
6th May 2004-05-06

Dear Heidi,

Thank you for your gentle reminder of the need to return my evaluation of the Skip 2B Fit programme.

It has been a privilege to be part of this. The benefits of the programme have been far reaching. The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience and I have enclosed their letters to John which, I believe, say it all.

The children have developed in both the academic and personal, social and health areas. In the main, the biggest effect was on their self-esteem and as this grew it positively affected their relationships within the school and their home communities.

There was a visible change in their body language showing a new confidence in themselves.

The knowledge and information that John imparted about health issues made sense to them and has had a lasting life-style impact.

Not only did their physical skills of being able to skip and do "tricks" improve but also their levels of fitness.

As I had expected the release of physical energy had a huge impact on concentration. Their bodies having released their excessive stored energy left the children physically comfortable and ready/receptive to listening and concentrating on their Literacy work. This manifested itself in an improved performance in spelling, handwriting and reading (sight vocabulary and comprehension of text).

These children had been chosen at Sherwin Knight because of low self-esteem associated with having Special Educational Needs. The Skip 2B Fit programme gave them a well deserved boost that is so difficult for them normally to attain, as they are so aware of the differences between themselves and other children, no matter how much one tries to encourage and motivate them.

The positive male role model of John was also a factor in the programme's success and I would like to extend my thanks to him for making the children feel so valued.

Kind regards



Dawn Atkins
SEN teacher for Literacy

Elaine Primary School Skip2Bfit review.

During the spring term, the Year 6 children took part in the Skip2Bfit programme. The aim of the programme was to improve fitness levels among the children and also to improve their academic performance.

Over the course of 5 weeks, they took part in a range of skipping related activities with the group leader, John. During each session the children were encouraged to improve their personal best scores and to practice outside of school and beyond each session. All the children were equally encouraged to participate in the activities, boys as well as girls. In fact, the boys almost seemed more eager to participate at times.

Each and every child looked forward to the sessions and took part enthusiastically. They practiced before school, at breaktimes and after school as well. There was a noticeable difference in their confidence levels as the programme developed. At first there were quite a few in the class who felt that they would be no good at it, but they amazed themselves at how well they did.

This had a direct impact on their academic learning. They could see the links between their skipping scores and mathematical work we were doing on mean, median and mode. They were able to work out their own mean scores over the programme and compare them with those of the class and comparisons were made with median and mode scores to highlight links.

They took the '*skipping view*' when trying new activities in class. If they were unsure or worried, we talked about the improvements in skipping and the '*try it and you never know*' approach. This was in evidence in the lead up to SATs where, many children were obviously less worried about the tests. They could see that they could link the improvements they had made in skipping with improvements in the classroom.

Tests were given to the class before and after the programme and there were noticeable improvements in achievement across the board. In my opinion, the Skip2Bfit programme played a part in these improvements, not least in the children's attitude towards unknown and/or potentially worrying situations.

Since the programme has ended the skipping bug has gripped the school with the Year 6 children teaching younger children games and activities in the playground. There is no doubt that the programme has improved the self image of a lot of the children and their confidence levels have greatly increased as a result.

The Year 5 class keep asking when they will be starting Skip2Bfit. The sooner the better as far as we're concerned!

Mark Gilronan (Key Stage 2 Coordinator)

A Review of the Skip2bfit programme at St. Thomas More School

Fifty eight Year 6 children participated in a five week skipping development programme which afforded them the opportunity to develop stamina, skipping skills, personal improvement targets as well as mental stimulation from cross-curricula input, with questions and problem solving covering areas of numeracy, science and aspect of literacy.

The entire project was a tremendous success with full pupil participation, staff commitment to the programme, and the opportunity to further develop curriculum areas once back in class. Personal stamina and achievement improved with all children.

In order to evaluate the academic benefits of increased fitness the day before the skipping sessions the children sat a SATs style mental arithmetic test answering questions read to them from a tape. A different test was given after each skipping session and on each occasion up to seventeen out of a class of twenty six bettered their scores. A control test was done on the parallel Year 6 class and again twenty three out of thirty one children bettered their scores.

The increase in work performance was also noticed in scientific and mathematical problem solving in both classes.

An additional benefit of the sessions was the Cross – curricula learning that took place led by the instructor.

The children enjoyed each session learning about the heart and pulse rate as well as improving their mental maths. A cross curricular links between science and maths were explained to the pupils.

Children who were reluctant the first week to participate and scored poorly saying that they could not skip improved each week as they saw it was not a competition with the others but were praised for improving their own scores. One boy who managed two skips the first week improved his score to over one hundred and fifty skips in two minutes by the end of the five weeks and was rewarded with a certificate.

The children practised at lunch time keeping them focused and the rest of the school responded by joining them especially the infant children. This had a very positive benefit to behaviour, with the children keen to participate.

One child who had broken a bone in her foot was not excluded, each week she observed the lessons and on the last session participated and scored the highest number of skips in two minutes for this class.

The enthusiasm for the project continued long after the trainer input sessions finished. Its success will inform future planning with regard to physical exercise for all age groups before problem solving work being completed. This view is re-inforced by the lead article in the T.E.S. Friday 23rd April where the 'Get Active Project' was highlighted to combat child obesity and improve academic achievement. The evidence from the project undertaken at St. Thomas More School confirms the outcome of all the research shown in the article by Professor Armstrong, and the views of David Bell about pupil exercise.

One final point concerns the gender divide. Initially it was felt that the boys may not be as enthusiastic about the skipping concept because of historically perceived stereotyping of the skipping issue. However by the end of the project on balance they were the more enthusiastic skippers and were matching the girl's achievement level. Another gender barrier has therefore successfully been removed by this project resulting in achievement equality.

ELAINE PRIMARY.

Post Skip2Bjrit

MARCH 2004

School List in Class order

Surname	Forename	Age (Yrs and M)	R Age (B)	R Raw Score	R Standardis	M Raw	M Standardis	W Level	S Score
Alb		11y 4m	13.06	28	96	34	110	4	117
Bat		11y 2m	9.03	19	83	14	88	3	112
Bla		10y 11m	12.09	27	97	22	99	3	112
Da		10y 9m	13.08	37	116	13	90	3	110
Der		10y 11m	13.07	28	98	24	103	4	117
Fri		11y 2m	13.04	33	104	20	95	4	118
Har		11y 2m	13.09	22	87	34	111	4	120
Hes		11y 5m	13.09	36	107	32	106	4	120
Jes		11y 5m	8.11	20	82	20	93	3	76
Jen		11y 0m	10.6+	20	86	14	90	3	93
Kea		11y 3m	13.0	33	104	28	103	4	120
Kin		11y 2m	8.03	13	73	20	95	3	31
Lan		11y 0m	10.6+	27	97	31	109	4	118
Mic		11y 0m	8.7	15	79	20	96	3	105
Mcj		10y 7m	13.09	25	96	8	84	3	105
Mcr		11y 6m	11.09	25	89	25	97	4	117
Mie		10y 8m	11.09	24	94	22	101	3	116
O'N		11y 3m	13.03	39	118	40	119	4	117
Pat		10y 9m	12	37	116	34	115	4	115
Plu		11y 1m	13.09	35	108	37	116	4	118
Ray		11y 1m	10.6+	13	73	12	86	3	113
Sini		10y 9m	13.0	24	92	23	102	2	113
Sou		10y 9m	12.03	18	83	17	94	3	115
Tayl		11y 0m	13.09+	33	107	34	113	4	119
Tho		10y 8m	13	26	98	27	107	4	119
Tura		11y 2m	12.06	29	98	24	99	3	117
War		11y 5m	10.06+	20	82	14	86	3	98
Why		11y 2m	13.06	34	106	26	101	4	119
Win		11y 1m	11.03	16	78	27	103	2	88