

BORN TO MOVE™

INNOVATIVE WAYS TO INCORPORATE MOVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Katherine Selby

Primary schools know that many children fall far short of the recommended physical activity levels. Plentiful research shows obesity and weight issues remain a threat to pupils' health while, conversely, increasing evidence points to the mental, physical, social and educational benefits of active children.

- Six out of 10 children don't get the recommended levels of physical activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of 60 minutes per day (30 minutes in school, 30 out). (1)
- 2.3m children do not reach at least an average of 30 minutes a day. (2)
- Physically literate children and young people are more resilient. (2)
- Enjoyment is the biggest driver of activity. (2)

The challenge to society of physical inactivity is well documented but less apparent are viable solutions to the problem. While schools are not the only route to youngsters' activity and wellbeing, teachers are very well placed to encourage physical activity and healthy behaviours by doing what they do best: using their skills to inspire youngsters to make a real difference. By adapting its world-renowned BORN TO MOVE™ children's programme for a school setting, Les Mills is empowering schools to deliver fitness through fun.

FITNESS THROUGH FUN

Partnering with Sports Leaders, Les Mills undertook a comprehensive pilot of 50 primary schools across the UK, taking insight from the teachers, children and educational experts to tailor its programme to suit the school setting. BORN TO MOVE Schools is now ready to help primary schools boost physical activity among their pupils. An option for secondary schools will follow soon afterwards. All this will be music to the ears of teachers seeking fun ways to boost physical activity.

Children will literally jump at the chance to be active – especially when music, fun and friends are involved. Tapping into children's innate desire to move and play, BORN TO MOVE Schools builds confidence, develops skills and fires their imagination by setting to music and song age-appropriate elements of dance, martial arts, sports conditioning, plyometric training and yoga.

The BORN TO MOVE children's programme is highly regarded in the fitness world, but Les Mills sought insight from Sports Leaders to adapt it to succeed within schools. "I applaud Les Mills for choosing to work collaboratively with us to understand the school landscape," says Richard Norman, Chief Executive of Sports Leaders. "BORN TO MOVE Schools brings physical activity and exercise into the school day and embeds innovation and imagination into the curriculum with clever use of technology. To succeed, physical activity must be fun, engaging, relevant and easily delivered. This is an excellent peer-to-peer platform and a positive move towards sustainability in physical activity within primary schools."

PEER-TO-PEER PLATFORM

BORN TO MOVE Schools comprises fun-filled classes to inspire children of all ages and abilities to be active. The magic lies in the progressive classes being developed 'for kids by kids' and schools are encouraged to train Year 5 and Year 6 pupils as Activators to lead their peers through the programme. The younger pupils respond well to this while the Activators gain confidence, self-esteem, resilience and responsibility.

Taking all the hard work out of delivering physical activity sessions, the programme is uploaded to the school intranet, enabling it to be accessed on screens in classrooms, the school hall and laptops. Utterly versatile, it can be run as a complete 35-55-minute session or enjoyed in bite size chunks to fit into shorter time frames within the school day, including assembly, breaktime, lunchtime and wet play. The pilot schools also found that dropping a few minutes of activity into classroom time significantly boosted energy and attention in lessons.

DELIVERING ON PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND 'PROMISING PRINCIPLES'

The Public Health England 'What works in schools and colleges to increase physical activity?' July 2019 report includes 'Eight Promising Principles' to help schools implement fun, effective and sustainable physical activity. BORN TO MOVE Schools meets seven of these.



1. Develop and deliver multi-component interventions.
2. Ensure skilled workforce.
3. Engage student voice.
4. Create active environments.
5. Offer choice and variety.
6. Embed in curriculum, teaching and learning.
7. Embed monitoring and evaluation.

The programme also meets key guidelines from the Association for Physical Education (afPE) and the Youth Sport Trust, specifically:

- raising the profile of PE and sport across the school
- raising the amount of physical activity that gets children warmer and out of breath
- upskilling staff and building longevity and sustainability; not being dependent on funding which may run out
- increasing the range of activity for children.

FULL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

Les Mills and Sports Leaders combine to train classroom teachers and teaching assistants to deliver and activate the programmes. Schools are also encouraged to train pupils in Years 5 and 6 on the Kids Activator Award, especially those who are

less active and less confident: their journey inspires the younger children while the older ones gain confidence and leadership skills.

FEEDBACK

“BORN TO MOVE Schools is possibly the best of its kind and has massive potential to help address obesity and inactivity in children,” says Martin Radmore, Director of VisionED, the primary PE experts who worked closely with several Norfolk and Suffolk schools undertaking the pilot. “Taking a modern approach to activity using music, rhythm and movement, it’s highly adaptable for all children. In my opinion, every primary school should look at this and consider an investment from their PE and Sport Premium as it hits the key indicators and rationale behind this funding.”

“BORN TO MOVE Schools has been a great success in our school, especially among the children who aren’t that sporty: they loved learning new skills like dance, martial arts, yoga and boxing,” says Sarah Franklin, Year 2 teacher and joint lead for PE at Great Sankey School in Warrington. “We uploaded the programme across all the teachers’ desktops and linked to the main school hall so sessions can be done throughout the school. Kids love to move and as soon as they hear the music, they’re on their feet.”

Sue Costello, Director of Inclusion at Aspire Multi Academy Trust in Cornwall, works with 28 academies that utilise a trauma-informed approach to improve the wellbeing of children with social and emotional mental health challenges. “BORN TO MOVE Schools has worked extraordinarily well for our children with SEND,” says Sue. “Physical activity helps to reduce the raised cortisol levels in a stressed child and distracts them from their negative emotions and feelings, thus helping divert a crisis.” Aspire is using the programme as part of its trauma-informed approach to wellbeing for staff and children and Sue loves the adaptability of the programme. “While some kids need to be calmed down, others are absolutely flat as if numb and absent,” she says. “BORN TO MOVE really comes into play here as the movement, songs and working together in a group helps give them a buzz. After a session they laugh, smile and high-five their friends. Taking this positive attitude back into class, they remain animated and able to engage with their peers,” explains Sue. “The children love it so much they don’t realise they’re training. I call it sport by stealth!”

“Experience and research show that BORN TO MOVE works and by developing it for the school setting we can engage many more children in fun physical activity”, says



Justine Williams, Les Mills Global Business Development Manager. “We listened carefully to education experts to adapt the delivery to suit the needs of the pupils, teachers and schools and ensure alignment with the new guidance from Ofsted, centring on intent, implementation and impact. Our pilot has shown excellent uptake and strong results and we are excited by the potential this has to empower schools to instil a love of movement among young children to help them form a life-long love of physical activity.”

Paul Sullivan works within local authority sports provision across schools and leisure centres across Monmouthshire, focusing on integrating services for children and families. “I immediately saw the potential here and didn’t hesitate to participate in the pilot. We were given ten school spaces and within 36 hours the places were filled. “Embedding health and wellbeing into the school day is a key area of learning that shouldn’t be confined to PE lessons,” says Paul. “BORN TO MOVE Schools is easy to pick up and administer. Engaging both children and staff, it’s right on the mark.”

BORN TO MOVE™ schools has been developed as a sustainable and developing resource which is future proofed by being adaptable to the changing needs of schools and responsive to youth trends.

To find out how your school could benefit visit: www.lesmills.com/borntomove/ or email BornToMove@lesmills.com ■

KIDS – THE TOUGHEST CRITICS

Monmouthshire Council asked over 300 youngsters across its participating schools what they thought of BORN TO MOVE Schools. These results show how many 'always' or 'sometimes' agreed. The combined totals are compelling and encouraging as is the word cloud created by the responses.

Question	Always	Sometimes	Combined
Exercise makes me happy	77%	20%	97%
I enjoy BORN TO MOVE	61%	31%	92%
I feel fitter for taking part in BORN TO MOVE	57%	30%	87%
I would recommend BORN TO MOVE to my friends	62%	22%	84%



REFERENCES

NHS
Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, March 2019.

Katherine Selby is a health and fitness writer and PR Director at Action PR.