

# PHYSICAL LITERACY

## The goal at the heart of Physical Education

All can achieve Physical Literacy  
Every pupil has a right to acquire Physical Literacy

**A Physically Literate individual possesses the motivation, confidence, physical competence, understanding and knowledge to maintain physical activity at an individually appropriate level, throughout life.**

- Physical literacy can be described as the ability and motivation to capitalise on our motile potential to make a significant contribution to the quality of life.

- As humans we all exhibit this potential, however its specific expression will be particular to the culture in which we live and the motile capacities with which we are endowed.

- An individual who is physically literate moves with poise, economy and confidence in a wide variety of physically challenging situations.

- The individual is perceptive in 'reading' all aspects of the physical environment, anticipating movement needs or possibilities and responding appropriately to these, with intelligence and imagination.

- A physically literate individual has a well established sense of self as embodied in the world. This together with an articulate interaction with the environment engenders positive self esteem and self confidence.

- Sensitivity to and awareness of our embodied capacities leads to fluent self expression through non-verbal communication and to perceptive and empathetic interaction with others.

- In addition the individual has the ability to identify and articulate the essential qualities that influence the effectiveness of his/her own movement performance, and has an understanding of the principles of embodied health, with respect to basic aspects such as exercise, sleep and nutrition.

### Implication for movement activity work in school

#### Content will need to:-

- enable all to realise their potential in respect of Physical Literacy
- be broad to cater for all young people
- be relevant to opportunities for physical activity throughout life
- include work that helps pupils to understand the nature of movement and its contribution to health

#### Methods will need to:-

- be inclusive and individualised
- be purposeful and have clear intent
- offer opportunities for all to experience success
- enhance self esteem and self confidence

#### The teacher will need to be:-

- sensitive, empathetic, appreciative and encouraging
- But also
- challenging, demanding and set high standards

### Proposed curriculum for 5 to 11 year old pupils:-

#### Modules of 6 hours entitled:-

Body management, Manipulating objects, Confidence in the outdoors, Moving with others, My movement, Exploring movement across the curriculum, Planning my own module.

The modules would be designed, not only to cover the range of movement capacities alluded to in the definition of Physical Literacy, but also to embrace the use of language, working with others, creativity, self assessment, decision making and issues concerned with health and well being.

A significant human attribute in line with the writings of a range of philosophers, psychologists and sociologists.

An important attribute that has far reaching significance in childhood, adolescence and throughout all stages of adulthood.

#### Our nature as embodied

For human reality to be is to act. (Sartre)  
The perceiving mind is the incarnate mind. (Merleau-Ponty)  
The concept of a person is logically primitive and is not derived from mind and body. (Strawson)

#### Embodiment as the basis of cognition

Thus the basis of meaning is not to be located in the rules that order cognition, nor in the grammatical structure of linguistic sentences, but in the bodily pattern and order of active perceptions. (Burkitt)



#### Beings-in-the-world

The environment is not an "other" to us. It is not a collection of things that we encounter. Rather it is part of our being. It is the locus of our existence and identity. We cannot and do not exist apart from it. (Lakoff and Johnson)



#### Achieving a sense of self

The original sense of 'I' is the 'I can', .... and therefore the sense of identity possessed by humans is not based on disembodied thought nor in early visual representation. Instead, the sense of self we develop is primarily based on the feel we have of our body and the way it connects us to the world. (Burkitt)

#### Relating to others

The understanding of the other person is primarily neither theoretical nor based on an internal simulation. It is a form of embodied practice. (Gallagher)

