

Case Study 2

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Thomas joined Beacon Hill School in January 2008, coming into class 3. He was a very aggressive boy, diagnosed with ASD. When he first arrived, he completely changed the dynamics of the class with his challenging and violent behaviour, directed towards staff and pupils alike. He needed 1-1 support to join in with any activity and to protect the other pupils he was working near as his unpredictable scratching, hitting and kicking often caught people unawares.

During the first term of P.E. with Thomas, we were doing Sherborne Developmental Movement, a series of physical interactions between staff and pupils, to encourage engagement and develop social skills in people with ASD. Thomas worked 1-1 with the same member of staff each session. In the beginning, he would fight to get away and would run off, refusing to interact with staff or other pupils. He would take part in very little during a session. As we continued with the programme, we began to recognise that there were some interactions he liked, such as swinging and twirling and he would sit and 'rock' with a member of staff for short periods of time for a swing. We gradually increased the time he had to 'rock' for and Thomas soon became confident and happy to sit and rock calmly with a member of staff. This was a very significant step in Thomas' progress and social interaction, one which the adults were able to transfer and use with him in the classroom to help calm him down. From this, there was a significant improvement in Thomas' behaviour and how it was managed. He began to feel 'safe' with the adults, develop trust and engage with them more positively and his class teachers were able to continue with the Sherborne Developmental Movement outside of P.E. lessons and involve his parents, other pupils in the class and their parents. Thomas is now in class 4 and has had no violent incidents since has moved into this class. He is able to interact with other pupils at a socially acceptable level in P.E, in the classroom and at social times. He is now a happy child who enjoys coming to school and is now able to access other activities in P.E. such as gymnastics and team games. He is not only showing a significant improvement in his physical ability when climbing, jumping, throwing, catching and balancing but his social skills such as taking turns, listening and following instructions, throwing and catching with a partner and sharing equipment have also improved. He is a pleasure to teach.