



# Inclusion Newsletter

19<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Welcome to the Inclusion newsletter for Term 5.

Our focus for this term is **Motor Skills**, which relates to children's physical development: their movement, balance and co-ordination skills, as well as their ability to do manual activities. Sometimes, children's motor skills do not develop properly, or at the expected rate. This can mean that they fall behind their peers in achieving developmental milestones, and may be unable to do things such as dress or feed themselves independently, develop writing skills, or throw and catch successfully when playing games. It can also mean they are slower to learn more demanding physical skills, such as riding a bike.

In most cases, there is no specific disorder present causing these difficulties, and children just need a bit of help to develop their motor skills, soon catching up with their peers. Where there are serious concerns about the development of a child's motor skills, ie. that they are significantly below the level expected for their age and this is having a detrimental impact on their day-to-day activities and achievements at school, they may need to be assessed by a paediatrician as they may have a condition such as **Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD – also commonly referred to as Dyspraxia)**. This condition can affect both fine and gross motor co-ordination.

At Riverside, activities which support the development of good motor skills are part of everyday lessons in all classes. Children do activities like 'dough disco' which are designed to build hand strength and support the muscle movements needed for writing and drawing. We build in movement breaks where children can practise balance and co-ordination and build their core strength. Our 'trim trail' and playground exercise equipment help to support this too. In addition, we offer intervention sessions to children who have particular difficulty with these skills. We use a range of resources and equipment in our Rainbow Room to develop core strength and help children improve their fine and gross motor skills. Some of our children also have Occupational Therapy (OT) or Physiotherapy if they need an even greater level of support.

As always, if you have concerns about your child's development and/or would like support to meet their needs, please do talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance, or me as Inclusion Manager. We have lots of ideas, strategies and resources that can help, some of which are discussed overleaf.

If you have any other suggestions, queries or concerns about anything to do with inclusion and SEND, then please do call or come and see me at the school.

**Mrs Z Huggett**  
Inclusion Manager



# Motor Skills

Motor skills are related to the movement of muscles in the body. They are divided into two groups:

**Gross motor skills** – these involve the larger movements of arms, legs or the entire body, necessary for activities such as running, jumping, throwing/catching/kicking a ball, hopping, skipping or using large playground equipment.

**Fine motor skills** – these involve smaller actions related to hands and fingers, such as being able to hold a pencil correctly, write and colour neatly, cut accurately using scissors, and do up buttons or shoelaces.



**There are more than 600 muscles in the human body. To take just one step, you use around 200 of them!**

~ Fine motor development can be supported through activities like drawing, painting, crafts and doing jigsaw puzzles. You can also give your child activities that specifically practise a particular skill, such as threading beads onto a string, posting items through a slot or picking small items up with tweezers. Playing with toys that require manipulation, such as Lego, plasticine or play dough is also very beneficial to the development of hand and finger strength. Children should be encouraged to practise life skills that require good fine motor control, including using a knife and fork to cut up their own food, and fastening their own buttons, zips and shoelaces. Fun activities such as baking are also great for developing a range of motor skills. There are lots more ideas like this if you follow the first link in the 'Useful Websites' section below.

~ Gross motor development is helped by being generally active. The more children practise throwing, catching, kicking, skipping and so on, the better they will become. Riding a bike, going swimming, climbing on playground equipment, bouncing on a trampoline and other sporty activities will help as well. As children get older, they can be asked to help with household chores such as sweeping, mopping, and vacuuming, or pushing the trolley round the supermarket and collecting items from the shelves.



## Useful websites:

<http://theimaginationtree.com/2013/09/40-fine-motor-skills-activities-for-kids.html>

<http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com>