The issue

There is growing evidence that poor physical development is becoming a universal problem.

Children with poor physical development may demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Inability to sit still, poor concentration, poor writing skills, poor behaviour, low self-esteem, poor coordination.

All of which lead to children becoming disinterested and less likely to participate in physical activity.

The referrals to physiotherapy services were increasing to unsustainable levels.

Children were not achieving their normal developmental milestones due to poor core stability and general physical literacy skills.

For more information contact:
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What did we do

Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists designed five exercises that pupils should complete every day for 15 minutes over a six week period. These exercises were designed to improve core stability and body strength. They were carried out after an initial assessment of children's physical development against a set of milestones appropriate for their age. If children were scoring less than 16 out of 19 milestones it was strongly recommended that they undertook the intervention programme. A score of 19 is considered ‘normal’ physical development for their age.

Schools evidence

Children now have:

- much greater control over their bodies
- an improved level of confidence
- knowledge of their core muscles and how to relax and contract them
- greater control when going up and down stairs
- greater ability to sit and also concentrate for longer.

Impact

60% of children who accessed the programme progressed to ‘normal’ physical development after a 6 week intervention.

The average milestone score showed a significant improvement in children's physical development from 8.5 to 14.8 after 6 weeks. Therefore within the group of children still not scoring 16, there were many in the 14/15 mark.

Paediatric services have already commented on the quality of referrals from schools who have been involved in the physical literacy programme, plus referral rates into children's physiotherapy have declined as a result.

We have evidence that even this minimum six week programme will have a lasting impact on children's development. Schools who have tracked Year 1 pupils that repeated the programme in Year 2 when assessed had clearly retained the core strength and stability required to achieve their normal physical development milestones.