

**THE
|P
LACE**

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS



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WELCOME



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Place's Continued Professional Practice (CPD) for Primary School Teachers!

These resources are designed to help teachers, school leaders and support staff to plan and run dance activities in a primary school. Everyone is welcome! No knowledge or experience of dance is needed - these resources offer step-by-step activity plans, week-by-week sessions, and wider ideas to think about.

Our aim is to help you feel confident planning and delivering dance activities, and to bring movement to more young people.

WHO WE ARE

The Place is one of Europe's most exciting, innovative dance spaces and home to London Contemporary Dance School; where artists from all over the world come to push creative boundaries, to experiment and to perform outstanding new work for audiences who expect to be surprised, inspired and delighted.

We are committed to powering your imagination through dance. Supported by a culture of innovation, risk taking and collaboration we strive to create extraordinary experiences with and for you.

We're passionate about how dance can enrich learning, and our partnerships with primary schools allow us to bring dance to a broad range of young people across London and beyond.

Created by the Creative Learning Team at The Place, led by Ania Straczynska, Creative Learning Assistant Manager with support from Maria Ryan, Creative Learning Producer, Emma Tweedie, Creative Learning Coordinator and Dance Artist, Laura Heywood.

This written resource pack is designed to accompany our digital resources. This CPD is divided into two sections. In Section 1 we will introduce you to key elements of movement: actions, dynamics, space and relationships. In Section 2 we will guide you through learning how to teach these concepts and design exciting movement sessions in primary school settings.



Please watch relevant CPD video [HERE](#)

INTRODUCTION

Looking at the school curriculum, children in Key Stage 1 should 'perform dances using simple movement patterns' and in Key Stage 2 they should 'perform dances using a range of movement patterns'. Through this resource you will learn how to achieve this.

Dance is movement of the body, which serves the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, but let's remember that it can also be a wonderful tool to enhance learning in the classroom. Other benefits of ensuring that Creative Dance is present in the curriculum are:

- The expansion of physical experience - moving in different ways
- Improvement of self esteem and confidence
- Development of teamwork skills
- Using space in a different way
- Supporting children in developing a new movement vocabulary, dynamics and rhythms
- Enabling students to move and to improve their physical and creative skills

Before you get your group moving, we would like to share some of our tips/ rules to remember:

- 1 Dance is for everybody and every BODY
- 2 All activity should be done safely; clear open space, safe use of props (props tried and tested in advance)
- 3 Choose music wisely - you have playlists available in this resource
- 4 Dance should be fun - no rights or wrongs
- 5 When leading sessions you should use clear and accessible language
- 6 Everyone should be involved during the sessions, including support staff

CORE INGREDIENTS OF DANCE

1. DANCE ACTIONS

These are the first building blocks of dance, they relate to **WHAT** the body is doing:

- **GESTURE:** a movement that contains a message, it could be hello (wave), stop (pushing your palm forward), good (showing thumbs up)
- **JUMPS:** you can jump from both feet to two feet, from both feet to one foot and so on. If you work with participants with mobility needs, you can, for example, encourage them to send energy up and down with their arms or their gaze
- **TRAVELLING:** moving in space from point A-B. We could step, or slide, or use the jumping action from before to travel
- **TURNING:** moving around your own axis, it can be combined with travelling, or even jumping
- **FALLS:** shifting your weight to the side and catching ourselves, controlled falls to the floor are also a dance action, those require a little bit more practice in order to make sure they are done safely
- **STILLNESS:** making a pose, to be still

2. DYNAMICS

How is the body moving:

- **SPEED:** slow/ fast/ medium movements. Think slow motion, or shaking bodies quickly
- **FORCE:** heavy/ strong/ light/ gentle movements
- **FLOW:** free/ restrained movements (or less/ more controlled)

Have a think how you can perform Dance Actions applying these dynamics.

2. SPACE

Where is the body moving?

- **PATHWAYS:** moving around the room, from A to B, diagonally, in a circle
- **LEVELS:** low/ high. Are you on your tiptoes, crouched low, or hovering somewhere in the middle in a squat?
- **DIRECTIONS:** moving to the right/ left/ front/ back

4. RELATIONSHIPS

Is the body interacting with anything or anyone?

- **SOLO:** moving alone
- **DUET:** moving with one other person
- **GROUP:** moving with others
 - a) **UNISON:** When pupils are moving together in the same way
 - b) **CANON:** When pupils dancing the same choreography but at different time

We can create small or large groups of pupils dancing, and we can even bring props, like scarves or ribbons to make our dances.



PART 2



Please watch relevant CPD video [HERE](#)

CREATIVE DANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In this section of the CPD we will walk you through 5 weeks of delivering dance sessions for Primary Schools and we will also guide you through developing it into a longer programme of up to 8 weeks of dance.

Please remember that each session should start with a warm up and finish with a cool down. A warm up allows children to prepare themselves for the activity both physically and mentally. Similarly a cool down enables their muscles to slowly return to their resting state.

WARM UP

You should start your session with a warm up. This can be a series of simple mobilisations or a themed, creative warm up, as shown in the video. You are welcome to use the warm up from our video or develop your own.

Remember that a warm up should:

- Get the children moving (get their heart rates up)
- Mobilise the joints
- Include some very gentle short stretches
- Help children focus on their minds and bodies
- Integrate the theme of the session

When in class: Develop repetitive movement phrase for warm-ups that you can build upon and develop through the term.

WARM UP – MOBILISING

Activity options:

- **Feet:** circling, pointing and flexing feet, either standing or sitting.
- **Legs:** High knees, squats
- **Torso:** stretching up and sideways, rolling through the spine
- **Arms:** shoulder rolls, lifts, stretching and coordination tasks
- **Head and neck:** slowly and gently look left and then right, draw a circle with your nose. Nodding and shaking your head.
- **Whole body:** weight transfer from one foot to the other, isolations, jumps, turns, spirals, moving down to, and getting up from, the floor, using levels.

When in class: You can find music that helps to keep the timing of the movements (see the playlists at the end of the resource).



WARM UP – CREATIVE

If you have chosen the theme for your sessions, for example 'forest', you can lead a little more creative warm up, for instance:

Activity options:

- **Arms and torso:** pushing past trees
- **Feet and legs:** jumping in a puddle
- **Arms and shoulders:** reach and swing imagining moving between branches
- **Neck:** twist your head slowly and gently like an owl
- **Spine:** Rolling slowly through your spine, moving arms or whole body to slither like a snake
- **Whole body and coordination:** hear a scary noise and travel fast - move quickly and curl into a small ball shape to hide

When in class: You can mix these types of warm ups, or each week lead something slightly different. But please remember, that repeating certain movement patterns allows children to develop their confidence and movement memory.

COOL DOWN

During the cool down, facilitate gentle stretches alongside breathing exercises. Deep breaths help the muscles to relax so it's important to encourage pupils to focus on their breathing during stretches.

Additionally you can facilitate breathing exercises:

- 1 Ask pupils to sit comfortably on the floor
- 2 Guide them to breathe in through their nose - count to 5 as they do that
- 3 Guide them to breathe out through their nose - count to 5 as they do that
- 4 Repeat several times, you can also ask children to close one nostril at a time

As a part of your cool down you can also introduce reflection time. Ask children to think about a positive element of the session, something that they enjoyed or something that they are proud of. You can either ask children to share it with the group or a partner. This helps children acknowledge their own accomplishments and leave the room with positive energy.



SESSIONS CONTENT

WEEK 1 – EXPLORING DANCE ACTIONS

ACTIVITY 1: GETTING TO KNOW THE ACTIONS

- 1 Demonstrate each action to the children and tell them what it is called. Ask children to repeat the action and its name after you. Can they show you their own versions of turns / jumps etc?
- 2 You can also show an action and ask them to name it - for instance: take a step to the side and ask 'What am I doing?'. If you need to give a clue you can ask 'What are you doing when you go on holiday'? The answer you are looking for is 'travel'.

ACTIVITY 2: CALL AND DO

- 1 After showing all the actions, play 'call and do'. When you say 'jump', the children respond by doing jumps of their choice etc. You can also use printed symbols or written words alongside your verbal cues.
- 2 You can replace calling out the dance actions with numbers. Such as 'when I call 1, please respond with jumps; when I call 2, please respond with travelling'.

ACTIVITY 3: SEQUENCING

Once your group understands the Dance Actions, you can embed that knowledge by teaching a short piece of choreography.

- Devise your own choreography by adding one action after another, for instance: gesture, travel, jump, turn, fall and finish with stillness. You can also copy the choreography from our video and teach it to your group.
- At the end of the choreography you can leave a few counts for children to add their own actions.

WEEK 2 – EXPLORING DYNAMICS

In order to provide stimuli for children, consider bringing an image or a video into the room. For instance an image of a landscape, with mountains, a river, trees and an owl sitting on a branch. Discuss the image with children, allow them some time to notice all the elements. Then choose one of the elements from the image to explore dynamics with the body:

ACTIVITY 1: RIVER – Soft, light and free

- 1 Ask the group to imagine that the river runs through their body, how does the body move?
- 2 Ask the group if the river can slow down, especially at the bottom of the river bed?
- 3 Can the river be taken 'around' the space, moving freely in the space?

ACTIVITY 2: GROWING TREE – Restrained and heavy

- 1 Start from asking the group to take the shape of a seed, feeling the weight of the soil pushing down
- 2 Task the group to try to break through the surface of the ground with their heads, then hands and arms, growing tall, using their legs as well slowly growing upwards
- 3 The group can start thinking of their feet as roots, heavy, strongly pulling down to the ground
- 4 Encourage the children to use their arms to grow taller like a tree

ACTIVITY 3: OWL – Bringing dynamics together

- 1 Ask the children to think of an owl waking up from a long sleep, slowly looking around
- 2 Task the group to sleepily stretch their arms as if they were wings and shake their feathers
- 3 Guide children through developing speed using their arms as wings flying around the room and moving lightly around the space

WORKING WITH PROPS

To help pupils understand dynamics a little bit better, we suggest using props. Please ensure you test, all the props before using them.

Props that work very well for dance would be:

- Feathers
- Scarfs
- Scrunchies
- Spots
- Shakers
- Socks
- Tunnels
- Hoola hoops

ACTIVITY 4: FEATHER – Dynamics of the object

- 1 Drop feather from high and let children observe the movement
- 2 Ask children to copy the feather's movement with their body
- 3 Discuss how the feather is falling with the pupils. What dynamics can they observe?

ACTIVITY 5: FEATHER – Flow

- 1 Ask the group to place the feather on the chosen part of the body for instance, arm or head
- 2 Task them to move around the space trying to balance the feather



WEEK 3 – EXPLORING SPACE

ACTIVITY 1: SPATIAL AWARENESS – Blowing a bubble

- 1 With a deep breath ask pupils to raise their arms to their sides into a T shape
- 2 Ask children to walk around the space, without popping anyone else's bubbles (without touching any one)

Here are some example activities that guide children through exploration of pathways, levels and directions.

ACTIVITY 2: PATHWAYS – Exploration

- 1 To begin, ask pupils to recreate the movement inspired by running water from **WEEK 2 (ACTIVITY 1: RIVER – Soft, light and free)**
- 2 Allow children to move around the room, encourage them to notice when they like to move close to each other or prefer to find their own space
- 3 Using verbal cues lead children through an exploration of pathways:
 - going from corner to corner
 - in circles
 - travelling from high to low
 - from left to right or from east to west
 - from front to back or from north to south

ACTIVITY 2: PATHWAYS, LEVELS, DIRECTIONS

- 1 Ask children to line up in the corner of the space. Task them with travelling (they can walk, run, hop or skip) to another corner of the room, using a **diagonal pathway**.
- 2 Ask children to spread out in the space. Task them with doing a turn as high as possible, then do a contrasting one on the floor, as low as possible. How many different ways of moving at **different levels** can they find?
- 3 Choose another action, for instance jump. Establish which way is left and right, and which direction is forward and which is back. Task children with listening out for **directions** and doing a jump in that direction.

When in class: You can really challenge them by speeding up your cues, you can also use printed symbols alongside your verbal cues.

WEEK 4 – EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS

ACTIVITY 1: Understanding basis of relationships: solo, duet and group

- 1 Ask children to move around the space (play some music and encourage them to explore different ways of moving than just walking).
- 2 Call out the following:
 - 'solo' children to respond with holding a still shape by themselves
 - 'duet' children to respond with finding a partner and creating a still shape with them
 - 'groups' children to respond with finding at least 2 other people and creating a still shape with them

When in class: You can challenge the children by speeding up your cues, you can also use printed symbols alongside your verbal cues.

ACTIVITY 2: Exploring relationship when dancing choreography

- 1 Recap choreography with children from **WEEK 1 (ACTIVITY 3: SEQUENCING)**
- 2 Guide children through exploring different relationship when dancing
 - dancing solo
 - dancing in unison - together with another person
 - mirroring - using different side of our bodies (as if looking in a mirror)
 - dancing in canon - move a little later than your partner does

Please see the video for a detailed demonstration.

WEEK 5 AND FURTHER – CREATIVE SEQUENTIAL LEARNING

Having built strong core skills in weeks 1-4, you can bring them altogether from week 5. Consider choosing a theme to explore across the whole period of learning.

We encourage you to make sure three elements are present in your sessions: PERFORMANCE, APPRECIATION and DISCUSSION.

Whenever your pupils make dances, or you teach them a sequence, try to split them into groups and watch each other.

Questions you can ask after are:

- *What did you notice?*
- *What did you enjoy?*
- *What do you think the group you watched did particularly well?*
- *What would you like to see more of?*

Here are some examples of creative tasks and ways of creating movement patterns that can be used across several weeks:

ACTIVITY 1: ANIMALS IN THE FOREST – focused on dynamics and working together

- 1 Starting from looking at a chosen image, discuss the movements of various animals
- 2 Task children with creating two actions for each animal and explore how they might move around the room
- 3 Ask children to find a partner. The pairs can work together and teach their movements to each other.
- 4 Guide children through joining movements together, creating one dance together
- 5 Create the space in which children can share the dances with the rest of the class
- 6 Discuss with children what dynamics they notice in the shared dances

ACTIVITY 2: LIFE CYCLE OF TREES – focused on levels and speed

- 1 Discuss with children what a tree needs to grow (rainfall, sunlight, air)
- 2 Task the children to explore those elements through movement - you can ask the children to grow from the ground like a tree, similar to the activity from week 2 (**ACTIVITY 2: GROWING TREE – Restrained and heavy**)
- 3 Allow children to take on a variety of roles, for instance some of them can be a growing tree and some can take the role of oxygen or others can be the rain watering the trees
- 4 Together with children, create a movement sequence out of these elements - see the video for demonstration

ACTIVITY 3: PROPS BASED ACTIVITY

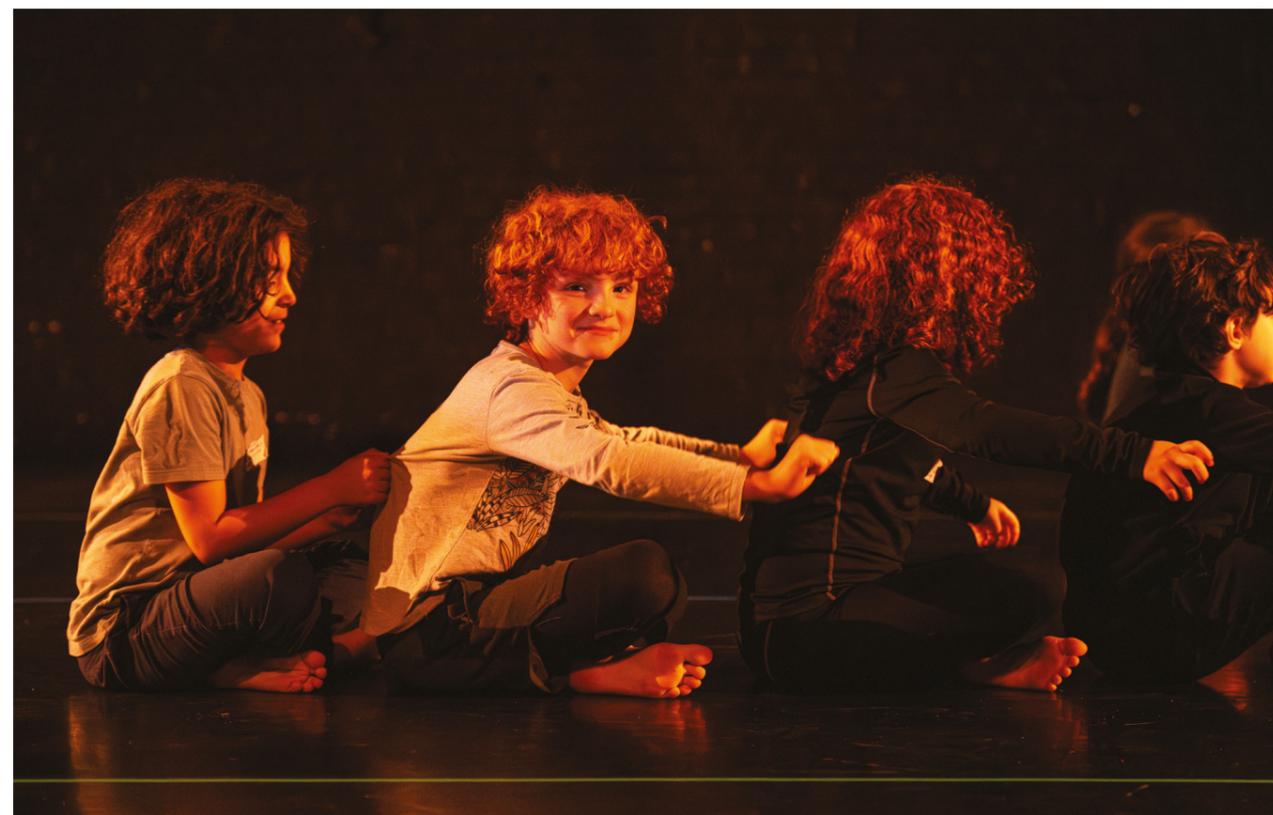
Using a soft fabric leaf to explore levels and dynamics:

- 1 Guide children through working in pairs: one person blows the leaf while the other imitates the movement, gently going down to the floor as the leaf falls down
- 2 Ask each child to take the leaf and look at its shape, then task them to trace the shape with their finger
- 3 To explore pathways, task the children with tracing the shape of the leaf on the floor, imagining that it's very big
- 4 Observe with children if the shapes created are the same or if you can notice differences. Discuss with children what pathways have been used
- 5 Create, together with the children a sequence from moves that they came up with

ACTIVITY 4: WITH AN IMAGE

Providing an image as inspiration for children to develop their own movement.

- 1 Task children with finding describing words from an image or a sentence, for example, 'the trees are tall, the leaves are soft'
- 2 Children can explore individually or in groups what movements can be tall, and what can be soft
- 3 Guide children through putting movements together to create short sequences, then dance them with music and share this with the group
- 4 After sharing, ask the children, who were watching, if they could recognise what movement was expressed





SESSION 1

Objectives

- To introduce children to dance and exercise.
 - To introduce the concept of warm up and cool down.
 - To introduce the dance actions and expand on spatial awareness.
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Session content

- **ACTIVITY 1:**
Warm up.
 - **ACTIVITY 2:**
Demonstration of dance actions: turn, jump, stillness, travel, gesture.
 - **ACTIVITY 3:**
Call out a dance action- children respond with movement.
 - **ACTIVITY 4:**
Set a simple movement sequence with all the dance actions for the children to learn and dance in unison.
 - **ACTIVITY 5:**
Complete activity 4 with children's improvisation. Task them to freestyle using their chosen dance actions and finish in stillness.
 - **ACTIVITY 6:**
In two groups. Group 1 performs the learned sequence. Group 2 observes, and feeds back. Then swap around.
 - **ACTIVITY 7:**
Expanding on the dance actions sequence created in Activity 4; task the children with making their own dance using the dance actions.
 - **ACTIVITY 8:**
Cool down: set of breathing and stretching exercises.
-

Materials and resources

- A speaker and music playlist.
- Open space for movement.
- Visual aids - cards with dance actions (optional).

SESSION 2

Objectives

- To explore the dynamics of movement with the use of images and props.
 - To explore a new way of moving with imaginative stimuli.
 - To begin to develop movement memory.
-

Session content

- **ACTIVITY 1:**
Warm up.
 - **ACTIVITY 2:**
Guided movement exploration of how a seed grows into a tree - slow growing movement from the shape of the seed. Following the exploration, discuss dynamics with the children.
 - **ACTIVITY 3:**
Guided movement exploration of the anatomy of an owl and the way it moves through space (wings, flying, looking around, stillness). Following the exploration, discuss dynamics with the children. Consider showing children a relevant video or image to the children before the activity.
 - **ACTIVITY 4:**
Guided movement exploration exploring the flow of a river. Following the exploration discuss dynamics with the children. Consider showing children a relevant video before the activity.
 - **ACTIVITY 5:**
Task the children to balance a leaf or a feather on a part of their body when moving around the space. As the prop falls, ask the children to describe what dynamic they observe.
 - **ACTIVITY 6:** Allow children to explore their own movement, experimenting with a variety of dynamics. Guiding them to set a simple movement sequence. E.g., 16 counts encouraging children to grow as a tree would. Each time they must try and do exactly the same thing.
 - **ACTIVITY 7:**
Cool down: set of breathing and stretching exercises.
-

Materials and resources

- A speaker and music playlist.
- Open space for movement.
- Visual aids to support the creative process. E.g. photo of a tree, photo of an owl, a video of a river flowing or a fast forward video of a plant growing from a seed.
- Soft fabric leaves or feathers.

SESSION 3

Objectives

- To develop spatial awareness when in groups.
 - To build confidence in using different dynamics when moving in the space.
 - To introduce the elements that we need to consider when exploring a space: pathways, levels, directions.
 - To support children in developing their own movement material having learned the concepts of dynamics and spatial elements.
-

Session content

- **ACTIVITY 1:**
Warm up .
 - **ACTIVITY 2:**
Guided improvisation– imagining the movement and current of the river, guide the children through in moving freely through the space, moving in groups or by themselves, applying a variety of levels and directions.
 - **ACTIVITY 3:**
Repeating Activity 2 from Session 2, this time with exploration of levels.
(Reminder: Guided movement exploration of how a seed grows into a tree).
Guide children through the task and discuss what levels were used on this journey.
 - **ACTIVITY 4:**
Exploring directions using the movement of a flowing river (similar to Activity 2).
Demonstrate to children how they can lead the movement with different body parts.
Allow them time to explore leading with different body parts and then task them with following your directional cues. E.g., lead with your elbow backwards, lead with your head forward.
 - **ACTIVITY 5:**
Cool down: set of breathing and stretching exercises.
-

Materials and resources

- A speaker and music playlist
- Open space for movement.
- Visual aids - cards with levels and directions.

SESSION 4

Objectives

- To introduce children to the concept of relationships in dance including terms such as solo, duet, group.
 - To build children's confidence with others in space and learn to compromise and share space.
 - To develop previous material to ensure that children increase their movement memory and gain further coordination skills.
-

Session content

- **ACTIVITY 1:**
Warm up.
 - **ACTIVITY 2:**
Moving through space and calling out: 'solo', 'duet' and 'group', Children to respond.
 - **ACTIVITY 3:**
Working in duets, revisiting sequence from Session 1, Activity 4, (Reminder: Set a simple movement sequence with all the dance actions), guiding children through dancing the sequence in unison and canon.
 - **ACTIVITY 4:**
Using the same movement sequence, introduce children to the idea of mirroring their movements and task them with learning the mirrored version of the sequence.
 - **ACTIVITY 5:**
Seed to tree (group) - Explore in groups and in proximity how a tree grows in confined spaces. Additionally, children could split into more groups as the sun, water, air and explore actions such as flow of air, sending solar energy and providing water as a flowing river to create a more complex piece inspired by tree growth.
 - **ACTIVITY 6:**
The river (solo/duet/group) - exploring moving through space independently, as a duet, or in a large group, and assessing the challenges or benefits.
 - **ACTIVITY 7:**
Develop previous material to ensure that we are continuously layering their movement experience E.g. connect material from Activity 3 and Activity 4.
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Materials and resources

- A speaker and music playlist.
- Open space for movement.

SUMMARY

We hope this learning resource has provided you with valuable insights and strategies for teaching dance to primary school pupils.

As you bring dance into your classroom, remember that the focus at this age should be on exploration, expression, and enjoyment. Encouraging students to move with confidence and providing them with space for creativity will not only help them develop their physical skills but also improve their social and emotional wellbeing.

Thank you for your commitment to inspiring young minds and bodies through the power of dance.

Please contact us if you have any questions at learning@theplace.org.uk

Creative Learning Team at The Place

Suggested playlist available [HERE](#)

For all our learning resources please visit theplace.org.uk

THE PLACE

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