



Physical Development

The physical development and activity levels of our learners is a key concern, especially in relation to their social, emotional and mental wellbeing. Many of our learners seek to manage some of the most common mental health problems such as phobic anxiety and depression. We have developed our curriculum offer to ensure the right conditions and support systems are in place to help address the learners' individual issues.

A high proportion of learning time allocated to physical development allows pupils to express themselves physically, challenge themselves and others, experience different environments and activities, work together and release their energy to de-stress and lower their anxiety, thus improving their behaviour. The high proportion and daily allocation of time devoted to physical development help address issues of inactivity outside of school hours. The Royal College of Psychiatrists provides clear guidance on the benefits of physical exercise and the effect it has on chemical compounds such as serotonin and dopamine.

A recent systematic review found that physical activity improves behaviour, cognitive function and increases attentiveness with some studies also demonstrating benefits in specific subjects such as mathematics and English (Reeves et al., 2016). Physical activity was found to have a positive impact on behaviour and cognition for students involved in a moderate-high intensity physical activity program

In Peach class students have a weekly visit to the gym to promote well-being and healthy lifestyles. They are encouraged to take part in a range of physical exercises as well as balancing this with a healthy lifestyle. They also have access to weekly football games with other students from across the school. Where possible students go to local parks to play football and cricket. They are also encouraged to take part in a weekly session in either boxercise, zumba/dance or yoga.