

**Aiming High for Children
Department of Children's Services**

Motor Skills Programme



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Learning Difficulties Team***



This programme has developed through our work with the children of Bradford. For lots of reasons children are entering school with an immaturity in their ability to integrate information coming from their senses. Many also have poorly developed muscle groups which are affecting their progress in school. Few, if any, of these will meet any medical criteria for a diagnosis as it is essentially an immaturity and **NOT** a physical difficulty. If referred on to health, parents are very likely to be told that their physical skills are well within normal limits and no intervention will be forthcoming.

Yet for these children their progress in school is greatly compromised by their difficulties. The concerns are not primarily physical but related to their learning ability. The immaturity in their motor skills is reflecting an immaturity in the connections in their brain. Without intervention to correct the problem they may fail in school. These children need to be identified and appropriate interventions put in place. Without this they will struggle and some may end up excluded.



Children with motor coordination immaturity appear inattentive, often off task and clumsy. They tend to surprise us in the classroom as they are often very able verbally but they fail to make the progress we expect of them. Their written work may well not reflect their ability. These children tend to puzzle and frustrate us. They can be withdrawn and poorly behaved in the classroom. It is often not their gross motor immaturity that we notice but their very poor fine motor skills and a dislike of putting pencil to paper at all.

The numbers of children of children with some element of difficulty is increasing greatly. I recently screened a Year 1 class in quite an affluent area. Out of 28 children, all had some level of difficulty. Similar screenings across Bradford have revealed similar results. Many of the children are finding it difficult to make their appropriate progress in school. Sorting out their difficulties will have a huge impact on progress in school. We can change lives!



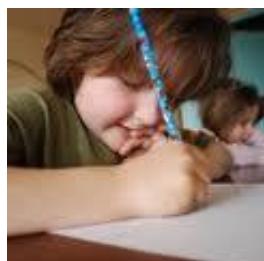
The Profile Sheets at the back of the programme will we hope help us to develop an awareness of who these children are and the extent of the problem. They are not tick lists and we do not have to enter lots of ticks for us to look further at their needs. Any ticks should alert us to the possibility of a problem and through discussion with parents and a very simple screening we should be able to identify children who need intervention. I would also recommend a routine whole class screening of all children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The earlier we start the better chance we have of stopping secondary difficulties such as low self-esteem and challenging behaviour developing.

Why the Increase?

Links have been made to the following: - changing life styles, diet and opportunities to practice and refine developing skills with children less likely to play outside. Placing babies on their backs due to concerns about cot deaths has also had a big impact. This has resulted in



babies with poorly developed shoulder muscles who are then less likely to crawl which is a vital stage in a child's development.



Balance and coordination is achieved through trial and error but many of our children have not had this opportunity. As soon as they are born children begin to interact with their environment. They explore with their limbs and senses and are naturally inquisitive. This is how children begin to learn. They integrate information from all of their senses and through play children practise and perfect movements. Through this they develop purposeful connections in their brain which underpin all learning. Without this children will find it harder to process information and to access the learning on offer in the classroom.

Many children are now starting school with immaturity in their motor development. They are not ready for the increasingly formal learning they are being asked to do in school. Unless we deal with this the children will not be able to reach their potential. Through the frustrations they will feel in school many of these children will not be able to cope and for some their behaviour will become a major issue leading to exclusion from school. Social and emotional damage can also be done.

So what do we need to do?

The children will need to follow a gross motor skills programme and they will need good classroom differentiation so that they can access what is going on in the classroom.



The earlier the gross motor skill intervention is carried out the better.

Ideally it should be done as soon as children start in school or nursery. This programme has been designed for children in Reception and Key Stage 1 but can easily be adapted for Nursery and for older children. It is a 12 week programme requiring about 20 minutes a day.

There are also suggestions for activities parents can do at home.

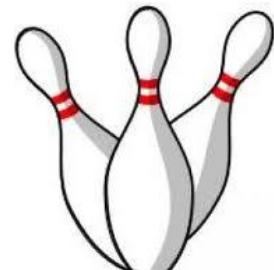


The programme can be adapted for individuals, small groups and for whole classes. This sounds a lot but the returns in terms of an improvement in children's learning and well being will be immense. The screening sheet should be completed at the beginning and at the end of the programme. Any children not making any progress should be discussed with your Learning Difficulties Link teacher who will advise on the next steps.

The Programme.

The earlier it is done in school the better so we strongly recommend that it is followed in Reception and Key Stage 1. It will also need to be followed higher up school until the benefits of early intervention are felt throughout school.

Due to the large numbers of children being identified we have developed this programme as a whole class intervention but it can also be used for individuals and groups.





The programme can be set up as work station activities with the child/children rotating through them. Where space and hall time permits the activities can be left out so that other classes/groups/individuals can also access them. Equally all the activities can be completed as whole class ones but this will require more equipment.

The programme covers the most commonly observed difficulties when our team and schools have been involved in screening. All the children will benefit from following the complete programme even if difficulties have not been shown in all of the areas.

The programme targets the following areas of motor skill development: – hand/eye coordination, foot/eye coordination, core stability and balance, bilateral integration and crossing the midline.

Motor Skills Screening

The screening sheet can be used with individuals or groups. Remember we are simply screening for an immaturity and are not seeking to diagnose or label. All of the children will be able to carry out the activities to some degree but we are looking for extra things that are happening when they do them e.g. the movement and twisting of hands and bodies when completing the walking activities and also if tongues are protruding. Record anything that is additional on the screening sheet. The example screening sheet below is annotated with some possible examples of behaviours observed.

The extra movements of hands and tongue are indicators of a motor skill immaturity. A child showing these will have additional connections in their brain which will be slowing down their processing of information, thinking and learning. It is an important part of the intervention to eliminate these. The hand movements will be eliminated by getting the children to hold quoits while they are doing the activities. The tongue thrusts by asking the children to close their teeth tightly and their lips. Be sensitive and do this individually with the children.

It is good to also record if there is a difference between the left and right sides of their bodies when carrying out the tasks e.g. they may be able to balance for 3 seconds on their right leg but over 10 on their left or the additional arm movements may be more pronounced on their right side. This would suggest that the dominant side of their brain is the right hemisphere which has implications for teaching strategies. All of these things can be discussed with your link Learning Difficulties teacher.

'We must eliminate the associated hand movements. As long as they persist the child will continue to have difficulty not only coordinating movements but coordinating thoughts and ideas'.

Madeleine Portwood.

Annotated Screening Sheet

Activity	Observations
Balancing on one leg in a space (balance): <i>To a count of 8+ in Reception and 10+ if older</i>	<i>Bent leg must stay off the floor and not touch the other. Look for tongue thrusting.</i>
Jumping with feet together (core stability/balance): <i>Continuously to 5+ jumps.</i>	<i>Look for problems in building up a smooth continuous jump. Also look for tongue thrusting and clenching of fists.</i>
Jumping feet together (core stability/balance): <i>Over a cane balanced on 2 cones – should land with both feet together.</i>	<i>Both feet must touch the floor at the same time. Look for tongue thrusting and clenching of the fists.</i>
Walking on heels (foot/eye coordination):	<i>Look for tongue thrusts and any movement of their hands.</i>
Walking on outsides of feet (foot/eye coordination):	<i>Look for tongue thrusts and any movement of their hands</i>
Walking on insides of feet (foot/eye coordination):	<i>Look for tongue thrusts and any movement of their hands</i>
Beanbag catch x10 – from 2 metres (hand/eye coordination): <i>Child to catch a bean bag thrown from a distance of about 2 metres. Reduce distance if needed.</i>	<i>Child should catch the beanbag in their hands away from the body</i>
Half kneeling to a standing position (core stability/balance): <i>Kneeling on one knee with other leg forward, knee bent with foot flat on the floor. Push up to standing (hands should not be used).</i>	<i>Look for poor balance and tongue thrusting. Hands should not be used to push up.</i>
Stand or lie on back. Lift leg, bending at knee and touch the knee with the hand on the same side x10. Repeat with the opposite hand. (bilateral integration/crossing the midline)	<i>Look for greater difficulty when the hand from the opposite side of the body is used e.g. right hand touching left knee.</i>

Learning Difficulties Team

We can support schools by providing training for teachers, parents and support staff on how to recognise and understand the difficulties arising from a motor skill immaturity. We can help with screening and setting up the programme. Please discuss this with your link teacher.

Classroom Inclusion

Children with motor skill immaturity are likely to also have difficulties with auditory and working memory and to improve their access in the classroom we recommend the following approaches which will also make learning more achievable for everyone.

It is important that a multi-sensory approach is adopted in all lessons. Pictures and diagrams should be used whenever possible so that they are not relying on their weak listening skills to learn. Practical activities should also be used whenever possible.

- Instructions must be kept short and their understanding should be checked.
- They must be given time to process information and to answer questions.
- Pre-teaching of the key vocabulary for all curriculum areas will reduce the demands on working memory.
- Key words should be displayed with pictures so they can refer to them during lessons as needed. The computer programme ‘Communicate in Print 2’ from Widgit would be ideal for this.
- Encourage the use of memory aids – wall charts, posters, wordlists, number lines, multiplication grids, calculators, memory cards etc.
- Develop the children’s own strategies – asking for help, note taking, organisational strategies, repeating information and talking through tasks before starting.
- They should be given the opportunity to use mind-maps and planning grids for planning and recording their work. This will reduce the demands on working memory and allow them to have an overview of a piece of work which they could then work on parts of it at a time.
- Opportunities should always be built in for repetition and over-learning

There is a copy of the Top Ten Tips for Children with Motor Skill Difficulties and some suggestions for activities to improve auditory memory in the Appendix at the end of the programme. Individual children can also be discussed with your link teacher.

The Programme

The programme is organised with a warm up and 4 activities per session covering the 4 areas outlined above. The activities can be followed sequentially with everyone spending approximately 4 or 5 minutes on each one, depending on the time available or alternatively the 4 activities can be set up before the session with the children rotating through the activities in groups, spending 4 or 5 minutes on each one. The sessions remain the same throughout the week. Ideally at the start of each week an additional 5 minutes could be spent outlining and practising the activities. The programme should run for 12 weeks and progress reviewed at the end.

Equipment

The equipment for each session is outlined in the programme. Most of the equipment will be available in school halls and items such as skittles can be made from using water bottles filled with sand or water. Obviously a lot more (x4) equipment will be needed for all the children to do the activities together rather than in groups.

Week 1

Warm Up – Running on the spot, slowly speeding up and then slowing to a stop.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	Large soft balls – one per child
Activity:	stand with feet apart – bounce ball on floor (slightly in front and centred) and catch with 2 hands.
Notes:	discourage tongue thrusts if shown.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. 5 metre line marked on the floor with chalk/masking tape for each child. Alternatively 5 metre ropes can be laid on floor with the child moving alongside.
Activity:	child to move along/next to line walking heel to toe with no spaces. At end of distance turn and walk back to the beginning – if appropriate walk heel to toe on the way back. This might be a good rest for younger children.
Notes:	it is vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly. The point of doing the programme is to eliminate these.
If children accomplish this easily extend the distance gradually to 10 metres	

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	quoits, 2 per child – to hold while balancing to discourage additional hand movements.
Activity:	children to practice balancing on each foot for up to 10 seconds.
Notes:	Allow child to touch the wall to start with but quickly discourage this and adjust target if appropriate for individual children. Demonstrate how stretching arms out to the side can help them balance. Look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	1 mat per child.
Activity:	child to roll along the mat with their arms stretched above their head.
Notes:	they may need help with this to start with but quickly encourage their independence. If needed an adult could pull the child forward by placing their hand on the child's hip and pulling forward.

At home –

Encourage parents and/or siblings to help them practice throwing and catching a ball. If this is not possible they can practice on their own, include bouncing and catching.

Week 2

Warm Up – jogging around hall with arms stretched above head.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	Large soft balls – one per child
Activity:	stand opposite a partner and bounce the ball in the middle for partner to catch, return with bounce in middle. 2 metres apart to start and gradually increase if appropriate.
Notes:	Look for tongue thrusts and discourage. Place a hoop between the pair to guide the bounce if needed.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. 5/10 metre line marked on the floor with chalk/masking tape for each child. Alternatively 5/10 metre of rope can be laid on floor with child moving alongside.
Activity:	child to move along/next to line walking on toes forwards, then on toes backwards along the same line. If the children are finding this difficult allow them to initially turn and walk back to the beginning. Try to get them to walk backwards on toes by day 2 or 3 if possible.
Notes:	it is vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly. The point of doing the programme is to eliminate these.

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	A bench between 2 or 3 children.
Activity:	children to walk next to the bench. They then turn and step onto the bench (wide side) and walk along the bench, step down, turn and repeat.
Notes:	look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed. They may need help stepping on and off the bench but quickly encourage independence.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	1 large soft ball and mat per child
Activity:	child to roll along the mat with arms stretched above their head, holding a ball.
Notes:	they may need help with this to start with but quickly encourage their independence. If needed an adult could pull the child forward by placing their hand on the child's hip and pulling forward.

At home –

Child to practice stepping on and off a step, changing legs and varying the speed.

Week 3

Warm Up – travel around hall on tip toes and stop on command (change speed). Repeat on heels.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment: none	
Activity: hand clapping games. Stand opposite a partner and clap in varied sequences of clapping both hands together on their own and then their partners e.g. 2 claps on own and then 3 using both hands with their partner. This can be followed by a sequence of clapping both hands on their own and then each hand in turn with their partner e.g. 3 claps on own, them 2 with right hand (to partners left) then 2 to left hand (partners right). Encourage them to think of own sequence. Do not cross the midline until the Wednesday or Thursday.	
Notes: Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.	

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment: 2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. 5/10 metre line marked on the floor with chalk/masking tape for each child. Alternatively 5/10 metre of rope laid on floor with child moving alongside.	
Activity: child to move along/next to line walking sideways and then back along the same line, still walking sideways.	
Notes: it is vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly.	

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment: beanbag and bat (plastic tennis sized). A bench between 2 or 3 children.	
Activity: children to walk next to the bench balancing a beanbag on a bat using 2 hands. They then turn and step onto the bench and walk along balancing the beanbag on the bat and step down, turn and repeat. Ideally the beanbag should remain on the bat throughout.	
Notes: look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed. They may need help stepping on and off the bench but quickly encourage independence.	

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment: None	
Activity: star jumps – working on feet to start. Child places their hands on their hips with feet together then jumps and lands with legs out to the side. Repeat and develop a continuous movement.	
Notes: As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage.	

At home:

Practice clapping games with parents, siblings and friends.

Week 4

Warm Up – Running on the spot, slowly speeding up and then slowing to a stop.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	1 hoop per child and 6 beanbags
Activity:	from a distance of 2 metres try to land the beanbags in the hoop (reduce/increase distance if needed). Retrieve and repeat. Throw underarm.
Notes:	Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. 10 metre line marked on the floor with chalk/masking tape for each child. Alternatively 10 metre of rope can be laid on floor with child moving alongside.
Activity:	child to move along/next to line jumping with feet together (small jumps with smooth continuous movement) and then back along the same line, still jumping. If this is too difficult allow them to walk to the beginning but try to get them doing it both ways.
Notes:	it is vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly.

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	beanbags – 2 per child. A bench between 2 or 3 children.
Activity:	children to walk next to the bench balancing a beanbag on the back of each hand, arms bent at the elbow and stretched forwards. They then turn and step onto the bench and walk along balancing the beanbags on their hands step down, turn and repeat. Ideally the beanbags should remain in place throughout.
Notes:	look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed. They may need help stepping on and off the bench but quickly encourage independence.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	None
Activity:	star jumps – feet and hands together. Practice arms on their own briefly, then put them together with feet movements. Child jumps and lands with legs and arms stretched out to the side, like a star. Repeat and develop a continuous movement.
Notes:	As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

At home:

Practice star jumps and jumping forwards and backwards with feet together.

Week 5

Warm Up – jog slowly around the hall with beanbag balanced on head – increase speed.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment: 6 skittles per child and 6 beanbags (skittles can be made from plastic water bottles filled with sand/water). Do not overfill as they will be very hard to knock over!	
Activity: from a distance of 2 metres try to knock over the skittles (reduce/increase distance if needed). Retrieve and repeat. Throw underarm. They may need help setting up the skittles.	
Notes: Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.	

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment: 2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. 5 metre line marked on the floor with chalk/masking tape for each child. Alternatively 5 metre of rope can be laid on floor with child moving alongside.	
Activity: child to move along/next to line on the outside edge of their feet (feet curled outwards) and then walk back to beginning. Repeat. Towards the end of the week if appropriate get them to walk back to the beginning on the sides of their feet as well.	
Notes: This activity is very likely to elicit very strong additional movements in their hands. Some children will struggle to move at all. Give lots of encouragement and initially reduce the distance. It is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly.	

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment: quoits – 2 per child. A bench and 6 small hoops between 2 children. Set the hoops out alongside the bench in a zigzag pattern.	
Activity: children to travel along the bench using various ways of travelling that have been practiced e.g. on toes, heels, heel to toe and walking sideways. Ask them to alternate. It is important that they hold a quoit in each hand to eliminate the arm movements. They then step off the bench and travel from hoop to hoop in a zigzag pattern jumping between them with feet together. At the end they get back on the bench and travel along it using a different foot movement.	
Notes: look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.	

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment: None	
Activity: commando crawl across the floor. Child to lie on tummy, bend arms up keeping torso on floor, then push with alternate arm and leg movements. Some children may need a lot of help with this.	
Notes: As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage.	

At home:

Practice commando crawl at home with parents, siblings or friends.

Week 6

Warm Up – side step around hall, changing direction on command.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	balloons filled with a handful of dry rice.
Activity:	using both hands together the child gently bats the balloon upwards and tries to keep it in the air.
Notes:	Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. 5/10 metre line marked on the floor with chalk/masking tape for each child. Alternatively 5/10 metre of rope can be laid on floor with child moving alongside. Gradually increase the length as you go through the week if appropriate.
Activity:	child to move along/next to line touching their heel to their toe as they walk with no spaces between, then walk back to beginning. Repeat. Towards the middle of the week get them to walk back to the beginning toe-to-heel as well.
Notes:	As always it is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly.

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	large soft ball between 2 children.
Activity:	children to work in pairs facing each other about 2/3 metres apart in a tall kneeling position. Child to bend one leg up and place foot flat on the floor. Throw and catch the ball, taking turns. After 2 minutes swap legs. Use beanbags briefly if a lot of time is being lost retrieving the ball!
Notes:	look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	None
Activity:	child to stand with their hands on their hips, one leg in front and the other behind. Child to jump and swap leg positions so the other leg is in front.
Notes:	As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

At home:

Practice batting a balloon at home and keep it in the air for as long as possible.

Week 7

Warm Up – crawling around hall changing direction and speed on command.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	balloons filled with a handful of dry rice.
Activity:	with a partner using both hands together the child gently bats the balloon between them and their partner keeping it in the air as long as possible.
Notes:	Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. 6 cones laid out in a straight line about 1 metre apart.
Activity:	child to weave between the cones on their toes and return on their heels.
Notes:	As always it is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly.

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	None
Activity:	children to stand in a space and move slowly to a swat position. Hold the position for a few seconds and then return to standing. Arms out to side to aid balance.
Notes:	look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed. Allow the child to sit briefly if they cannot maintain the squat but try to get them to do it as quickly as possible.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	None
Activity:	child to stand with right leg and arm in front and the other behind. Child to jump and swap leg and arm positions so the other leg and arm swap to being in front.
Notes:	As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

At home:

Practice standing and squatting at home.

Week 8

Warm Up – walking toe to heel, speeding up and then slowing to a stop.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	balloons filled with a handful of dry rice and table tennis bat or baton – one per child.
Activity:	the child gently bats the balloon and tries to keep it in the air as long as possible.
Notes:	Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. One beanbag per child.
Activity:	child to travel around moving the beanbag gently between their feet, tapping it with one foot then the other, keeping it close.
Notes:	As always it is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly. If appropriate a medium sized ball could be used towards the end of the week.

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	beanbag between 2
Activity:	children to swat facing their partner. Throw and catch a beanbag between them.
Notes:	look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	10 beanbags and 2 hoops per child. It is important to place the hoops about 2 metres from the child with one hoop positioned to their left and the other to their right. The beanbags are placed in 2 piles (5) to their left and (5) to their right.
Activity:	child to stand and pick up a beanbag with their right hand and throw it underarm into the hoop on their left x 5. Then with their left hand pick up the hoops on their left and throw them into the right hoop. Retrieve and repeat.
Notes:	As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage

At home:

Practice dribbling a medium/small ball at home.

Week 9

Warm Up – bunny jumps, feet together moving around the hall. Jump to side on command.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	hockey stick and beanbag per child.
Activity:	the child gently moves the beanbag with the hockey stick along a straight line. As confidence grows they can move around the hall.
Notes:	Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	2 quoits per child – held in hands by their side to eliminate additional hand movements. One beanbag and set of cones per child.
Activity:	dribble a beanbag between a set of cones set out along a 6 metre length.
Notes:	As always it is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly. If appropriate a medium sized ball could be used towards the end of the week.

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	none
Activity:	children to swat then lean back and take their weight on their hands – crab position. Practice moving around and changing direction.
Notes:	look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	children to work in groups of about 6 with one large ball between.
Activity:	the children are to stand in a line sideways. Using both hands they pass a ball along the line to the end and then back the other way. It is important that the children do not turn to face the child next to them but move the ball using both hands.
Notes:	As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

At home:

Practice crab walking at home.

Week 10

Warm Up – skip around the hall, stopping and starting on command.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment:	hockey stick and medium sized ball per child.
Activity:	the child gently moves the ball with the hockey stick along a line. As confidence grows they can move around the hall.
Notes:	Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment:	one medium sized ball per child. (Quoits in hands to eliminate hand movements if necessary).
Activity:	dribble the ball along a 6 metre length. Turn and repeat. Later in the week depending on how the hall is being used the children could dribble to ball around the hall.
Notes:	As always it is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly. If appropriate a medium sized ball could be used towards the end of the week.

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment:	beanbag per child
Activity:	in crab position as before move a beanbag around using feet. Practice moving around and changing direction.
Notes:	look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment:	1 large ball between 2.
Activity:	With a partner. One child sits cross legged on floor and the other throws the ball gently to them from about 2 metres. The other child catches with 2 hands and throws back. After 2 minutes swap over.
Notes:	As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage. It is important that the throwing and catching is done using both hands.

At home:

Practice crab walking with a ball at home.

Week 11

Warm Up – walking toe to heel, speeding up and then slowing to a stop.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment: hockey stick and medium sized ball per child. Sets of cones to move between.	
Activity: The child gently moves the ball with the hockey stick between the cones. Encourage them to speed up as their confidence grows.	
Notes: Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.	

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment: one medium sized ball per child. Set of cones to move between.	
Activity: dribble the ball between the cones. Turn and repeat. Later in the week the hall could be set out as a circuit through which the children move with the ball.	
Notes: As always it is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly.	

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment: large hoop per child (medium sized later in week)	
Activity: running on the spot, lifting legs really high, staying inside hoop. Use last 1 minute to practice jumping in and out of the hoop in any direction. As the week progresses reduce the size of the hoop and get them to speed up.	
Notes: look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.	

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment: 1 large ball between 2.	
Activity: With a partner. One child sits cross legged on floor. The other child stands to one side of them and throws the ball gently to them from about 2 metres so they have to turn to catch, using 2 hands. The other child catches and throws back. After 2 minutes swap over.	
Notes: As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage. It is important that the throwing and catching is done using both hands.	

At home:

Practice jumping in and out of a circle and running on the spot in a small area. This could be drawn on the floor or a mat used.

Week 12

Warm Up – march around the hall with arms swinging, raising legs high and stomping on the floor.

Activity 1	Hand-eye coordination
Equipment: hockey stick and medium sized ball per child. 2 cones for every 2/3 children.	
Activity: The child aims the ball with the hockey stick between the cones, placed one metre apart to score a goal, from 1 metre away. Later in the week the children could travel around the hall, aiming their ball at different cones as they travel. Depending on the children they could work in pairs passing the ball to each other and taking turns to score.	
Notes: Look for tongue thrusts and discourage.	

Activity 2	Foot-eye coordination
Equipment: 3 sets of 2 cones with a cane balanced on them placed about a metre apart. Use a height of 10 cms to start and gradually raise this to 20cms and to 30cms if appropriate.	
Activity: Children to walk between them and step over the canes.	
Notes: As always it is absolutely vital to eliminate any additional movements of hands by using the quoits. Hands should be at the child's side. If their tongue is out they must be asked to close their teeth and lips tightly.	

Activity 3	Core stability/balance
Equipment: none	
Activity: in a space children to balance on their bottoms with their arms and legs stretched in the air for as long as they can. Rest and repeat.	
Notes: look for tongue thrusting and get children to keep their mouths closed.	

Activity 4	Bilateral integration/crossing the midline
Equipment: 1 large ball between 2.	
Activity: With a partner the children sit back to back. Using 2 hands they pass a large ball around the side to their partner – going left to right continuously to start, then after 2 minutes move the ball the other way. It is important that both hands are used and that the ball moves in a continuous circle.	
Notes: As always look for tongue thrusts and discourage. It is important that the throwing and catching is done using both hands.	

At home:

Practice kicking a ball between 2 markers at home. Also practice balancing on their bottom with arms and legs stretched out.

APPENDIX

Pupil Profile – Motor Coordination Difficulties

Foundation Stage

Name: Class: Date:

Tick any observed difficulties

<i>Area of Development</i>	<i>Difficulties Observed</i>
Sensory	<input type="checkbox"/> Easily distressed, very emotional <input type="checkbox"/> Very excitable <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot sit still during story time <input type="checkbox"/> Distressed by loud noise <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes being touched or wearing new clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Chews objects or clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Fussy messy eater
Fine Motor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor pencil grip, drawing & writing <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to use scissors <input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to build a tower of 6 x 2cm bricks <input type="checkbox"/> Avoids construction toys <input type="checkbox"/> Avoids jigsaws <input type="checkbox"/> Handedness not established
Gross Motor	<input type="checkbox"/> Clumsy – bumps into things <input type="checkbox"/> Knocked off balance easily <input type="checkbox"/> Falls, trips easily <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting on to climbing equipment/chairs <input type="checkbox"/> Jumps with no sense of danger <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty peddling a tricycle <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty throwing, catching and kicking a ball <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty jumping with feet together <input type="checkbox"/> Climbs stairs leading with same foot <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting up from floor without using hands <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to squat to pick up things from floor
Communication & Social Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow response time <input type="checkbox"/> Prefers to play alone/alongside <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected by peers, prefers adult company <input type="checkbox"/> Easily distressed, temper tantrums <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty following routines/instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear speech <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot speak in sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Poor at imaginative play <input type="checkbox"/> Avoids eye contact
Independence Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to take coat off and hang on peg <input type="checkbox"/> Needs help to get un/dressed <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to use toilet independently <input type="checkbox"/> Messy eater/drinker <input type="checkbox"/> Prefers finger food

Pupil Profile – Motor Coordination Difficulties

Key Stage 1 & 2

Name: Class: Date:

Tick any observed difficulties

<i>Area of Development</i>	<i>Difficulties Observed</i>
Sensory	<input type="checkbox"/> difficulty sitting still <input type="checkbox"/> easily distracted <input type="checkbox"/> poor visual tracking <input type="checkbox"/> poor self esteem, withdrawn, attention seeking <input type="checkbox"/> difficulties copying from the board <input type="checkbox"/> dislikes being touched <input type="checkbox"/> dribbles <input type="checkbox"/> fear of open spaces/heights <input type="checkbox"/> difficulties in PE and games <input type="checkbox"/> difficulties judging distance and direction
Fine Motor	<input type="checkbox"/> avoids writing tasks <input type="checkbox"/> immature pencil grip and control <input type="checkbox"/> difficulties using scissors <input type="checkbox"/> poor drawing and painting skills <input type="checkbox"/> work poorly set out <input type="checkbox"/> difficulties with construction kits e.g. Lego
Gross Motor	<input type="checkbox"/> clumsy, bumps into people/objects <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty hopping, skipping, jumping <input type="checkbox"/> poor ball skills <input type="checkbox"/> poor balance
Communication & Social Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> poor eye contact <input type="checkbox"/> slow to process information <input type="checkbox"/> poor articulation <input type="checkbox"/> finds it difficult to remain on task <input type="checkbox"/> few if any friends <input type="checkbox"/> prefers adult company
Independence Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> finds dressing and undressing very difficult <input type="checkbox"/> struggles to find peg for coat & place coat on it <input type="checkbox"/> slow to change for PE (may try to avoid it – forgets kit) <input type="checkbox"/> slow messy eater <input type="checkbox"/> struggles to use toilet – issue of hygiene <input type="checkbox"/> may avoid using toilet at school
Personal Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> forgets reading book, dinner money, messages etc. <input type="checkbox"/> finds it difficult to select equipment for a task <input type="checkbox"/> poor sequencing skills <input type="checkbox"/> finds changes of routine difficult

Motor Skills Screening

Name: Class: Date:

Activity	Observations
Balancing on one leg in a space (balance):	
Jumping with feet together (core stability/balance):	
Jumping feet together (core stability/balance):	
Walking on heels (foot/eye coordination):	
Walking on outsides of feet (foot/eye coordination):	
Walking on insides of feet (foot/eye coordination):	
Beanbag catch x10 – from 2 metres (hand/eye coordination):	
Half kneeling to a standing position (core stability/balance):	
Stand or lie on back. Lift leg, bending at knee and touch the knee with the hand on the same side x10. Repeat with the opposite hand. (bilateral integration/crossing the midline)	

**10 Tips for Supporting Children
with
Motor Skill Difficulties in the Classroom**

1. Seat the child at the front facing the board and class teacher and check that they have a good sitting position for working with their feet flat on the floor and arms on the table at the right height.
2. Give clear simple instructions and constant reminders, both oral and written, repeating important information and displaying key vocabulary with pictures.
3. Reduce the amount of material to be remembered – increase meaningfulness and familiarity of the material – and always link to previous knowledge.
4. Reduce the amount of written work that they have to do through teaching and encouraging the use of alternate ways of recording their work such as mind-maps and oral responses.
5. Reduce the clutter on worksheets so the important learning points are clear and simple to see.
6. Teach the child how to organise and plan their activities and give them time to do this.
7. Never ask the child to copy from the board or rewrite messy work and always mark the content of work and never the presentation.
8. Provide a quiet area with few distractions to reduce stimulation if needed.
9. Allow extra time for dressing and undressing for PE. Show them how to organise their clothes to make this an easier task.
10. Find the child's strengths and interests and build on them, praising at least one piece of work every day.

Ideas for Improving Auditory Memory

Clapping Rhythms

Clap out a rhythm (e.g. 2 claps, pause, 2 claps) and other player repeats.

Listening to Shapes

Say series of shapes for other player to draw (from memory). Increase number in series.

Skip, Hop and Jump

Give instructions for other player to follow e.g. hop on right foot, skip, and then jump twice.

Run and Touch

Ideally played outside or in the hall – walk around first and check the child knows the names of the objects you will use. Ask them to e.g. run and touch the door, run and touch the tree – increase the number of items as their confidence grows e.g Run and touch the pot and the box.

Dressing Up

Have a pile of dressing up clothes – encourage child to find each item before you start – ask child find a series of items e.g. find me the sock and the hat.

Drawing Pictures

Give directions only once. Increase level of difficulty e.g.

- Draw a blue flower in the middle of your paper.
- Draw a green line under the flower.
- Draw a red bird in the sky.
- Draw a yellow sun over the flower.

Following Directions

Give an increasing number of directions, start with two e.g. Turn on the light then hop back here. Encourage another player to repeat them quietly before carrying them out.

Echo game

Aim to get from one side of the room to the other. Players line up at one end. Leader is at other. Leader says simple nonsense words. Correct repetition wins a step forward e.g. boom, doom, do, etc.

Move on to longer words e.g. zippety – zop, diddley – dum. Then move on to silly sentences and tongue twisters e.g. Silly Sally Sat, Big Ben bounced.

Shopping List Game

I went to the shop and bought an apple.

I went to the shop and bought an apple and a banana.

Take turns, adding one more item each time. Does not have to be in alphabetical order but can help with learning alphabet. Can be varied by playing e.g. in the box in the garage I found... At the zoo I found...

Simon Said

Add more than one thing at a time as memory improves e.g. Simon says hop on left leg and tap the top of your head etc.