



Made to Play

Discovery
EDUCATION

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT: RUDSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, LIVERPOOL

ACTIVE KIDS DO BETTER: THE POWER OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

At Liverpool's Rudston Primary School movement plays a part in every lesson. The school was one of the first to sign up to Active Kids Do Better, and teacher Jay Clarke has won awards for his efforts to get kids moving. Here he explains how the programme has transformed attitudes to physical activity and reveals the amazing impact on attendance and attainment.

LINKING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

We've used Active Kids Do Better since its launch in 2018. I attended a special course in London with Nike and Discovery Education, where I had the opportunity to meet Olympic athlete Joe Clarke and learn more about the links between physical activity and achievement. I was massively inspired and decided to adopt the programme for our school. It's had a huge impact and we haven't looked back. We were the first recipients of the '**Liverpool Active Award**', which was amazing.

SHORT BURST ACTIVITIES

Active Kids Do Better provides teachers with short burst activities which are easy to slot into the school day. When I first introduced the programme my aim was to increase kids' awareness and concentration. We tried to do it at set points throughout the day: first thing in the morning, at break, after lunch and at home

time. This has gradually shifted and its now so embedded that we use it all the time, right across the curriculum. If a teacher can see that a child is flagging, they'll introduce a quick movement break into the lesson.

EASY-TO-USE RESOURCES

The Active Kids Do Better resources are easy for teachers to use with short videos and cards showing each activity. You don't have to be a PE specialist. Most of the activities are classroom based and you don't need a lot of space. We've laminated the Active Kids Do Better cards and given each pupil a set to keep in their tray or take outside for playground games

FUN MOVEMENTS

The children enjoy all of the movements, especially the silly ones. They particularly like '**Cowboy Squat**' – which develops leg strength - and '**Clap Under Leg**' – which boosts bilateral

Active Kids Do Better is available for free to all primary schools in the UK.

www.activekidsdobetter.co.uk

movement. They've adapted some of the movements as their own and given them different names. Recently we tried '**Clap Under Leg**' while bouncing. It was great fun and the children were ready to focus on their work afterwards. The Active Kids Do Better website lets you join the activities together to create a circuit. The children choose their favourites and create their own workouts which they really enjoy. I often see them practising circuits at playtime. It's become commonplace.

BRAIN BREAKS

We've encouraged the children to take ownership of Active Kids Do Better. If they've been working for too long or are feeling a lack of motivation, they approach their teacher and ask to take five. We call these '**brain breaks**' and every child from Reception to Year 6 is encouraged to take one. They might say "***I've been sitting for 30 minutes, I need a break***" or "***I'm feeling a little tired, I think I need to move.***" We've empowered children to ask for time out to re-energise and focus. It's instilled in every child and it's a really positive thing.

MOVEMENT WITH LEARNING

Recently I was teaching a phonics lesson in Year 1. We were looking at phonemes, reading the different sounds out loud and one of the children asked if we could do it while dancing. They choreographed the dance themselves using hand movements for each sound and soon the whole class were moving and chanting. It was amazing to see 5 and 6 year olds take ownership. They came up with the idea because Active Kids Do Better is instilled here. Pupils know how to match movement with learning.

CROSS CURRICULAR

Active Kids Do Better makes it easy to introduce movement throughout the curriculum. We encourage the children to think of imaginative ways using the different activities and we reward the best ideas in assembly. Last term a Year 4 class tried the 'March On' activity in their history lesson. They were learning about the

Romans and dressed up as soldiers. We presented the class with an Active Award. It's become like an inter-house competition and the children love it.

MENTAL HEALTH

We want the children to take personal responsibility for their physical activity and to recognise that it can improve their mental health. If they're feeling a little down we encourage them to take a break with the Active Kids Do Better activity cards, perhaps going for a walk in the corridor and moving to help them feel better. We've taught our pupils to see movement as an emotional outlet.

ACTIVE FAMILIES

Getting parents on board has been part of our success story. We share what we do on social media and we've also tried to involve families directly in the programme. We've decorated our outdoor area with the activity cards so children and parents can try the movements in the morning. The resources can also be accessed online and we encourage families to log on at home. Pupils love showing their parents and carers the different activities.

PROVEN IMPACT

Active Kids Do Better works and the results in our school have been astounding. Over a 12-week period where pupils were using Active Kids Do Better daily, there was a massive increase in attainment. Children's work and results improved, as did their attendance. Because the children were so engaged in the classroom, it eradicated absences where they didn't feel like coming into school. They wanted to attend because they didn't want to miss out.

Another big impact is pupil focus. If the children take a break, they come back ready to work. It's especially powerful in the morning. Some children have been up earlier than others and may be tired before school even starts. We always try to start the day with movement, to create a little spark and it works. You can see the

children respond, wake up and become more engaged. I might ask them to jump on the spot or practice curly kicks, and they come back ready to focus. The children are increasingly aware that it's for their benefit. They see physical activity as a positive thing.

ACTIVE TEACHERS

Active Kids Do Better is about building good habits for life and our teachers have benefitted as much as our pupils! We've all immersed ourselves in the programme, to show the children that we want to be active regardless of our age. It's led to some amazing outcomes, with teacher colleagues taking up running and completing half marathons for the first time. It's a talking point for the children and they look up to us as active role models.

MADE TO MOVE

Active Kids Do Better has also created opportunities for children who don't think of themselves as sporty. Because they enjoy the activities in school, they want to continue in their spare time. I've helped lots of parents to find new extra-curricular clubs for their children.

We also use Active Kids Do Better to engage our SEN learners. We have a special club on a Friday afternoon where they try out the activities. We use Nike's motto ***"If you have a body, you are an athlete."*** Every child has a body. Every child can be an athlete. I often say to the children, ***"We have a body. We were made to move! Let's do it!"***

AMAZING IMPACT

Active Kids Do Better has had an amazing impact across our whole school community. There are so many positives that can stem from a single activity and from the programme as a whole, which shows the power that sport and physical activity can have in the classroom. As well as boosting health, achievement and attainment it's also helped our classroom ethos, improving children's attitudes to learning and building life skills such as listening, focusing and communicating with others.

For teachers it's simple to use and can easily be linked to any part of the curriculum. It doesn't generate any additional work and there is no extra planning. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend other schools to sign up. It's a really well developed programme and for us it's been transformative.