

June
2001
No
2

Research

Research
Summary

Summary

The Class Moves!®



Contents

Background	2
Methods	4
Findings	5
Discussion	7
References	10

Background



The Class Moves![®] programme consists of a number of relaxation exercises for use with primary school children of all ages. Originally developed in the Netherlands¹, these exercises are grouped by theme and age and are listed on a wall-mounted monthly calendar, which follows a stage-related development plan. The programme aims to encourage children to engage in different types of physical exercise on a daily basis. The desired outcomes for pupils include: increased motivation and improved concentration; raised physical awareness and sensorimotor development; and injury prevention and self-care.

The National Assembly for Wales (Health Promotion Division) and the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) in association with **spor tscotland** commissioned the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) to evaluate pilots of *The Class Moves!*[®] programme in Welsh and Scottish schools².

The main aims of this evaluation were:

- To review the nature and content of *The Class Moves!*[®] resources related to the activities introduced in the programme.
- To review and evaluate *The Class Moves!*[®] programme for implementation in three Welsh schools and three Scottish Schools that were piloting the programme.

- To assess the feasibility of *The Class Moves!*® programme within the classroom setting.
- To predict the replicability of the outcomes of *The Class Moves!*® programme in Welsh and Scottish primary schools.

Methods

2.

The study was largely qualitative and used detailed studies involving three Welsh and three Scottish pilot schools. The main methods used in the evaluation were as follows:

- Observation of *The Class Moves!*® programme in operation in the classroom.
- Interviews with head teachers and teachers at the beginning and end of the pilot period.
- Group interviews with pupils.
- Teacher diaries/logs.
- In addition, the Welsh element of the evaluation included the use of questionnaires to gather information from those teachers using *The Class Moves!*® programme in a further nine pilot schools not included in the main study.

Findings

3.

A number of striking similarities emerged from the findings across all schools involved in the Welsh and Scottish pilots. For example:

- The programme is likely to be adaptable to the school and classroom settings in Welsh and Scottish schools. Findings indicate that the model developed in the Netherlands has the potential to be transferable to primary schools in the UK and is applicable to all primary school age groups.
- The programme needs minimal training, provided the basic calendar resources and exemplar materials are available. Schools require little further support.
- Pupils and teachers perceive the programme to be innovative, interesting and enjoyable.
- There is a consensus among teachers and pupils that the programme assists pupils' concentration and behaviour in class and has a notable effect on relaxing and re-focusing pupils. Certain activities can present challenges to teachers and can excite pupils but most teachers are able to address these issues.
- The programme contributes to pupils' awareness of their bodies, health issues and teacher-pupil relationships.

- The support of the head teacher and/or senior management is a crucial factor for staff confidence in using the programme and for the potential of the programme to be fully realised.
- *The Class Moves!*® programme can be related to aspects of the wider curriculum and is compatible with other health promoting initiatives and frameworks (for example, *The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes* and *The Active School* in Scotland).
- Parents' knowledge of the programme is limited but they are generally supportive provided it does not impede their child's 'learning'.
- Many of the factors influencing the successful implementation of the programme are similar to those for other initiatives. These include: the wider curriculum and timetable; practical concerns such as availability of space and the classroom environment; support from relevant advisers and senior management; willingness of the head teacher and other teachers to actively contribute to the programme.

Discussion

4.

While the evaluation indicates that *The Class Moves!*[®] is relevant, useful and transferable to Welsh and Scottish schools, a number of implications arise from the study concerning wider use of the programme. These include:

- Sustainability of *The Class Moves!*[®] programme for classes facing considerable demands elsewhere in the curriculum. Whole-school planning, policies and teacher strategies could address this issue and ensure that the programme is not 'squeezed out' by the curriculum.
- While teachers stress that the programme does not require intensive training, they do value ongoing support, advice and ideas from colleagues including head teachers and advisory personnel.
- Teacher confidence and their understanding of the underlying principles of the programme are important factors.
- *The Class Moves!*[®] programme complements other health initiatives such as *The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes* and curricular topics including drama, physical education, biology, science and personal and social education (PSE). There is potential to further develop links, helping to promote the stable use of *The Class Moves!*[®] programme and benefit related initiatives and the wider curriculum.

- *The Class Moves!*® programme has been used in Wales and Scotland for too short a period to assess whether or not it can have any impact on academic performance. In the longer term, this will be an important issue for further study.
- The evaluation reported here has been limited to a small number of schools with a total of 52 classes, 44 in Wales and eight in Scotland. While this is sufficient for a feasibility study, it would be sensible to explore whether or not refinements are necessary if the programme is adopted more widely.
- There were very few pupils in the pilot schools with clearly identified special educational needs, but their enthusiasm and willingness to participate suggests that the programme should be reviewed for its sustainability in special schools and for those pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools.

In conclusion, the evaluation suggests that *The Class Moves!*® programme has the potential to promote pupil concentration and body awareness. Long-term studies will be better placed to assess the extent of these and other effects but findings suggest that the programme could be implemented more widely. *The Class Moves!*® programme can be seen as one example of an increasing number of diverse approaches that aim

to promote physical activity among young people and facilitate physical, cognitive and emotional benefits. Such benefits have the potential to make a positive contribution to promoting social inclusion. However, it should be recognised that the potential benefits can be influenced by a range of factors including integration within a health-promoting framework, appropriate planning, staff development, time and resources. Finally, such programmes will form one component of a busy curriculum.

References

5.

1. Sijthoff E., Kooyman L. (1999) *Concept Manual for the International Project: The Class Moves!* Fysio Educatief. Amsterdam.
2. Lowden K., Powney J., Davidson J., James C. (2001) *The Class Moves!® Pilot in Scotland and Wales. An Evaluation. SCRE Research Report No.100.* The Scottish Council for Research in Education. Edinburgh.

The full report upon which this Research Summary is based, referenced above, can be obtained from SCRE, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8JR.

Tel: 0131 557 2944, Fax: 0131 556 9454,
<http://www.scre.ac.uk>.

For further information contact:

Research and Evaluation Branch
Health Promotion Division
National Assembly for Wales
Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
Tel: 029 2082 3574 Fax: 029 2082 5779
www.hpw.wales.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2001

Published by Research and Evaluation Branch, Health Promotion Division

National Assembly for Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ

Tel: 029 2082 3574

Fax: 029 2082 5779

ISSN 1472 9644