

THIRD EDITION

Developing Physical Health and Well-being through **Gymnastics**

7-11

A SESSION-BY-SESSION APPROACH



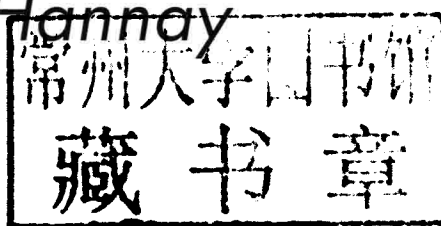
MAGGIE CARROLL AND JACKIE HANNAY

Developing Physical Health and Well-being through Gymnastics (7–11)

A session-by-session approach

Third edition

*Maggie Carroll
and Jackie Hannay*



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Preface

We were delighted to be asked to write new editions of my original teachers' gymnastics workbooks for primary school teachers and students.

(The first series was co-authored by Bob Garner and Maggie, and the second by Hazel Manners and Maggie.)

The need for this new edition became self-evident for two reasons:

- The success of the series and its format, as evidenced by ongoing testimonies from teachers and students on its usefulness and clarity.
- Inevitable changes to the primary curriculum over time have necessitated our re-evaluation of the principles underlying the teaching of gymnastic activity. Many of these still pertain but, additionally, we have focused more of the work on children's well-being, and on how it also supports access to broad learning across the curriculum.

We have retained a similar format and approach as in the original versions because teachers have told us how this has made their planning and assessment straightforward and manageable.

We welcome this opportunity to share with teachers and students this contribution to a crucial aspect of children's development.

*Maggie Carroll
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University of Brighton, January 2011*

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Foreword

The updating of this book is very welcome. It has always been a most valuable resource for the primary school subject leader, experienced teacher and, especially, the non-specialist. The lesson outlines have a clear structure with a good range of activities that, when sequenced, help learners to develop specific sets of skills and apply them appropriately. The units are well designed with development of core skills, specific techniques and compositional concepts and ideas central to them. In addition, there is a very clear section in each lesson that helps teachers to know what to look for in terms of specific learning objectives. It also makes excellent use of the core tasks developed as part of Curriculum 2000 and, subsequently, the PESSYP strategy.

Carroll and Hannay have skilfully updated the materials in order to reflect both the most recent curriculum developments in physical education and the most up-to-date thinking about teaching and learning. Whatever happens to the National Curriculum, the book will provide a really strong starting point for the development of positive learning experiences in this area of physical education. For subject leaders, the authors provide an excellent resource to support the development of schemes of work and a ‘feel safe’ clear set of ideas that can be turned into lesson plans for the non-specialist. For those who use the resource well, it will enable high-quality curriculum, learning experiences and teaching to be provided for all learners. This will offer settings in which children, whatever their ability, can develop:

- physical competency;
- confidence in themselves as physical beings;
- creativity and performance skills; and
- knowledge and understanding of aspects of personal health and well-being and healthy lifestyles.

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Introduction

Physical skills develop from the moment children are born. It is during the early years of children's lives (3–7) that physical education (PE) is primarily concerned with all-round physical development, and young children need to be provided with opportunities to explore a range of physical movement and equipment through structured and exploratory play in order to develop and master key motor skills. (See the companion volume, *Developing Physical Health and Well-being through Gymnastic Activity* (5–7).)

However, in the later primary years (7–11), children are becoming capable of differentiated activity, which is more closely aligned to those forms of activity seen in the public domain. They are able to develop and perform carefully controlled movements and sequences that are pleasing both to watch and perform, and that need skill in their execution.

Development of this will occur only through regular activity during the middle and later primary school phases. Whatever form a national curriculum might take in the primary years of schooling, concern for physical development, health and well-being must predominate, and as such is vital for children's development as confident individuals. It provides the foundations for long-term well-being and contributes to children's all-round development.

This workbook sets out to ensure that gymnastics, as part of a balanced PE programme, offers opportunities for children to acquire aspects of:

- physical skill acquisition and performance, which are improved through practice (they will become competent in the control and dexterity of their movements, and will use these abilities creatively and with commitment);
- generic skills so that they can move in controlled ways in a range of different contexts; and
- broader learning across the curriculum, often related to their personal, emotional and social development.

Building on work from the early years, where the children will have begun to master natural actions of rolling, climbing, running, jumping and sliding, combined with controlling the weight of the body while moving, the focus is now different. Children will need to concentrate more particularly on ‘correctness’, on control and on the beauty of their movements. They will continue to learn longer or more complex sequences that they are able to replicate and develop towards an optimum performance. They will continue to cooperate effectively with others in this, observing, giving and asking for feedback, and striving towards the notion of ‘getting it right’.

Gymnastics sessions will provide the ideal context for later primary-aged children to refine their social skills, such as communicating, negotiating, taking the lead and sharing ideas. They will also be able to challenge themselves by developing a deepening knowledge of what is good work. All this needs to be planned for and its development supported. For example, to be able to give feedback to another is a sophisticated skill that will have been introduced in the early primary years, and now needs to be developed to ensure that it is accurate, is given in a positive manner and benefits the receiver.

Through the mastery of skills and through achievement, children will be able to develop their sense of worth and well-being. This, combined with their developing knowledge and understanding of such matters as nutrition, hygiene and sleep, and the importance of achieving a balance of these, will allow them to make informed choices and engage in a healthy lifestyle. Children’s engagement in

gymnastics will, in part, provide a framework for them to gain this knowledge and expertise.

Links can be made to other areas of the curriculum in order to enhance children's learning, but these should not be contrived. Indeed, other areas of PE may lend themselves more appropriately to cross-curricular work, especially in the outside learning environment.

Gymnastics develops children's strength, balance, speed, suppleness, stamina and core body skills, as well as posture. These have importance for other areas of the PE programme. For example, to be successful games players, children need to have many of these attributes.

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) has a key part to play in teaching gymnastic activity. In the later section, 'So what about assessment?' (page 7), ICT is considered to be an essential assessment tool that can be used with the children to enable the teacher to capture performances. Together with the teacher, the children will be able to evaluate and celebrate their achievements.

What is involved in gymnastics?

Definitions are often difficult and imprecise. A definition of gymnastics is not necessarily helpful – yet it is necessary to know what characterises the work. It would seem that, whatever form of gymnastics is evident (Olympic, rhythmic, educational, sports, acrobatics, vaulting and agility), certain kinds of attributes give the work its name.

Gymnastics is normally characterised as having components such as:

- physical (strength and suppleness/flexibility);
- skill (with or without apparatus);
- aesthetic (shape, line and finish);
- creative (choosing movements that are authentically gymnastic);
- cognitive (understanding what the body is doing); and
- psychological (perseverance, courage and determination).

This list, however, need not deter teachers. They do not need to be gymnasts themselves, nor have detailed knowledge of complex gymnastics skills. Throughout Key Stage 1, children will have been developing their physical and motor skills, exploring basic movements, such as jumps, balance, travelling, rolls etc., and developing their knowledge of their own physical development, their health and their well-being. In doing this, the characteristic components of gymnastics will gradually have emerged through these early years. So now, in Key Stage 2, as noted above, the emphasis is on the need for children to concentrate more particularly on ‘correctness’, on control and on the beauty of their movements, learning longer or more complex sequences leading towards optimum performance.

If the six components of gymnastics listed above need to be present for the activity to be authentic, and if the work is to happen in school, then a teaching approach throughout must be adopted that, on the one hand, will generate the development of these essential characteristics and, on the other, will also be a relevant educational experience. Children should therefore be able to demonstrate bodily skill on the floor, on apparatus, on their own and with a partner, and in a small group, with the ultimate aim of creating a performance.

How do teachers achieve this aim?

As in the early years, the individual needs of the children must be considered. The early years child will have been using ‘gymnastic’ activities to explore a range of movements and the role of the teacher at this stage was to intervene to make the children *conscious* of what they were doing (so that they were both *moving* and *knowing*). Further to this, the teacher will also have been developing the children’s knowledge of the criteria that they need to consider in order to improve and achieve the desired outcome.

Now, however, as the children develop through the middle and later phases in the primary school years, the teacher seeks to develop more stylised, skilled bodily actions – which have a clearer resemblance to

recognised gymnastics forms. By the end of Key Stage 2, children should be capable of demonstrating a range of skilled, controlled and refined body actions that they have combined in a sequence, achieved through a selection and combination of movements (with consideration of levels, speed and direction), assessment and refinement. Through this cycle children will work towards achieving their ultimate performance.

If gymnastics is about bodily skill (as it undoubtedly is), and if we want our children to be proficient in using skilled bodily movement in answer to various kinds of tasks, the style of teaching must operate fully along the methodological continuum of open-ended (process) to closed (product). It makes sense that some activities require direct teaching (some skills for example), whereas others lend themselves to an experimental approach. Sometimes the teacher will set tasks that tightly constrain what the children may do (for example, ‘spring from feet to hands to feet’ or ‘practise performing cartwheels’). At other times, children may need to demonstrate understanding of a movement concept in their performance and so the task will be of a different order (for example, ‘change from one action to another using rotation to start/initiate the changes’). There are also many other stages in between that are more or less constraining. Examples of all these kinds of task feature in the session plans that follow.

Ultimately, for children to succeed they need to enjoy gymnastics. This can only be achieved by ensuring that they all experience success, and therefore teachers need to cater for individual needs. Children usually respond positively to challenges, and so these need to be built into the sessions to ensure that they are achievable and celebrated. Opportunities to share successes may be extended outside the class through performing to other classes, in assemblies, to parents and within the community.

Creating a positive ethos in sessions will optimise children’s learning. If children feel that their abilities are recognised, that their ideas have been valued and that they have felt safe, they are more likely to experience a smooth transition to the next Key Stage of their schooling. Gymnastics sessions are well suited to promoting such an ethos.

The place of skill in the later years

It is evident that young children are flexible, agile and inquisitive. Through gymnastic activity we want to channel these traits in the older primary-aged children so that they become skilful in managing their bodies in a variety of situations. In Key Stage 1, the emphasis was on skilful control of the actions the child has chosen rather than mastery of gymnastic skills chosen by the teacher. The focus was on the individual children's needs within the class, where there is inevitably a wide ability range. To some extent this will be the case in Key Stage 2, as it is likely that one child has a relatively immature stage of development whereas another is able to control and use bodily skill responsively. So, whereas most children will be ready to focus on the work that is more characteristically 'gymnastic', a few may still need the emphasis more aligned to Key Stage 1 work. In order to extend the children's capability, the 'Specific skills guide' (page 215) sets out a clear and safe process for teaching gymnastics skills. Throughout the four-year overall plan, in particular sessions and where skill teaching is appropriate, teachers are asked to refer to this guide.

When a set skill is to be taught (for example, see Year 4, sessions 12 and 13), it is suggested that the teacher asks an able child to demonstrate exactly the skill task being set. The class observes. Then, in order for the teacher to give further support to the skill practice, the class, in groups, works on differentiated tasks, leaving the teacher to remain with the group practising the skill.

In their classes, teachers may have several children who have been taught gymnastic skills at a club. These children may be very skilful in this respect and teachers may be apprehensive about safety factors, or worry that other children may emulate them. This is why, on the whole, most of the content of the sessions in this workbook calls for individual, inventive responses quite different from the way gymnastics clubs operate. However, the more able children can often be a source of inspiration for others, and especially will be able to share ideas and demonstrate good quality.

Teachers may have to explain this to the children who want just to perform their skills, and, additionally, encourage them to be inventive by trying other ways of answering the tasks set. If teachers use the ideas outlined in the sessions, they will be able to broaden children's movement vocabulary and develop their performance capabilities.

So what about assessment?

Assessment for learning and of learning should be integral to the gymnastics session. Teachers will need to assess the children's physical competence and also the extent to which there is increasing development of their understanding of health, well-being and cross-curricular aspects of learning (concern for others, safety, giving and receiving feedback etc.).

In addition to teacher assessment, the children should be encouraged to engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment. Examples of these will be found in the session plans that follow.

In the sessions, children will be trying out movements, reflecting on them and then refining them. So they will need to learn about the kinds of criteria against which they will be able to assess themselves and others, and, in so doing, begin to take responsibility for their own development and learning. The teacher can use different strategies to achieve this:

- modelling and demonstration of good practice;
- mini-plenary sessions to reinforce expectations; and
- reviewing performances with focused feedback.

Children should be encouraged to discuss and evaluate their work at the end of each session in preparation for the next. These opportunities can happen in the classroom after the lesson.

Judiciously planned use of ICT will also help the children and the teachers in this process as they record, observe and assess themselves in action.

The approach

In order to facilitate teachers' selection of session content and its presentation to the children, the workbook is written in a session-by-session format (called the 'session plan' and starting on page 75) for the four years of Key Stage 2. The sessions can be adapted, developed or used for consolidation, dependent on the time and resources available and/or the children's ability levels. Most sessions indicate the work to be covered over a two-week period, but teachers should spend more time if needed to ensure the work is of a high quality. They should not be afraid of repeating sessions to achieve this. This is important. Teachers must be confident in spending enough time to enable the children to 'play' with ideas, to practise and then to 'get it right'.

The individual sessions are preceded by an 'overall plan' (starting on page 17), which will give teachers an overview of the programme to be taught over each of the four years.

The overall plan

The plan sets out the focus, aspects for consolidation and the learning objectives for all the sessions in Years 3–6, and in this way shows the progression that has been built into the whole four-year programme.

This plan is a continuation of the work from Key Stage 1, and so will support the transition process and avoid regression in the children's

learning. (See the companion volume, *Developing Physical Health and Well-being through Gymnastic Activity (5–7)*.) It also indicates how the Year 6 work may lead into that found in Year 7.

The session plan

The session plan is a detailed plan derived from the overall plan. It is an easy-to-follow guide for teachers and student teachers in delivering the sessions. Each year has eleven session plans, nine of these incorporating at least two week's work, but with a single assessment session at the start and end of each year. Each plan has:

- a *title* that forms the focus for the session;
- *learning objectives* relating to physical development, to aspects of general health and well-being and to aspects of broader learning across the curriculum;
- *assessment criteria* that indicate the questions the teachers and the children should be asking themselves about what has been learned.

In most cases consolidation from the previous session is built into the plan.

All sessions have warm-up, floor work and final activities. Most have apparatus too. After each session, it is suggested that the children spend a few minutes recording what they have performed in some form of a workbook, and also discuss what they thought they had done well and what they need to do to improve their performance. It is particularly important to use this time to help the children articulate their understanding of their performances and how to improve upon them, particularly as the length and complexity of their sequences increase as they move from Year 3 to Year 6.

Additionally, teachers might wish to discuss issues of health and well-being just after the sessions. They might also do this after the session warm-up, where there is often a focus on developing suppleness and strength.

Warm-up

This should be vigorous so that the children have the opportunity to develop strength, speed, flexibility and stamina.

At the start of each session, there are tasks designed to get the body warm, raise the heart rate, and so prepare the body for the stretching (and sometimes strengthening) activities that follow.

Warm-ups can provide additional opportunities for children to consolidate skills and actions learned in previous sessions. They also enable teachers to incorporate activities that support children's learning about their personal well-being, as they are actively experiencing changes in how they are feeling, for example breathing heavily when active.

As noted above, in most sessions there is a specific emphasis on developing suppleness and strength.

Floor work

This centres on the development of skills and actions. It provides opportunities to select and refine these skills and combine them in a sequence, working towards an ultimate performance. Within the sessions, through demonstration, observation, modelling, questioning and reflection, children will gain an understanding of the performance criteria that will encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning and so become independent learners. Through this they will have opportunities to develop skills such as problem solving, sharing ideas and giving feedback. There is an increasing emphasis on partner work and then group work as the sessions move through the years. This facilitates children's development in cooperative learning in this unique context.

Apparatus work

This is used as an extension of the floor work. During Key Stage 1 children will have learned to lift, carry and assemble apparatus

appropriately, placing it in arrangements devised by the teacher and then by themselves (see the section ‘Apparatus diagrams’ on page 229).

Children should be encouraged to continue to replicate ideas and skills developed on the floor and explore these on the apparatus. They will discover that they may have to adapt their movements on the apparatus. The teacher should encourage them to be constantly active, in order to maximise the opportunity for the development of stamina, strength, speed and flexibility.

As the children become more adept and skilful, they will spend more time refining their performances. As in floor work, there is a developing emphasis on working with a partner and in small groups throughout the programme.

Final activity

Often this includes a strengthening exercise, and is also an opportunity for the children to feel and understand the benefits of effective stretching after activity.

The content of the sessions varies so that there are:

- activities done together (including the teacher) to develop a corporate sense of belonging;
- challenges in which children, through exploration, try to find their own way of responding, working individually and with others, discovering their capabilities;
- ideas from the teacher and from the children, put forward to help the children create patterns of movements that can be repeated and performed. This will support their sequencing skills and their movement memories.

As noted earlier, it is very important that teachers give the children sufficient time to try out ideas, practise them and then work towards the best quality of which they are capable.