

Step~by~Step

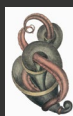
Primary Dance



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The power of dance!

Dance, as well as being a subject in its own right, is a rich and vibrant activity that can support learning across the curriculum.

It provides engaging ways of developing understanding as well as contributing towards fitness by raising heart rate, strengthening muscles and developing co-ordination. Increasingly, we are gaining understanding of the positive mental and social benefits of dance.

It is inclusive, social and proven to boost mood and self-esteem. As a creative art form, dance involves life and employability skills including problem solving, collaboration and self-expression - the creative industries being one of the fastest growing sectors of the UK economy.

With all these wonderful benefits, you want children in your class or school to have access to high-quality dance provision, don't you? So what's stopping you? How many times have you or your colleagues said the following:

- "I can't dance! I can't stand at the front of the class and show them what to do! I can't think of any moves to teach."
- "I don't know anything about dance and I don't have time to plan."
- "We already do a lunchtime dance club in our school."
- "Our pupils lack confidence / they don't like performing / they are too 'challenging' / they won't take it seriously."
- "We don't have time to fit it into the timetable with everything else!"
- "We don't have the capacity or budget to send teachers on a course."

We know how hard teachers and support staff work and we believe that high-quality dance provision should be available to all. And the best bit? We know that classroom teachers *can* deliver high quality dance provision to their pupils - yes *even* those who believe they can't dance.

Step-by-Step is designed to give you the tools to get your children moving, creating and dancing - learning the combination of skills that dance can provide *and* support their learning across the curriculum!

A note about music

Many teachers frequently comment that finding suitable music for dance lessons difficult and time consuming. The good news? There is no need to worry about finding that 'perfect' piece of music for each lesson or topic.

Creating a playlist of instrumental music of different moods and atmospheres can save a great deal of time and effort later. Film scores are an excellent source. Music should provide an overall mood and tone to support the dance content of the lesson.

- Check you haven't got it too loud: you should be able to talk over it easily.
- Check for any inappropriate lyrics.
- Set the task first and then add the music once they're working.
- Not all lessons need pre-recorded music: use a tambourine; or sound effects; get pupils to create their own.
- Don't think that you need to have several pieces of music for one lesson. This can be saturation for the students and a nightmare for you.

Step~by~Step 'Quick Start' guide

Who is *Step-by-Step* for?

This resource is aimed at all those planning, delivering and supporting dance in a school setting to children aged 5 - 11: classroom teachers, school leaders and support staff.

Whether you are completely new to teaching dance or you are just looking for new ideas *Step-by-Step* is here to help: it is aimed at the non-specialist teacher and requires NO previous knowledge or skill in dance.

If you want to start from the basics we recommend that you read through this Teachers' Notes pack from the beginning. You'll find a wealth of background and dance subject knowledge, written in easy-to-understand language. We've kept the jargon to a minimum to help you develop your understanding before you get going!

This resource features differentiated content to support teaching 5 - 7 year olds and 7 - 11 year olds. Of course, the principles of good teaching in dance are universal and much of the content and the key concepts are applicable to both age groups. And of course, all children and schools are different. *Step-by-Step*, however, focuses on a playful, exploratory approach with younger primary-aged children, providing them with the building blocks needed as they move towards creating and performing more developed dances in the later primary years.

A little more confident or experienced in dance? You might want get stuck straight in with our exemplar units.



Claire Pring with Y3 / Y4 pupils and their teacher, making 'strong' shapes.

Our content for 5 - 7 year olds has two units. Each unit supports the development of key experiences that are fundamental in providing younger children with the foundations they need to successfully engage in dance lessons throughout their education: *developing creativity and building cooperation*.

In our content for 7 - 11 year olds each unit supports your understanding of one key area of successful dance delivery - *planning, delivering and assessing* - while simultaneously modelling how to develop the key dance skills in your older primary aged pupils: *creating, performing and reflecting*.

The associated frameworks and films for both age groups are based around popular cross-curricular topics, allowing you to see a 'real life' dance lesson in action. Frameworks can be 'pick up and go' or you can use them as a template to plan and develop your own frameworks.

Age 5 - 7 frameworks

	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE 5 - 7	UNIT 1: DEVELOPING CREATIVITY	UNIT 2: BUILDING CO-OPERATION
UNITS	TOPIC: <i>Year group:</i>	WHO AM I? <i>Year 1</i>	SEED DISPERSAL <i>Year 2</i>
LESSON CONTENT	X Curricular topic	Who am I?	Seed dispersal
	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE FRAMEWORKS * = featured in the resources prepared by Claire Pring. Titles are hyperlinked to the frameworks online.	3 lessons on the theme <i>Who am I?</i> Who am I? - Touch Who am I? - Feel Who am I? - Connect*	3 lessons on the theme <i>Out and about</i> Planting seeds Pollinators Seed dispersal*
TEACHER FILMS AND AUDIO RESOURCE	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE CPD FILMS <i>Process of Teaching Dance</i> Dur: 9 mins	Focus on Developing creativity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration through improvisation • Responding to a stimuli • Making a multi-sensory experience 	Focus on Building co-operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building respect • Experiencing a range of roles • Recognising and valuing similarities and differences
	AUDIO RESOURCES Dur: 20 mins	Music and guidance to deliver a lesson on <i>Who am I?</i> (with pause points)	Music and guidance to deliver a lesson on <i>Seed dispersal</i> (with pause points)
PUPIL FILMS	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE CHALLENGE <i>Pupils go head to head on the dance floor!</i> Dur: 5 / 6 mins	WHO AM I? Four pairs of Year 1 pupils with their mentors present their creative dance ideas on moods and emotions.	SEED DISPERSAL Four pairs of Year 2 pupils with their mentors show off their collaboration skills through dance duets.
	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE PERFORMANCE <i>What a good one looks like</i> Dur: 3 mins	WHO AM I? Demonstrating creativity Performing with props	SEED DISPERSAL Exemplifying collaboration Performing as a duet

Age 7 - 11 frameworks

UNITS	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE 7 - 11	UNIT 1: PLANNING AND CREATING	UNIT 2: DELIVERING AND PERFORMING	UNIT 3: ASSESSING AND REFLECTING
TOPIC: Year group :		THE BLITZ Year 6	THE FIREBIRD Year 5 / 6	ALFRED THE GREAT Year 3 / 4
X Curricular topic		World War 2	Mythical stories	Anglo-Saxons
LESSON CONTENT	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE FRAMEWORKS * = featured in the resources prepared by Claire Pring. Titles are hyperlinked to the frameworks online.	The Blitz* The Shelters Evacuees War artists Slogans	The Firebird - Australian* <i>The Midas Touch</i> - Ancient Greek <i>Romulus and Remus</i> - Roman <i>Why Warthog is on his knees</i> - African <i>Creation story</i> - Chinese	Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to Britain? Who were the Anglo-Saxons? What were Anglo-Saxon beliefs? Who was Alfred the Great?* Why did the Anglo-Saxon dynasty end?
TEACHER FILMS AND AUDIO RESOURCE	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE CPD FILMS <i>Process of Teaching Dance</i> Dur: 7 / 8 mins	Focus on Planning and Creating Dance skills: • Physical • Compositional • Performance • Analytical	Focus on Delivering and Performing How to challenge and support What to expect Dos and Don'ts of a dance lesson	Focus on Assessing and Reflecting What to look for: • Action • Space • Dynamics • Relationships
	AUDIO RESOURCES Dur: 14 / 16 mins	Music and guidance to deliver a lesson on The Blitz (with pause points)	Music and guidance to deliver a lesson on The Firebird (with pause points)	Music and guidance to deliver a lesson on Alfred the Great (with pause points)
PUPIL FILMS	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE CHALLENGE <i>Pupils go head to head on the dance floor!</i> Dur: 4 / 5 mins	THE BLITZ Two groups of 9 / 10 Year 6 pupils compete to see who will be judged the most creative choreographers.	THE FIREBIRD Two groups of 3 / 4 Year 5 pupils with their mentors compete to see whose dance is judged the most imaginative composition.	ALFRED THE GREAT Two groups of 5 / 6 Year 3 pupils compete to see who will be judged the star performers.
	STEP~BY~STEP DANCE PERFORMANCE <i>What a good one looks like</i> Dur: 2 / 3 mins	THE BLITZ Exemplify <i>dance</i> skills Where creative exploration leads	THE FIREBIRD Exemplifying <i>composition</i> skills The result of choices made	ALFRED THE GREAT Exemplifying <i>performance</i> skills The stimulus for interpretation and analysis

Dance in the UK primary curriculum

England

Dance sits explicitly within the PE curriculum in England, which states that *'Pupils should be taught to...Perform dances using a range of movement patterns'*. Furthermore, the skills explored and developed through dance activity clearly support the PE Curriculum's aims of pupils being able to:

- *develop flexibility, strength, technique, control and balance*
- *compare their performances with previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best*

The activities and creative tasks in *Step-by-Step* provide opportunities for children to *'enjoy communicating [and] collaborating with each other'*.

Crucially, use of tablets for self-reflection and self-assessment is embedded throughout the *Step-by-Step* Frameworks and allows pupils to *'develop and understanding of how to improve...and learn how to evaluate and recognise their own success'* in a simple, fun and engaging manner!

Wales

Dance forms part of the current PE curriculum in Wales, which highlights the need for pupils to be given *'opportunities to be creative and imaginative in gymnastic and dance activities'*.



The use of tablets for self-reflection and assessment is embedded through the Step-by-Step Frameworks and allows pupils to 'develop an understanding of how to improve...and learn how to evaluate and recognise their own success' in a simple, fun and engaging manner.

Participating in dance activities contribute positively to 'Health, Fitness and Well-being'. It explicitly addresses much of the 'Creative activities' skill area, which requires pupils to develop and apply basic body actions as well as learn about composition and choreography in order to *'plan sequences and a range of movement patterns'*.

As Wales moves towards its new 'Curriculum for Wales for 2022', dance features strongly in the Expressive Arts area of learning and experience, with a focus on creative work that combines *'knowledge and skills using the senses, inspiration and imagination'*. The contribution of dance towards health and wellbeing continues to feature.

Scotland

Education Scotland's 'Curriculum for Excellence' published in September 2019 places dance as a discrete subject in its comprehensive Expressive Arts curriculum area. *'Through dance, learners have rich opportunities to be creative and to experience inspiration and enjoyment. Creating and performing will be the core activities for all learners, and taking part in dance contributes to their physical education and physical activity.'*

At First and Second Level, pupils are expected to have opportunities to explore and create a range of movement ideas and use them in their own sequences, be inspired by a range of stimuli and 'give and accept constructive comment' on their own work and that of others.

The mental and physical benefits of dance also positively support the delivery of the 'Health and Wellbeing' curriculum area.

Northern Ireland

Dance sits within the Physical Education curriculum, though acknowledgement is made of the clear links with The Arts curriculum area, such as Drama and Music.

In addition to being able to demonstrate a range of movement skills, pupils are required to:

'listen to, and move in response to, different stimuli and accompaniments, for example, verbal (music, poem, nursery rhyme, story, action words), visual, tactile, historical and cultural to create different types of dances'

The Frameworks included in *Step-by-Step* model how a range of classroom topics and starting points can be used to generate individual movement responses from pupils.



Y1 pupils perform their dance exploring mood and feeling words, using juggling scarves as a prop.

The core 'ingredients' of Dance

So, before we get moving, let's get to grips with the basics. What IS dance? Dance is quite simply movement - so if you can wave, nod, step, slide, turn, blink, clap, wiggle...you can dance! When we watch a piece of dance, whether it is simple or complicated, whether it is danced by professional dancers or children in a school hall, it is made up of four 'ingredients':

- **Actions:** *what* the body is doing - sometimes just referred to as 'movements'
- **Dynamics:** *how* the dancer is moving - this helps communicate a dance idea / mood to the audience
- **Space:** *where* the dancer is moving
- **Relationships:** *with whom* the dancer is moving

We also know the terminology around dance can seem overwhelming and confusing, so let's unravel the mystery! Like any subject we should endeavour to use the correct subject-specific language and encourage pupils to do the same.

Actions (What)

Jump

Gesture

Travel - walk, slide, skip, tiptoe...

Turn - full or partial turn, could be a roll...

Stillness

Dynamics (How)

A combination of speed and force

Jagged

Smooth

Wobbly

Calm

Fluid

Sudden

Powerful

Space (Where)

Pathways (moving from one place to another) - could be straight, curved, zig-zag, etc

Directions (facings) - to the front, the back, the side, a corner, etc

Formations - where we position the dancers (pupils often know this term from football!). Could be in a circle, a line, a V-shape, etc

Levels - low, medium, high

Proximity - how close the dancers are to each other

Size - how big or small an action is

Relationships (With whom)

Solo, duet, trio, quartet, etc

Unison - same actions at the same time

Canon - one after another, like a Mexican Wave

Mirroring - working opposite a partner, like a reflection

Complementary - doing different things that work well together

Contrasting - doing things that are purposefully very different to each other

Question and Answer - where one dancer or group performs a movement or sequence; then another dancer or group responds with something different

...these are the most common for this age group.

Safety and classroom management

Physical space

The reality of teaching dance in most primary school settings (unless you are extremely lucky) is that dance will be taught in a multi-purpose space - most likely the school hall. Prior to starting any practical work it is vital to make a few important checks:

- The floor should be clean and clear, free from debris (vital if your dance space is also the school canteen and you are teaching after lunch!)
- The room should be at an appropriate temperature. 18° C is the minimum, below which it is unsafe to practice anything beyond small, sedentary, gestural movement. Many think it wise to maintain a temperature of around 24° C and that 21° C is the minimum.
- Pupils should have room to move freely, without bumping into each other or tripping over items of furniture, etc. A useful rule is to provide a minimum of three square metres for each participant of the primary school age range.
- Music creates a great atmosphere in lessons. Sound levels should be controllable, so that pupils can hear instructions from the teacher clearly and can communicate with each other.
- If working outside then the same principles apply, but you also need to consider that the surface is likely to be uneven, the sound may be carried away on a windy day and you may need to consider sun protection.

Pupils

Pupils should be appropriately dressed for physical activity - ideally with an extra layer they can remove as they get warmer. Watch out for long trousers that they could slip on.

Many schools have shorts as their PE kit. If so, be careful with floorwork: skidding / sliding movements on bare legs is not a comfortable experience! Bare feet are ideal for dance: free of charge, non-slip and allow children to feel increased proprioception.

Long hair should be tied up and all jewellery removed. Covering stud earrings with a plaster does not prevent them from being ripped out. Pupils should never eat or chew in any physical activity.

Managing the space and physicality

Walking into the open space of a hall can be overwhelming for pupils, especially if they have spent a lot of time behind desks recently! This can also be overwhelming for teachers who feel more comfortable with the structure and layout of a classroom. Sitting pupils in a circle at the start of every class is perfect if you want to feel a sense of order - also a great formation for everyone being able to see and hear! This can even be in register order or similar if you prefer a definite seating plan.

The nature of dance, as a physical activity, requires some physical contact between pupils. This provides a great opportunity to teach appropriateness of physical contact, sensitivity to others and respecting boundaries.

You should of course always follow your own school's policies and procedures regarding physical contact. Safe practice should be demonstrated and highlighted throughout dance activity.

Warm up and Cool down

Pupils should have the opportunity to mobilise joints and gradually increase their heart rate at the start of each lesson. Likewise at the end of each lesson they should have an opportunity to gradually reverse this process.

This is important for their psychological as well as physical preparation. Warm up and cool down can be fully embedded into pupils learning and should flow seamlessly as part of the lesson, as demonstrated in the *Step~by~Step* frameworks and films.



In the Alfred the Great CPD film, the lesson concludes with pupils cooling down by exploring the smoke rising from Alfred's burnt cakes (07 58).

Dance is for everyone!

Inclusion and differentiation

There is no right or wrong

We believe ALL children and young people should have access to high-quality dance provision regardless of their starting points and background. Every child, every class and every school is unique.

All the ideas in *Step-by-Step* can be adapted to meet the needs of every learner. This is because there are no 'steps' to learn - all the movements are created by the children themselves in response to tasks and ideas given by the teacher. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' response.

It's all in the language

The wonderful teachers in our CPD films get their pupils to create and perform high-quality dance...and all without dancing a single step themselves!

Using language like 'Find a way to...' or 'Can you move across the floor like...' means that the children have to find their own response and create their own unique way of moving. Descriptive language encourages creative and imaginative responses.

No opt out!

Students who are ill, injured, or don't have kit can still be involved in so many aspects of the lesson! Of course teachers must always follow advice and guidance from medical professionals and follow their school policy, but some ways of involving and engaging all might include:

- giving creative ideas to a group
- act as a mentor, creative director or 'outside eye' - this could involve filming and assessing on a tablet. In the Alfred the Great CPD film (04 29) we see Chris filming his group and then joining them to share feedback and discuss improvements
- modify the responses to 'find a way' that works within the constraints - eg just using the hands or being seated



During the lesson on 'The Firebird' the pupils are encouraged to find their own way of making swooping actions.

Scaffold and support

All tasks and ideas in *Step-by-Step* can be broken into smaller chunks to scaffold learning for individuals or groups. Some pupils might just focus on one choreographic element, or on creating a smaller number of actions. Working in mixed ability groups can provide additional support for those pupils who struggle with confidence.

In the *Firebird* CPD film we see mixed ability pairings working together successfully in the *Context ~ Application* section (03 29).

In the *Who am I?* CPD film we see a pupil struggling to come up with a mood idea being given the option to choose one from a pre-prepared list (07 16).

Stretch and challenge

The *Step-by-Step* frameworks provide plenty of opportunities to stretch those pupils who are more experienced or more confident in dance. Pupils can be given a leadership role, acting as a mentor in creative tasks. The open-ended instructions mean they can respond in a way that is more complex or sophisticated, or additional considerations can be added such as dynamics, focus, or use of levels.

Support staff

If you are lucky enough to have support staff - get them joining in! They can model ideas to children and even those who are less confident can show that everyone can achieve and make progress.

Consider 'role reversal' - if your support works with a particular child, can the staff member be in the dance with the pupil directing and coaching?



The class teacher works with her Year 1 pupils for the 'Who am I?' unit.

Step-by-Step Dance 5 - 7

Dance for 5 - 7 year olds

Dance lessons with younger primary children should be engaging, fun and active, introducing them from an early age to the idea that dance is for everyone and helping to break down myths about what dance is and who can be a dancer.

Dance is truly unique as an educational subject in the way that it seamlessly combines creativity with physical activity.

Introducing younger primary children to dance through their mainstream education helps to provide them with a broad and balanced curriculum that helps make meaningful connections between subject areas.

Dance provides many positive benefits for children including social skills needed for life, physical fitness, mental wellbeing and enriching cultural experiences. Embedding dance into a normal part of the curriculum at such a young age gives early access to these benefits.

The *Step-by-Step* units for ages 5 - 7 cover two of the skill areas needed as the foundation building blocks for access to dance education: *Developing creativity* and *Building co-operation*. The units also link to popular class themes, providing opportunity for younger children to develop discrete subject-specific dance skills while developing their understanding of their topic areas.

Quick links to the KS1 films and frameworks:



Who am I? - all films



Who am I? - Touch



Who am I? - Feel



Who am I? - Connect



Out and about - all films



Out and about - Planting seeds



Out and about - Pollinators



Out and about - Seed dispersal



What kind of seed? Y2 pupils demonstrate their exploration of different kinds of seed dispersal.

Unit 1: Developing creativity

Tapping into the ability that Key Stage 1 children have to 'play' is a fabulous starting point for dance. Their natural imagination and endless curiosity allow them to explore, pretend, investigate, and imitate. Simply giving children an empty space and perhaps adding some music, however, will not necessarily enable them to develop their creativity.

Creativity requires a stimulus to spark ideas: a challenge to respond to; problems to be solved and decisions to be made. And this is the role of the teacher - to create an environment where ideas can be cultivated, explored, shared, by simply asking questions such as... 'Can you find a way of travelling/stretching/turning...?' or 'How can you make yourself small/look fierce/melt...?' or 'Can you do that faster/bigger/with a jump...?'

Throughout this resource improvisation (ie asking the children to respond to movement ideas without pre-planning or being given set 'steps') is used extensively.

Younger children are natural improvisers so its playfulness fits well with this developmental stage, and we can capitalise on their innate creativity.

But many teachers worry about where to start and how they can develop tasks while trying to embed dance specific skills and knowledge in a meaningful way.

To explain how this can be done simply let's draw an analogy. Imagine that you have a piece of paper and a pencil. Now please picture something that you might draw.

By doing so you have already made choices: the shape you have created; where you located it on the page; how big you made it; how hard you pressed with your pencil.

The same is true in dance. If we asked the children to find a way of travelling around the room, some might walk or run, some will slide on their tummy, others might skip or jump, but each will be doing it in their own way - deciding where to travel, how big or small to make their actions and how fast or slow to move. They are already improvising.



In the unit 'Who am I?' Y1 pupils work with juggling scarves as a prop and explore how the material can be manipulated to suggest different mood and feeling words.

Then it is the role of the teacher to apply challenges or prompts to encourage the children to explore and build upon their ideas. These might involve those core 'ingredients' of dance we introduced on page x:

- The *action* content of the work (possibly by specifying or extending the range of movements they are performing)
- The *space* they are using (the location of their work)
- The *dynamics* qualities of their actions (the force and speed of the movements)
- The *relationship* between the dancers (who they are dancing with)

Equally improvisation can be used to develop and explore physical dance skills. If, for example, we were thinking of the idea of popcorn popping then we could apply *extension* (stretching fully) or jumping and landing safely. If we were thinking of crabs scuttling along a beach, then we would be working on *coordinating* hand and leg actions.

As soon as we move, we are applying a wide set of skills automatically - so the role of the teacher is to highlight key areas and allow the children the opportunity to focus on those within their work.

These are noted for each section of the lesson in the right-hand column of the plans.

Improvisation requires the children to respond to a movement idea. If, for example, the children were exploring travelling through a deep, dark forest you may see them weaving their way between the trees; they might duck under low hanging branches or even step over fallen logs.

As the teacher you can help to paint the picture - they will all be working independently and responding to the same idea in their own unique way. And, as would be the case in other lessons, you may wish to pause the children for a moment and look at some examples of good work to improve and extend the work of those with less experience or confidence in their ideas.

This also gives the opportunity to model the skills being demonstrated. Maybe through their forest walk they are showing balance as they step over the log, or control as they squeeze under the boughs and branches, or their facial expression and bodily tension might communicate how they are feeling.

In the filmed lesson for 5 - 7 Unit 1 we also used juggling scarves to develop their movement ideas. The use of props such as these can:

- Help to make a movement idea more tangible
- Improve fine and gross motor coordination
- Remove focus from the child onto the object
- Give a different sensory experience
- Increase movement range
- Add different qualities into the actions
- Sustain concentration
- Help to communicate a story, character or mood
- Extend or enhance the movements

The responses the children generate will probably leave you amazed at the diversity of their ideas and the level of engagement! The impact of such an immersive experience is likely to spill over into their wider understanding of the content.

Other objects often used as props in a dance lesson:

- Feathers
- Sponges
- Lycra or Elasticated fabrics
- Bean bags
- Hoops
- Emergency blankets

Introducing objects gives the children a 'real' experience. This can be further capitalised upon by removing the objects and asking them to repeat the task - recapturing the sensations, movements or emotions involved.

This requires the children to recall the actions and qualities and recreate them, thus extending their movement range and embedding the learning experience.

And a final note: creativity is fostered within a climate of possibility. It is up to us as teachers to establish a culture of curiosity, exploration, and possibility. We should expect the unexpected from the children we teach!



One of the Y1 duets taking part in the Dance Challenge.

Unit 2: Building co-operation

The many benefits of dance are usually divided into the categories of physical; mental and social.

The physical skills focus on the acquisition of balance, control, coordination, strength, flexibility, stamina, and the associated health benefits.

The mental aspect looks at the acquisition of knowledge (regarding both dance as a discrete subject and the topic or theme they might be dancing about), the boost to memory as well as mental wellbeing.

The social benefits include: the opportunity to work with others; to build respect; an improved sense of trust in ourselves and those we are working with; the opportunity to take on a range of roles and responsibilities; the requirement of application and commitment; recognising and valuing similarities and differences and an improved understanding of other times and cultures.

Dance gives the children the chance to work together in a large and relatively empty space. So, building in opportunities to help them to develop their self-discipline as well as co-operative skills, will not only enable the lesson to run more smoothly but will stand them in good stead for future team working.

Working in a space

If the children are working independently, then taking time at the start of the activity to ensure that each child has sufficient space around them is an investment. This allows them to move safely and unhindered by others or furniture. Maintaining this can be challenging for some children, but this is usually remedied by working in short bursts and regular reminders to move into their own space.

Working in a circle

If you ask the children to 'make a circle', take a moment to consider the amount of complex thinking this requires... First they must know what a circle looks like and that they are to picture this as viewed from above. They also have to identify themselves as a section of that circle and work out where they should stand (relative to everyone else). Once solved, circles enable everyone to see and be seen so give a sense of equality and balance to an activity which can be particularly beneficial at the start and end of a lesson.



Y2 pupils finding ways to build co-operation.

Taking turns

In an activity that involves taking turns typically, most children want to go first.

When introducing the task, stress that they will soon be changing roles, then do so within 20 to 30 seconds. By changing roles rapidly and frequently, the children will remain more engaged with the activity over a sustained period.

As the children become familiar with alternating in this way you can extend the length of time prior to changing over.

If engaging in a game such as Follow-My-Leader keep the groups small - perhaps pairs or threes - so they rapidly return to the leadership role.

Close working or contact

Respect for another person's body and appropriate physical contact can be supported through dance.

By guiding the children to use certain body parts, or to move close without making physical contact the children become familiar with boundaries or the amount of strength to apply, thereby developing the self-discipline required to work with others demonstrating care and consideration.

Use of stillness or slow motion can also assist with this or allow the teacher to intervene if they identify something of concern.

Using props

Very simply, using props can enable the children to wait patiently, such as while they are being handed out or between tasks. They might share or exchange the objects they are working with, while also needing to demonstrate awareness of the needs of others such as extra space.

There is also the courtesy and practicalities of handling the objects with care and putting them away safely at the end of the sessions.

Depending upon the prop in question there may also be some actions that you don't want the children to do for safety reasons, such as putting things around their necks, so the self-discipline this involves also promotes consensus and co-operation.



Y2 seed dispersal. One pupil moves as the seed; the other pupil is the object to which the dispersing seed will connect. The pupils find a variety of different ways to connect.

Watching the work of others and giving feedback

Performance opportunities allow the children a chance to share their work with others; however many children struggle to sit still for long periods of time so with younger children this is commonly done on a one-to-one basis which is gradually increased as they mature.

The skills of performance are developed irrespective of the size of the audience but performing to a partner or to the teacher can feel 'safe' and more supportive to a less confident child. Keeping all sharing situations brief and focused will help the children to develop audience skills including paying attention, watching quietly and being able to give considered feedback.

In the lesson frameworks you may see tasks where pupils work in small groups and one child takes on the role of the 'teacher'. At first the 'teacher' guides the action, therefore being in a place of responsibility, then the task is often repeated with the 'teacher' having to interpret the action.

By integrating a performance task into the main body of the lesson this can also help support children who are not confident with a more formal performing situation.

When younger children are observing others, it often helps to give them a physical task to do - for example, 'when you see your partner perform a balance put your hand up' or 'point when you see someone performing a turn', or you could ask them to recreate the shape or action.

The modelling of observations throughout the lesson by the teacher supports the children's ability to describe, interpret and analyse the actions of others, taking the children beyond describing the work of others as simply 'good' or 'I liked it'.

The constructive comments made by classmates give encouragement and build confidence creating a safe atmosphere where the children feel they can experiment.

This also sets the tone of how the children describe the work of others and give feedback to ensure that it is constructive, considerate, and mindful.



The class teacher working with her Y2 pupils on seed dispersal.

Step~by~Step Dance 7 - 11

Dance for 7 - 11 year olds

As children progress through primary education we continue to build on and develop their innate creativity. We are likely to use dance lessons both to embed learning across the curriculum and to build on and develop discrete dance specific skills, developing the notion of dance as a valuable and worthwhile subject in its own right.

As children progress in dance, we begin to embed the three 'pillars' of dance education:

Composition or choreography - in short, the skill of making dance. This is achieved through pupils creating, selecting, refining, discarding and structuring dance ideas relevant to the theme, topic or dance idea they are exploring.

Performance - building physical and expressive dance skills and presenting dance work to an audience (however small!)

Appreciation - the ability to reflect upon, evaluate and analyse their own work and that of others. This might include exploring and analysing professional dance work as well as that of their peers.

In primary education these activities are likely to be seamlessly linked in dance. A short activity where a pupil creates a dance action in response to a theme, shows it to a friend and then they discuss how to make it better has explored composition, performance *and* appreciation - probably without even realising it!

Quick links to the KS2 films and frameworks:



The Blitz - all films



The Blitz



The shelters



Evacuees



War artists



Slogans



The Firebird - all films



The Firebird



King Midas



Romulus and Remus



Why Warthog is on his knees



Chinese Creation story



Alfred the Great - all films



Why did the Anglo-Saxons come?



Who were the Anglo-Saxons?



What were Anglo-Saxon beliefs?



Who was Alfred the Great?



Why did Anglo-Saxon dynasty end?

Unit 1: Planning and creating

In dance - as with any lesson - it is critical to know what you want children to get out of it and use this lesson objective to inform your planning and activities. The lesson objective can be:

- artistic: what they will communicate / use as a starting point
- physical: the skills they will develop
- social: eg problem solving, resolving a task / team working / exploratory

Once you have the objective set you can then plan the rest of the lesson from there by asking yourself, 'what do they need to do to meet the objective?' This should give you the middle section of the lesson.

Then you should ask yourself, 'what body parts or skills will they be using for this?' This should lead you to a suitable warm up.

Everything in the lesson should link together. In the case of the Blitz CPD Film, pupils develop their coordination during the warm up and begin exploring how to communicate a theme through the creative exploration.

Context

Using a theme or cross-curricular topic to develop your ideas and plan your questioning:

- What shape does it make?
- What does it look like?
- How would it move?
-

In the case of our lesson on The Blitz we use 'How does the building look?' (03:06) and 'How does it react when..?' (04:56)

When dealing with cross-curricular topics, plan for any 'sensitive' issues and how pupils may respond. In this case, sensitivity may be needed when dealing with issues around bombs / war / destruction for some pupils.

Creative exploration

Group sizes can be varied to accommodate the different needs of the pupils. Do pupils choose their own group (as in this case) or do you select groups? Do you want pupils to work with those of a similar ability level or in mixed ability groups? Consider your mechanisms for both support and challenge.

Build in time to explore and 'play' with ideas. The movement ideas that pupils try and then discard are just as important as what they choose to keep. Be prepared: your classroom will be busy and may look rather 'messy' during this part of the lesson!

Giving feedback

Build in regular opportunities for pupils to give feedback. This can be a chance for them to practice using correct terminology. Tablets are a great way for students to quickly review their own work giving them an 'outside eye' when they are dancing in their own choreography.

Keep it snappy! Remember the children should be moving more than they are watching / talking. Give them opportunities to implement the feedback - don't leave it until the end of the lesson when there is no time left to implement any changes.

Composition: structure

Give pupils a clear 'frame' so their dances have a beginning, middle and end. Often children will spend a long time rehearsing the start of the dance and forget to plan how it ends! The use of start and end positions can be useful.

In The Blitz lesson, not all children are doing the same thing at the same time – one group of dancers is doing one thing while another does something else. This adds choreographic interest and structure.



When planning for the structure of their dances in The Blitz lesson, the pupils are asked to combine two ideas they have explored through the lesson (06:47). This means not all children are doing the same thing at the same time - one group of dancers is doing one thing while another does something else. This adds choreographic interest and structure.

Unit 2: Delivering and performing

Regular feedback (from self / peers / teacher) and the chance to implement it through quality rehearsal are crucial steps in the preparation of a strong performance.

Children need opportunities to develop quality and refined movement responses. Remember to keep feedback quick and specific: get them to implement it straight away.

Context

Stories can be great stimuli for dances, especially if children are already familiar with the narrative or the characters. Top tip: we are using the story as a starting point for creativity. We don't need to use the whole story and we need to encourage pupils to go beyond 'mime' to re-tell the story. Look for ways of prompting more creative responses.

The Firebird

The story we explore in this unit is an Aboriginal 'Dreamtime' myth from Northern Australia called *The Firebird*.

You can listen to Eric Maddern's well-known retelling of the story [here](#) (he calls the bird the 'Rainbow Bird'). You can read a brief summary of the events of the story [here](#).

Performance

The build up to a 'big' performance (eg at the end of a lesson or for an assembly) can be valuable but it isn't the only way. Showing a short sequence to a partner or the teacher while the rest of the class are busy working is still a performance!

Don't worry about trying to get some formal performance into every lesson: there probably isn't time and for under-confident children the trauma that they will have to 'show' their work at the end can be a barrier to engagement or good work in a lesson. You could include:

- Showing work to your partner for them to feedback on.
- Having work filmed and then watching it back (by yourself / your group, or by another student or another group).
- Asking who would like to perform - eg 'Whose work is ready to be shown?'
- Showing very short snippets or shapes as examples of good work. Keep this brief and don't over analyse. Keep it moving.



Assessing and analysing the performance once it has ended.

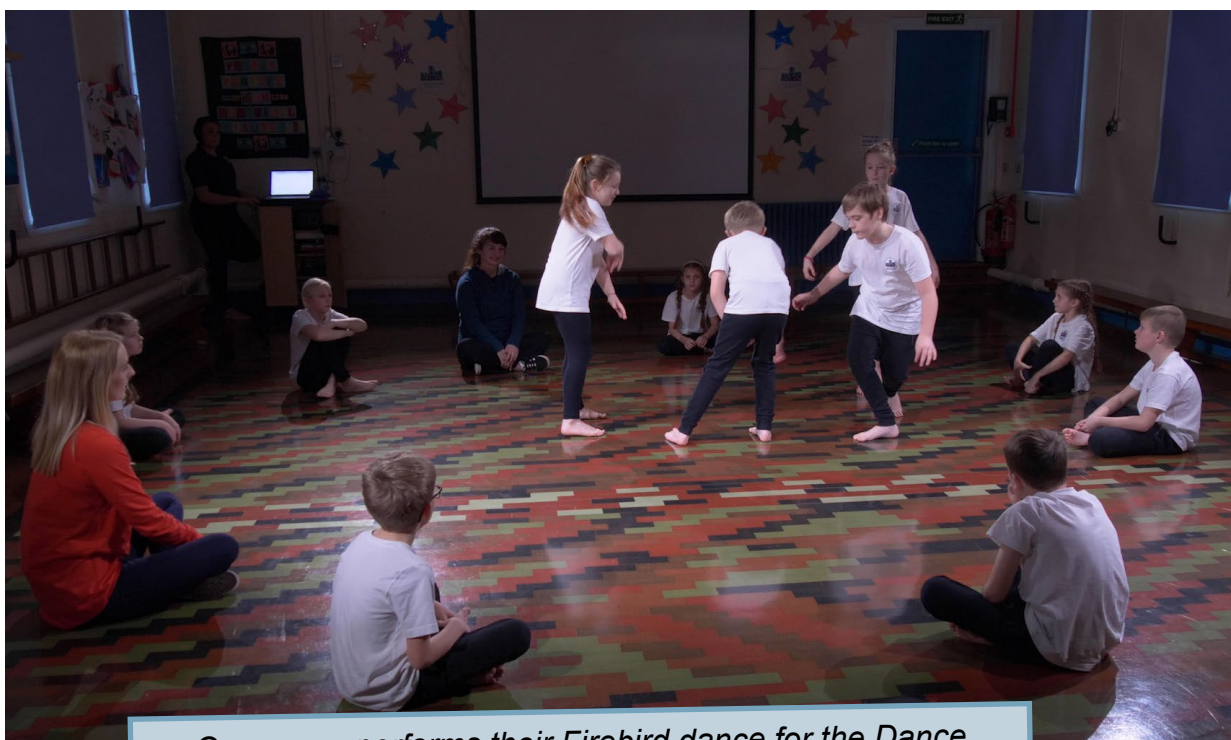
Then if you *do* want to share:

- Don't wait to the end of the lesson if you want them to have feedback and act upon it.
- Keep it speedy: have more than one group showing at a time.
- Get groups to show more than once.
- Give the audience things to look for (the aims of the lesson).
- Consider where the audience is placed: at the front / in a circle / etc.
- Push for high-quality performance: focus and commitment from all and clear starts and ends to the dance (no walking off or saying 'That's it!').

Performance skills

Through their dance lessons, pupils should be focusing on developing:

- Characterisation / Facial expression
- Musicality (rhythm / timing)
- Extension
- Emphasis
- Focus
- Projection
- Sensitivity to others (in group dances).



One group performs their Firebird dance for the Dance Challenge, while other groups watch and assess.

Unit 3: Assessing and reflecting

Performance: analysis

It is vital to set up clear protocols for reflection - particularly peer assessment. Presenting their creative ideas in front of others is a very personal experience and can make pupils feel exposed. It is vital that feedback is structured with clear boundaries. We all want to avoid the standard responses of 'It was good' and 'They had good timing'!

- Be clear about what pupils are being asked to feedback on. Are you asking the pupils to comment on the composition itself or performance skills?
- Link feedback to the lesson objective: eg 'How effectively have the dancers included..?' Or: 'What might they have done to show xxx more clearly?'
- Encourage use of subject specific language.
- Allow pupils to consider actions, dynamics, space and relationships.

Using tablets to record and analyse work can allow for quick and engaging self-assessment. Pupils have the opportunity to see their work from the audience's perspective and identify immediate areas for improvement.

Conversations between the teacher and pupils as they watch the tablet footage in lessons gives opportunity for immediate useful and meaningful teacher assessment - reducing marking time outside of the lesson and supporting teacher workload reduction.



The 'Alfred the Great' CPD film demonstrates excellent use of collaborative feedback and assessment between the teacher and pupils (06:30).

Cool down

This is a vital part of the lesson, not only to prepare pupils for moving on to their next lesson but also to prepare them psychologically and to consolidate what they have learned.

As with the warm up, the cool down should be linked to the rest of the learning and can even be used to gently introduce a new idea ready for the next dance lesson.

In our Alfred the Great CPD Film, the lesson concludes with pupils cooling down by exploring the smoke rising from Alfred's burnt cakes.

Ready to go? Using Step~by~Step

Frameworks

Each framework includes a series of lesson plans themed around a specific topic. If you are less experienced or less confident, these can be used as a 'pick up and go' resource, to be delivered directly to your pupils! For those with more confidence, or as you gain experience, you will be able to modify or create and deliver your own frameworks to suit the needs of your class and to reflect the topics and themes you want to explore. You will find a framework template available below and [available here](#) as a separate download to get you started.

Lesson timings

Timings will vary considerably whether the children are Y3 or Y6, whether they've done lots of dance before or very little and how long they have for their lesson. As a general guide the *warm up* and *introduction* should take approximately the first quarter of the lesson; the *performance* and *cool down* are the final quarter, leaving half the lesson for the *creative exploration* and *composition* sections.

Step-by-Step CPD Films

One framework from each topic is modelled for you in the CPD films. These are aimed at supporting teachers (they are not 'pupil-facing' resources) so you can see a sample lesson in action.

Each was filmed with the class in a typical lesson context without any coaching, so the responses you see are what you might expect to see from your own students.

The lessons are led by real teachers, who have little or no experience of teaching a dance class, with their class in their school halls. Support by the dance specialist provided guidance along the way, as an 'expert on the shoulder'. The specialist and teachers' professional dialogue gives additional insights throughout the lesson as it happens.

Audio resources

The music used in each of the CPD films is available as an audio resource structured in the same way as the featured lessons and frameworks. These have prompts along the way for you or the children to use as a guide with pause points marked by audio pips. The performance sections, marked off in this way, do not have any prompts and can be used as performance music or as general background atmosphere while the children are devising their ideas.

Many people worry over selecting music for dance lessons. While it is useful in setting the mood, tempo or tone of a dance, by setting the task first the music then simply 'informs' the actions rather than dictates it.

Step-by-Step Dance Challenge Films

These films follow on from the lesson demonstrated in the CPD film, featuring two groups who have demonstrated high-quality outcomes. The Dance Challenge films can be shown to pupils to model quality dance outcomes and also as a peer assessment strategy. Thinking about the lesson objective, which group would your pupils choose as the star choreographers or star performers - and more importantly, why?

Step-by-Step Performance Films

These films contain exemplar material to support both teacher and pupils to understand what a quality response might look like. Performance films can be shown to pupils at or near the start of the creative process to stimulate ideas for those pupils who are less confident or need additional input.

Later on in the creative process they can help pupils with refining their ideas and support with ways of structuring material and getting 'performance ready'.

These films represent the quality that can be achieved in just a few lessons.

"I'm working on a completely different theme with my class and have written my own framework. Are the films still relevant?"

Yes! The fundamental features of good quality performance and composition transcend any particular theme.

Look back at the core ingredients of dance on page 5. You can identify how effectively the core ingredients have been included in the examples in the films. How might these be different for *your* theme?

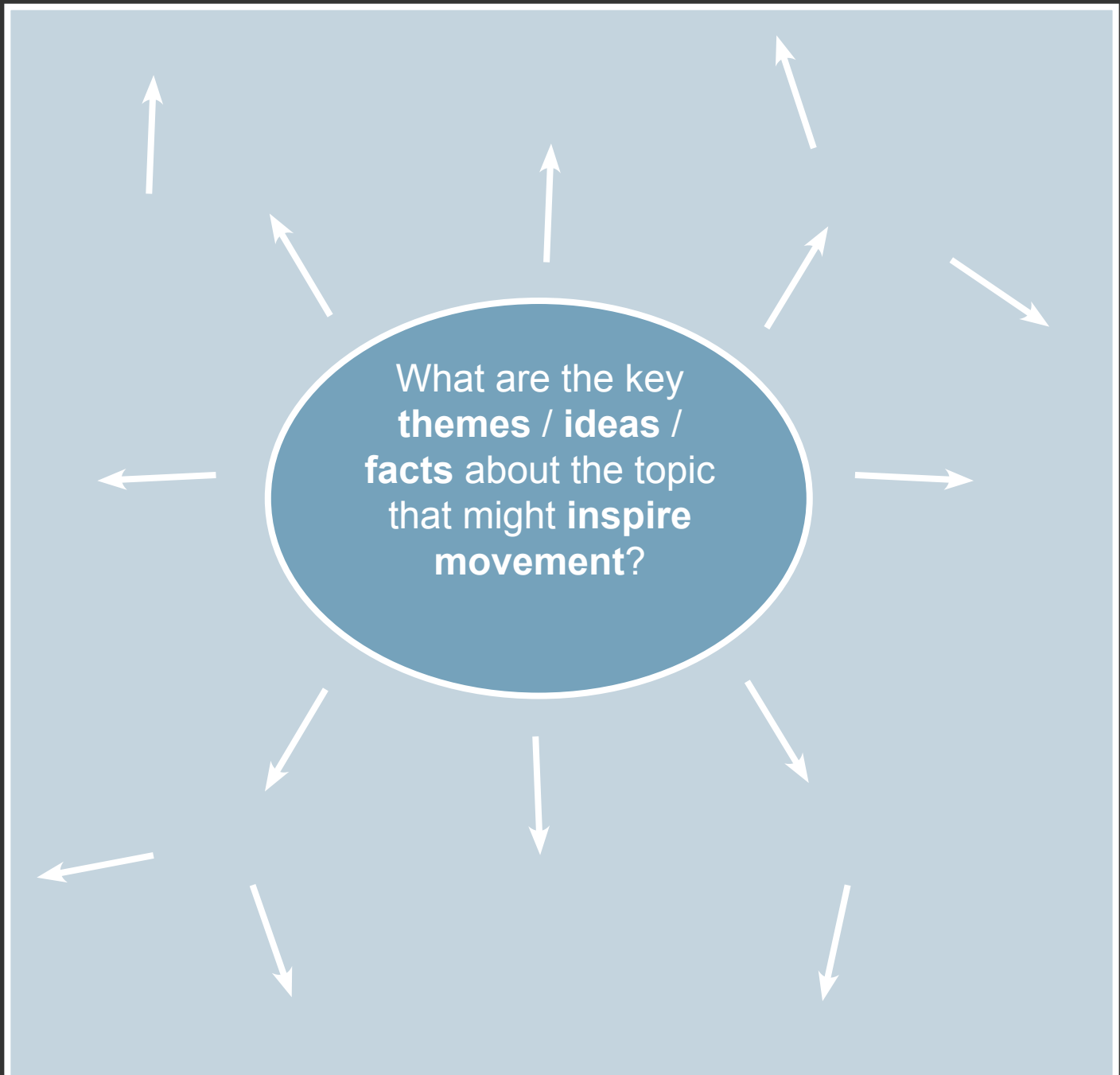
You may want to focus in on a specific performance element to explore with your pupils (look back at the list on page 11). The films demonstrate effective use of a range of performance skills.



Pupils working together to create their strong Anglo-Saxon 'burh' shapes.

Feeling inspired? Over to you!

What topic / theme would you like to cover with your class?



Fill in what the core 'ingredients' of a dance based on this topic might look like in the table below.

Don't overthink it...this is an exercise in 'stating the obvious'. Then use the guide framework to write the lesson plan.

Actions
(What)

Dynamics
(How)



Theme

Space
(Where)

Relationships
(With whom)

Working backwards...

- How will you get the pupils to achieve this?
- What steps will they need to go through?
- What language, imagery and questions do you need to use?

Lesson Objectives:

What am I looking for?
You can -

Warm up

Organising the class: what you will ask the children to think about and do to warm up physically and stimulate ideas?

Further guidance of how these ideas could be developed.

Re-organising the children into different pairs or other groupings.
Varying the speed, space or relationships to explore the movement ideas.

Skills

Context - Exploration & Composition

Introduction: reminding the children of particular events / characters / ideas from the topic that will inform their dance ideas.

Then revisit the warm up ideas with the application of the context.

Add changes (eg direction, speed, level) linked to the theme.

Notes: make sure that the children are able to find their own way of...

Select one key idea and add further detail from the theme to encourage variety and creativity.

Note: consider the size of the group for the task.

If time permits...add a second, contrasting idea.

Note: if the previous task has been static (shape-based) then make this task more movement-based (eg jumping, turning, travelling).

Dance focus

Pulling ideas together, for example asking the children to recap.

Note: practise a number of times or change roles.

Note here how you will enable the children to record using tablets and share.

Lesson Objectives:

What am I looking for?
You can -

Composition

Recap the key ideas covered in the lesson and offer suggestions of how this might be amalgamated.

Note: this might simply be ordering the ideas or it could include how they transition from one to the next, repeating one or more ideas, adding a pause, considering entrances and exits...

Ask the children to perform their compositions and possibly record on tablets.
Consider how you will organise this: show another group; a few groups show at a time; selecting just a few groups to perform...

Recap on the key ideas to guide the observers in their viewing and analysis.
How to encourage the children to share their feedback with other groups: how you will help frame their responses by giving parameters.

Performance focus

Cool down

Ask the children to find a space.
Remind the children of an element in the topic they have been studying and use this in a slower, smoother way.

Encourage the children to adjust both mentally and physically for the following lesson.

Physical elements

Suggested music

Find a piece of music that will set the right mood / tempo / context.

How to use Step~by~Step to support teacher CPD

Developing a whole school approach...

We believe that high-quality dance provision is the right of every child. With this in mind, *Step-by-Step* can be used to support whole school CPD.

Step-by-Step materials can be used in a number of ways to meet the needs of your school and staff members. This could involve:

Individual development

- Teachers deliver a lesson (or series of lessons) using the frameworks as 'pick up and go' resources. Self-reflection: What went well? What were the difficulties?
- Watch *Step-by-Step* CPD films to observe good practice.

Year group planning

- Working in year group teams, staff plan their own Framework based on a topic or theme of their choice, using the resources on page 14 and 15.
- Use the template on page 16 to team plan one lesson in more detail.

Individual delivery

- Delivery of the detailed lesson plan with the class. If possible, pair each teacher with another to observe and provide reciprocal feedback.

Whole staff CPD session

- Ask staff to identify their concerns and barriers to the delivery of dance - likely to include those listed on page 3.
- Introduce staff to the background and subject-specific information (pages 3 - 8 of this pack).
- Share one of the *Step-by-Step* CPD films with staff. As they watch ask them to identify how each of their concerns / barriers is addressed.



The Teaching Assistant helps with the 'Who am I?' session.

Glossary and terminology

Actions	What a dancer does with their body (eg jump, turn, etc)
Canon	Moving one after another - eg like a Mexican Wave
Character / Characterisation	Performing as someone / something else and communicating this to the audience
Choreography	The art of creating a dance (sometimes called composition)
Complementary	Different movements that work well together
Composition	The art of creating a dance
Contrasting	Movements which are very different to each other
Directions	Which way the dancer is facing
Duet (or duo)	A performance by two people
Dynamics	How a dancer is moving - a combination of speed and force (eg jerky, smooth, wobbly, calm, fluid, robotic, etc)
Extension	Lengthening of a muscle or limb; reaching
Emphasis	Highlighting a particular movement or moment
Facial expression	Using the face to communicate a mood, character or feeling
Focus	Where the dancer is looking; using the eye-line to draw the audience's attention in a particular direction
Formations	How / where the dancers are positioned (eg a line, circle, etc)
Gesture	An action that doesn't involve weight transference, often with the upper body (eg a nod, clap, point, etc)
Jump	Elevation from the ground. Can take off and land on one or two feet, so includes hop, leap, etc
Levels	How high or low the dancer is in space
Mirroring	Two or more dancers reflecting each other's movements
Musicality	How the dancer responds to and expresses the music
Pathways	The floor pattern created by the dancer as they travel
Projection	Communicating an idea through movement, engaging the audience
Proximity	How close dancers are to each other
Quartet	A performance by four people
Question and Answer	A dance relationship where one dancer moves and another responds with a different movement - a bit like a conversation

Relationships	With whom; how the dancers interact with each other
Rhythm	The skill of being in time with the music and being able to respond to different beats
Sensitivity to other dancers	Awareness of and connection to other dancers
Solo	A performance by one person
Space	Where the dancer is moving (eg levels, directions, pathways, etc)
Stillness	A frozen position - often used to start or end a dance
Timing	Being in time with the music or others in the group
Travel	Moving from one location to another
Trio	A performance by three people
Turn	A full or partial rotation
Unison	Two or more dancer performing the same action(s) at the same time



Y6 pupils perform their final Blitz dance.

Further support and resources

BBC Dance resources

BBC Teach provides a range of ready-to-use dance resources for KS1 and KS2 using audio supported by frameworks and Teacher Notes. Ideal for the time-pressed, non-specialist.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/dance-ks1-ks2-home/zjn3xyc>

One Dance UK

One Dance UK is the sector support organisation for dance, including teachers (specialists and non-specialists). It is also the Subject Association for dance in schools, with memberships available for teachers and educational establishments.

www.onedanceuk.org

Laura Nicholson

Laura Nicholson is the Head of Children and Young People's Dance for One Dance UK. She is our consultant practitioner and dance expert appearing in the pupil films. She is the lead author of these Teachers' Notes.

Claire Pring

Claire Pring is a highly experienced dance specialist with a particular interest in implementing high-quality dance provision in primary school settings. She is the lead practitioner of the *Step-by-Step* resources, preparing the Frameworks, working with teachers and appearing in the classroom sequences. She also acts as one of our dance experts in the pupil films and is co-author of these Teachers' Notes.

www.clairepringdance.com

Regional and countrywide dance organisations

People Dancing

www.communitydance.org.uk/

DU Dance (Northern Ireland)

<http://www.dudancenicom/>

YDance (Scotland)

<https://ydance.org/>

National Youth Arts Wales

<https://www.nyaw.org.uk/>

Dance City (North East)

<https://www.dancecity.co.uk/>

The Lowry (North West)

<https://thelowry.com/>

Yorkshire Dance

<https://yorkshiredance.com/>

Dance4 (East Midlands)

<https://www.dance4.co.uk/>

DanceXchange (West Midlands)

<https://www.danceexchange.org.uk/>

The Place (London)

<https://www.theplace.org.uk/>

Trinity Laban (London)

<https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/>

Dance East

<https://www.danceeast.co.uk/>

South East Dance

<https://www.southeastdance.org.uk/>

Pavilion Dance South West

<https://www.pdsw.org.uk>

Credits

Teachers' Notes by Laura Nicholson and Claire Pring.

Step-by-Step is an independent production for the BBC by Cornucopia Productions.

www.cornucopia.tv

Producer: Ben Dickey

For the BBC: Andrew Barnes