

Beeslack High School – The MOVE Programme within a mainstream setting

Beeslack High School, in Midlothian, is a mainstream comprehensive school with pupils aged from 12 to 18. The School has been using the MOVE Programme since 2006 when its intake included four pupils with physical and learning disabilities. Beeslack implemented the MOVE Programme in 2006 after identifying the need to support their students to improve functional skills and that the educational participation and inclusion of the children would be improved by the programme.

Gill Pye, PE Teacher and MOVE Trainer at Beeslack comments; “We were aware that special ‘ed’ kids would be coming to the school, so we knew we had to do something to ensure their inclusion and make sure they had the best education possible. Our school physiotherapist was keen for us to engage in the MOVE Programme as she had worked with it previously and knew its benefits. The MOVE Programme is based on the philosophy that by improving mobility, disabled children have more opportunities to access education.

To successfully implement the programme, the Physiotherapist, got the team around the relevant children - guidance/teaching staff and the parents and children together to plan and discuss the potential for the Programme and how it would work for the school and the children – the MOVE Team. We were very lucky as the Physiotherapist had been trained in delivering MOVE and was a great help and inspiration to the group and could take them through the implementation of the programme, and the new system of trans-disciplinary working.

Initially the children were extracted from class to discuss/implement their individualised programme but the plan was to integrate their targets throughout their classes, so the programme simply became part of the everyday routine. Over time, due to the improvement the children have made and our progress in running the programme the kids on the programme now spend all their time in class with the other pupils – fostering great inclusion. The only ‘special’ requirement is some changing facilities that cannot be avoided.”

Introducing the MOVE Programme at Beeslack High has led to some fantastic times for the school and the children. One such moment came as part of the school’s Scottish Country Dance programme at Christmas. During the dance the boys on the MOVE Programme were pushed, pulled and spun around the dance hall with anyone who could dance - to everyone’s amusement. The Children were delighted to be so involved in such a fun event for everyone.

Another great moment came when one of the MOVE Programme users – Jordan Donald, 17 - who had worked very hard at walking became involved with the local disability sports club “to help the others who couldn’t walk”! The child related well to competition and was “timed” at changing for PE, previously he needed a helper, but with a stopwatch the whole ethos changed. Once again this highlights how crucial it is to find the right motivator and how individual the motivator is.

Gill Pye comments, “I would highly recommend MOVE to schools in a similar situation to ours. It’s a solution to many of the problems of inclusion and increased educational performance of the SEN children. The challenges and targets the kids met on a daily basis gave them so much confidence and keenness to rise to the everyday challenges life has to offer. MOVE is a team based activity so you never stand alone and it helps to foster trans-disciplinary work. The network of support gave you the confidence to continue. The MOVE Programme helps to make the development of functional mobility fun, achievable and ensures it suits the individual needs of the individual youngsters, which supported our success.”

Via the MOVE Programme, Beelack High School has gained a better understanding of disability and how able bodied people can help improve the daily lives of the disabled pupils. The able-bodied pupils see the MOVE Programme as a part of the daily routine of the disabled student and appreciate that is part of the integrated day. The disabled pupils are not treated any differently than any of other students. The MOVE programme has been very successful in school as it particularly articulates with our inclusive PE programme – a vital part of the national curriculum. Some have been able to access the stairs and are now able to evacuate in the case of an emergency rather than wait to be taken out by staff - dramatically improving the smooth running of our emergency evacuation procedures.

The students on the MOVE Programme have been working towards creating a greater independence for themselves and have been able to attend extra curricular activities such as school discos, drama productions, sporting events and clubs, which would have been very difficult without the progress made by

the MOVE Programme. Being included with the rest of the students at such activities means the world to the children with regards to their self-esteem.

Ultimately, the MOVE Programme is leaving a lasting legacy on both the school and the children. The able-bodied see inclusion in practise becoming used to having disabled people in their environment and see what they can achieve and the children on the MOVE Programme achieve greater independence and inclusion in their immediate community.

One child on the Programme at Beeslack, Jordan Donald, 17, says of MOVE; "Taking part in the MOVE Programme has changed my life!" What more can we say.



Jordan Donald, 17, at the All Star club Jordan helping other disabled people in the community.