

## Enhancing Engagement and Confidence Through Dance Within Specialised Secondary Schools

### Case Study 2: The Pines School

#### Introduction

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) often experience limited access to inclusive physical activities whether it's in school or out in the community. Recognising this gap, Sport Birmingham partnered with FABRIC to deliver a targeted 6-week dance programme within 4 local specialised secondary schools. The initiative aimed to promote physical activity within their students, increase teacher confidence in delivering movement sessions and raise awareness of the role dance can play in specialised educational settings.

#### Background

The Pines Special School applied to be one of the 4 schools chosen for this project. They emphasised the importance of improving their students wellbeing and self esteem using dance to facilitate this. They also highlighted the need to improve their teachers' knowledge and confidence in delivering dance based activities and PE as a whole. Their students were of a lower understanding and ability when it came to dance. They had no previous experience of participating in dance within the curriculum or in a community setting.



## Programme Structure

Sport Birmingham and FABRIC hired two dance tutors, Shaq Shadare and Georgie Bache, with the focus being on contemporary style sessions taking place every Friday morning with a group of 10-12 young people from varying age ranges and abilities. The provision was on-going for 6 weeks with the aim of upskilling teaching staff with the intention of introducing dance into the curriculum as well as supporting the students with their wellbeing and self-esteem.

## Initial Challenges

For the first few sessions, Shaq and Georgie found it difficult to understand the needs of the students, and they had challenges engaging within the sessions until they had developed a trusting relationship. This led to a 'trial and error' period for the first few weeks. This enabled the tutors to gauge the type of activities and music students preferred. During the sessions there were a handful of students who were reluctant to participate.



## Progress and Development

Once the young people had developed a relationship with Shaq and Georgie, they began to express themselves more. They were able to express their likes and dislikes, preferences of music etc. which allowed the tutors to provide more structured lessons which, in turn, impacted the young people's confidence and engagement, and increased their physical activity time. Once the music started to play, students who were previously reluctant to participate started moving their body in a way they started to feel comfortable with.

## Outcomes

Through this project, Sport Birmingham and FABRIC wanted to have a positive impact on the young people's overall physical activity levels as well as providing access opportunities for young people with SEND. We found that the sessions at The Pines supported their students to feel more confident and happy within themselves, and this lasted throughout the school day. The sessions also upskilled the teaching staff, helping them to create a workbook of games and activities. This workbook is planned to be easily replicated within dance clubs or other PE lessons to integrate the idea of expression through movement. Overall, the project had a significant impact on teaching staff and students. Going forward, The Pines Special School are looking at integrating dance into their curriculum whilst also exploring ways of continuing their relationship with FABRIC dance tutors.



To find out more information of how you can get involved with FABRIC, please email Becky Bailey, Director of Engagement - [becky@fabric.dance](mailto:becky@fabric.dance)

Why should specialised schools consider working with FABRIC or integrating dance within their school day?

'It will help support teachers with teaching dance and greatly benefit the children's mental and physical health'  
Teacher at The Pines School