

# Warming Up in the Cold Spots: KS2 Dance Lesson and Research



# Introduction

This lesson plan is inspired by the Arts Council England National Lottery-funded *Move to be Moved* intergenerational dance project in the Black Country, Dudley. The project was facilitated by Dance Artist Tori Drew, with research carried out by Dr Imogen Aujla of **Dance in Mind**.

This resource aims to support the delivery of dance within “cold spot” areas — schools or communities where access to the arts may be limited, or where children may face socioeconomic barriers to participation. The lesson plan draws upon Dr Aujla’s research alongside the *Move to be Moved* project, which explored barriers to dance participation and motivations for engaging in dance within schools.

Research can be found at: <https://www.movetobemoved.co.uk/about>

## Children in the Mines: Industrial Revolution

### Learning Outcomes

- Develop confidence through creative movement and performance.
- Explore local history through dance.
- Build physical skills including travelling, rolling, jumping, balance, and coordination.
- Encourage creativity, teamwork, and self-expression.
- Foster pride in local identity and heritage.



# Checklist 1: Understanding Barriers to Participation

**Have you considered the barriers to dance or arts activities within the area?  
How does your project address these specifically?**

Questions to consider:

- Have you researched the local area, transport links, demographics, and what arts opportunities the school already offers?
- What percentage of pupils receive Free School Meals?
- Will funding be needed to support participation costs?
- Can you connect with local organisations to support delivery, such as mental health services, community groups, or children's organisations?
- Could local archives or heritage organisations contribute resources?
- Could another local artist collaborate, such as a poet or visual artist, to help make the project feel more accessible and less intimidating for beginners?

Dance can feel unfamiliar or intimidating for some children. Consider how to make it relevant, meaningful, and connected to their everyday lives.



# Checklist 2: Using the Local Area as Inspiration

**What aspects of the local area or region could inspire the work?**

For example:

- Landscape
- Architecture
- Industry
- Local history
- Community stories

Even within cross-curricular work such as history, consider how the topic can connect to where children live and their sense of identity. Students stated in research that they are proud of where they live as a result and a high percentage enjoyed learning about where they lived.



## Pre-Project Research

Use internet searches, local archives, and community social media groups to research:

- Which mines existed locally?
- What did they produce?
- Who worked in them?
- When did they close?
- Are there historical images connected to the school's area?

Many websites offer local coal mine searches and historical archives.

It can also be valuable to understand students' interests and cultural references. For example:

- What music do they enjoy listening to?
- What sports or hobbies do they follow?

This is not about directly using their music choices, but about understanding their world and finding relatable connections. For example:

- "Stretch your arm like an Aston Villa goalkeeper saving a goal."
- "Lift your knee to the side like a Dhamaal movement in Bhangra."

These references can help students feel seen, understood, and more willing to engage. In the research students stated that they enjoyed sharing their own stories.

## INTRODUCTION

Show images of children working in mines and discuss local mining history where possible.

### Key Roles Within the Mines:

- **Trappers**  
Children as young as five sat by ventilation doors, opening and closing them for mine carts.
- **Hurriers / Drawers / Thrusters**  
Older children dragged or pushed heavy coal carts through narrow tunnels.
- **Getters**  
Workers who cut coal from the seam using pickaxes.

## MINDSET STARTER

Ask students to stand in a space and stand tall and proud. Encourage them to imagine they are in a place where they feel safe and comfortable — for example, their bedroom, a park, or with family. This can help ease nerves and create emotional safety within the class.

Discuss positive self-talk and confidence-building.

Check in with how students are feeling using:

- Thumbs up
- Thumbs in the middle
- A rating out of five fingers



## Checklist 3: Building Ownership and Confidence

Giving children small responsibilities can help build pride, belonging, and confidence within the class. Examples include:

- Line leader
- Class buddy
- Collecting cones
- Organising water bottles

These small roles can create a stronger sense of investment, ownership and participation.

# Checklist 4: Music

In research most of the students mentioned music as a motivator to dance.

## WARM-UP

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**Music:** Disco, Dance, film music, Afrobeats are all good drivers in encouraging high energy.

Use a consistent warm-up that develops progressively across the project.

Strategies include:

- Frequently changing the facing direction so the same confident students are not always at the front.
- Using movements that change facings, such as:
  - Eight star jumps facing each wall.
- Introducing fun partner activities such as seated high-five sit-ups.

## PLANK CHALLENGE

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Introduce a regular plank challenge that gradually increases in duration across the weeks. Students mentioned this as a highlight in evaluation.

This can:

- Engage students who may identify more strongly with sport than the arts.
- Encourage independent practice outside school.
- Improve core strength and posture.
- Create opportunities to celebrate success for students who may not usually feel confident in creative subjects.



## TRAVELLING

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**Music:** *KCU* by DJMotu, *Bongos* by Crazy Cousins, *My Power* by Beyonce and *Run it Up* by Hanumankind.

# Checklist 5: Performance Through Movement

Travelling exercises provide an early opportunity for students to perform in front of others without the pressure of formal performance.

Encourage students to:

- Walk proudly
- Look forwards rather than down
- Use confident posture

Connect this beyond dance:

“Next time you walk home, walk with pride.” Students said in the research that they feel more confident as a result of dance.

You may reference role models students admire. For example, Marcus Rashford speaks in his book about constantly watching and learning from others. Similar examples from sport, music, or popular culture can help students connect to the lesson.

### Technical Development

Remember that many children are still rebuilding confidence and physical literacy following the disruption caused by Covid-19. Skills may need to be broken down carefully and revisited regularly.

## Checklist 6: Highlighting Small Successes

Celebrate improvement and effort, not only technical excellence.

For students who lack confidence or avoid attention, invite them to demonstrate small successful moments. Even recognising a tiny detail can help build self-esteem and encourage participation.



### Rolls — Moving Through the Mines

- Full-body rolls
- Knee rolls
- Roll to stand

### Jumps — Reaching Out of the Mine

- Two-footed jumps
- Springs focusing on upward energy

## MOVEMENT EXPLORATION

### Creative Task

**Music:** Discombobulate by Hans Zimmer.

Inspired by the actions of the child mining jobs. Ask students to travel and add:

- Freeze
- Grab
- Roll
- Jump

This helps build movement ideas for later creative tasks while encouraging students to observe and learn from each other.

## ROUTINE

**Music:** Paint It Black — Sebastian Böhm

Sequence example:

- Two lunges, then a third lunge with a strong “Hulk smash” action reaching towards the floor to represent digging coal.
- Roll into a crouched position to represent the low mine shafts.
- Jump upwards as if being lifted out of the mine.
- Jump into a wide leg position and throw the arms downward to represent mine explosions caused by escaping gases.
- Circle the arms like the turning pit wheel.

Encourage students to connect their own story or emotions to the routine so the movement feels personal and expressive.

This can help beginners feel more emotionally connected to dance.



## PERFORMANCE

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### Checklist 7: Performance

Surprisingly, a high percentage of students reported that 'performing' was a motivator to do dance. Build confidence across the weeks. Start with a few groups sharing their work at the same time, then move to one group at a time before finally sharing solo work.

### COOL DOWN

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**Music:** Choose an acoustic or instrumental piece of music that students may connect with and enjoy.

Focus on:

- Breathing
- Slowing the heart rate
- Stretching
- Reflection: Check in how they feel compared to the start.

### HOMEWORK

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Students could:

- Practise their plank challenge.
- Rehearse movements with their groups during breaktimes.
- Draw a mine pathway.
- Create a short poem inspired by their chosen mining role.

Encourage teachers to reward independent rehearsal through house points or dojo rewards.

Connecting dance to drawing, poetry, history, and teamwork can help students who are less confident in dance feel more successful and included.

### CREATIVITY TASK

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**Music:** The Avengers by Alan Silvestri

Ask students to work in pairs so they initially feel supported by a trusted partner. Later on combine pairs to create larger mixed-ability groups.

#### Creative Challenge

Can groups:

- Choose a mining role?
- Create a short pathway through the mine?
- Add gestures linked to their role?
- Include:
  - A roll
  - A jump
  - A freeze

Build creativity gradually, using earlier travelling exercises and movement explorations to support confidence.

# Checklist 8: Celebrating Local Creativity

How can the project showcase the creativity and talent within the local area?

Consider:

- Sharing performances with parents or carers.
- Performing for community groups or care homes.
- Inviting local organisations or funders to attend sharing.
- Creating opportunities for local artists, both within and outside dance, to collaborate.

Projects like this can help highlight the creativity, pride, and stories that already exist within the community. A high percentage of students said they would want to perform again if they were to do dance again.



[www.movetobemoved.co.uk](http://www.movetobemoved.co.uk)



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