

South Asian Dance in SEND schools

Reach Out and Reveal Case Study 2

This child was 8.5 years old at the beginning of the study. Earlier sessions noted that he often needed to wander and move around the space. This continued across the project and was also seen in film footage. The artist suggested that working with short bursts of activity helped to keep him engaged. He was often dancing alongside one or two other peers across the study, and often needed 1:1 support to maintain engagement and focus. Across the first year this child's focus improved and he was able to concentrate and mirror movement for longer periods of time. Throughout the second and final year of the study, engagement was mixed with some sessions demonstrating great moments of focus and eye contact, and other sessions with shorter bursts of focus as well as some emotional dysregulation/distress and hyper fixations. This carried on throughout the year however there were less instances of being overwhelmed or distressed by the end of project as compared to Autumn Term 2024. Notes also suggested that he was better able to reengage after moments of distraction or stimming by the end of the project.

While 1:1 support was useful to keep this child engaged and in the dance space, he began the study moving fairly independently and this continued to improve across the project with the artist noting more movements that can now be achieved without physical support. In the first year of the project the artist noted some progression in range of movements and ability to do more repetitions of dance movements. In the final year, comments suggested continued improvements in being able to do more repetitions of actions with the artist also noting a good understanding of how to work with different speeds, directions, and sizes of movement as well as improved coordination in the upper and lower body. This child developed in his ability to twist the body and the hands at the same time.

Film footage demonstrated a freedom and clear ability to twist and rotate the spine, clear leg brushes, a good extension in the arm when reaching above the head to touch hands with a partner, and a clear ability to coordinate lifting one leg and clapping under it while in standing. However, film footage also demonstrated how clarity of these actions fluctuated considerably depending on level of engagement, effort, and how much he needed to wander around the space.

The artist commented on the brilliant fine and gross motor skills that developed by the end of the project. Comments regarding fine motor skills are particularly interesting here given the stronger improvements seen in this child's writing skills within his curriculum progression scores.

The amount of change in subject scores for this child between Spring Term 2024 and Summer 2025 is displayed in Figure 1 below. Alongside the change in writing score (+1.94), this child's stronger areas of improvement were seen in listening (+1.29) and science skills (+0.93).

Figure 1. Amount of change in subject scores

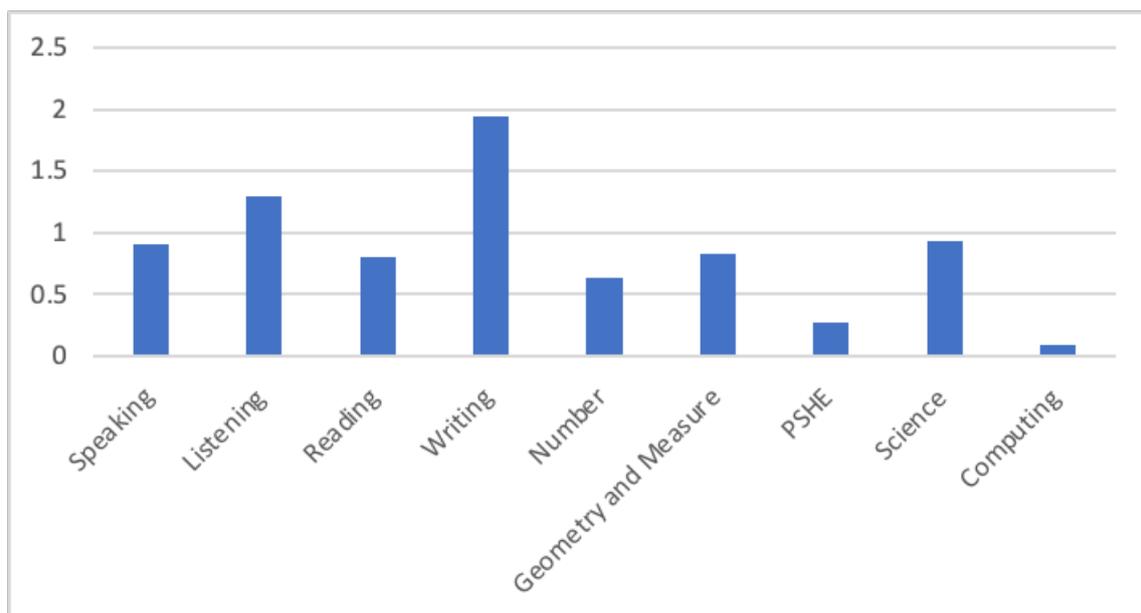
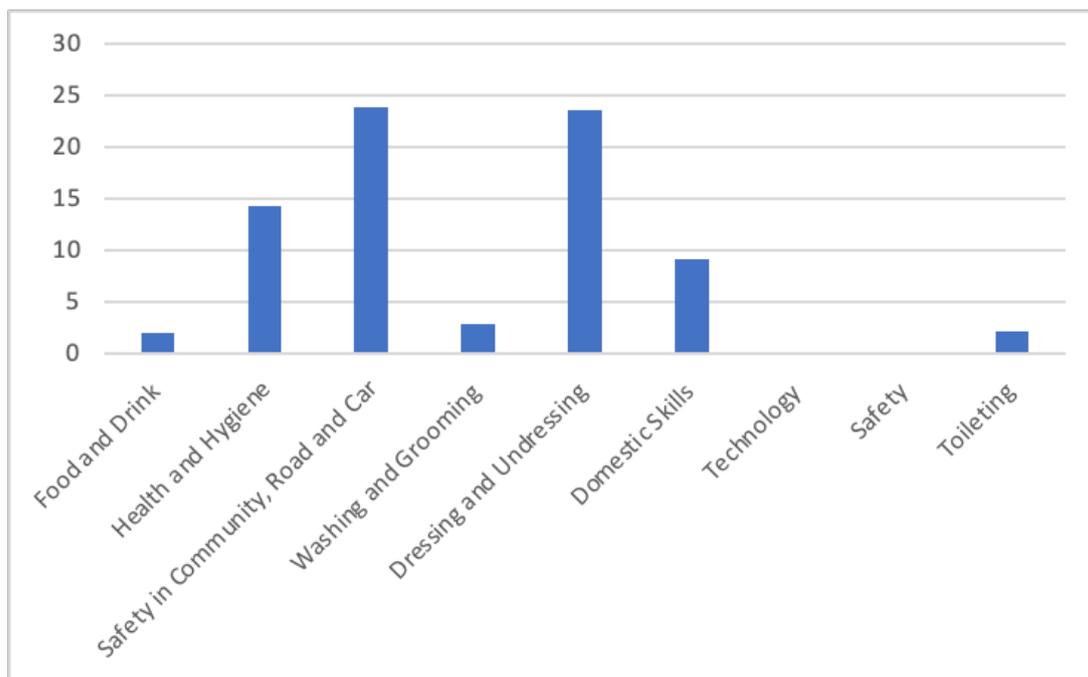


Figure 2. Amount of change in functional skill scores

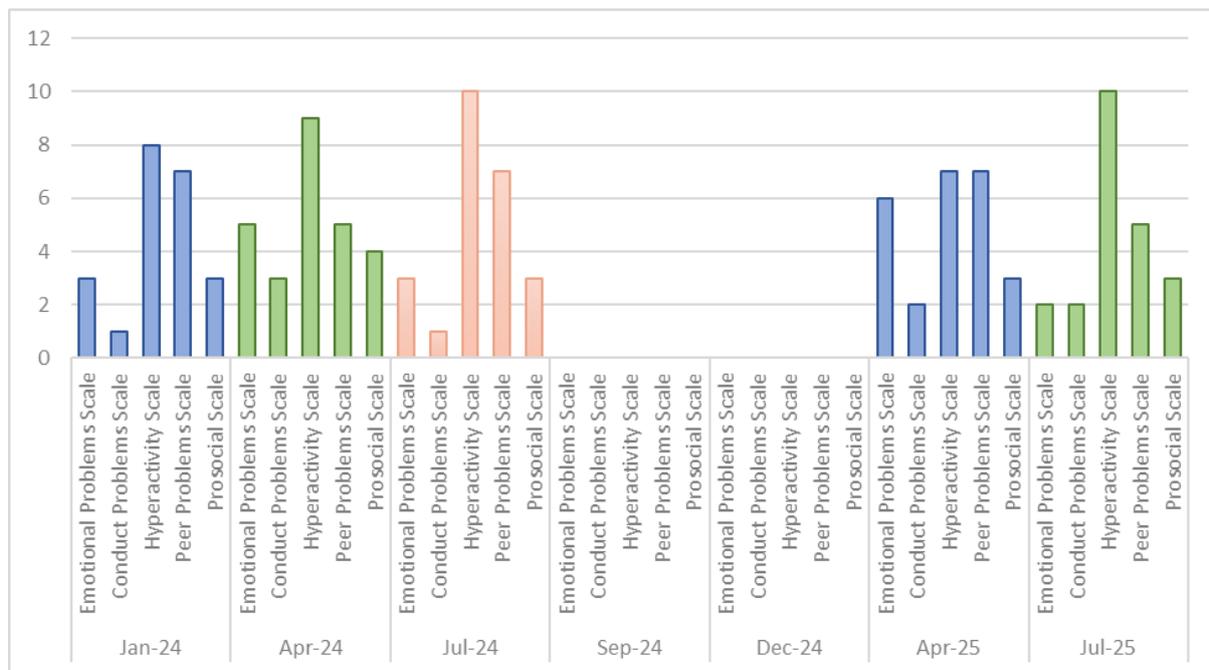


This child saw improvements in many functional skills between Spring 2024 and Summer 2025 and particularly with skills within the safety in the community/road safety and dressing and undressing subscales. Examples of statements seen within the safety in the community subscale include: “I can fasten my seatbelt in a car/minibus when I get into the vehicle” and “I can step off an escalator”. Examples of statements seen within the dressing and undressing subscale include: “I can put on a jumper” and “I can put on shoes”.

Both subject and functional skills scores must be viewed with caution and an understanding of the assessment structure and challenges as described in the report above.

Teacher SDQ data was not submitted for the first half of the 2024/2025 academic year however data was submitted in April and July 2025 allowing for an understanding of change across the duration of the study. Unfortunately, no parent SDQ data was submitted across the duration of the study. Figure 3 outlines the teacher SDQ scores for this child between January 2024 and July 2025.

Figure 3. Teacher Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



This child saw a slight decrease in emotional problems and peer problems, however these scores fluctuated over time as did scores in the conduct problems scale which saw a slight increase by the end of the study. Hyperactivity scores saw a steady rise across the study. It could be that the school environment and other peers in the space impact upon his hyperactivity levels. As this child appeared to be better engaged and focused in 1:1 situations and when working with a partner in the dance sessions, this could be a useful consideration for other contexts and environments.