

## South Asian Dance in SEND schools

### Reach Out and Reveal Case Study 3

This child was 8 years old at the beginning of the study. Early sessions demonstrated a good level of engagement and focus as well as excitement and enjoyment regarding his dancing that continued to improve across the academic year with the dance artist making notes of improved concentration. Upon entering the second year of the study, this child struggled with a change of class that caused upset and distress. This meant that throughout Autumn Term 2024, it was challenging to get him to come into the room to dance and there were more instances of emotional dysregulation. However, over the final two terms of the study, this child improved in his engagement and willingness to participate in the dance classes, showing improved focus for longer periods of time, improved listening skills and a better ability to deal with some stimming behaviours and hyper fixations.

The child commenced the study as a fairly independent mover not requiring any physical support to carry out the actions and this continued across the project with some sessions requiring physical support for encouragement purposes. Dance artist feedback suggested he improved in a variety of motor skills including coordination between upper and lower body, mirroring, application of feedback in the moment, changes of speed and direction, precision, memory of sequences, and balance. Film footage gathered between Spring and Summer 2025 aligns with these findings with the child demonstrating a good level of coordination, extension of limbs, and balance ability in the set movement sequence. Initially he found it difficult to coordinate bending and stretching the knees when moving the arms and would slightly hinge at the waist instead. Into the second year the dance artist noted improvement with coordination and ability to bend and stretch at the knee. Across the second year of the study the artist also commented multiple times on his ability to communicate verbally and understand instructions. Interestingly, speaking skills were one of his stronger areas of improvement when looking at curriculum progression.

The amount of change in subject scores for this child between Spring Term 2024 and Summer 2025 is displayed in Figure 1 below. Overall, there was slight improvement in all subject scores

with writing showing the largest improvement (+1.0) followed by reading (+0.76) and speaking (+0.75).

Figure 1. Amount of change in subject scores

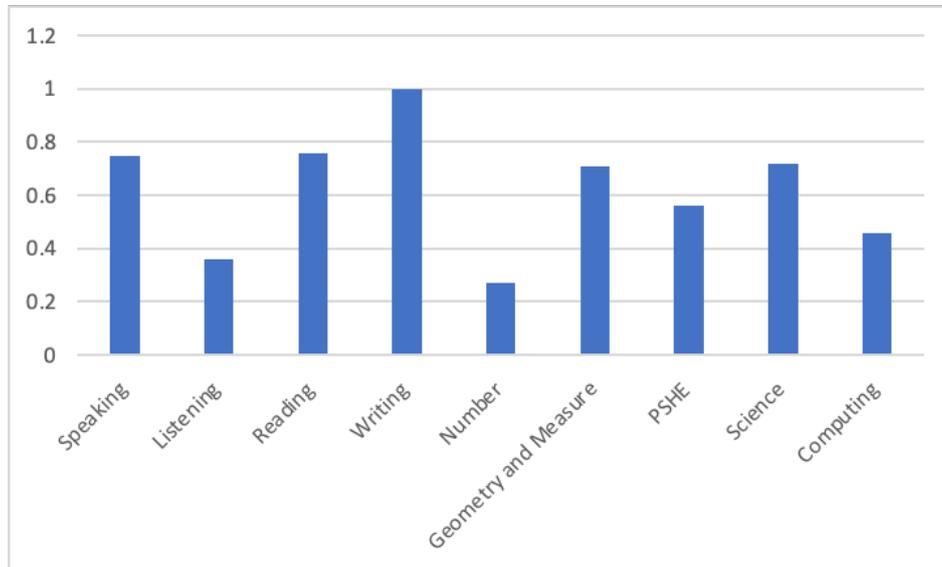
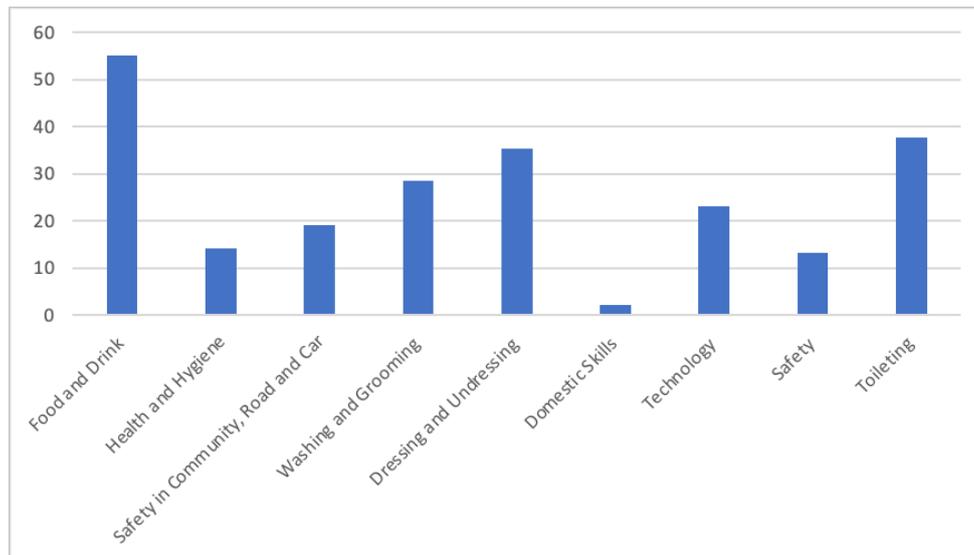


Figure 2. Amount of change in functional skill scores



This child saw improvements in many functional skills between Spring 2024 and Summer 2025 and particularly with skills involving fine motor movements including Food and Drink, Dressing and Undressing, Toileting, and Washing and Grooming. However, subject and functional skills scores must be viewed with caution and an understanding of the assessment limitations as described in the report above. On the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, this child saw more difficulties with peer problems and hyperactivity within the school environment however these scores fluctuated. Teacher scores (Figure 3) have also noted some variability

and increase in emotional problems. Artist feedback did note some challenges in Autumn 2024 which meant that this learner was not as willing to engage with the dancing during that term and experienced emotional dysregulation frequently.

Figure 3. Teacher Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

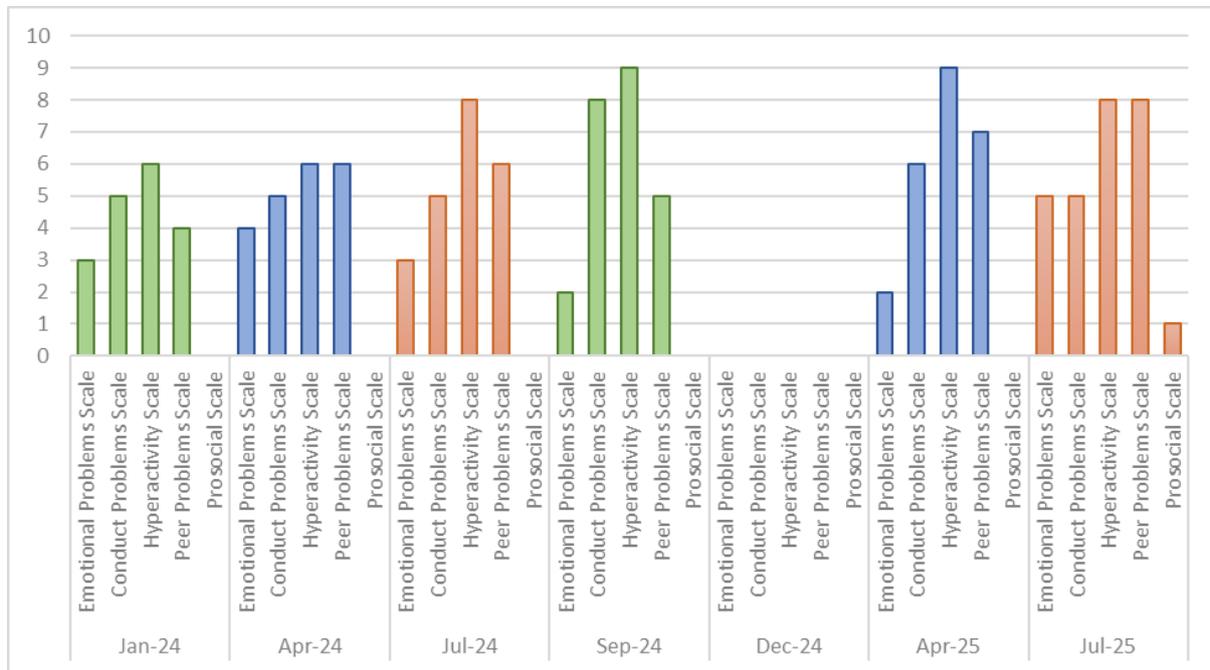
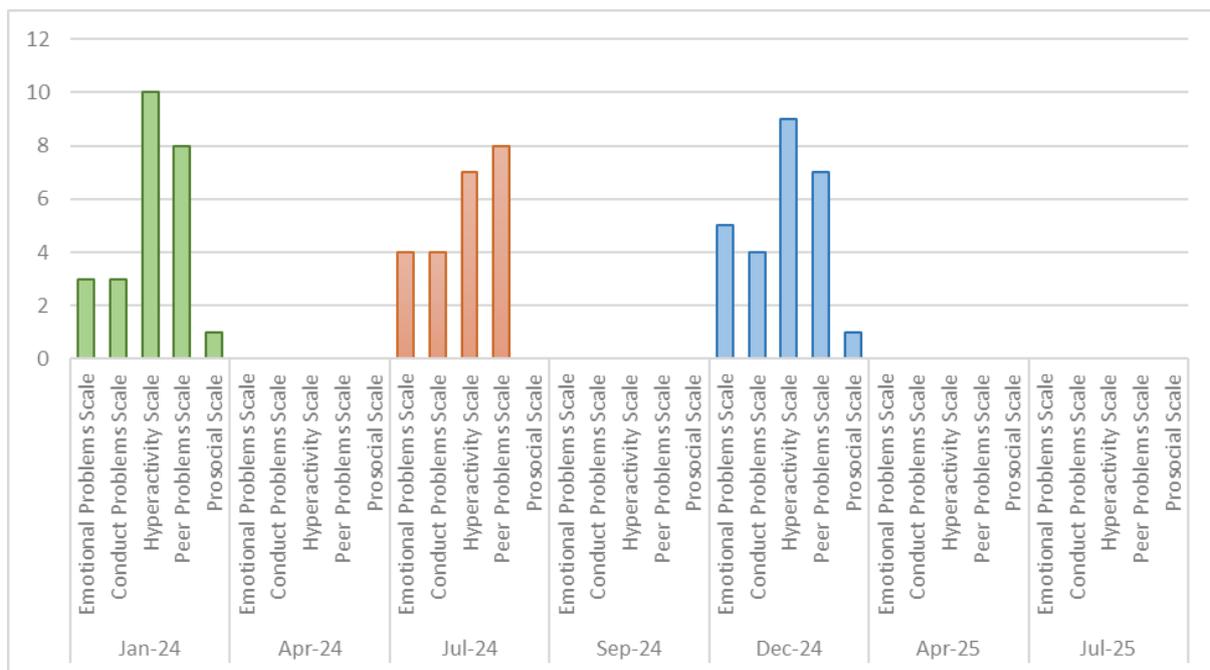


Figure 4. Parent Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)



Interestingly the parent SDQ data (Figure 4) shows a slight reduction in hyperactivity scores whereas teacher scores show an increase in this subscale across that same time indicating that perhaps this learner struggles more in the school environment where there is possibility for more distractions and stimulation as well as interaction with other peers. Throughout the project, he worked 1:1 with the dance artist in solo classes which likely helped the learner remain engaged and focused, therefore allowing the opportunity for further improvements in motor skills.