

Partner work

A gymnastic activities core task for key stage 2 children

You need:

- mats and a variety of low and high/large apparatus (eg movement tables, benches and frames) grouped in different combinations
- a video camera and playback equipment (this is optional, but it is useful to record the children's first and then later attempts at the core task to show their progress)
- TOP Gymnastics cards or similar resources (optional).

What is the core task?

The 'Partner work' core task involves children creating a gymnastic sequence on floor, mats and apparatus focusing on how they work with a partner.

Working in pairs, the children choose six different actions and devise a sequence on one of the following themes: leading and following, meeting and parting, side by side. They show an understanding of mirroring and matching, and use changes of level and direction.



To help the children evaluate and improve their core task performance, ask them:

- Did you mirror or match your actions? Can you describe what you did?
- What theme did you and your partner use?
- What do you think worked well about your performance?
- How could you change your performance to make it better?

How are the children doing? Look out for them:



performing a variety of actions on floor, mat and apparatus



devising a sequence on a clear theme



using mirroring and matching



changing level and direction



performing with control and accuracy



showing fluency and clarity of movement



maintaining quality when performing with their partner



describing their performance and suggesting improvements

To make the task easier or harder, consider changing one or more **STEP: Space Task Equipment People**

Partner work: development activities

After the children's initial attempt at the task, you will know what they can do, how well they can do it, and what they need to work at. To help all of them make progress and achieve in different areas, choose from the activities suggested here and add some of your own.

Developing skills

Mirroring and matching

- Ask the children what gymnastic actions they know and which ones they can perform safely with a partner.
- Talk with the children about working with a partner by mirroring and matching.
- Ask the children to perform actions at the same time as their partner by firstly mirroring and then matching. Balances are a good starting point.

Practising actions

- Working with their partner, encourage the children to practise actions that they can include in their sequence. Teach skills that require more focus, drawing attention to the different families of actions (travel, balance, jump, roll).
- Remind the children to perform actions with tension, control and extension.
- Ask the children to experiment with performing actions over, along, on and off apparatus.
- Encourage the children to keep practising with their partner until they can perform actions together accurately and consistently.

Evaluating and improving

Which actions work well mirrored? Which actions work well matched? Do you find mirroring or matching easier?

Ask the children to watch their partner performing actions and to focus on the quality of the movements. *Are they using extension? Is there tension in their body? Is the timing good? Do actions flow?*

Take photographs of the children performing actions and ask them to annotate the pictures with good and bad features.

Making and applying decisions

Themes and teamwork

- Ask the children to perform actions to each of the following themes in turn: leading and following, meeting and parting, side by side. Ask them to experiment with mirroring and matching to each theme.
- Teach the themes on floor, mats and apparatus.
- Ask the children to find ways of working with each other without continually looking at each other (eg calling each action, counting four for each action and using peripheral vision).

Apparatus and floor

- Help the children to choose appropriate apparatus for their sequence. Ask them to think about whether they both need the same piece and encourage them to experiment with performing the same action on the floor and on apparatus.
- Challenge the children to include changes of level and direction in their sequence.

Evaluating and improving

Working in fours, ask one pair to perform and the other to watch (evaluate). *Were the performers mirroring or matching their actions? Which theme did the performers use? What worked well? What needs to be improved?*

Give the children opportunities to watch other pairs in the class perform their sequences. *Who do you think performed their sequence well? Why?*

Developing physical and mental capacity

Sharing warm-ups

- Working in pairs, ask the children to take it in turns to show and copy an activity that warms up the body.
- Talk with the children about what happens when you warm up and why.

Activity diary

- Ask the children to keep an activity diary for a week. Ask them to write down activities they take part in and to describe whether they felt tired, hot, exhausted and so on.
- Share the diaries and discuss the results.

Stretching and strength

- Teach the children stretching exercises and some simple strength exercises.
- Talk with them about why they need to be supple and strong for gymnastics.

Evaluating and improving

How does your heart rate, breathing and body temperature change when you warm up? Why do you think this is helpful for gymnastic activities?

Why does physical activity affect each person differently? What type of activities place the greatest demands on the body?

Why do you need to be strong and supple for gymnastics?

Which parts of your body need to be strong and which need to be supple when performing specific actions?

Gymnastics core tasks

This chart shows how the new gymnastics core tasks relate to the existing core tasks in the QCA/DCSF schemes of work for gymnastic activities. It presents a visual snapshot of the pitch and challenge of different tasks, enabling you to track and plan pupils' progress in gymnastics.

