

BY CATHY FRY

# Moving it

## at St Andrew's School for Girls

The purpose of the programme is to enable all learners to gain competence, knowledge and confidence from healthy physical activity, given the new and embedded importance of physical education in the core school curriculum. We want young girls to have the ability and desire to remain committed to regular participation in healthy physical activity.

### Children need to get active

Governments in the UK, Australia, Canada and the USA have taken action to combat increasing health problems, caused by poor diets and sedentary lifestyles among school-going children. Authorities advise increasing the time

allocated to organised physical activity per child per week. In most cases, the minimum allocation is three hours per week, while the UK recently legislated five hours per week per child. However, in South Africa, on average children might only participate in organised physical activity for one school period per week.

St Andrews selected the Move-It, Moving Matters® programme because it ensures that every child engages in age-appropriate, challenging yet very enjoyable, diverse physical activities on a regular basis. The special value is that the classroom teacher, who may not be a Physical Education specialist, can facilitate the year-long programme. It comprises a 'mixed bag'; each component designed to teach children foundational movements.

The Move-It, Moving Matters® programme is a unique, proudly South African product, developed by experts for application in our current diverse educational contexts.

### All sorts of skills part of the programme

We have started our grades 3 and 4 learners on the Blue Bag, the first bag in the suite of four designed for the Intermediate phase. The components of the Blue Bag – namely 'fly it', 'kick it', 'juggle it', 'do it' and 'skip it' – are designed to help children to gain mastery of:

- balance
- locomotion
- neuro-motor control
- weight transference
- spatial awareness
- timing and rhythm
- cardiovascular endeavour
- hand-eye, foot-eye manipulation and coordination
- cooperative and competitive team work.

The tasks – self-paced, play-focused, learner-driven and problem-solving oriented – encourage self-awareness and social cooperation. The Move-It, Moving Matters® programme systematically shapes the neuro-muscular development of the child while also increasing students' physiological capacity. Through regular participation, bone mass, cardio-respiratory efficiency and neuro-muscular functioning are bound to improve.

Each bag comes with a learner's manual that becomes a portfolio of evidence of the child's progress. Assessments and extension challenges for quicker pupils are also provided.

The end goal of the programme is to raise the levels of physical and motor

Teachers enjoying a training session





achievement, and to teach children how to attain personal goals. In essence, we are hoping to awaken in them the sheer joy of movement. We subscribe to the idea that 'Moving Matters'!

### How and why we got involved

In 2007, together with our outreach partner school, Madingoane Primary School in Daveyton, we had the opportunity to test the programme in its development stage. One of the key findings of the pilot study was the seamless delivery of the programme in diverse contexts. It was the measurable successful outcomes in both schools that led the pioneering driver behind the programme, Dr Claire M Nicholson, to negotiate with ISASA to lead a sustainable, child-orientated, developmental solution going forward.

The programme was added by ISASA to its preferred supplier list, and then, through the South African Heads of Independent Schools Association (SAHISA) network, heads of schools were invited to participate. The idea is to partner an 'anchor' school (typically an independent school) with another less-resourced school and, together with private sector involvement, to roll out the Move-It Moving Matters® Programme. In schools without a relationship with a disadvantaged partner school, the Move-It Moving Matters® team help to broker new partnerships between schools.

### An example of the 'anchor'/'partner' school relationship

St Andrew's is part of Ubambiswano, the Daveyton Education Programme. Children from 80 schools in Daveyton come to St Andrew's on Saturday mornings, where they are taught core and supplementary content and skills in Maths, English and Science. They also learn how to swim, to use a computer and to play a musical instrument. It was both a natural and an obvious decision for us to extend our Daveyton Education Programme to include Move-It, Moving Matters®.

### Teacher development a further opportunity

The first step was to train the teachers – both Physical Education teachers and



*Pupils engrossed in the Move-It programme*

class teachers teaching Life Orientation at St Andrew's and in the Daveyton schools – who were to facilitate the programme. Amidst shrieking and much laughter, the teachers got the hang of the different equipment – balls attached to rope, dice, jacks and bats. Each person was also given a teacher's manual full of organisational tips, key teaching points, worksheets, learner activity progressions, assessment tools and a learner reporting system. An accompanying CD contains year-long reporting structures, mark sheets, graphs to report the growth and development trends of the children and certificate templates to reward competence and achievement. At the end of the training, all the teachers were declared competent and ready to facilitate their learners in the programme for the year.

Our school has subsequently been invited to host and co-facilitate the training of a further 70 teachers who are also engaged in the programme in Gauteng.

### Move-It, Moving Matters® in 2010

The programme was introduced in the second term of this year to grades 3, 4 and 5 learners at St Andrew's School and Madingoane Primary School. The children absolutely love it! The programme motivates them to improve,



*Cathy Fry*

and they learn essential skills that benefit them in more traditional sports programmes. Even children who, prior to the start of the programme, did not enjoy physical activity, find the different activities fun and 'doable'.

The management team from Move-It is a delight to work with, and their support and interest in our progress in inspiring. We are looking forward to progressing to the Red Bag level in 2011, the Yellow in 2012, and the Green in 2014. ❀

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