



# Sonning Common Primary School



## Gross and Fine Motor Skills

### Where to start?

Before children can develop their fine motor skills, they will need to have spent time developing their gross motor skills. As a starting point we always look to see how well-developed gross motor skills are for every child. Examples of gross motor skills are sitting, crawling, walking, running, jumping, throwing, lifting, skipping, hopping, creeping, slithering, spinning, turning, twisting, pushing, pulling and climbing stairs. By mastering these movements, they will have formed the basis for fine motor skills and will then be able to relate to body awareness, balance, strength and speed of reaction.

Many children when they reach Kites (Reception) can do many of these skills independently but may need some additional support and practise to do them with ease and accuracy. Before moving onto fine motor skills practise, we would suggest you prioritise gross motor skill refinement first for any of the movements above that your child finds challenging.

### *Ideas to develop gross motor skills...*

- Walking to local green spaces can develop stamina. In Reception children should be encouraged to walk by themselves rather than be aided by a pushchair.
- Give opportunities to move around on a range of different surface types: woodland floors, grassy areas, pebbly beaches and sandy shores.
- Spend time in the playground: hanging from climbing equipment, bouncing on a seesaw, pushing others on swings or on a merry go round. Make the most of the opportunities to climb and go up ladders and steps on play equipment.
- Den building: lifting and manipulating large, awkward and heavier objects like logs and big branches. Perfect for a morning out in the local woodland areas.
- Create your own obstacle course: at home or out and about. You could use different objects from around your home or garden. You can include trampolines, slides, blankets, hula hoops, tyres, steppingstones, rockers, small steps or mini ladders. Maybe build in those commonly found features in your garden such as paths, furniture, fallen branches and tree stumps. Remember to encourage different opportunities for going under, over and through. They could even make their own obstacle courses once they've completed yours.
- Go swimming: not only a lifesaving skill but so good for gross motor and physical development.
- Riding a bike: this engages both balance and muscle control. Start with stabilisers if confidence or more support is needed and work quickly towards being able to ride a two-wheeled bike unaided. Children can also ride scooters to help develop gross motor skills.
- Playing hide and seek: a classic game that promotes movement, maybe moving into tighter and smaller spaces and balancing to stay still!
- Hopscotch: played the traditional way and also a great way to reinforce counting and number recognition.

# Sonning Common Primary School

-**Throwing and catching:** so simple but very effective. Grab a large ball such as a football to start and then work down in size to refine those skills. Many children find throwing and catching accurately difficult so the more practise the better for all.

-**Visiting adventure houses, soft play, activity centres, climbing centres, and/or gymnastic clubs:** you certainly don't need to go to a centre or activity group and pay admission to develop gross motor skills, but if you are looking for variety or to try something different and you have a few pennies to spend then visiting these kinds of places with your child will certainly contribute towards gross motor skill development.

-**Yoga, dance, cheerleading activities:** you don't need to join a club for your child to take part in these. You can find Cosmic Yoga on YouTube which is a firm favourite in Reception, Just Dance online or on a computer console game for example. Even websites such as CBeebies have activity sessions to promote your child to get moving...it really isn't about fitness, it develops your child's physical and mental wellbeing.

- [Gross Motor Skills Advice](#) If you want to find out more about gross motor skills, are concerned about gross motor skills or want to do more, then this website can provide some good pointers. It is based in Australia so not all advice will be applicable here in the UK but it does have some great information that you may find useful.
- [10 fun ways to improve gross motor skills](#) Exactly what it says on the tin! Take a look for more gross motor skills information and ways to develop these at home.
- [Gross Motor Skills Activities](#) A comprehensive list of activities to help develop gross motor skills from the Paediatric and Occupational Therapy services in Cork.
- [Animal Movements Gross Motor Skills Cards](#)
- [Gross Motor Activity Cards](#)
- [Gross Motor Skills Match and Move Game Cards](#)

## Moving on...\_

Once a child has started making progress and achieving key gross motor skills, we then look to develop their fine motor skills. Developing fine motor skills will help towards key life skills such as eating, getting dressed, writing and manipulating a range of objects. Children in Reception will regularly use their skills to zip up their own coats, eat their lunch, use scissors to cut different media, paint and mark make/write to name just a few.

Children who develop their fine motor skills are also working on precision and hand-eye co-ordination. Children will need to do repeated and varied activities to develop and refine their fine motor skills. Most importantly children need

# Sonning Common Primary School

support and feedback from adults to master many fine motor skills activities. It can be fiddly, tricky and awkward but with support and encouragement it soon becomes manageable and achievable.

## *Ideas to develop fine motor skills...*

-**Threading, sowing and weaving:** beads, buttons and strings and threading these on, why not include some maths and create repeating patterns too! Weaving can be achieved by using rags, ribbons and fabrics through fences, wire mesh.

-**Scissor fun:** you can create your own lines (straight, wavy, zigzag) simply on paper for your child to have to follow with the scissors. Make it fun by using different colours, different papers (wallpaper samples, colour paper, newspapers etc) or even different size pieces of paper.

-**Elastic and loom band fun:** geo boards are used in school to encourage children to create shapes and pictures, but if supervised at home loom bands can also be used.

-**Gardening:** planting up bulbs in spring, weeding, digging over the soil, stringing up and supporting plants.

-**Buttons challenge:** choose a shirt with buttons...how quickly can they do them up and undo them again. Can they beat their time last time?

-**Painting, chalking, drawing and colouring in:** a regular activity that you probably do at home but every little counts! Can they keep within the lines and develop better control.

-**Cooking:** without even realising it there are a whole host of fine motor skills built in to cooking activities, just be mindful to encourage to do as much as they possibly can safely.

-**Playdough:** The children love playdough and this can be used in conjunction with activities such as 'dough disco' which is accessible on YouTube also.

- [OT Toolbox - fine motor skills](#)A comprehensive explanation and ideas to support and develop fine motor skills
- [Ten activities to develop fine motor skills](#)A professional website offering ten fun and achievable fine motor skills activities for home.
- [8 fine motor skills ideas for use at home](#)A good selection of simple activities without a lot of adverts placed on the webpage!
- [40 fine motor skills for children](#)A website which offers a range of fine motor skills activities that you may be able to undertake in your own home.
- [Playdough Skills Mat](#)
- [Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards](#)
- [Fine Motor Skills Suggested Activity Cards](#)
- [Fine Motor Skills Activity Cards](#)

## Sonning Common Primary School

You can find many more ideas using an online search engine of your choice. Try using phrases such as 'fine motor skills activities eYfs' which often generates many more results which are appropriate. If you already hold a Pinterest account there are some great images which show both gross and fine motor skills activities of tried and tested activities that you may enjoy doing at home also.

### *Then...?*

Once your child has made good progress in developing both gross motor and fine motor skills you will see a marked difference in their ability to hold their pencil effectively, mark make clearly, and further on, write using good formation and accuracy. As much as you can practise at home alongside the fantastic opportunities children are having in class then the quicker progress and development will be for these skills. But above all, remember that developing both gross motor and fine motor skills should be fun!

If you find any of this challenging with your child, or you have any concerns through doing some of these activities with your child's progress then please do arrange to speak to your child's class teacher at a suitable time.