Body Awareness

We develop body awareness through movement and receiving sensory feedback within the early years. This helps us move within an environment and adapt our movement in response to what is happening around us.

Lack of body awareness can present many challenges for a child including:

- Awkward moving around the classroom or physically challenging environments – bumping into table and chairs

- Difficulty placing the body in positions e.g. sitting on the floor for carpet time

- Use of excessive force and pressure during movement tasks

- Dressing difficulty

- Difficulty accessing PE

Activities that can support developing body awareness

- Simple obstacle courses for small groups – movement on different surfaces going in, over, under and through. This provides proprioceptive input to increase body awareness.

- Contrast physical activity – stand still like a statue, then wobble like a jelly. Encourage the children to think about how it feels.

- Seated push ups – do wall push ups or 4-point kneeling push ups. This provides proprioceptive feedback to the body, increasing awareness of position.

- Deep pressure activity – squeezing under cushions in quieter corners. This can be undertaken in small groups or with individuals. This provides both proprioceptive and deep touch pressure, increasing awareness of different parts of the body. It is helpful to verbally identify body parts while completing.

- Squeezing dough – provides proprioceptive input which increases feedback on hand muscles, joints and ligaments.

- Rolling up in PE mats or beanbags – provides proprioceptive and deep touch pressure to increase awareness of the body.

- Rolling a gym ball over the body – identify body parts as this is done. Can be completed in small groups or with individuals.

- Cognitive strategies – describing the movement that needs to be completed out loud in physically challenging environments (staff and young people).

- Pushing and pulling activities – including moving classroom chairs, cleaning tables, and carrying equipment such as books to hand out.