

Move Well Move Often

External Cues

to support the teaching of
Fundamental Movement Skills

USING CUES IN THE PE LESSON

Cues are snippets of information, or task-orientated information, used to support children in learning how to perform a task or skill. Two types of cues, internal (e.g. MWMO teaching points) and external are particularly applicable to the PE context. The teaching points outlined for each skill in the Move Well, Move Often resource direct the child to focus their attention on the body movements associated with the skill and are also called **internal cues**. **External cues** direct the child to focus their attention on the movement effect or the outcome associated with the skill.

Research has shown when developing, mastering or learning a new skill, cues which direct the child's focus of attention and are used to provide feedback can play an important role in the acquisition of that skill (Wulf, 2013, Palmer et al, 2017). External cues integrate seamlessly with how the child naturally relate to the world and can adopt a child friendly and play based approach which can enhance motivation and confidence.

Strategies for using cues

- Allow pupils to explore the skill of focus through a [movement inspector](#) or other exploratory activity before introducing any cues.
- In some instances, children may not need a verbal cue to develop their proficiency of a skill. Guided discovery through specifically chosen, adapted or constrained activities may be sufficient to support pupil development (Rudd et al, 2021).
- Where cues are considered helpful to the development of pupils, focus on a maximum of 1/2 cues per PE lesson to avoid cognitive overload (Rosenshine, 2010).
- If using external cues, ensure they are meaningful and relatable to the pupils you are working with. The Move Well Move Often external cues are not exhaustive and teachers/students may wish to create new cues using analogies or metaphors.
- Attempt to elicit the relevant cues from the pupils through discussion rather than simply telling them e.g. how might we use our arms to help us go faster in the running activity we just did? What might that look/feel like?

Which type of cue should I use?

Both internal and external cues may be helpful during explanations, discussion or demonstration in advance of or after movement. The research generally suggests that external cues better support learning and skill performance than internal cues (Wulf, 2013), within school age children (Palmer et al 2017). Directly prior to or during an activity, there is some evidence that using 1 key short external cue or analogy as the last spoken phrase can be most beneficial (Winkleman, 2020). Learners at different stages of development and in a different context may, however, respond differently. Teachers should take account of the task and learners when considering the use of cues within their lesson sequence.

Movement Inspector

THE MOVEMENT INSPECTOR

Introducing the skill of running

Try to run...

- tall like a giraffe without bending your knees
- small like a pike bent over at the waist
- without moving your arms
- looking at the sky/looking at the ground
- on your tiptoes/flat footed
- forwards/backwards
- as fast as you can on the spot
- along a different path to everyone else
- for as long as you can
- as fast as you can
- in front of/behind a partner
- holding hands
- using all the correct technique outlined

Effective questions

- What position should your body be in?
- Try to make an L with your arms - is it possible?
- Where should you look?
- How should you land/take off?
- If running backwards look over shoulder
- What are arms and knees doing?
- What happens to technique when you - get tired or get competitive?
- Let's put it all together!

This teacher-led exercise encourages guided discovery and allows pupils to identify the correct technique. Effective questioning can help to guide pupils in their learning.

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EXTERNAL CUES

WALKING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Maintain good posture by keeping the body straight and walking tall	Show off the crest on your jumper
The head should be in line with the spine and eyes looking forward	Look at the window on the school wall
The arms swing in a small natural arc in opposition to the feet	Imagine air is blowing your arms lightly
Toes are always facing forward during each step	Imagine a laser is pointing out of your toes and lighting the way
When planning the foot, use a heel-to-toe action	Imagine painting the ground with your heel first, then your toe.
The heel touches the ground first and then the toes	Paint your heel red, toe yellow. Walk red, yellow, red, yellow
The knees should bend slightly when the foot makes contact with the ground	Walk on the spongy floor

EXTERNAL CUES

RUNNING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Hold the head up, stable and eyes looking forward	Show off your school crest
Elbows bent at 90 degrees	Push the letter L forward
Drive arms backwards and forwards vigorously in opposition to the legs. Ensure arms stay close to the body, 90 degree angle remains at the elbow and the drive comes from the shoulders	Thumb goes from hip to lip
High knee lift with the thigh almost parallel to the ground	Imagine you are running in water
The kick back should be close to the buttocks (at least 90 degrees)	Flick the sand up and away
Push off the ball of the foot and land on the heel of the foot initially, however, when the run speed increases contact will be made predominantly with the ball of the foot only	Imagine that there is paint on your heels. Keep the floor clean
Lean slightly forward when accelerating and slightly backwards when slowing down	Take off like an aeroplane

EXTERNAL CUES

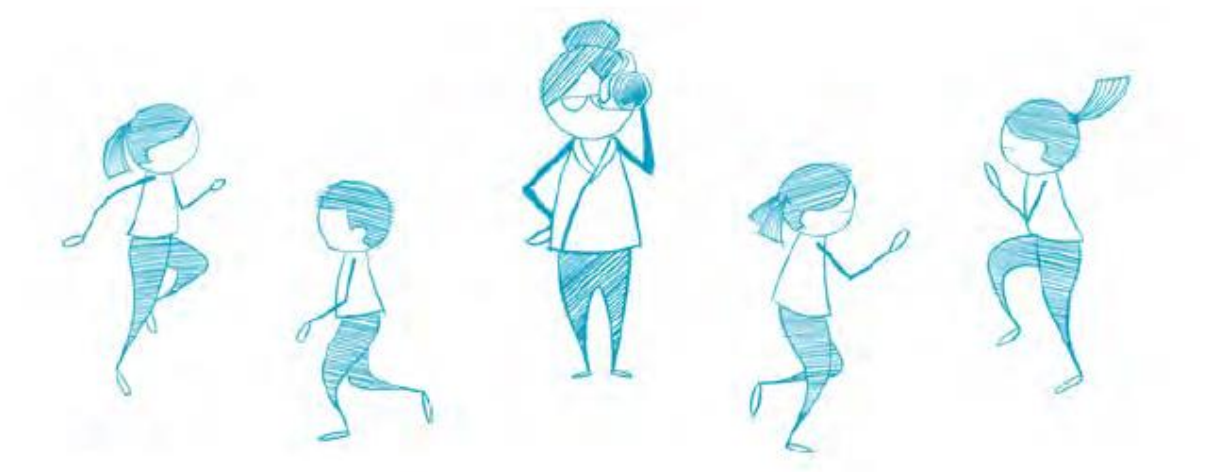
HOPPING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Take off and land on the same foot, pushing off from the ball of the foot	Imagine the ball of your foot is a 'bouncy ball'
The support leg swings in rhythm with hopping leg	Break the glass with your knee
Bend the hopping leg slightly on landing and straighten on take-off	Hop like a kangaroo softly and quietly
Arms bent at the elbow, swing back then vigorously forward and upwards to assist the leg action in providing force	Lift the buckets
Head and trunk should be stable with the eyes focused forward	Be a strong oak tree, don't let the wind blow you to the side
Practise on both right and left legs to become proficient on both	

EXTERNAL CUES

SKIPPING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Step forward and hop on the same foot with a high knee drive	Horse trotting in water
Land on the ball of the foot	Land on the bouncy ball
Knee of the support leg should bend to prepare for a hop	Spring from the spongy floor
Repeat with the other foot and then build rhythm	Skip to the beat of the drum
Head and trunk should be stable at all times with the eyes focused forward	Show off crest on jumper
Arms should be relaxed and swing in opposition to the legs to help maintain balance	Swing arms gently as if air is blowing through the hands.

EXTERNAL CUES

JUMPING FOR HEIGHT



Teaching Point	External Cue
Eyes focused forward or upwards, head up and back straight throughout the jump	Look at the bird's nest in the tree
Crouch with knees bent and arms behind the body	Ready to pounce like a tiger
Legs forcefully extend and straighten in the air	Back and legs as straight as a ruler
Arms swing forwards and upwards in time with the legs	Throw the 'stones' in the air
Arms and legs extend as far as possible in the flight phase.	Imagine you are reaching to the ceiling
Ankles, knees and hips bend on landing to absorb the shock.	Land and sit back onto a stool
Land on both feet with no more than one step in any direction to control the landing.	Don't let the wind blow you over

EXTERNAL CUES

JUMPING FOR DISTANCE



Teaching Point	External Cue
Get into the 'ready' position by bending the knees, hips and ankles	Get into 'frog' position ready to jump
Head up and eye focused forwards	Look at the school wall
Explode forward from the ready position	Push the ground away
Swing the arms back behind the body then quickly forwards and upwards	Shoot your spider web into the sky
Push off from both feet together, with the toes the last part of the body to leave the ground	Push the ground away with the balls of your feet
Legs straighten during the flight phase	Point the ruler towards the ground
Land on both feet at the same time bending the hips, knees and ankles to absorb the impact	Sit back on to a stool as you land

EXTERNAL CUES

DODGING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Head up and eyes focused forward	Look over your neighbours green hedge Look at the window on the school wall
Low body position	Dip low under the branch
To change direction plant foot, bend knee and push off from the outside of the foot	Push the big, red button
Lower the body during the change of direction	Follow the bend in the tunnel
To add a deceptive element to the dodge, step/lean one way and push off in the other direction	Move shoulders like a window wiper
Practise on both sides	

EXTERNAL CUES

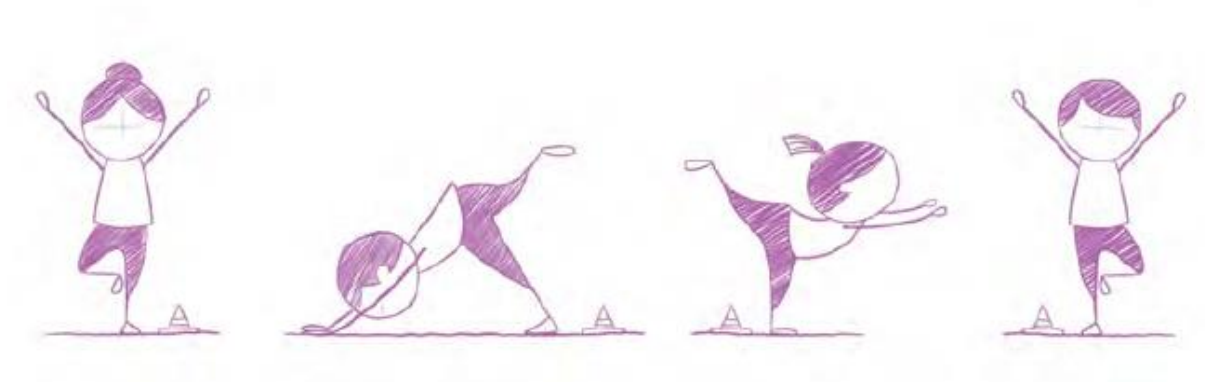
SIDE-STEPPING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Stand side on with hip and shoulder pointing in the direction of travel	Stand tall on the surfboard and point to where you are going
Knees slightly bent with weight on the balls of the feet	The ball of your foot is a bouncy ball
Head stable and eyes focused forward or in the direction travelled	Look over your neighbours hedge
Lead foot steps in the direction travelled	Step along the narrow path
Free foot follows quickly behind	Quickly follow the leader
There should be a brief period where both feet are off the ground	Skim over the water
Arms out to the sides for balance	Arms out like a scarecrow
Movement should be rhythmical	Side-step to the beat of a drum

EXTERNAL CUES

BALANCING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Standing leg still, with foot flat on the ground	Standing leg like a tree
Trunk stable and upright	Be a strong oak tree, don't let the wind blow you over
Non-standing leg bent and not touching the support leg	Make a V between your legs
Head stable with eyes focused forward on a target	Look over your neighbours green hedge
Arms as still as possible with no excessive movement - either at the side or extended to aid the balance	Arms like the wings of an aeroplane

EXTERNAL CUES

LANDING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Head up, stable and looking straight ahead	Show off your school crest
Arms should be stretched out in front to maintain balance	Reach out front towards the wall
Stomach should be pulled in and bum tucked under the body	Sit on a stool
Land with the feet wide apart but still in a stable position	Land at either side of the 'box'
Bend the knees	Sit on a stool
Land on the feet in the order toes-ball-heel	Land gently like a mouse

EXTERNAL CUES

CATCHING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Eyes focused on the object throughout the catch	Watch the ball
Move feet to place the body directly in the path of object and secure a wide base of support	Get in the way of the ball
Hands reach out to meet the object	Push the swing forward
Fingers and hands are relaxed and slightly cupped to receive the object	Hold the beach ball
Catch and control the object with the hands only	Don't dirty your jumper
Elbows bend at least 90 degrees to absorb the impact	Pull the ball in

EXTERNAL CUES

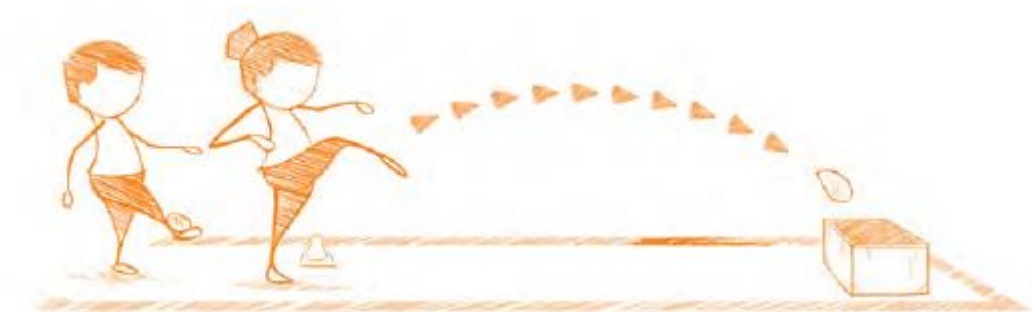
THROWING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Hold the object in one hand	Keep one hand free to wave
Eyes focused on a target throughout the throw	Eye on where you want the ball to go
Stand side on with non-throwing shoulder towards a target	Beam a laser from your pocket towards the target
Bring the throwing arm back behind the body, swinging it down and backwards in preparation to throw	Wind up for the throw
Step toward a target with the foot of non throwing side (transferring weight from the back foot to the front foot).	Step towards the target
Hips then shoulders rotate forwards	Face your school crest towards the target as you throw
Throwing arm moves forward, releases the object, then follows through in the direction of a target and down across the body	Put on your seat belt as quickly as you can
It is good practise to raise the non-throwing arm and point it in the direction of a target in the preparation phase, then lower it when throwing	Use your other arm to point at the target

EXTERNAL CUES

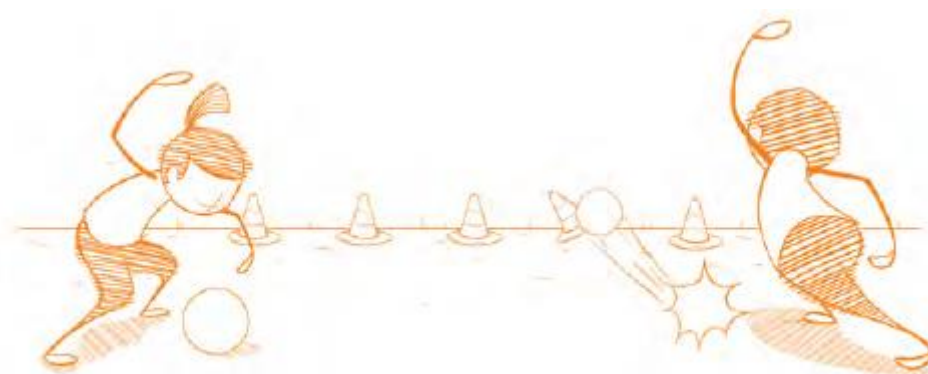
KICKING



Teaching Point	External Cue
Approach the ball from behind and slightly to the side	Kick from around the bend
Place the non-kicking foot to the side of the ball	Press the button beside the ball
Swing the kicking leg back to make an angle of at least 90 degrees	Get the leg ready to pull the trigger
Bring the kicking leg forward fast, making contact with the ball using the shoe laces or instep of the foot	Shoelaces to the ball
Swing the arm opposite the kicking leg forward and sideways	Chop across the body
Ensure that the trunk leans forward and the arm opposite the kicking leg swings forward during contact	Lean towards the ball
Follow through in the direction of the target	Foot follows the ball

EXTERNAL CUES

STRIKING WITH THE HAND



Teaching Point	External Cue
Keep eyes on (and in time over) the ball	Find the star beyond the ball
Knees bent and feet a comfortable distance apart	Stand softly either side of the line
Lean slightly forward at the waist	Lean towards the ball
Fingers are spread open but relaxed	Hands open like a fan
Push the ball downwards with the fingers while also controlling the movement with the wrist	The ball is a yoyo
Follow through when bouncing and pull the hand back as the ball rebounds in a cushioning action (no slapping action)	Your hand follows the yoyo (up and down)
Keep the ball below waist height	Ball stays below your belt
When on the move (dribbling), bounce the ball slightly forward in front of the body	Keep the ball in front of you on your path

EXTERNAL CUES

STRIKING WITH AN IMPLEMENT

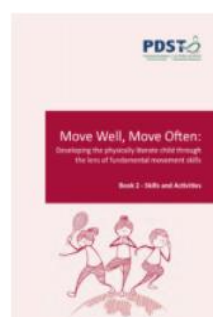


Teaching Point	External Cue
Stand side on to the target	Beam a laser from your pocket towards the target
Eyes should be focused on the ball throughout the striking action	Look for a name or logo on the ball
Hands should be together at the base of the implement with the hand at the end matching the front foot	Hold the sword
Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent with weight on the back foot in the preparation phase	Lean away from the target like the tower of Pisa
Step forward with the front foot, rotating hips and shoulder during the striking action	Step towards the target and show your school crest
Arms should be extended fully at the point of contact with the ball.	Elbows as straight as a plank of wood
Follow through the ball and around the body.	Swing the axe over your shoulder

FURTHER SUPPORTS



- See 'Using Cues in PE' on www.scoilnet.ie for further information and videos clips on the use of cues in the PE lesson
- Visit www.scoilnet.ie/pdst/physlit to explore the Move Well Move Often resource and supplementary materials



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