

Sensing the Difference!

by Sandy Eifion-Jones

When a primary school in Richmond, Surrey approached a leading school sports provider, Motive8, to deliver a one hour work-shop on visual impairment, they soon became aware of the fun involved!

In order to engage the pupils, the Motive8 coach used a combination of informative and interactive tasks, involving both conversational and physical techniques.

The children began to learn about the difficulties that those with a disability may experience when playing sport and how someone with a sensory or physical impairment can overcome these as a challenge, rather than a barrier.

The innovative ideas of the Motive8 coach meant the children had to make adjustments in communication and in their spatial awareness and balance.

In playing games such as 'Goalball', commented Nick



Sadler, the director of Motive8, "the children had fun and learnt key skills; they realised how other senses could be used to compensate."

In 'Goalball' the ball has a bell inside in order to hear in which direction the ball is moving.

"Students with disabilities need to feel relaxed and welcome at sports sessions," he pointed out, "not awkward, isolated or embarrassed."

"It is a joy to see faces light up and staff so appreciative of what Motive8 are trying to achieve," added Nick. "After just one session by one of our coaches, there is a noticeable difference in the approach of the children towards disability and sport."

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English children best in Europe

A report has found that English children are the best in Europe at science and maths but don't enjoy their lessons.

The report showed that England has risen up the league table. Coming top were far eastern countries such as South

Korea, Japan and Singapore.

English pupils' enjoyment of maths and science, however, is poor, suggesting that attainment is being achieved at the expense of imparting enthusiasm for the subjects which is reflected in few so few taking up jobs in these sectors.

School meals

Headteachers are calling for an overhaul of the school funding system after figures have shown that half of pupils living below the poverty line are not qualifying for free school meals. About a million pupils from poor homes do not qualify for a free meal, which also means their schools miss out on funding.

Says John Dunford, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, "We've always recognised that

free school meals are a very poor proxy for socioeconomic disadvantage, and a bad basis on which to base funding and accountability systems. The system needs an overhaul to find a better definition of disadvantage so that schools can be given the resources they need to do the job."

Free school meals are a component in league tables which assess how schools are doing in test results and pupils' social and economic disadvantages are taken into consideration.