



# Qigong and Mindfulness

In the

**UK Primary School Curriculum**

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Academy**



# Who Am I?

- Qualified Music Specialist Teacher since 1990 – taught in the Caribbean for 15 years.
- Tai Chi and Qigong practitioner since 1989.
- Teaching Tai Chi and Qigong in the UK since 2005 under the guidance of Master Faye Li Yip and Master Tary Yip
- Teaching in mainstream primary school in the UK since 2005

# Why Bring Qigong and Mindfulness into the UK Primary Curriculum?

“One in ten children and young people aged 5 to 16 has a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder and around one in seven has less severe problems”

– Department of Health, UK, ‘Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools’, March 2016



# Key Points of Promoting Mental Health

- to be resilient and mentally healthy.
- support good mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- intervene early and strengthen resilience, before serious mental health problems occur.



# Age range of children

- Original 10 week study with children with special mental and emotional needs. Age range 5-11 years old.
- School SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) observed the sessions. Recommended it be taught to years 2 and 6. Age range 6-7 and 10-11 years old.
- This study was done with 60 children aged 6-7 years and 60 children aged 10-11 years over 38 weeks. Once a week for 45 minutes.

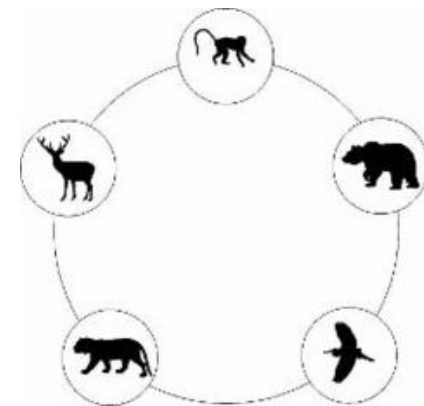
# Background of the Children

- Willenhall is in the top 21.9% of the UK deprived areas.
- Fibbersley Park Academy is ranked 17 out of 20 in the school rankings for this area.
- 27% of the children in the study have ADHD, ADD, Asperger's Syndrome, Autism or Dystonia (motor control difficulties).
- 3% of the children have severe anger management issues.
- 17% are 'looked after children' (Emotional issues).
- 7.5% were morbidly obese at the beginning of the course.

# Connecting to the Children

Age 6-7 Years Old Programme:

- Use of the 12 Chinese Zodiac Creatures moving using jumping, running, low stances, balance stances, learning the story of the Chinese Zodiac.
- Working on Wu Xin Xi- half an animal move per week, building up to whole set, following teacher, in groups then individually.
- Learning to count and basic phrases in Chinese.



# Connecting to the Children

Age 10-11 years old

- Used 3D Acupuncture Charts to introduce the children into the idea of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxPjklLnqgM>

- Introduced Ba Duan Jin
- Taught children counting in Chinese and some simple commands
- Children found immediate benefit.
- Learned to count and basic phrases in Chinese





# Connecting to the Children

## Martial Morality

謙虛 Humility

尊敬 Respect

正義 Righteousness

信用 Trust

忠誠 Loyalty

武德



Will 意志

Endurance 忍耐

Perseverance 毅力

Patience 恆心

Courage 勇敢

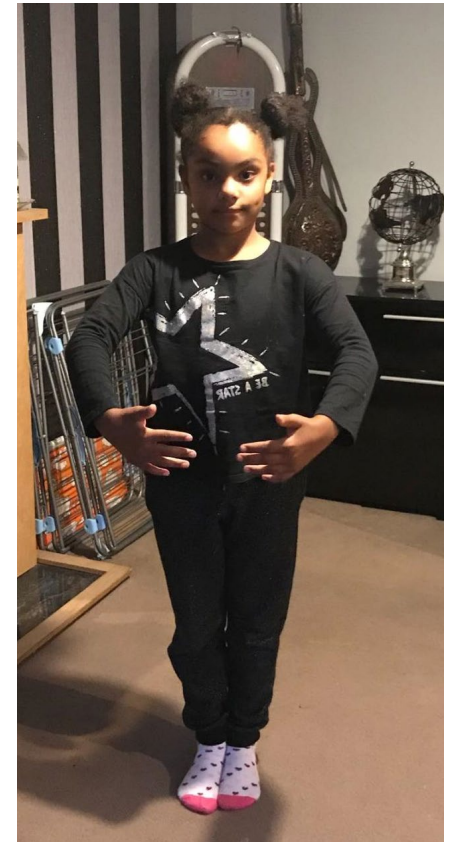
# Scholar's Breath

This is a long, measured breath designed to relax and calm. Raising the toes to draw the chi down to the earth.

❖ Children were encouraged to take long deep breaths to help focus the mind before beginning learning tasks after break times.

❖ Children were encouraged to use this breath to calm themselves before anger erupted

Kyle's Story...



# Warrior's Breath

This is a harsh outbreath designed to stimulate and wake up. Usually accompanied with punch, kick or loud outbreath sound 'Hai!'

- ❖ Used if the children were sluggish or tired often at the beginning of a session in order for them to be able to relax.

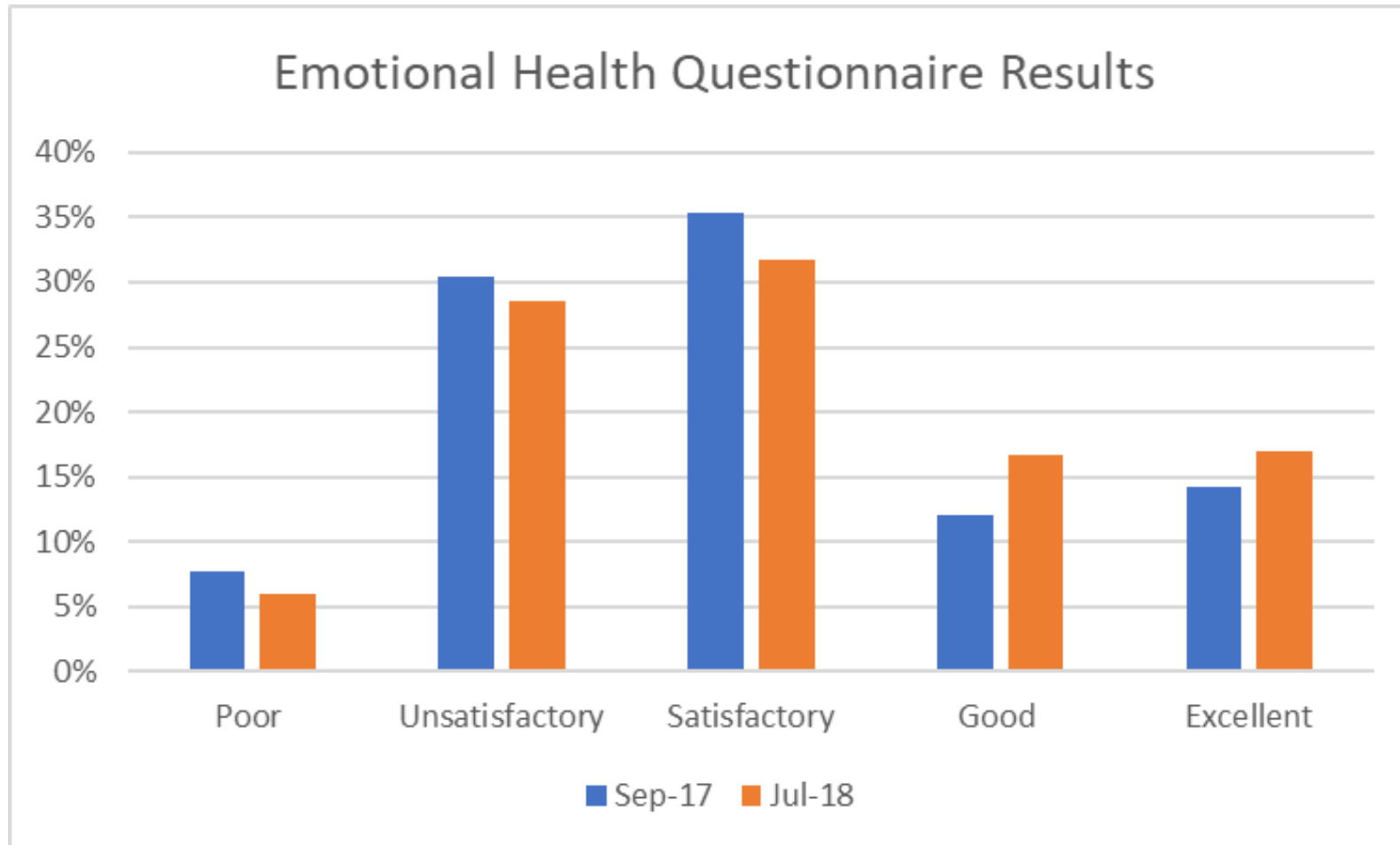


# Meditation Journey

- ❖ Lying down – Guided Journey Full Body Relaxation
- ❖ Seated in lotus position- Guided Journey Full Body Relaxation and Release of Fears, Anxiety, Bad Thoughts
- ❖ Seated in Lotus position – Self Journey



# Children Were Asked A Series of Questions Relating to Emotional Health



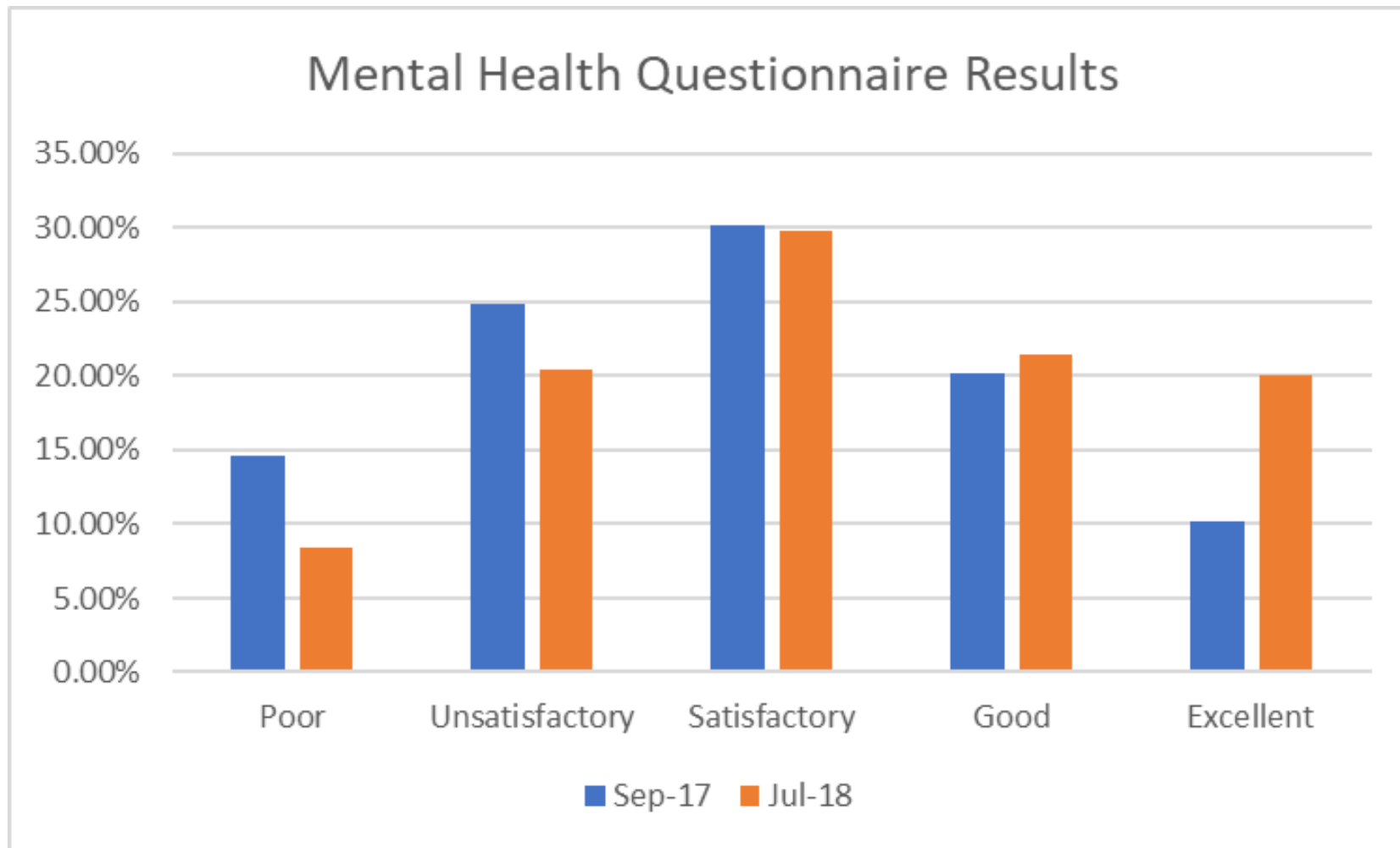
# Children Worked in Groups Taking it in Turn to Be the Leader to Help Each Other Learn Sequences of Movements

- Working with Qigong in groups translated into the classroom working in groups.



- Those who had never lead groups in class before became more confident to lead groups.

# Children Were Asked A Series of Questions Relating to Mental Health



# Physical Health

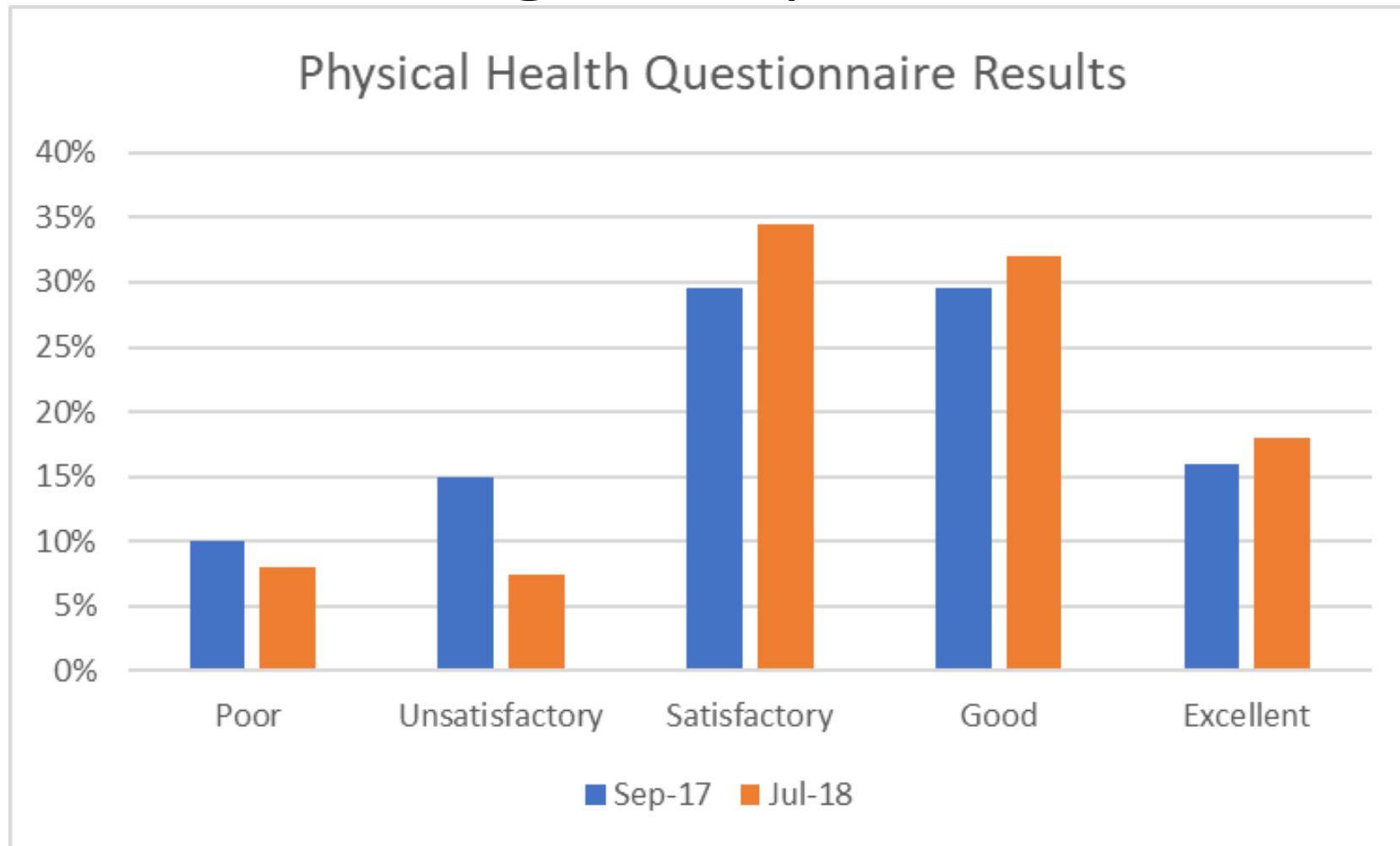
*Today nearly a third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese and younger generations are becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer.*

-Health and Social Care Information Centre (2015) Health Survey for England 2014

-Johnson W, Li L, Kuh D, Hardy R (2015) How Has the Age-Related Process of Overweight or Obesity Development Changed over Time? Coordinated Analyses of Individual Participant Data from Five United Kingdom Birth Cohorts. PLoS Med 12(5)

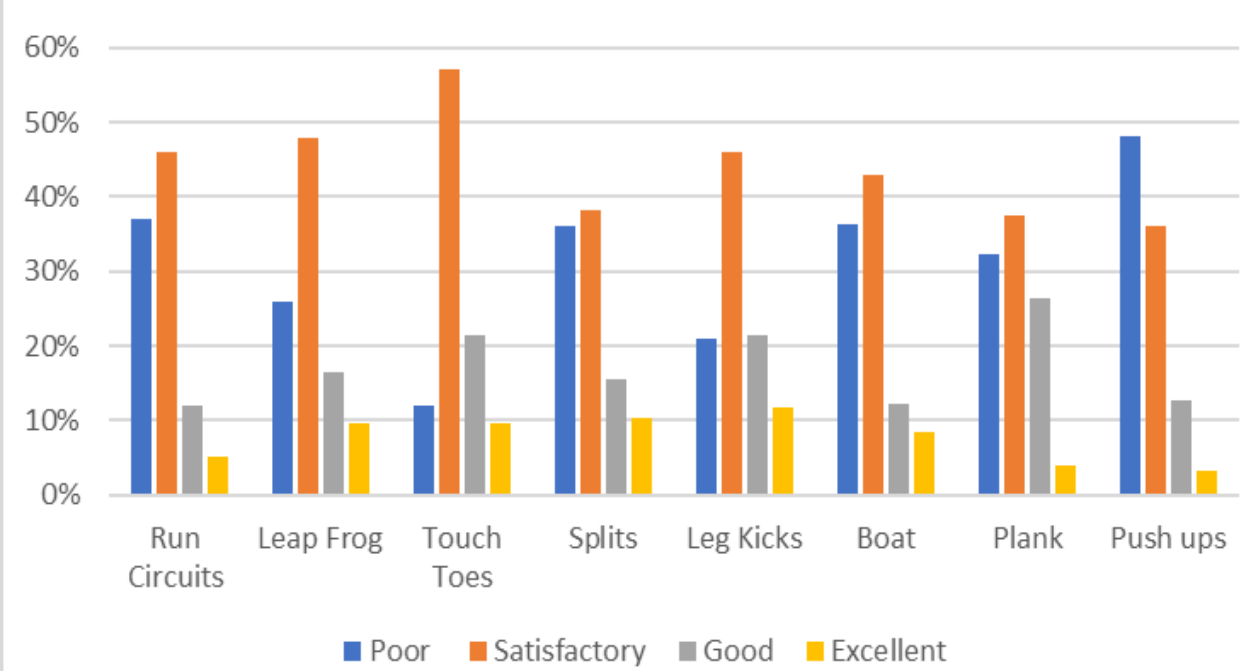


# Children Were Asked A Series of Questions Relating to Physical Health

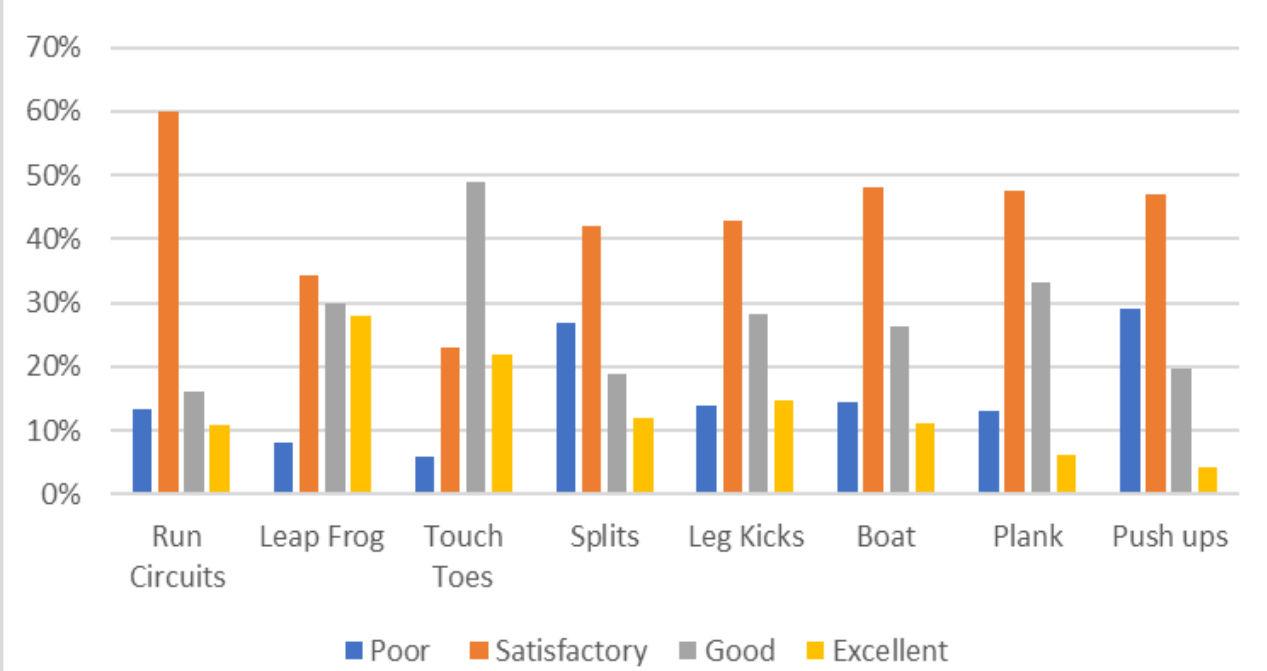


# Physical Tests

## Physical Tests September 2017



## Physical Tests July 2018



# Physical Activity = Academic Success

“There is also evidence that physical activity and participating in organised sports and after school clubs is linked to improved academic performance.”

-PHE (2014): The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/370686/HT\\_briefing\\_layoutvFINALvii.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/370686/HT_briefing_layoutvFINALvii.pdf)

-Chanfreau et al (2016): Out of school activities during primary school and KS2 attainment

Fibbersley Park Academy has enjoyed its best national exam results for many years this academic year. Children were less stressed by the exams with NO CHILD crying or having to leave the exam room due to stress or anxiety.



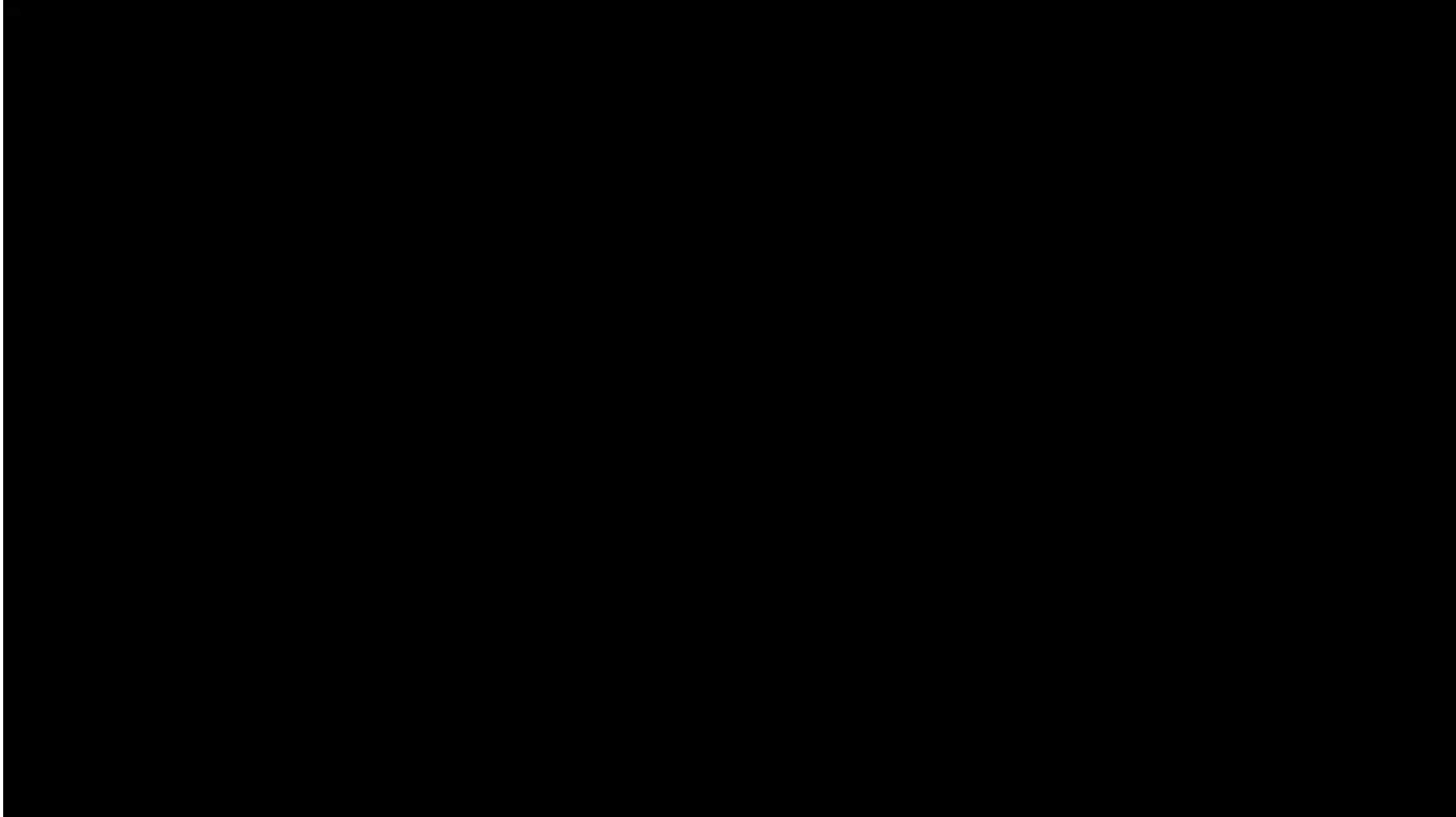
# Qigong – The ‘Gentle’ Exercise

Children’s Thoughts:

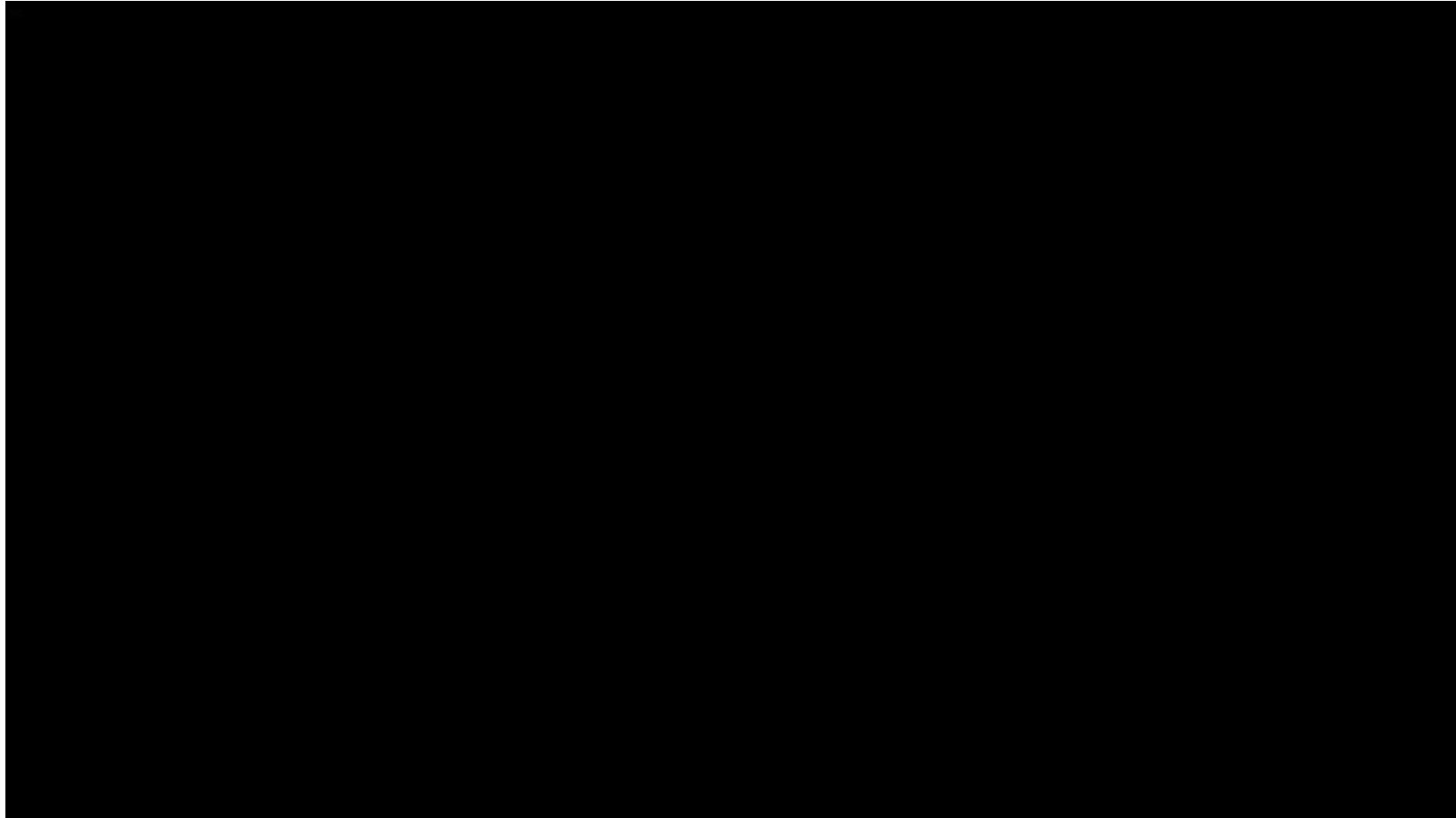
- ❖ It’s slow, so I can understand what I need to do.
- ❖ It’s exhilarating so I feel alive.
- ❖ It helps me to relax
- ❖ I feel more confident
- ❖ I feel stronger
- ❖ It helped me feel healthier
- ❖ I feel happier
- ❖ I like focussing on the positive things
- ❖ I can focus more on my work



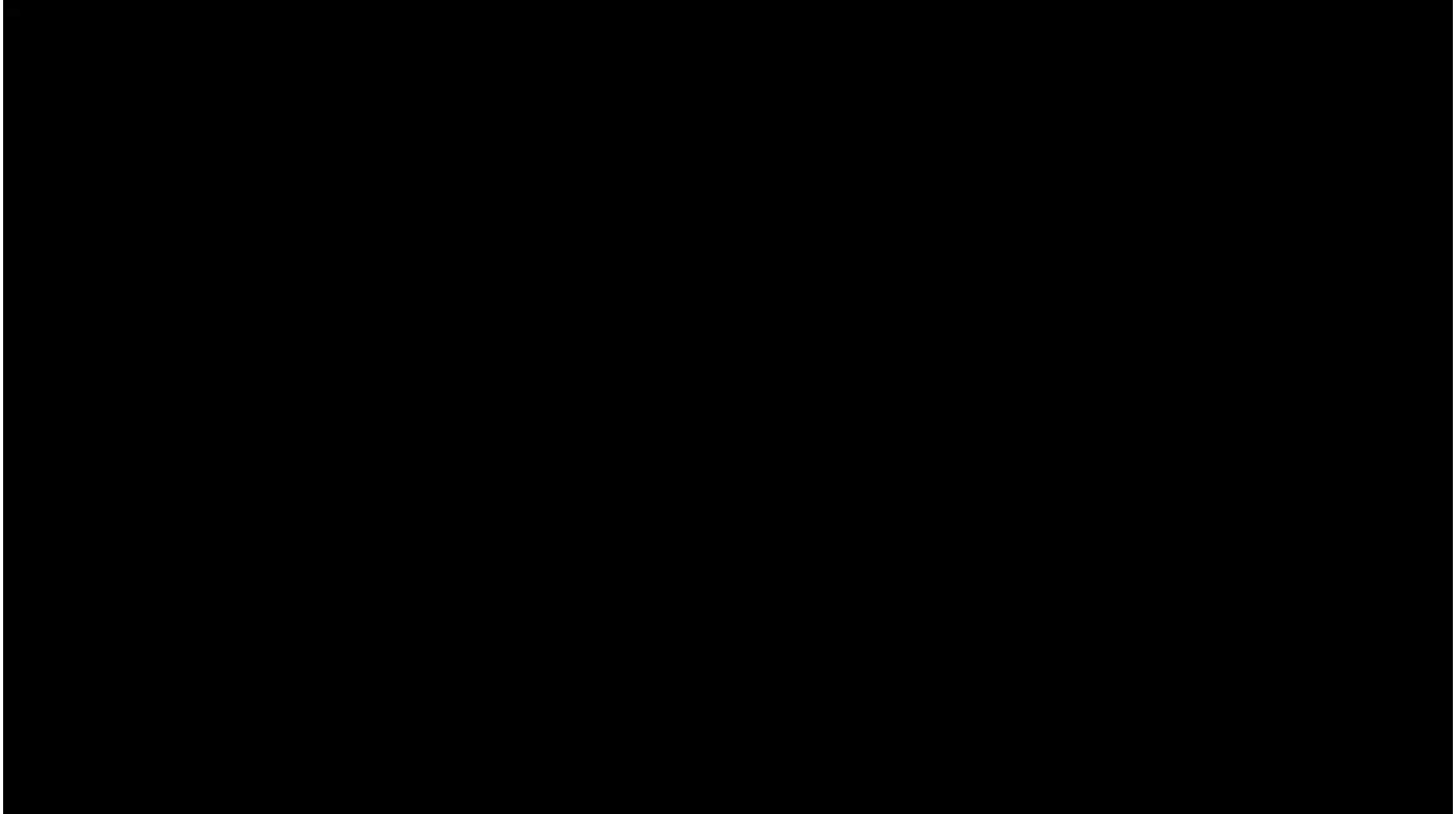
# Modified Ba Duan Jin



# Children's Comments



# Teacher's Comments



# Summary

- All children found the exercises accessible including the obese children.
- Children found they could manage emotional and mental problems calmly.
- Academic success was increased.
- Higher self esteem
- More self confidence
- Higher levels of physical fitness
- Children shared what they learnt with friends and family
- Children were more cooperative in their learning



# Future plans

- Next academic year 150 new year 2 and 6 children will be introduced to Qigong and Mindfulness.
- 30% of these children have ADHD, ADD, Asperger's, Autism
- 14% of these children have mental or emotional special educational needs
- Children who learnt academic year 2017-2018 will continue learning in after school clubs.
- Staff will participate in one 30 minute qigong session once a week after school.

# Children in Opening Ceremony

15 of the children in this study will be taking part in the opening ceremony. 3 of them have special educational needs.

