

# Physical education in schools 2005/08

Working towards 2012 and beyond

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The report evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of physical education in a small sample of primary and secondary schools between 2005 and 2008 and reports on the impact of the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links strategy. Part A focuses on physical education, and identifies good practice in achievement, provision and leadership. Part B discusses what needs to be tackled by providers of physical education as we move towards 2012 and beyond.

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## Executive summary

This report is based on a three-year evaluation of physical education in 99 primary and 84 secondary schools in England. Evidence was drawn from focused subject survey visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors and Additional Inspectors from September 2005 to July 2008.

The survey suggests that physical education is showing an improving trend in standards, achievement, provision and leadership. Government funding from 2003 has placed a greater and sustained focus on physical education and school sport and this has paid dividends for large numbers of young people throughout England. Teachers in all phases, but particularly in primary schools, have benefited from increased opportunities for professional development which, in turn, have led to the improving trend in teaching and standards observed in the schools.

Pupils' achievement was good or outstanding in two thirds of the primary schools visited and just over three quarters of the secondary schools. Unvalidated teacher assessments show that standards in primary schools are now at expected levels for the majority of pupils; standards at Key Stage 3 have been rising steadily over the three-year survey period, although the proportion reaching the higher National Curriculum levels remains below that of other non-core subjects. Standards in GCSE and A level physical education have also been improving, with no attainment gap between boys and girls. The number of students taking GCSE and A level dance has increased, although this is still relatively low.

Many of the schools visited had increased curriculum time for physical education and the majority of the schools were providing the expected two hours, except at Key Stage 4, where provision in half the secondary schools visited fell short for some pupils. Primary pupils' participation in competitions and tournaments was greatly increasing the focus on physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The vast majority of young people spoken to by inspectors during the survey said they enjoyed physical education. Consequently, their engagement in lessons was positive and participation rates in extra-curricular activities were high. Young people have had increased opportunities to undertake leadership roles and responsibilities in physical education. Students were also being given more opportunities to evaluate and give feedback on the provision, particularly in specialist sports colleges and their partnerships.

Part A of the report evaluates standards and achievement in physical education and discusses the strengths of teaching, curriculum provision and the quality of leadership and management that inspectors observed on survey visits. It recognises the importance of the increased use of strategies for assessment for learning, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. It gives examples of where provision has changed, including the use of modern technologies in lessons, and the impact this has had on young people, particularly on motivating older students. The

report indicates improvements in the quality of leadership and management that occurred during the time of the survey, especially in the primary schools, following opportunities for training. It recognises the significant contribution of the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy in supporting improvements.

As part of the focus on the contribution physical education makes to the Every Child Matters outcomes, the report discusses health and increasing concerns about childhood obesity, recognising that physical education makes a contribution to tackling these but is not the sole solution.

Part B of the report discusses physical education and its challenges as the nation moves towards the 2012 Olympics and beyond. It highlights aspects of provision that are still relatively weak, such as assessing and tracking pupils' progress, and the lack of procedures to monitor and evaluate provision systematically. Part B also looks at the continuity of learning experiences for young people within and between schools, identifying this as an area for development in the majority of the schools visited.

## Key findings

- National data indicate a trend of rising standards and improved achievement over the past three years. There is no longer an attainment gap between boys and girls.
- The overall quality of teaching was good or outstanding in two thirds of the schools visited, although it was more variable in the primary schools. The subject knowledge of primary teachers was less secure than that of secondary teachers, often because they had entered the profession inadequately prepared to teach the full range of physical education activities and this had not been fully compensated for by professional development.
- Opportunities for pupils in years 5 and 6 and of secondary age to take on responsibilities and leadership roles in physical education had increased in the schools visited. This has supported their personal development significantly and enabled them to contribute positively to the school and their local community.
- The better schools visited assessed, recorded and tracked pupils' progress systematically. However, because there is no common assessment strategy nationally, inconsistencies remained in judging pupils' standards and achievements accurately. Most of the secondary schools visited did not assess students' standards and achievement in core physical education at Key Stage 4.<sup>1</sup>
- The survey suggests that the quality of the physical education curriculum had improved in the schools visited. The vast majority provided two hours of physical education in the curriculum at Key Stages 1–3, but many fell short of this at Key

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<sup>1</sup> Core physical education at Key Stage 4 is the provision for students who do not follow an examination course, to ensure coverage of National Curriculum expectations.

Stage 4. In all key stages, the provision of non-traditional activities across the schools visited was inconsistent, as was access to provision post-16.

- The range of examinations and other opportunities for sports accreditation increased considerably during the period covered by the survey, although not all the schools offered a range of courses to suit all students' needs and abilities.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) was good in the majority of the examination classes seen, but not elsewhere. The exception tended to be specialist sports colleges, where it was more prevalent.
- The quality of leadership and management of physical education was good or outstanding in two thirds of the schools visited and, particularly in the primary schools, had benefited from professional development. Strong links existed between senior leaders' support for physical education and improved standards and provision. Monitoring, evaluation, strategic planning and systems for assessment were the weaker aspects of leadership and management.
- The majority of the schools visited had well-managed, high quality accommodation and resources that supported the curriculum effectively and had a positive impact on students' attitudes and achievements. This was more varied in primary schools.
- The PESSCL strategy was having a major impact on all aspects of provision for physical education, particularly in the primary schools visited and, in the latter part of the survey, the secondary schools. The strategy's various strands have widened participation in after-school and community club sports activities, improved leadership of the subject in primary schools, increased opportunities for professional development and encouraged collaboration.
- Physical education has contributed effectively to the Every Child Matters outcomes, particularly to 'being healthy', 'enjoying and achieving' and 'making a positive contribution'. Despite the improvements in physical education, it has yet to have sufficient impact on tackling the health issue of childhood obesity.
- The schools visited did not promote continuity of learning across points of transition effectively, although some good practice was taking place within schools.

## Recommendations

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) should:

- continue funding the physical education and sports strategy for young people up to and beyond 2012 to ensure that schools have the capacity to sustain and build on the improvements they have introduced
- establish a post-16 entitlement to physical education and school sport, including providing access courses for students across the full range of ability levels

- enable sports colleges and school sport partnerships to be at the heart of local and regional initiatives to tackle childhood obesity and to promote a lifelong commitment to 'being healthy'.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and providers of primary initial teacher education should:

- review the time allocated to physical education during primary initial teacher education to ensure teachers are better prepared to teach all aspects of the subject.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and professional associations should:

- develop and publicise support and guidance for schools to implement a robust, coherent, common assessment strategy to include assessing core provision at Key Stage 4.

Associations and organisations, local authorities, local delivery agencies and school partnerships should:<sup>2</sup>

- continue to focus on professional development for all staff
- consider, and advise subject leaders and other managers how they can use time most effectively to monitor, evaluate and assure consistently high quality in physical education teaching, outcomes for pupils and the impact of the PESSCL strategy on their provision.

Schools should:

- enable subject leaders to monitor, evaluate and improve provision systematically to maintain the pace of improvements in standards and achievement
- broaden provision further to incorporate non-traditional activities so that young people in hard-to-reach groups are motivated to participate
- make more use of modern technologies in lessons with all age groups
- work collaboratively to improve continuity of learning and promote rapid progress by developing effective information which is transferred within and between schools and partnerships

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<sup>2</sup> A local delivery agency is accountable to a national management group for physical education (with representatives from the association for physical education, youth sport trust and sports coach UK) and, ultimately, the DCSF for the quality assurance of the management, operation and delivery of continuing professional development programmes, to nationally set minimum standards. It must set and achieve locally determined delivery targets.

- consider the new approaches to assessment and evaluate their appropriateness for their school.

## Part A

### Physical education in primary schools

#### Achievement, standards and personal development

1. Pupils' achievement was at least satisfactory in all but two of the 99 primary schools surveyed. The proportion of schools in the sample where pupils' achievement was good rose from a third in 2005/06 to two thirds in the final year, but outstanding achievement was rare.
2. In the Foundation Stage, most children in the schools visited made consistently good progress in their physical development, for example moving in spaces confidently and safely, using small equipment such as bats and balls, and moving in different ways on equipment. These areas led to the four strands of the National Curriculum for physical education. The quality of the teaching and the rich variety of activities developed their physical skills. Comprehensive records of their progress during the Foundation Stage enabled teachers to have a good understanding of pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 1.
3. In Key Stages 1 and 2, most pupils in the schools visited made good progress towards age-related expectations, with the best achievement in games activities and swimming. This example typifies the good practice seen in many of the schools.

Good standards were achieved in games lessons. Pupils in Year 2 knew how to throw, catch, roll and strike a tennis ball accurately and with control. They had good spatial awareness and moved around the play area sensibly. Pupils in a mixed-age Year 3 and 4 class were increasingly able to perform two-point balances with tension and alignment. In a Year 5 class, pupils made good progress in a racket skills session, where all of them were developing good control, leading to a sustained rally. Many pupils achieved above the national expectation in swimming. Promoting health and fitness was a strong feature of the curriculum. Teachers focused sensitively on pupils who were overweight so that they could make the most of opportunities.

4. In the schools surveyed, pupils' understanding of health and fitness was an area of relative strength in both key stages 1 and 2. They knew about the importance of taking regular exercise to get fit and how this was linked to other decisions about healthy lifestyles, such as eating a healthy diet. Consequently many pupils were choosing to be active and eat healthily. They were able to talk knowledgeably about the effects of exercise on their bodies and why it was important to warm up beforehand.



5. Development of the other three strands of physical education in the National Curriculum, namely acquiring and developing skills; selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas; and evaluating and improving performance was more variable. Where these were good or outstanding:
  - pupils made good progress in acquiring and developing skills, for example being able to plan gymnastic sequences using a range of movement, balances and shapes they had learned during lessons
  - pupils were particularly good at selecting and applying their learned skills, for example to produce a dance phrase or to select the correct shot in tennis
  - the majority of pupils had well-developed abilities to observe and give feedback to each other in a range of activities.

In addition, where teachers had focused on pupils evaluating and improving their work in lessons, they made better progress. This was because they were starting to understand the correct techniques and what led to achieving high-quality performances.

6. However, where these strands were less well developed:
  - pupils lacked the ability and, sometimes, the opportunity to select and apply appropriate skills when working in groups, such as putting their passing skills into action in a small game
  - few opportunities existed for pupils to observe, discuss, evaluate and give feedback to each other or with their teacher to help to improve their work.
7. Although inspectors did not notice any discernible differences overall in the standards achieved by girls and boys, the girls observed tended to be better in the aesthetic activities of gymnastics and dance and the boys were better at games. A report on swimming which Ofsted published in 2007 noted that pupils from some minority ethnic groups often started with less experience and made the least progress.<sup>3</sup> A few pupils identified as gifted and talented in physical education made even greater progress than might have been expected. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities usually achieved in line with their capabilities, because they were fully included in lessons or because they had programmes of physical education which had been matched to suit their needs, as in the following examples.

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<sup>3</sup> *Reaching the Key Stage 2 standard in swimming* (070023), Ofsted, 2007; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Document-type/Thematic-reports/Reaching-the-Key-Stage-2-standard-in-swimming](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Document-type/Thematic-reports/Reaching-the-Key-Stage-2-standard-in-swimming).

The school's approach to including all pupils is outstanding. An effective programme of support for pupils in Key Stage 2 who have difficulties with gross and fine motor skills has enhanced these pupils' personal and physical development. Pupils from different age groups work with a trained teaching assistant on a multi-skills programme at lunchtimes. Each day they work on different but specific activities to improve their hand-eye and/or foot-eye coordination. They set their own targets each day and there is genuine delight when one of their group achieves this consistently, with spontaneous cheers and applause.

Teachers and teaching assistants offer sensitive yet challenging support for pupils with disabilities, tailoring activities to meet their needs. They ensure a good balance between supporting pupils and developing their independent learning. For instance, a child whose arm was severely disabled, resulting in restricted balance during activity, initially was lifted over a low hurdle by a teaching assistant when she attempted to jump over using two feet. During subsequent attempts, the teaching assistant gradually reduced the support and the pupil eventually jumped over the hurdle independently. Not only was this a major physical achievement, but it also boosted the pupil's confidence to try new activities.

8. Pupils' personal development was enhanced considerably through lessons and enrichment activities. The majority of the pupils seen had very positive attitudes, both in lessons and towards taking part in extra-curricular activities. Many said how much they enjoyed physical education and new challenges. Commitment and rates of participation were generally high and the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils was very good.
9. The following example illustrates physical education and healthy living in a large, urban, junior school. All the physical education lessons seen were good or outstanding.

The school's extensive, focused programme of physical education, school sport and healthy living contributes significantly towards pupils' overall achievement and their personal development and well-being.

The physical education lessons include high levels of challenge for pupils at all attainment levels; high activity rates; individual, paired or group work; and plenty of opportunities for evaluating work, with comprehensive feedback on how to get even better. Teachers make learning fun and, through their efforts, pupils respond very positively. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards across all activities are well above average.

Daily physical activity starts at the breakfast club, where children eat and then take gentle exercise; at break times, the whole school, including the

teachers, participates in 10 minutes of aerobic-style physical combat exercises, to music, led by Year 6 pupils who are trained as sports leaders. At lunchtimes and after school, a wealth of clubs, festivals and competitions for individual and team sports helps pupils to engage and excel in a broad range of sport. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend a specific club, using speed, agility and quickness (SAQ) resources and, consequently, they make exceptional progress in improving these aspects of physical education.

Pupils research and record information on healthy living, food and diet, relaxation and levels of physical activity in their 'healthy living journal'. They also set themselves targets for a healthy lifestyle and record their results as a score every term.

Pupils really enjoy being in school and being active.

10. Evidence from the sample of schools visited in the final year of the three-year survey indicated that they were placing greater emphasis on developing pupils' responsibilities and leadership skills. Commonly, those identified as gifted and talented were challenged to lead warm-up sessions, demonstrate techniques and help to develop all pupils' observation and analysis skills. In half the schools visited in the final year, older pupils were acting as sports leaders or playground activity leaders. Many were also leading the short 'wake and shake' sessions, often for the whole school. Pupils said how much this helped to build their confidence; inspectors also noted how it contributed to raising their self-esteem.
11. Evidence from these 33 schools also identified that pupils were being asked more frequently for feedback on their experiences and to help make decisions about improving provision. The following illustrates how pupils benefited from such opportunities.

Pupils undertake the role of sports leaders with maturity, no better demonstrated than in their proficient organisation of a festival of sport for their partner infant school. They relish the opportunities to use their own skills to help coach their peers in class contexts and to teach younger pupils in club activities. Sports monitors are proud of and enjoy the responsibilities for organising class and playground equipment. Pupils have excellent opportunities to feed back their views on provision and, through their class sports council representative, to suggest improvements. For example, at their suggestion, a digital display board for physical education and sport was placed in the school reception area to share news of successes in inter-school matches with visitors and to inform pupils of future sporting events.

When pupils are given opportunities to give feedback and improve provision, they feel more involved with the subject, have very positive relationships with

staff and are self-confident. As a result, they are unafraid to take risks in their learning and achieve well in physical education lessons.

### Teaching, learning and assessment

12. Teaching and learning were good or outstanding overall in just under two thirds of the primary schools surveyed and were satisfactory in a third. They were outstanding in only three of the schools and inadequate in two.
13. Good and outstanding teaching typically included planning that was highly focused on learning and progression, combined with assessment and feedback throughout the lesson to bring about improvement. The good physical education teaching observed in the survey was characterised by:
  - teachers' good questioning skills to ensure that pupils understood the task and what they needed to do to improve
  - a mix of teacher-directed activities, peer teaching opportunities and pupils being guided to make decisions for themselves
  - pupils being enabled to use their observation, evaluation and feedback skills consistently to help improve their own and others' work
  - tasks and equipment planned to meet pupils' differing needs, including those in mixed-age classes
  - the effective deployment of teaching assistants to support individual pupils or groups, particularly pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
14. The following illustrates outstanding teaching in a mixed-age Reception/Year1 class in a large, urban primary school.

Meticulous lesson planning focused sharply on outcomes. Thorough planning included reference to the early learning goal on physical development and the National Curriculum expectation of ball control.

In the warm-up session, the teacher developed pupils' understanding of the use of space by placing hoops strategically on the floor around the working area for the stop/start and stretching activity. When two or more children stopped in the same hoop, her questions helped them to understand the risks of working too closely to others during activities that included speed or stretches. They succeeded in working out the sensible solution for themselves, namely that one child should stop in each hoop.

In the main part of the lesson, about developing ball control skills, the teacher gave out balls of different sizes, textures and weights, based on children's previous attainment. This enabled all of them to succeed. Excellent activities enabled them, through guided discovery, to experiment with different methods of controlling a ball on the move; they enjoyed

trying to move with it between their knees but quickly worked out that this was not an effective way to move at speed or to pass the ball to a partner. The children had many opportunities to discuss the merits of each technique before they decided collectively to roll the ball to each other to achieve a successful game.

The teacher observed and questioned children to assess their responses and to develop their understanding of what they had achieved. Previous assessments were used very well to inform subsequent planning and to monitor children's progress.

15. Where teaching and learning were satisfactory rather than good, one of the following features was usually evident:
  - a lack of pace and physical activity, typically when pupils were passive or inactive for periods of the lesson or when teachers talked too much
  - pupils watching performances with no opportunities to evaluate them or suggest improvements
  - insufficient challenge, especially for more able pupils
  - an over-reliance on commercial schemes of work that had not been adapted to meet the needs of the school's pupils or that did not have clear learning objectives.
  
16. A common characteristic of the teaching that was no better than satisfactory was that teachers' subject knowledge was not sufficient for them to identify and tackle pupils' specific errors and help them to reach the highest standards in their performances. For example, even when pupils planned, performed and remembered complex dances, they were not challenged and supported to reach higher standards in poise and extension. Teachers did not always exploit demonstrations of good practice fully to clarify their expectations about the quality of performance.
  
17. The range of knowledge required to teach all activities and strands of the physical education National Curriculum is considerable. Most of the physical education lessons seen in primary schools in the survey were taught by class teachers. They were not subject specialists and therefore most were not adept at teaching all the areas of learning. Generally, they were more proficient at teaching games and this was reflected in the higher standards observed.
  
18. One important factor, however, was that the schools themselves had identified weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge. In the vast majority of the schools visited, the subject leaders had asked their colleagues to complete a needs analysis for their professional development as part of the auditing of the school sport partnership. Teachers commonly identified dance and gymnastics as the weaker aspects.

19. The auditing was followed up with training. Professional development had improved teachers' confidence and competence to provide a broader curriculum, including more emphasis on gymnastics and dance. For many of the schools, improved teaching and learning followed from focused training. It remains the case, however, that the consistent weakness in teaching dance and gymnastics raises concerns about the time given to these aspects during initial teacher education for primary teachers.
20. In 2004, the TDA commissioned a national project to raise the quality of initial teacher education for physical education. Although the funding was originally aimed only at providers of secondary teacher training, the project leaders had identified that the time allocated to physical education in primary teacher education varied considerably and it rarely covered all aspects of the physical education National Curriculum. The project evolved successfully to include an interactive CD-ROM, for teachers of children aged 7–14, on observing and analysing learners' movement to help to tackle this. However, very few of the schools in the survey were using this material.
21. A small number of the schools visited decided to use teachers with specialist knowledge to teach all the physical education lessons. Generally, this resulted in higher standards and better progress. Again, a small number of the schools found alternative routes to greater specialism, for example by using specialist dance teachers or employing external coaches. Although coaches bring specialist subject expertise which helps pupils to acquire and develop skills, their pedagogical skills tend to be weaker and they do not always teach the full breadth of the physical education National Curriculum. The strengths and weaknesses of using external coaches are well illustrated in this example.

The school employs a private sports and coaching company to teach half of its physical education programme, covering teachers' time for planning, preparation and assessment. This is well conceived, as the coaches have good subject knowledge and experience in a wide range of games and dance areas where teachers feel that their subject knowledge is less secure. Because of the coaching, pupils tend to make good progress in developing their performance skills in these activities. However, the sessions tend to be focused predominantly on pupils' acquisition and development of skills. Coaches rarely give pupils opportunities to select and apply the skills they have learned in different situations or to observe each other's work in order to give and receive feedback for improvement. A plenary session takes place, but this is generally the only time pupils evaluate their work.

22. In 2005/06, only one of the schools visited had a secure assessment system for the subject and knew precisely how well its pupils were doing. In 2007/08, the picture was more encouraging as several schools in the sample had records to assess, record and track pupils' progress over time. However, despite the

apparent increase, the use of assessment to raise standards is still an area of relative weakness. This is discussed further in Part B.

23. One area of assessment, however, that appeared to have more prominence in lessons during the final year of the survey was assessing progress in lessons. In the sample of schools inspected in 2007/08, two thirds of the teachers seen were consistently observing pupils' progress. They made timely interventions to set more challenging tasks or to help pupils understand what they needed to do to improve their work. The following example from a small infant school illustrates effectively how assessment may be used to help pupils to learn and make progress.

Teachers assessed through carefully observing pupils' performances. They questioned pupils about what they thought they were doing well, why, and what they thought were the main characteristics of good work. Teachers praised pupils appropriately; specific feedback helped them to move forward in a task. For example, the teaching assistant in a Year 1 lesson contributed significantly to supporting assessments by taking digital images of performances, watching the playback immediately with the pupils to evaluate the strengths and identify what could be improved. This immediate feedback helped pupils to make instant changes in their performances, such as improving their use of space, their coordinated timing of their dance movements within the group and their use of gesture to emphasise the meaning of their dance. It also helped to develop their vocabulary when they used specific terminology to evaluate their own performances in a structured and realistic way. At the end of the lesson the teacher and teaching assistant discussed and agreed which pupils had made progress and who needed support in future lessons.

A small number of schools used the 10 outcomes of high-quality physical education and sport effectively to assess pupils' progress or evaluate provision.<sup>4</sup>

24. Examples of good assessment included:
- detailed assessment and records that reflected the four National Curriculum strands of the subject
  - pupils tracking their own progress against learning criteria and setting their own targets for improvement
  - National Curriculum levels of attainment adapted to form the basis of a tracking sheet
  - assessment information being used effectively to identify pupils for additional support, such as the development of hand-eye coordination or spatial awareness

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex 2 for further details of the 10 outcomes.

- comprehensive analysis by the subject leader of progress against the 10 outcomes, incorporating a 'traffic light' system to track pupils' progress and identify those underachieving or achieving highly.
- 25. Less than a third of the primary schools in the survey shared records of pupils' achievements in physical education with their partner secondary schools, although a small number of those visited intended to do so and had included this as part of their action plan for physical education.
- 26. In the schools visited, ICT was not exploited enough in physical education lessons or in the assessment of pupils' achievement. Around one in 10 of the schools were using ICT as a stimulus for learning, while most recorded participation through photographs. However, there were few examples of pupils using ICT to observe, evaluate and improve performance. Good uses included:
  - effective use of the interactive whiteboard in classrooms to stimulate interest and motivation and to promote discussion of progress in previous lessons and targets for improvement before pupils moved to the working area
  - using still images with pupils in the Reception year and moving images with Year 1 to analyse their movement
  - teaching assistants recording and evaluating performances with digital cameras
  - recording performances to indicate pupils' progress
  - pupils' use of laptops in gymnastics to view their work on sequences that had been captured on digital camera in the previous lesson, enabling them to discuss how they might improve the quality of their performance.

### The curriculum

- 27. The physical education curriculum was good or outstanding in two thirds of the schools surveyed. The vast majority of the schools met the statutory requirements, although a few were not providing suitable opportunities for pupils to achieve the National Curriculum standard in swimming.<sup>5</sup>
- 28. Key features of the successful curricula observed included the breadth of programmes and a better balance between games, aesthetic activities and individual activities. Additionally, the schools visited had altered their curriculum

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<sup>5</sup> The National Curriculum for swimming activities and water safety requires that pupils should be taught to: 'pace themselves in floating and swimming challenges related to speed, distance and personal survival; swim unaided for a sustained period of time over a distance of at least 25 metres; use recognised arm and leg actions, lying on their front and back; use a range of recognised strokes and personal survival skills [for example, front crawl, back crawl, breaststroke, sculling, floating and surface diving]'.



and, particularly, their extra-curricular programmes to include more non-traditional activities. This had widened pupils' choice and encouraged those not attracted by traditional team activities to participate. Nearly all the schools offered all six activity areas – that is, dance, games, gymnastics, swimming, athletics, and outdoor and adventurous activities – including opportunities for the latter through residential experiences. Most of the pupils interviewed said that the curriculum suited their interests. The following exemplifies a successful curriculum.

Programmes include traditional competitive activities, such as football, 'high 5' netball, cross-country, cricket and rounders, and more aesthetic or leisure-based activities, such as country dance and tai chi. The school also has an annual sports day, residential visits for different age groups, 'healthy school' days and adventurous outdoor play in the Nursery. Excellent links with professional sports clubs, parents and the school sport partnership provide many other opportunities, such as tag rugby, football and judo. Pupils from the school have also visited Finland as part of the Comenius project, looking at healthy living, including participating in a mini-Olympics. The combination and range of activities lead to high levels of enjoyment and participation by pupils and the attainment of good standards overall.

29. All the schools visited made at least a satisfactory contribution to the 'being healthy' outcome of the Every Child Matters agenda and for the vast majority this was good or outstanding. A third of the schools surveyed had achieved Activemark and the national Healthy School accreditation, recognising their commitment to raising awareness of the benefits of health and exercise, widening opportunities and increasing pupils' participation in physical education and sport. The curriculum in the next example was judged to be outstanding.

Pupils have more than two hours of physical education through the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, and all of them benefit from daily 'take 10' starter sessions. The teaching of physical education uses a broad range of approaches to capture pupils' imagination. It has been devised through effective professional development of subject knowledge. The school makes outstanding use of the local Peak District National Park to meet the needs and extend the interests of pupils, through such activities as scrambling, potholing and orienteering. In addition, there is an annual residential visit, and pupils from all year groups regularly participate in festivals of sport, planning and participating in 'virtual' sports days using ICT sports packages and multi-skills activities organised by the local sport partnership. Creative and aesthetic activities, such as dance and gymnastics, as well as outdoor and adventurous activities, have a high profile and are taught expertly. For example, the Foundation Stage curriculum includes woodland walks and simple orienteering exercises.

30. Good curriculum planning for physical development begins in the Foundation Stage.<sup>6</sup> Children in Reception and Nursery classes benefited greatly from problem-solving activities and creative play. The better schools visited used similar approaches to link activities in the Key Stage 1 curriculum. For example, in one school, physical education was part of a 'creativity curriculum'. The school improvement team, including the physical education subject leader, used themes in physical education; personal, social and health education (PSHE); music; and drama to tackle the outcomes of Every Child Matters. Pupils enjoyed the physical education lessons and the activities led to good teamwork and improved social skills across the school.
31. A feature of good curricula in Key Stages 1 and 2 was the effective use of units of work, linked to secure schemes of work, to promote continuity and progression. Following guidance from the QCA, schools in the latter part of the survey showed an increased length of time given to each unit of work, enabling pupils to make further progress.
32. Good schemes of work included well-conceived medium- and long-term plans, with activities for pupils of different ability levels or those in mixed-age classes. The better schemes also linked well to arrangements for assessment, with clear learning objectives and outcomes that could be shared with pupils. In 2007/08, as subject leaders were becoming more aware of the 10 outcomes of high-quality physical education, the schools visited showed greater evidence of their use in planning. Better schemes of work could also be linked to the support of local authorities, advanced skills teachers and school sports coordinators or to the use of commercially produced schemes. The following examples show schemes of work being used effectively to support the progressive development of skills.

The school makes excellent use of a variety of commercial schemes of work to support teaching. The subject leader has worked hard to select appropriate elements from different schemes and to ensure that resource cards, such as those from the Youth Sport Trust 'Top Play' and 'Top Sport' schemes, supplement ideas effectively and extend the range of activities in lessons. The result is that pupils in a single class work on different activities suited to their ability level. As a result, they are engaged in their learning and constantly challenged to achieve their best.

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<sup>6</sup> The survey took place before the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2008.

Comprehensive schemes of work in physical education support teaching very well. The subject leader's use of commercial materials is outstanding. They are adapted annually to meet the needs of each class and all staff are given an individual file of plans, resources and activities for their class each year, based on pupils' prior attainment. All the pupils make good progress because of well-planned teaching supported by exciting resources and activities. Achievement is good across all age groups; in games it is outstanding, with pupils attaining standards that are well above average by the end of Year 6.

Insecure schemes of work resulted in activities not being matched well to pupils' needs and a lack of planning to assess them. A small number of the schools visited were still providing units of less than four hours' work.

33. About a third of the schools surveyed had identified a need to personalise the curriculum and had responded with innovative practice, including:
- intervention programmes with years 3 and 4 to improve the performance skills of those identified as below expectations, such as hand-eye coordination activities to improve bat and ball skills
  - teaching assistants and outside coaches working in a special school with pupils who had multiple or profound learning difficulties to ensure that they were included in lessons and had access to activities such as swimming, kayaking and horse riding
  - a lunchtime club for Bangladeshi pupils, leading to the increased participation of those who could not normally stay after school since they attended their local mosque
  - the introduction of QCA core tasks, so that more appropriate provision could prepare pupils for the move to secondary school
  - the re-engagement and motivation of disaffected pupils through non-traditional activities, such as cycling and martial arts
  - the introduction of multi-skills sessions for younger pupils.
34. The inclusion of pupils in physical education was a strength in all the schools visited. Examples included specific programmes for pupils with coordination difficulties, girls-only activities to improve their participation, and the use of sport to re-engage a group of disaffected boys. However, in all the schools there were still a few pupils who were reluctant to participate. Schools where physical education was outstanding had recognised the need to nurture gifted and talented pupils, identifying them and providing additional activities with the support of the local authority or school sport partnership, or encouraging them to attend local sports clubs.
35. Two thirds of the primary schools visited saw opportunities for physical education to support the development of literacy and numeracy. A few of the

schools had excellent links with professional football clubs, such as the 'double club'. This scheme identifies pupils likely to benefit from additional support for literacy and numeracy and gives them the opportunity to work at professional sporting venues. Pupils complete work in basic skills and are then 'rewarded' by working alongside sports professionals to improve their performance skills in that sport. In one school, pupils were enthused by opportunities to work with professional footballers and this was reflected in often moving poetry of their experiences.

36. Fewer than a fifth of the schools visited made strong connections between physical education and other subjects to help pupils understand the context of their learning better. In planning, teachers looked for ways to link subjects in order to make pupils' learning more relevant and seamless, such as:
- good links between physical education, science and PSHE to explore 'leading a healthy lifestyle'
  - the use of command words in French, such as fast, slow, up and down, as the stimulus for a warm-up in dance
  - when studying other cultures or periods in history (for example, Mexico or the Tudors), pupils learned dances related to the particular theme
  - using a topic on the Greeks to explore the ancient Olympics and athletic events
  - linking physical education to mathematics by studying, recording and analysing performances in athletics or personal fitness.
37. In the latter part of the survey, the large majority of the primary schools visited were offering two hours of physical education in the curriculum in order to meet the government's target, set in 2002, of two hours' high-quality physical education and school sport. This time was used best when the teaching was tightly focused on helping pupils to make progress in their learning, so that they improved their knowledge, skills and understanding of all aspects of physical education. Schools that did not meet the target of two hours within the formal curriculum frequently bolstered the time by structured activities at the beginning of the day, break and lunchtime.
38. The survey found that schools' involvement with the PESSCL strategy had considerably increased the availability of equipment and resources through schemes such as Youth Sport Trust 'Tops' programmes, Huff and Puff schemes and the development of a Zoneparc in playgrounds.<sup>7</sup> It had also led to more

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<sup>7</sup> Zoneparc is a primary playground project aimed at tackling social exclusion and increasing the activity levels of young people. It introduces innovative break-time activities and systems of playground management to make break-times safer and more fun for everyone. It has been

pupils wanting to be involved in sport because of the richness and variety of opportunities. Links with local sports clubs and school sport partnerships had strengthened both curricular and extra-curricular provision. Schools' preparation, however, for the new government target of five hours of physical education and school sport varied.<sup>8</sup> All the schools visited already offered between one and three additional hours of physical activity each week.

39. Generally, accommodation, equipment and resources for physical education were appropriate and supported curriculum provision well. Schools had a good range of equipment and resources, sometimes recently upgraded using funding from their sports partnership. Subject leaders had also become adept at supplementing their equipment, for example by using supermarkets' voucher schemes effectively.
40. The very small schools visited provided a full curriculum effectively, despite cramped hall space or limited outdoor facilities, or both. Many of the schools visited had made the best possible use of the space they had but, given better accommodation, could have improved the quality of pupils' experiences. Occasionally, physical education lessons were hampered by being held in multi-purpose halls where, for example, tables for school meals took up large amounts of space. Towards the end of the survey, more schools were benefiting from using facilities at their local partner secondary schools, such as for gymnastics. On rare occasions, facilities and provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties in mainstream schools were inadequate and inappropriate.
41. Involvement in the school sport partnership often enabled subject leaders to have access to funds. They could use these to upgrade and introduce a wider range of physical education equipment and resources for the curriculum and extra-curricular provision. About one in 10 of the survey schools, for example, had improved their outdoor play environment by using funding to establish playground zones and adventure areas.

A primary school used its lunchtime play activities very well to supplement the physical education and sport programme. The programme, devised by the subject leader, ran daily through the lunch break. The playground was divided into four play zones, each managed by a play leader, all of whom had received training in positive play. On the day of the inspection the four zones were for dancing, skipping, ball and astro-turf. A good range of equipment was provided for skipping, the ball zone and the astro-turf,

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supported by a commercial sponsor, the DCSF, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport over the last five years.

<sup>8</sup> This is reflected in the Public Service Agreement target (January 2008): 'To deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high-quality PE and sport.'

where pupils were practising hockey skills. An additional 'gym trail' zone, designed to improve coordination skills, was set up for specific pupils, supported by a teaching assistant. Most of the 400 pupils took part in one or more activities each day. The school's midday supervisors reported that, since the activities had been provided, pupils' attitudes and behaviour at lunchtime had improved significantly.

## Leadership and management

42. In the first year of the survey, leadership and management were good or outstanding in half the schools surveyed. In the final year of the survey, there were strong indications of improvement in the sample of schools, with two thirds judged good or better, including eight where leadership and management were outstanding.
43. The selection of a subject leader was a critical decision. The most effective showed a keen interest in the subject and were prepared to provide robust leadership and support for their colleagues in order to improve provision and raise standards. Consistently, the key characteristics of effective subject leadership were:
  - good subject knowledge, used well to lead training for staff
  - the provision of good role models for other staff in teaching physical education well
  - a good understanding of what is required for high-quality provision
  - commitment and enthusiasm, including organising and leading a wide range of enrichment activities for pupils.
44. Almost all the subject leaders in the survey were able to identify the aspects of physical education that were strengths in their schools and those that required improvement. Although they understood the strengths and weaknesses, only around one in five had procedures to monitor, evaluate and improve provision regularly and systematically, as discussed in Part B.
45. The majority of the schools had used resources provided through the school sport partnership to audit their provision formally. Most of these schools, although not all, then used this information to develop effective action plans or development plans for physical education. Around one in 10 of the schools also used interviews with pupils and questionnaires to extend their understanding of their provision.
46. The quality of the action plans varied. All the plans seen identified priorities for improvement. Most of them focused on providing professional development, revising schemes of work or introducing new ones, extending extra-curricular opportunities, and upgrading resources. A few also identified weaknesses in assessment and more effective use of ICT to support teaching and learning as

priorities. However, too few of the plans focused sufficiently on outcomes for pupils or identified precise success criteria to measure the extent to which standards and achievement had been improved by the actions taken.

47. Frequently, in the schools visited, teachers had benefited from professional development associated with the PESSCL strategy. More often than not, subject leaders cited the school's involvement with the school sport partnership as a key factor contributing to professional development, alongside local authority officers and advisers (where such posts existed).
48. In nearly all the schools, subject leaders analysed training needs and organised professional development courses accordingly, either for all teachers or for individuals who needed additional training in a particular activity. Most professional development focused on helping teachers to improve their subject knowledge in dance and gymnastics. Team teaching or coaching by staff from the school sport partnership and sports development coaches supported teachers in improving their subject knowledge.
49. The vast majority of the subject leaders surveyed had also taken advantage of the opportunity to strengthen their own subject knowledge by attending training for primary link teachers and dedicated courses across a range of activities. Such training had greatly increased their awareness and capability to undertake their roles and responsibilities successfully.
50. In the schools visited where physical education was a strength, the subject leader had specialist subject knowledge. They were able to provide a very good role model for teaching physical education and, frequently, worked alongside other staff, team teaching to develop their subject knowledge and confidence. The following illustrates a subject leader's outstanding leadership and management in an inner-city primary school.

An efficient structure of team leadership, necessary in this much larger than average school, enabled the subject leader to work effectively with a number of staff, including senior leaders, the site manager and teaching assistants, to improve provision. They received excellent support from the headteacher. This gave physical education a high profile, seen, for instance, in the posters displayed in the school hall, illustrating the 10 outcomes of high quality physical education and school sport.

The subject leader provided a very good role model for her colleagues. She introduced modern technologies into physical education lessons, with outstanding demonstrations of its uses during the introductions to lessons and for pupils to record, evaluate and improve their work, leading to better standards.

She was strongly committed to improving standards and achievement. Several useful activities had been undertaken to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. Teachers' planning was scrutinised regularly and

observations of lessons identified aspects of teaching which required strengthening. The canvassing of parents' and pupils' views had led to, for example, 'inspire' workshops for pupils from Pakistani backgrounds, and their parents, to boost attainment and participation. Rigorous checks were also made on pupils' attainment and progress.

A very comprehensive, written evaluation identified strengths and areas for improvement. This led to a strong action plan that included developing teachers' subject knowledge through peer observation and coaching. Informative evaluations recorded the outcomes of the monitoring and were reported to staff and governors.

51. Schools' knowledge and use of the 10 outcomes for high-quality physical education and school sport varied markedly. This ranged from those where posters illustrating the outcomes were displayed prominently (such as in the above example), including photographs that illustrated how pupils in the school were meeting the outcomes, to schools that were unaware of them. Subject leaders in two of the schools visited were starting to use the outcomes as a further method to evaluate the quality of their provision.

A subject leader decided to use the 10 outcomes to assess pupils' achievements. An evaluation schedule was drawn up and class teachers were asked to judge how their pupils performed against each outcome. An evaluation revealed strengths in eight of the 10 indicators but less positive responses in terms of pupils' desire to improve and in their thinking and decision-making.

As a result, the weaker areas became priorities for improvement in the following year's action plan and teachers focused more on these aspects in planning lessons.

52. The strength of subject leadership was directly linked to the strong support given by the school leadership team, coupled with a commitment to using physical education and school sport as a means to improve pupils' lives. Where leadership and management were most effective, headteachers and subject leaders appreciated the importance of a strong curriculum in physical education. They saw how improved fitness, physical capabilities and skill levels, the enjoyment of physical activities, teamwork and leadership skills all benefited pupils' personal development and well-being. In such schools, physical education had a high profile with staff and pupils, as in the outstanding provision in the following small, rural primary school.

The headteacher's determination to place physical activity at the heart of the school's curriculum had ensured that pupils participated regularly in an excellent range of physical education and sports activities. Staff made the best possible use of limited accommodation and also visited a local secondary school gymnasium for specialist teaching for older pupils.



Achievement was at least good for all pupils. In the Foundation Stage, each child had individual objectives. Pupils in Key Stage 2 benefited from specialist teaching programmes in areas such as dance and gymnastics. Staff placed considerable emphasis on individual pupils' personal achievements. Those who were talented in particular sports, often identified in coaching sessions organised at the school, were encouraged to develop their skills in local and regional clubs. These pupils frequently went on to achieve representative honours.

Being part of a local sports partnership had helped to strengthen subject leadership and enabled pupils to take part in a wider range of sports activities and competitions. Pupils showed great enjoyment and enthusiasm for all sports activities and, with their parents, appreciated how much the school provided for them.

53. Schools' engagement with a school sport partnership also had a strong influence on their effectiveness, since the primary link teacher for the partnership was nearly always also the subject leader. Training for link teachers had increased their awareness of their roles and responsibilities and had improved their management skills and subject knowledge. The engagement with the partnership also provided time for subject leaders to audit and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of provision, to join networks of colleagues from other schools to discuss practice, and to work with sports coordinators to improve pupils' opportunities for participation.
54. A small number of the schools visited worked with highly effective subject teams, thereby building capacity across two or more members of staff. This enabled the schools to improve provision more effectively and, often, at a faster pace, while also guarding against improvements slowing if key staff changed. Teams can have benefits, as illustrated in the first example here, although they do not work if other elements are not in place.

Two members of the school's leadership team shared responsibility for the subject. They ensured it had – and maintained – a high profile. The subject leaders had a very good understanding of the quality of provision in all year groups and discussed this with each other, senior managers and their colleagues. Together they had established a good system to enable teachers to assess and record achievements. They used this information well to track pupils' progress, and analyse and report on any underachievement. Their observations of lessons and feedback on points for improvement were helping to improve teaching and learning. Their encouragement to staff to become involved in the extra-curricular sports programme helped to enhance pupils' enjoyment and well-being through sporting activities.

In contrast, in a school of a similar size in a similar locality, subject leadership rested temporarily with three members of staff. This

arrangement covered a time when the school was without a nominated subject leader. An action plan had been written only recently and the school had gained limited advantage from being part of a sports partnership. Although the previous subject leader had attended some of the training for primary link teachers, this had not improved the subject's overall leadership and management. Procedures for monitoring and evaluation were not defined and much of the teaching had been assigned to a team of sports coaches. Standards in physical education were below average and pupils had limited opportunities to take part in sporting activities after school.

55. In the few schools in the survey where physical education was inadequate or barely satisfactory, a key factor was weak leadership or the absence of a full-time subject leader. These included schools that had newly appointed subject leaders who had made a good start but had not had time to make an impact.
56. Even in schools where the quality of leadership was good overall, an area of relative weakness was the monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress over time in physical education. This is discussed in Part B. Generally, record-keeping of pupils' progress in swimming was better than that for other aspects, often because the instructors leading the swimming programme produced the records. Occasionally, the instructors retained these records, rather than sharing them with the school; alternatively, they were made available but the subject leaders did not analyse them to measure pupils' progress and its contribution to their overall achievements.
57. All the schools in the survey provided annual reports on pupils' involvement in physical education and school sport. These varied considerably in length, content and quality. Typically, reports written by teachers of Reception children had specific comments related to pupils' achievements in physical development, aligned closely with the Foundation Stage profile. The best examples were skilfully personalised. Reports written for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 tended to be less focused on individual pupils' achievements. Very few of the subject leaders scrutinised reports to evaluate the content or used the outcomes to analyse provision.
58. At best, the schools kept pupils and parents well informed through regular newsletters and information displayed on notice boards of sporting events, club activities and pupils' achievements in physical education and sport.
59. Subject leaders usefully devoted much of their time to attending school sport partnership meetings, organising training, and arranging coaching sessions for and attending tournaments with pupils. They had performance targets related to managing the subject, although these were more frequently linked to improving levels of participation rather than to improving standards and achievement or teaching. In the better schools visited, a governor was linked to the subject to keep in touch with developments, although few of the subject

leaders provided written reports to the governing body about pupils' progress in physical education or the subject's strengths and weaknesses.

## Physical education in secondary schools

### Achievement, standards and personal development

60. Over the three years of the survey, students' achievement was good or outstanding in just under two thirds of the secondary schools visited and at least satisfactory in all but one school. Inspectors saw more good and outstanding achievement in the sample of schools visited in the last year of the survey.
61. National standards at the end of Key Stage 3, as measured by unvalidated teacher assessments, have risen steadily over the past three years from 76% attaining Level 5 in 2005 to 81% in 2008. A higher proportion of students achieved Level 5 or above in physical education compared to teacher assessments in other non-core subjects at Key Stage 3. However, this was not sustained at Level 6 or above: fewer students reached the higher levels of performance. Standards across the breadth of games activities observed were appreciably higher than in other activities of the physical education National Curriculum at Key Stage 3, such as gymnastics and athletics.
62. Evidence from the survey indicates good knowledge and skills across the four strands of the National Curriculum and a better balance in developing students' understanding of the strands than previous surveys have seen. The vast majority of the students observed were acquiring and developing their skills well; they were also able to select and apply skills appropriately, although these tended to be stronger in games activities and dance than in other activities. An inspector recorded:

Students have outstanding opportunities to develop their skills in the four strands. They are particularly good at selecting and applying skills to help answer challenges in activity effectively. From Year 7, students are expected to lead small groups in appropriate warm-up activities, adapting them to match the conditions of the day and the activity for which they are preparing. Students are constantly encouraged to challenge themselves. In a Year 8 football lesson, for instance, students practised individual skills of ball control and were encouraged to add difficulties and complexities to beat an opponent. In another lesson, students used a range of movements to demonstrate canon and unison in dance. In both these lessons, the students were able to evaluate their own and others' work accurately and, as a result, made rapid progress.

63. Students have responded well to increased opportunities to develop their skills of observation, evaluation and feedback. In the last year of the survey this emerged as a strength of provision across all activity areas, as in the following example.

Students are encouraged to evaluate their own and each other's performance in all physical education lessons, although it is done in a way that does not hold back levels of activity. Students are given very clear criteria for success in performance on work cards that include a good mixture of text and pictures to illustrate excellence. These help them to identify what high quality should look like and recognise areas for improvement, both in their own performances but also when observing their peers. The role has become almost second nature to students and they give continuous and constructive feedback to each other very supportively. As a result, the vast majority of students make good progress; they are self-confident and standards are above average.

64. The physical education departments seen had given prominence to developing students' knowledge and understanding of fitness and health, linked to developing a healthy lifestyle. This was a strength of provision for physical education, although students did not always put it into practice. In half of the schools visited, the links between this strand of the physical education National Curriculum, the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda and the Healthy Schools award were strong, as in this example.

Units of work are planned well to emphasise one of the strands in each lesson. Consequently, students have excellent opportunities to develop their understanding, knowledge and use of the four strands. Their understanding of health and fitness is particularly well developed and they gain an increasing awareness of the effects of exercise. They know why it is important to warm up, and some can talk confidently about the components of fitness and how to improve them. They know how much exercise to take each week and develop a very good understanding of how different training methods contribute to improved performance. Older students write their own training plans, such as working on their agility and stamina to improve football skills. They not only know about healthy eating but also make informed and appropriate choices from the school lunchtime menu.

65. In a girls' school, an inspector reported:

The vast majority of the girls have a well-developed understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle because of the school's commitment to and achievement of the Healthy Schools Gold Award. The fitness clubs at lunchtimes have proved very popular and, by demand, have had to be extended to accommodate all those wanting to attend. Girls enjoy the opportunities to work in friendship groups across the age range and say, 'This helps to keep me going'. All the girls spoken to were very positive about the opportunities to be physically active.

66. Schools' use of the 10 outcomes was very variable. In the main, the 12 specialist sports colleges surveyed were using them highly effectively. Posters

promoting the outcomes were displayed prominently; they were referred to in lessons and used for evaluation with students. One department in a sports college focused very effectively on the two outcomes of understanding and decision-making to develop students' more detailed knowledge and understanding of the subject. In another sports college, the inspector noted:

Students know and use the 10 outcomes of the PESSCL strategy during lessons, particularly in Year 9 where this work was first trialled. Students are familiar with the content and are able to discuss which outcomes they are meeting and why. This promoted their good awareness of the progress they are making in lessons, how extra-curricular activities boosted their achievements and what they wanted to achieve next. Posters of the 10 outcomes were displayed in the physical education working areas to further remind and motivate students to attain their highest standards.

The teachers in the minority of the schools visited who were unaware of the existence or potential of the 10 outcomes were missing an opportunity to support improved standards.

67. The proportion of students achieving A\* to C grades in GCSE physical education examinations rose by three percentage points between 2005 and 2008, from 59% to 62%. While the results for girls have increased slightly from 60% in 2005 to 62%, the proportion of boys achieving these grades has increased from 58% to 62%. There has been an overall increase of 32% in the number of girls taking GCSE physical education since 2004. Although there is no longer a gap between the overall attainment of boys and girls in physical education, boys tend to be stronger in the practical aspects and girls in the written papers. Students in the schools surveyed were frequently attaining their best examination results in physical education.
68. The number of schools in England offering GCSE examinations in dance has increased in the last three years, although the number of students choosing these courses is still relatively small compared to all other subjects. Only 5% of those taking GCSE dance are boys. The results are the weakest of all GCSE subjects, although there is a trend of improvement.
69. At AS and A2 GCE level, the take-up of physical education GCE examinations has increased by about 9% in the last five years. Approximately one in five students completing the AS course choose not to take the full A level. The proportion of students achieving A–E grades in A2 physical education was 97.5% in 2008. However, it remains one of the weakest subjects at A level. While fewer girls than boys take AS or A2 examinations, they attain more highly than boys. In A2 physical education, 48% of girls and only 33% of boys gained A or B grades in 2008.

70. The number of students taking dance at AS and A2 remains very small. Of those taking the course, 47% of girls attained A or B grades against 42% of boys.
71. In the schools visited, physical education had a considerable impact on students' personal development. Participation, behaviour and relationships between staff and students were often outstanding. Very occasionally, inappropriate behaviour slowed the pace of learning or disrupted the learning of others. However, the vast majority of the students were enthusiastic about physical education and had very positive attitudes to their learning. They said how much they enjoyed the subject, especially in relation to the greater choice in Key Stage 4 lessons and the opportunities to undertake leadership roles or to gain accreditation for leadership. Following changes to the curriculum, motivation levels for older girls in particular had improved, as in this example.

The school has taken students' opinions into account well through their completion of regular questionnaires on provision. Successful changes have been made, such as reverting to single-sex teaching and more individual activities for girls. Innovative changes to the curriculum for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students include the choice of individual sports, team activities, aesthetic activities and swimming. The opportunities to select pathways of learning based on interest have improved attendance and participation, especially for girls in Key Stage 4. This is particularly noticeable when they choose the dance option.

72. In all the secondary schools visited, students had opportunities to complete sports leader, dance leader or national governing body awards. The majority of these students subsequently become involved in organising and running inter-form or inter-house competitions and clubs for younger pupils. They also make a good contribution by running festivals of sport, tournaments and clubs in partner primary schools. In a few of the secondary schools visited, students had been elected physical education prefects, sports council members and house sports captains. Many of the students taking leadership awards acknowledged the opportunities to work together in teams, the gains in self-confidence because of the varied experiences and roles, and how this helped to prepare them for the future.

An outstanding physical education department in an inner-city secondary school has developed an innovative leadership programme. It extends the work started with the Playground Leaders Award in primary schools. The programme is very popular, with more than 20% of the secondary school roll participating. The skills of leadership are gradually expanded across Key Stage 3 and into Key Stage 4, involving students working through five leadership levels, both within lessons and during out of hours activity.

The work starts with developing independence and refereeing games with small teams and moves on to planning, coaching and leading practices of

more advanced skills. As well as accreditation through school awards, the programme leads into the range of nationally recognised leadership qualifications. These include the Sports Leaders UK 'Young Leaders' Award, Sports Leaders Level 1, and several governing body entry-level coaching awards, such as the Junior Football Organisers Award. Parallel programmes exist for qualifications in dance leadership.

In Key Stage 4, students also become involved in the national 'TOP Link' and 'Step into Sport' schemes. Many of the students work in local primary schools. The real value comes with their involvement in their own learning and in supporting their knowledge and understanding of the 'selecting and applying' strand of the National Curriculum. The students say that commitment to the leadership programme has helped to build their confidence and improve their performance. Those participating in this work are excellent role models. Their contributions help to build the high self-esteem that permeates the department.

73. Opportunities to take leadership qualifications have increased substantially. In 2007/08, just over two thirds of the 28 schools visited were offering a range of qualifications as sports leaders, young football or basketball leaders and young dance leaders. Students involved in these courses could not praise the opportunities highly enough to inspectors. One commented to an inspector: 'It has helped me become more confident, not just in physical education but in my other subjects too. I am more willing to ask questions and give input to class discussion.'
74. Students studying Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) or sports leader courses are required to plan and run a sports festival for primary school students. They relished the opportunities to be good role models for physical education and sport and to work with younger students in local primary schools and in their own schools. The opportunities not only enhanced their self-esteem but also extended the range and number of activities in the schools in which they worked. In one outstanding school, a larger than average school drawing from a wide rural area, the impact was exceptional.

The students benefit from excellent personal development through physical education, receiving high quality support and guidance from staff. They are actively encouraged to develop confidence, independence, leadership qualities and aspirations through following leadership qualifications and volunteer sports programmes. Students regularly work with primary-aged pupils.

The benefits for the students include improved organisational skills, increased confidence to talk to large groups of people, and opportunities to work alongside adults in team teaching. Through such provision, high quality outcomes for physical education and school sport – striving to succeed, teamworking and developing evaluative skills – are very

apparent. The school has gained the Healthy Schools gold award, and students' awareness of the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles is excellent.

In discussions, students referred to their high levels of satisfaction with physical education. Staff nurture strong relationships with students that lead to exemplary attitudes to learning and behaviour. Attendance and participation rates are outstanding. Students' achievements are recognised through a 'star' for the week, assemblies and a good referral system, alongside press coverage for outstanding performances.

75. Just over one in 10 of the schools visited were actively seeking to involve students in making decisions about provision in physical education. When this work was effective, students' personal development was enhanced directly through physical education. Students completed an annual evaluation of their experiences and were asked to suggest improvements. The following example is from a school with specialist status in the humanities.

Through the strong students' sports council, their personal development is significantly enhanced by their contributions to decisions about provision for physical education. The students are elected democratically and provide mature feedback to their peers through year group assemblies and a strategically placed noticeboard.

Students have good opportunities to voice their opinions through an annual evaluation of provision. Positive changes have included amendments to the choices for the core Key Stage 4 curriculum and extra-curricular programme to increase the range and number of activities, especially non-traditional team games; the availability of water fountains in the physical education area and lockers to store kit during the day. Additionally, following requests from girls who completed GCSE dance, A level dance has been introduced.

### Teaching, learning and assessment

76. Teaching and learning were good or outstanding in two thirds of the schools surveyed, although only five of the 84 schools were judged to have consistently outstanding practice. Teaching on examination- and leadership-accredited courses was never less than good. Teaching and learning were not judged to be inadequate in any of the schools surveyed, although procedures for assessing and tracking progress were inadequate in two.
77. In all the schools visited, physical education was taught predominantly by a team of well-qualified, subject specialist teachers. With the exception of schools with sport or performing art specialist status, however, few schools visited had specialist teachers for dance. In the schools with dance specialists, standards in dance were higher and more students were choosing to study dance to a



higher level. One of the schools had linked effectively with an arts college to provide specialist dance teaching.

78. A small minority of the lessons seen were taught by non-specialist teachers, often deployed with core Key Stage 4 students, or by external coaches. Generally, these lessons were satisfactory rather than good, mainly because either the teacher's knowledge of the requirements for the physical education National Curriculum or knowledge to support progression in learning was weaker.
79. The newly qualified teachers observed were prepared well to teach the full range of activities and strands of the National Curriculum. The quality of secondary initial teacher education courses for physical education has improved significantly over the last three to four years, aided by funding from the TDA to tackle weaker aspects of provision and concerted work within the physical education higher education institution network to share good practice.<sup>9</sup>
80. In just over two thirds of the schools, teachers' subject knowledge was good or outstanding. It was used highly effectively to improve the rate of students' learning, particularly their knowledge of theory on accreditation or examination courses and in performance skills. In the majority of the schools, teaching strengths were fully exploited in curricular and extra-curricular programmes to ensure students had the best opportunities to make progress. For example, in one school, a teacher with expert knowledge of basketball taught this across the school; in another, one teacher taught swimming to all age groups. In post-16 settings, an increasing number of colleges offer sports academies in a growing range of sports, providing learners with an opportunity to experience high-level coaching in their chosen sport, as well as access to academic or vocational learning programmes.<sup>10</sup>
81. The majority of the teachers observed were skilled at planning lessons that were well structured, had a broad range of activities and led students through progressively more challenging tasks. Rapid progress was evident in the following example.

The teacher used his subject knowledge to break down skills into small elements that enabled the students to practise and learn at a pace which suited their ability. In a Year 8 rugby lesson, the students were taught correct tackling positions before the teacher directed them to move to static tackling. His careful observation and assessment ensured the boys moved to this stage only when ready. Higher attaining students were

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<sup>9</sup> In 2004, the TDA commissioned a national project to raise the quality of physical education initial teacher training provision.

<sup>10</sup> *Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in leisure, travel and tourism* (070245), Ofsted, 2009; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070245](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070245).

challenged well through being paired with others of similar ability to introduce full tackling.

Occasionally, however, the most able students were not challenged enough and were capable of achieving more.

82. In the vast majority of the schools visited, the pace of lessons was good and most lessons were well matched to different ability levels, as in this example of effective teaching in a large, specialist sports college in an urban area.

Outstanding teaching plans stimulate activities that excite, engage and motivate students. They have excellent opportunities to experience different roles. For example, when coaching each other in a Year 8 gymnastics lesson, they used posters to discuss the correct technique and had been taught to observe and evaluate body tension and control in balance. In a Year 10 trampolining lesson, the teacher used reciprocal learning strategies<sup>11</sup>, asking probing questions of the observer and how this could be fed back most effectively to improve the work. In Year 11 lessons, students led different warm-up sessions, refereed a conditioned football game confidently and suggested strategies to improve play and communication within the team. All the sessions included very effective questioning related to individual students' targets, prompts for them to reflect on their progress, and cross-references to aspects of other sports to extend students' understanding.

In the few instances where teaching assistants were observed, they made a good contribution to supporting students, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

83. Teachers discussed and reviewed learning outcomes regularly with the students throughout the best lessons. Students were given time to practise, consolidate and refine their skills before being introduced to the next stage. This example shows outstanding teaching in introducing challenge.

The subject knowledge of all the teachers is very good. Rapid progress stems from the coaching, purposeful demonstrations and structured progressions they provide. Detailed lesson planning identifies clear learning outcomes and the students' different ability levels.

Almost all the teaching is good; some lessons have outstanding features, as in the lesson in which the teacher used simple but challenging practices of gradually increasing difficulty. These were then applied to the game to

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<sup>11</sup> Reciprocal learning has been described as a dialogue between teachers and students in which participants take turns assuming the role of teacher.

improve a particular technique. For example, a small game involving shuttlecocks was used to improve students' reaction time. This was then applied to the skill of returning a ball over the net in volleyball. The lessons are conducted at a good pace and take account of the ways in which the students learn.

84. In most lessons, and especially during examination and leadership courses, a good range of teaching methods stimulated and engaged students. In outstanding lessons, teachers used critical thinking and problem-solving activities particularly effectively and they skilfully guided students to discover new information and solutions. Demonstrations illustrated or corrected technique. In these lessons, teaching was always challenging, innovative and set high expectations. In a GCSE class, for example, discussion, investigation and independent research on the internet extended students' understanding of new material. The following example comes from an A-level lesson in a rural school.

The learning objectives were linked clearly to examination questions and improving examination technique to gain the highest marks. For example, the excellent use of a 'trigger' question led to high-level discussion and debate where students were at ease in offering and justifying sometimes controversial views on the differences between recreation and national sports. An excellent range of visual images playing in the background recalled previous work on the history and psychology of sport. These were skilfully related to the subject so that the students saw the relevance of and links to previous and current learning. The pace of interactions between the teacher and the students was fast but, where necessary, the teacher gave time for them to reflect on and then revise answers.

Relationships were excellent. The teacher knew every student's interests and areas of sporting expertise; he used these at every opportunity to draw them into the lesson. Inspirational teaching led to enthusiastic, articulate and intelligent responses. Their progress was exceptional.

85. A strength of the teaching in the majority of the schools visited was skilful questioning to extend students' knowledge and understanding of physical education. Teachers' use of the terminology of physical education developed students' literacy skills. Effective questioning challenged their thinking and encouraged students to find a range of solutions. This was particularly noticeable in GCSE and A-level classes.
86. Where teaching and learning were satisfactory rather than good, at least one of the following features was usually evident:
- learning objectives were too broad and did not take fully into account the range of students' abilities and needs

- too much talking by the teacher, so that the pace of learning slowed and students were inactive for too long
  - too many teacher-directed activities, so that students' opportunities to use their own ideas were limited
  - too much reliance on worksheets in accredited courses.
87. Fewer than one in 10 of the schools visited used ICT to stimulate students' interest and support learning in all age groups. Of these, most had purchased commercial software for movement analysis. This offered students opportunities to observe, analyse and evaluate their own and others' performance to bring about improvements. For example, students in one school observed and evaluated their own and others' work very effectively through using digital camera recordings of performance and peer assessment sheets. In another school where the use of ICT was very effective, the inspector observed the following.

Video clips from 'YouTube' on the boxing match between Mike Tyson and Oliver McCall were used to discuss somatic and cognitive impact on physiological arousal when participating in sport and its effects on performance, following the breakdown of McCall in the ring. This led to discussion of the importance of temperament under pressure, drawing on examples such as an England versus Germany penalty shoot-out and the missing of an easy conversion which would have won the rugby league challenge cup. The teacher then led a session expertly on the impact of confidence, peaking in performance and self-talk, comparing performances of Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell. The use of visual cues, contemporary examples and discussion combined with the teacher's excellent subject knowledge helped to consolidate students' understanding of a complex topic very well.

Nevertheless, few of the schools used ICT routinely, other than during accreditation courses or for recording students' assessments and tracking their progress. A similar finding was noted in the context of post-16 physical education in the report referred to earlier.<sup>12</sup>

88. Procedures for assessing, recording and tracking students' progress remained a relative weakness in many of the schools visited. This is discussed further in Part B.
89. Schools visited in the final year of the survey used assessment for learning effectively in lessons. The majority of the teachers seen in these schools were able to observe and analyse students' work successfully, leading to timely

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<sup>12</sup> *Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in leisure, travel and tourism* (070245), Ofsted, 2009; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>.

interventions during activities. In most cases, feedback during lessons was regular, comprehensive and constructive. Consequently, the vast majority of the students seen in Key Stage 3 knew how well they were doing and what they needed to do to improve further. Most of them also knew their level of attainment and their targets for improvement. This was not the case for the majority of Key Stage 4 students observed, unless they were on examination or accredited courses.

90. Systems to track and analyse performance for students on accredited courses were well established. Marking of coursework and feedback to students on how to improve were highly effective in most of the schools visited. Staff discussed individuals or groups of students confidently with inspectors; they knew who was on target, underachieving or needed additional challenge, and the action taken.
91. The departments with the best assessment practice had comprehensive and coherent systems of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment which were applied consistently. Teachers set students targets for improvement systematically; these were periodically reviewed and judgements about their progress were moderated with other staff and other schools. In addition, as a matter of routine, the students were required to assess their own and others' performances in lessons against agreed criteria.

The quality and effectiveness of assessment procedures are outstanding. Good-quality data about attainment on entry, together with frequent assessment, provide information that the department uses effectively to inform planning and tailor provision. It has developed an excellent assessment system that monitors, tracks and evaluates individual students' progress. The database is updated regularly and identifies students who are meeting or exceeding expectations, and those underperforming, at which point additional support is provided to get students back on track. The system is well embedded and transparent. Students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. They are involved in commenting on the staff's perceptions of their attainment and progress. The school maintains assessment records for all students, including non-GCSE and BTEC students in Key Stage 4. Parents receive a termly progress report and benefit from formal, face-to-face consultations with staff.

### The curriculum

92. In 2005 and the first half of 2006, inspectors judged the curriculum to be just satisfactory in the majority of the schools visited because of insufficient breadth and balance in the programmes they offered.
93. In the final year of the survey, the curriculum was good or better in two thirds of the schools visited; it was outstanding in just over one in five. The schools in

the final year were all able to show the changes they had introduced that had led to such judgements. Key developments included improved school–club links as a direct result of schools’ involvement in the PESSCL strategy and broader, more balanced provision. In addition, introducing leadership programmes and new, exciting activities for students captured their imagination and increased participation rates, particularly among older girls.

94. Evidence from the schools visited suggests that, increasingly, students were being offered a much wider experience of physical education and sport. Golf, skateboarding, mountain biking and cycling, yoga, archery, cheerleading, martial arts and problem-solving challenges were being taught alongside more traditional activities, often at students’ request. This not only enriched the provision but provided creative solutions when facilities were limited or the programme of traditional team activities was proving unpopular. This had reduced disaffection and improved engagement, particularly among vulnerable groups.
95. Schools in the final year of the survey were able to give good examples of a range of activities they had introduced to personalise the curriculum, including ‘fast-tracking’ high-attaining students to start GCSE courses in Year 9, mentoring for gifted and talented students through the Junior Athlete Education (JAE) programme and students’ use of sports pursued outside school for GCSE accreditation.<sup>13</sup>
96. A few of the schools had made innovative changes to the Key Stage 4 curriculum, which gave their students opportunities to select programmes based on their interests. This resulted in better attendance and participation in these schools, especially among girls. One school, for example, used a running club that focused on power walking, running and cross-country running to engage specific students, including some who were obese or unfit. The following illustrates a school’s efforts to suit the needs of girls better.

A new curriculum introduced as a pilot for Year 9 girls is seen as a way of gradually broadening provision, leading into various Key Stage 4 curriculum pathways. The curriculum takes into account the results of a survey of the students, as well as recognising the more personalised learning opportunities likely to be introduced as a result of implementing the new National Curriculum programme of study. Choices in Year 9 enable students to focus on units of work emphasising individual skill and creative ability such as gym, dance and trampolining, or team games, or a combination of these two. Whichever choice is made is not to the

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<sup>13</sup> The JAE programme is designed to support gifted and talented young athletes. Implemented through sports colleges and their partnership schools, the programme helps young athletes achieve a balanced lifestyle of training, competitions, schoolwork, examinations and family life.

exclusion of other activities. Early responses indicate a further increase in motivation and high demand for a range of dance styles.

97. However, health and fitness programmes did not feature consistently. These were often marginalised or subsumed into other activities. This is worrying, given the widespread concerns over childhood obesity and the increasingly sedentary lifestyles that many young people lead.
98. By the final year of the survey, most of the schools visited had introduced additional accreditation, volunteer, leadership and support programmes into the curriculum. The schools that offered these recognised the different needs of their students well. The certificate of achievement was proving particularly successful. However, only a very small number of the schools offered entry level accreditation for less able students. The post-16 report referred to in paragraph 80 indicated that many colleges offered a range of qualifications at all levels from entry level and, in some cases, up to foundation degree level.
99. Although the schools visited met the minimum statutory requirements for the coverage of National Curriculum activity areas at key stages 3 and 4, very few of them offered outdoor and adventurous activities or swimming as part of their curriculum programmes.
100. Of the schools surveyed, nine out of 10 offered two hours of physical education in the curriculum each week in Key Stage 3. However, less than half of the schools offered two hours or more at Key Stage 4 for students following only core lessons. In one of the schools, Key Stage 4 students had only 30 minutes a week of physical education. This was in stark contrast to another school where senior leaders had committed three hours a week, for all students in key stages 3 and 4, for physical education within the curriculum as well as further time for accreditation in first aid, leadership or coaching awards. Students also had an additional five hours for physical education at GCSE level. Schools that offered dance as part of the performing arts curriculum usually did so in addition to physical education.
101. The best programmes were broad and balanced and had been adapted following students' feedback. Units of work were of sufficient length to allow for in-depth study of activities and they reflected good coverage of the four strands of the physical education National Curriculum, especially in Key Stage 3. Occasionally, time was lost when lessons started late or finished early.
102. In most of the schools visited, mapping of the curriculum was logical and sequenced to consolidate learning, as in this example.

Curriculum provision is excellent and students make very good progress in developing the four core strands of physical education. There is a very good balance between allowing students some autonomy to tailor provision to their specific needs and interests and ensuring in-depth coverage of the National Curriculum. All students have access to two

hours of high quality physical education at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 within the core physical education curriculum, while GCSE students receive an additional two hours. The addition of GCSE dance, the BTEC First Diploma in Sport and the Junior Sports Leaders award broadens the curriculum further. Different pathways for success as students progress through the school, including leadership, vocational and traditional academic routes of accreditation, help to ensure that all students are included.

Occasionally, students in core lessons at Key Stage 4 had insufficient time to study an activity in depth, and limited choice; they lacked alternative curriculum pathways to suit their interests.

103. The schools that had outstanding curriculum provision offered their students a rich and varied programme that provided a high degree of social, physical and intellectual challenge. As a result, the students flourished and achieved highly, as illustrated by this specialist language college, serving a mixed socio-economic area.

The quality and impact of the curriculum are outstanding. The school provides an impressive range of opportunities and experiences, which go well beyond the minimum requirements of the National Curriculum. Students in Key Stage 3 benefit from opportunities for leadership built in throughout the curriculum, while Key Stage 4 and post-16 students are able to gain academic and vocationally based accreditation such as GCSE physical education, a BTEC Sport Diploma and A level physical education. In addition, students undertake the Duke of Edinburgh award and the Junior and Community Sports Leaders awards. There are also opportunities to experience sport in different cultural settings through international sports tours, and to take part in outdoor and adventurous experiences, such as mountaineering and orienteering expeditions.

A core team of hard-working specialist staff and some 29 other staff from across and beyond the school support this extensive programme. Very strong links exist with a number of outside clubs and organisations. These provide students with an important pathway of continuous development. The effect of this high-quality provision is that students excel and standards are high, with many of them gaining the highest levels and grades possible in examinations and assessments, while others achieve regional and national recognition in their chosen disciplines.

104. The majority of the schools visited were using elements of the QCA units of work and the National Curriculum programme of study to fashion their own schemes of work. Most of these were well conceived to support teaching and learning. However, at times, schemes were insufficiently broad and reflected stereotypes of male and female activities, particularly in Key Stage 3. This frequently resulted in a programme dominated by traditional team games. For



example, nearly 70% of one school's programme was dedicated to games, while dance and gymnastics shared just 10% of the programme.

105. A small number of schools lacked breadth in their physical education curriculum so students experienced a narrow range of activities and could gain accreditation only in GCSE physical education. At the other extreme, giving students in Key Stage 4 greater choice and control over what they studied in their core lessons occasionally led to less in-depth study because the activity changed each half term. This had a negative impact on standards. Further, in a few of the schools, a narrowing of the curriculum based on teachers' expertise or interests, rather than on the requirements of the National Curriculum or on meeting students' interests, needs and aspirations led to inadequate provision in a key stage.
106. All the schools in the survey with a sixth form offered A level physical education or BTEC Level 3 Sports Studies, or both. However, few of them provided intermediate or lower-level courses. Very few other sixth-form students had access to timetabled physical education provision, although most of them were offered an enrichment programme. Take-up of these opportunities varied considerably, either because involvement was not compulsory or access to provision was not an entitlement, or both. In addition, some students were unable to benefit from the programme because of timetable clashes. One of the schools visited organised its provision for sixth-form physical education within a local consortium. This worked well: pooling resources and maximising choice provided a broader range of opportunities for the students from all the partner institutions.
107. Positive benefits associated with the National Strategies were evident, including coherent and well-conceived action to consolidate students' literacy and numeracy skills through physical education. In the best examples, students were challenged to calculate distance, predict angles of trajectory, and design and monitor competition tables. Similarly, they were required to learn and spell complex subject-specific terminology and to develop their oral communication skills when discussing tactics with peers, providing feedback, leading a warm-up or acting as officials. In a few schools, however, links to the strategies were superficial.
108. During the first two years of the survey, the primary schools visited were more positive about the impact of specialist sports colleges than the secondary schools. In the latter part of the survey, all the schools visited were very positive about the benefits they had gained from the introduction of inclusion strategies, projects for gifted and talented pupils and students, and curricular support initiatives associated with the PESSCL strategy.
109. As discussed further in Part B, there is still considerable scope to improve transition and to make the best use of students' prior learning. The following exemplifies good links.

After identifying some problems with continuity in their respective curricula and driven by a desire to improve learning and ease transition between phases, the primary and secondary schools began collaborating. They devised complementary curricula, based on an agreed format and with common assessment criteria. This ensured that pupils had universal experiences in their primary schools and the secondary school had common transfer information from its partner primary schools. This enabled better continuity of learning since little time was lost at the beginning of Year 7 in assessing students' starting points, and the students were challenged according to their level of ability in physical education. The link was strengthened further when staff taught across the two phases to embed the new procedures. Additional advantages included the early identification and nurturing of gifted and talented pupils, as well as of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from the primary schools, who received additional mentoring and a tailored curriculum. Joint working also facilitated the sharing of resources, expertise and equipment between the primary and secondary schools.

110. The impact of a school's specialist status in other subjects on provision for physical education varied. Benefits were seen where strong links were made between physical education and the specialist subject. Good examples were seen in schools with science, design and technology, and modern languages specialisms. One school used the links established between the specialism and other subjects, including physical education, to reinforce common curriculum elements such as diet, nutrition, alcohol and drugs awareness, personal hygiene and the designing of athletic footwear. However, opportunities were missed to exploit other specialist subjects fully, such as the absence of physical education terminology displayed in different languages in a language college.
111. The vast majority of the schools visited provided a good range of enrichment opportunities, encouraging wider participation. This was enhanced further by the PESSCL strategy and the introduction of more non-traditional activities. These included sports tours, skiing, Pilates, boxer-cise, golf, sailing and horse riding. 'Street dance' in one school proved attractive to a group of otherwise disaffected students and resulted in better attendance. The rich variety of extra-curricular programmes enabled most students to discover something they liked and wanted to carry on with into adulthood. The post-16 report referenced in paragraph 80 also noted that 'nearly all of the colleges provided a broad range of enrichment activities'.
112. Because of such extra-curricular opportunities, all the schools visited were satisfying the expectation to provide four hours of physical activity. In the last year of the survey most of the schools visited were meeting or had good plans in place to meet the Government's new expectation of providing five hours of physical education and school sport through the curriculum and extra-curricular and local sports activities.

Extra-curricular provision is a strong feature of the school's work and students receive outstanding opportunities either to reinforce learning from the core curriculum or experience new activities. Consequently, a very high percentage of the students take part regularly in activities at lunchtime, after school and at weekends. The school has gained Sportsmark gold in recognition of the strength of its provision, including non-traditional activities such as archery, rowing and skiing. Alongside these, students can choose volunteering schemes through the school's involvement in the 'Step into Sport' programme. Talented students join the 'Junior Athlete Education' programme and benefit from additional support and guidance to further their sporting ambitions. There is an on-site dance academy and the school is considering establishing a sports academy. It uses outside coaches and teachers effectively to enrich students' experience of physical education and sport. The school competes locally, regionally and nationally, while many other students simply enjoy the opportunities for non-competitive learning.

113. Most of the extra-curricular provision observed in the survey took place after school rather than during lunchtimes, which were often too short to allow for any meaningful activity. Just over half of the schools ran a good range of class or house competitions and competed against other schools. In the schools which had lunchtime schemes, a combination of trained supervisors, private coaches and senior students frequently acted as organisers and leaders.
114. Accommodation, equipment and resources for physical education were generally of high quality in the vast majority of the schools and supported provision well. However, for significant periods of time throughout the year, nearly all the schools lost major indoor spaces for external examinations and modular tests, restricting the range of opportunities at those times. A minority of the schools visited enhanced provision by using partner or local community resources such as swimming pools, astro-turf pitches or sports centres. The following illustrates the range of facilities available in some physical education departments.

Facilities include extensive fields, hard court areas and a dedicated physical education classroom with 14 computers, a weight training and fitness area, sports hall, dance studio, gymnasium and climbing wall. In addition, the school uses a local all-weather surface, cricket pitch and swimming pool. These provide the foundation for high-quality provision and engender positive attitudes to learning.

### Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management of physical education were good in just over two thirds of the secondary schools visited. They were inadequate in only two of the 84 schools. Leadership and management were judged to be outstanding in only four of the schools.

116. The great majority of the physical education departments observed had undertaken detailed evaluations of their subject. Almost all these departments knew their strengths and weaknesses well and used this knowledge to draw up suitable improvement plans. Regular monitoring and evaluation activities, such as observing lessons, scrutinising assessment data and auditing staff and students' views kept the best departments in touch with the outcomes of their development planning. Where leadership and management were outstanding, there was a clear vision for the subject from leaders and managers who knew what they wanted their students to achieve. This was based on a comprehensive system of rigorous evaluation and precisely defined improvement priorities.

The subject leader has a good knowledge of the department's strengths and weaknesses, especially the achievement and standards of all the different groups of students. The action plan has clear priorities to improve further an already good department. Its timescales are realistic, with monitoring and evaluation activities identified to ensure its successful implementation. As all members of the department contributed to its construction, there is a real sense of ownership of the plan, as well as drive and commitment to implement improvements.

117. The most effective departments used the expertise of all staff very effectively to improve provision by undertaking regular professional development. Strong teamwork among departmental staff and a collective commitment to reach and sustain high standards characterised the best departments. They shared teachers' skills and knowledge in departmental meetings to improve already good provision. Team teaching and departmental training were used frequently to introduce new activities and teaching approaches, while comprehensive and up-to-date schemes of work ensured the curriculum was matched to students' needs and guided teachers' planning.
118. In general, the secondary physical education departments visited drew less than the primary schools on school sport partnerships, relying more heavily on professional development courses to improve teachers' subject knowledge.
119. As in the primary schools visited, senior leadership teams in the secondary schools appreciated the value of physical education and sport in contributing to students' overall achievements and their personal development. The role played by the head of department in demonstrating exemplary teaching and a positive approach to the subject was crucial in setting the tone for staff and students.
120. Good departments made sure physical education and sport received a high profile in public displays of information on achievements, events and opportunities. Noticeboards and displays promoted involvement in club activities, in school and in the local community. They also advertised and invited participation in coaching and leadership awards and celebrated personal and team performances.

121. Systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching were relative weaknesses. In the weaker schools, even where systems existed to observe teaching and analyse attainment data, these data were not used productively to evaluate the quality of provision and plan for improvements.
122. Where leadership and management were outstanding, quality assurance systems ensured that all members of the department were accountable for its outcomes. Observations of teaching and learning, moderation of assessments and regular meetings maintained consistently high-quality provision. These schools were using students' views systematically to inform subsequent development plans.

In a high-achieving secondary school in which leadership and management were outstanding, the excellent departmental structure provided effective leadership at all levels. Experienced and knowledgeable staff worked well with less experienced colleagues in a department which was forward-looking and creative. Weekly departmental meetings supported consistency and ensured that staff worked well as a team. Governors and senior managers recognised the value of sport in whole-school improvement; consequently, they were prepared to invest in higher levels of staffing, excellent facilities and resources of the highest quality. Employing specialist coaches helped students to become elite performers in sports such as rugby and gymnastics. The head of department's high expectations of the achievements of staff and students had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and standards. Teaching was monitored consistently, a comprehensive scheme of work guided curriculum planning and assessment procedures were well established. Students knew the levels at which they were working and what they needed to do to improve.

123. Physical education departments were managed efficiently in just under three quarters of the schools visited. Appropriate systems ensured that the department's daily work ran smoothly, as illustrated in this outstanding school.

Exemplary management systems and structures facilitated the department's smooth operation. Roles and responsibilities were clearly established and efficiently undertaken. As a result of detailed schemes of work, a comprehensive induction programme, thorough curriculum planning, and clear policies and working procedures, all the staff, including newly qualified teachers, trainee teachers and support staff received effective support and guidance.

124. Departments' capacity to improve was judged to be good in around three quarters of those visited, as in the following example.

The well-organised and clearly focused head of department and staff showed a commitment to and a sense of common purpose in improving

already good provision. Each member of the enthusiastic, hard-working team had delegated responsibility for improving provision further, such as introducing systems with which to recognise and reward students' achievements, and introducing and establishing key stage curriculum changes.

## The impact of the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links strategy and Specialist Sports Status

125. The Government launched the PESSCL strategy in October 2002. Its aim was to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities for 5- to 16-year-olds and to improve the standards of teaching, coaching and learning in physical education and school sport. Inspectors evaluated four programmes within the PESSCL strategy during the period of this survey: specialist sports colleges; school sport partnerships; provision for gifted and talented young people; and professional development. Ofsted also published reports on the PESSCL strategy (2005), on good practice in school sport partnerships (2006) and on reaching the Key Stage 2 standard in swimming (2007).<sup>14, 15, 16</sup> The 2006 report found that school sport partnerships were helping to improve the quality of provision. This continues to be the case, particularly in the primary schools visited. The overall picture is one of success in improving opportunities for young people to engage in physical education and school sport.
126. Working towards 2012, the Physical Education and Sports Strategy for Young People, launched in January 2008, has now replaced the PESSCL strategy. It sets out the Government's aim that each child should have access to five hours of physical education and sport a week by 2012, made up of two hours in school with a further three hours on school sites or in the community.
127. One of the major changes that has occurred since the PESSCL strategy was introduced has been the number of schools that now provide two hours of physical education as part of their curriculum for every child. Although this is a positive start, there is still some way to go to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to experience high-quality physical education and school sport consistently so that it has a real impact on achievement and standards.
128. Over the course of the survey, all schools in England became included in a school sport partnership. Almost all the schools visited had embraced the aims of the PESSCL strategy and were making the most of the opportunities it offered. Almost all of them had responded quickly and used their involvement

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<sup>14</sup> *The physical education, school sport and club links strategy* (HMI 2397), Ofsted, 2005; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2397>

<sup>15</sup> *School sport partnerships* (HMI 2518), Ofsted, 2006; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2518](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/2518).

<sup>16</sup> *Reaching the Key Stage 2 standard in swimming* (070023), Ofsted, 2007; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070023](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070023).

to make changes to improve provision. As a result, the benefits and profile of physical activity had been raised considerably. Only two of the secondary schools in the survey reported little benefit from being involved in a partnership, as they had limited contact with a school sports coordinator or the local specialist sports college. The following example is more typical.

The school has only recently become involved with the school sport partnership programme but this has already had an impact on swimming, where a top-up programme has been introduced for pupils unable to swim 25 metres. The school's provision has been enhanced further through the launch of volunteering and leadership programmes. Assessment has been developed through an agreed authority-wide scheme of work, and core tasks for baseline assessment have been initiated. Attempts have also been made to encourage students to continue with sport once they leave school by describing the availability of various local opportunities. The choice and diversity of activities for pupils have also increased through festivals of sport and coaching sessions.

129. Inspectors visited 12 specialist sports colleges as part of the survey. Nine were either good or outstanding in their overall effectiveness and, for students in these schools, the impact of specialist sports status was very evident. Areas of consistent good practice included:

- more opportunities for students to evaluate the provision and suggest improvements
- more secure assessment and tracking of students' progress, particularly in Key Stage 3
- the increased range and choice of activities and opportunities for accreditation, particularly in Key Stage 4
- the introduction of more non-traditional activities that took account of students' evaluations and/or were designed to re-engage disaffected students
- the expansion and range of professional development for all staff, including leadership training for middle managers.

A weaker aspect of sports college provision was that the impact of specialist sports status on subjects other than physical education was less well defined.

130. Students' responsibilities were extended successfully across a range of sporting activities. For example, students in one sports college visited had an outstanding opportunity to work with a school in Africa as part of the 'Dreams and Teams' project to promote sport, based on their commitment to

participation and leadership skills.<sup>17</sup> In eight of the specialist sports colleges the student voice was very prominent, with sports councils, student evaluations and lead roles in classrooms.

131. The impact of the work of sports colleges on other local schools, however, was more varied. The impact was greater in primary schools than in other local secondary schools, although the following illustrates an effective partnership between an established sports college and a small, rural secondary school.

The partnership alleviates some of the isolation the school faces. The quality of the outreach work is good. A member of the sports college department acts as a 'secondary manager', a post formulated by the sports college to provide direct support for secondary schools in its family of schools. This manager spends two hours a week in the rural school, working with gifted and talented students and with staff on self-review and developing teaching and learning, an invaluable resource in such a small school. Professional development opportunities are good. They include staff from the sports college developing their training and coaching skills outside their own school. The sports college promotes BTEC sport, providing a training day for its partner schools; it also hosts a termly meeting for all the heads of physical education departments. Both of these are of great benefit to this small, rural school.

Primary school staff benefited from opportunities to work alongside specialist teachers and undertake team teaching, particularly in gymnastics and dance.

132. Pupils reaped most benefit through the school sport partnership links. Increased opportunity to experience new activities, initiated by school sport coordinators, has been one of the important outcomes for both primary and secondary school pupils. The introduction of this broader range of activities has increased markedly the numbers of primary and secondary pupils taking part in physical activity, especially at lunchtime and after school.
133. Not all the schools visited, however, knew the exact numbers of pupils participating, since they did not analyse the attendance records. This was a missed opportunity to identify the small number of pupils and students who were harder to engage or reluctant to participate, to explore the reasons and to introduce activities to meet all pupils' needs and interests more successfully.
134. A well-focused approach was seen in one secondary school which had a high number of students from minority ethnic groups. The school used additional funding, available through the PESSCL strategy, particularly effectively to

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<sup>17</sup> 'Dreams and Teams' is a joint project between the Youth Sports Trust and the British Council, providing links between British schoolchildren and their counterparts around the world.



increase the participation of students from Asian backgrounds in physical education and sport.

Good links have been created with the local community, including employing former pupils from the locality as support assistants for sport. The awareness-raising days for parents and the provision of adult learning held by the school sports coordinator and primary link teacher have helped to break down barriers and gain parental support. The school has introduced activities such as kabadi, hockey and boxing, made possible by the PESSCL funding.<sup>18</sup> This has resulted in full participation in all activities, including swimming, and high numbers involved in extra-curricular activities after negotiations with the leaders from the local mosque.

135. Where the schools visited had a broader curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 4, this opened up choice and diversity. Students taking leadership accreditation courses had good opportunities to use these skills through PESSCL programmes such as the 'TOP Link' festivals. Specialist teaching and the additional use of external coaches resulted in well-motivated students who were keen to participate, such as a group of disaffected boys working on BMX and mountain-biking skills and a small number of students using a local river for canoeing.
136. In the secondary schools, particularly the specialist sports colleges, talented students were benefiting from the introduction of the Junior Athlete Education programmes. Students profit from individual mentoring, additional time for training, and coaching and 'catch up' programmes for their academic studies. For example, one of the schools visited amended the timetables of two gymnasts working towards participation in the 2012 Olympics to enable them to have additional coaching on two afternoons each week. Subject teachers provided academic work which they completed with their mentor's support at after-school sessions.
137. The majority of the primary schools visited identified their gifted and talented pupils in physical education and sport and gave them access to extension programmes. Most of these activities took place at secondary schools and included primary pupils from across the partnership's schools. This was also helping to support smoother transition and integration for this group of pupils when they reached secondary age. Secondary staff were starting to use information to set higher expectations when these pupils transferred to the secondary school. Good examples of programmes for talented pupils included ones held at sports academies and multi-skills clubs.

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<sup>18</sup> Kabadi is a team sport originally from the Indian subcontinent. Two teams, occupying opposite halves of a field, take turns to send a 'raider' into the other half to win points by tagging or wrestling members of the opposing team. The raider tries to return to his own half, holding his breath during the whole raid.

138. The time made available for professional development, based on partnership evaluations of school provision, has had a considerable impact on the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. In all the schools visited during the survey, teachers had attended partnership, association of physical education or local authority courses or worked alongside specialist teachers and coaches to increase their subject knowledge, confidence and competence to teach physical education. Teaching assistants, midday supervisors or other adults had also been trained as play leaders to support purposeful play.
139. The following describes a larger than average secondary school in a town centre and its partner primary schools. The inspector judged the impact of the PESSCL strategy to be outstanding.

The PESSCL strategy is making an impressive contribution to standards and the provision of high-quality physical education and sport in the school and within the partnership. The outstanding leadership of the school sport coordinator is inspiring. She has an ability to lead staff and enable them to develop skills, interest, enthusiasm and confidence to teach physical education. Through the sports coordinator, staff in the partnership have undertaken professional development in using ICT, assessment for learning, and thinking skills in physical education. Consequently, provision and outcomes have improved across the partnership. All this is supported very well by the very high level of commitment to the national strategy from senior leaders.

The strategy has broadened students' experiences in physical education and sport, both within curriculum time and beyond it, with many students having the opportunity to work with expert coaches and sports development officers in their chosen sport. Gifted and talented pupils have been well supported in travelling to and carrying out high-level training. Overall, these opportunities have led to increased achievement, motivation and participation, including among groups of students in danger of losing interest in physical education and sport. The leadership skills of many students have been developed substantially through 'Step into Sport' programmes and other leadership courses. Young leaders have made a significant contribution to the work with primary-aged pupils within the family of schools, where they lead activities in gymnastics, dance and trampolining.

All the action taken is carefully focused on priorities arising from good consultation with students and staff and aimed effectively at raising standards. Most of the targets set by the partnership have been met or exceeded. For example, the rate of progress has improved in lessons and the number of students taking part in extra-curricular activities significantly exceeds the national average.

140. Although the impact of the PESSCL strategy overall has been considerable in the schools visited, there are still challenges ahead for schools and school sport partnerships, leading towards and beyond 2012. How can schools ensure that the improving picture of teaching and the better quality of provision are reflected in higher standards? How can subject leaders improve assessment, recording and the tracking of progress and use the information to focus more effectively on the hard-to-reach and unfit pupils to increase their participation? How can primary subject leaders use their time most effectively to monitor and evaluate provision in their school, including the impact of the PESSCL initiatives? These questions are explored in Part B.

## Part B: Working towards 2012 and beyond

### Tackling obesity

141. Despite the generally positive messages of this report, the broader context of young people's health and fitness is worrying. The rate of obesity in young people continues to rise; projections are frightening, for example, that nine in 10 adults and two thirds of children will be obese by 2050.<sup>19</sup> The challenge is for all schools to find time for physical education and to give young people the skills and dispositions to last them into adulthood so they make independent choices about healthy lifestyles.
142. In England, the DCSF reports that 90% of schools have a minimum of two hours' physical education and school sport, but this falls short of other countries' average allocation to curricular physical education.<sup>20</sup> For example, in Wisconsin, USA, the time allocated is 150 minutes a week; in Queensland, Australia, students have between three and four hours each week.<sup>21</sup> Having found the time, schools need to ensure that physical education is of consistently good quality. For instance, in all lessons, the warm-up needs to be sufficiently rigorous for all students to raise their pulse levels high enough to benefit their levels of fitness.
143. Increasingly, schools have made good use of the PESSCL strategy and the Healthy Schools initiative to influence young people's behaviours and positive choices while they are on site. However, in every school visited, a small number of students were reluctant to participate. Schools and parents cannot afford to ignore this, and it is a challenge for everyone involved in the health and well-being of children and young people.

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<sup>19</sup> From *Healthy weight, healthy lives: a cross-government strategy for England*, Department of Health, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> From *School sports survey 2007/08*, Research Report (DCSF-RW063), DCSF, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Data from INCA: International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; [www.inca.org.uk](http://www.inca.org.uk).

144. As noted earlier in this report, the majority of the students in the schools visited had a well-developed understanding of how to lead a healthy, active lifestyle, including eating a balanced diet and drinking water during exercise. In all the primary schools and two thirds of the secondary schools most, although not all, young people were choosing to be physically active during extra-curricular opportunities; before or after school as well as at lunchtimes. Secondary students commented positively on the broader range of activities, which had increased their motivation to attend, particularly fitness clubs, yoga and martial arts. One boy said, 'This is 50/50. We need to work hard at fitness at home too. The teachers tell me how I can do that.' In one of the schools, students were campaigning for more sporting opportunities in the sixth form in order to maintain a physically active regime.
145. Only a fifth of schools in the survey were making good links between physical education, science and PSHE programmes to reinforce the messages about and understanding of being healthy. In two primary and two secondary schools where this was good, such links culminated in a 'healthy living' theme for a week or a 'healthy' day. Activities included science projects exploring and evaluating elements of fitness and introducing new physical activities. One primary school had good links with a northern professional football club to follow their 'staying healthy, active and well' programme. Pupils loved working with professional footballers, who were excellent role models for the levels of health and fitness needed to achieve sporting excellence. Pupils were inspired to start developing their own healthy lifestyles.
146. The Government's target for five hours of physical education and sport has firmly placed the emphasis on continuing to help young people in developing active rather than sedentary lives. It is time for young people to take decisive action to halt the trend towards obesity.

## Assessment

147. The procedures to assess, record and track pupils' progress in physical education over time were a relatively weaker aspect of provision in the secondary and most of the primary schools visited. They were not used systematically to improve standards. In the last year of the survey, only seven of the 33 primary schools visited and 12 of the 28 secondary schools had procedures for assessment, recording and reporting that were sufficiently robust and accurate to enable subject leaders to monitor and analyse effectively the achievement and standards of all the pupils.
148. Most subject leaders in the primary schools did not have suitable data to know precisely how well pupils were doing and in which areas of learning they were underachieving. Such monitoring was often better developed in the Foundation Stage, where staff kept comprehensive records of children's progress in physical development.

The management of assessment in a small primary school was particularly good. Teachers were encouraged to assess pupils' achievements at the end of units of work and record the outcomes, including matching them to the National Curriculum level descriptions. The information was then used effectively to match planning to pupils' needs. The subject leader collected this information to enable her to monitor attainment in each year group, check on the progress that pupils made as they moved through the school, and adapt provision as required. Teachers were asked to keep video clips and digital photographic evidence of pupils' achievements, building on the good practice established in the Foundation Stage. The subject leader also set up a system in which pupils in Key Stage 2 were beginning to accumulate their own record of achievement in physical education as part of an assessment for learning initiative: they recorded this electronically in video files and PowerPoint presentations.

149. Few primary schools had got as far as this in establishing systems to assess and record attainment to provide thorough information on pupils' progress. However, virtually all the primary subject leaders identified using assessment as an area for improvement in physical education, although only a few had started work on it. Around one in 10 school sport partnerships had begun to tackle it through collaborative work between primary and secondary staff to ensure consistent judgements. However, this was at an early stage for most and it was too early to judge the impact of the developments.
150. The most effective assessment made judgements on each area of learning and recorded these, matched against either the levels of the National Curriculum or the 10 outcomes of high-quality physical education. Schools visited in the survey's final year were increasing the emphasis on assessing pupils' progress against the four strands of the physical education National Curriculum. Subject leaders in these schools were analysing the data and were able to identify any underachieving groups of pupils and possible weaknesses in provision.

This small, inner-city primary school has an excellent system for tracking attainment and progress in physical education that mirrors how it tracks progress in English and mathematics. All teachers make assessments of pupils' attainment. These are collected and collated electronically before the subject leader analyses them. The data are used successfully to identify underachievement and improve provision for groups and individuals who are not making sufficient progress. For example, the school had identified that Year 1 boys, Year 4 girls and pupils of Pakistani heritage were underachieving and had focused support on these groups. Records of progress and targets for the end of each year are passed to the next teacher and a good range of photographic and video evidence is kept of pupils' achievements.

151. Generally, the secondary schools visited had secure procedures for tracking the progress of students in examination classes. They had also reviewed their

procedures for completing end-of-unit assessments, based on criteria derived from the four strands of the physical education National Curriculum in Key Stage 3. Departments with less secure procedures tended to have systems that were over-bureaucratic and time-consuming to complete.

152. Weaknesses remain in secondary schools in using information to identify and track the progress of different groups of students over time or to tackle any underachievement or weaknesses in provision at both key stages and in examination groups. Most of the secondary schools missed the opportunity to assess students' achievements in leadership and coaching roles.
153. Few of the secondary schools continued to assess students beyond Key Stage 3, unless they were on examination or accredited courses, and therefore they had no records of students' progress in core Key Stage 4 physical education or beyond.
154. Even in the schools where assessments were made and records kept to track pupils' progress, teachers' assessments were rarely moderated to verify their accuracy, particularly in the primary schools. More of the secondary schools used moderation exercises across the department, including moderating judgements about boys and girls. However, when moderation was not applied, this was a lost opportunity to ensure that teachers shared the same standards and high expectations.
155. The QCA's work on assessing pupils' progress aims to support teachers in judging pupils' progress, refining their understanding of their needs, and matching their planning and teaching accordingly. It has been developed for English and mathematics and is now being extended to include foundation subjects.<sup>22</sup> This is a timely development for subject leaders of physical education, set against the background of weaknesses in assessment.

## Monitoring and evaluating schools' provision

156. As described in Part A, around seven in 10 of the primary subject leaders visited have had increased opportunities to coordinate and lead their subject, through the role of primary link teacher. They have used the available days effectively to support the development of teaching and learning, for example in identifying the need for, and providing professional development through, audits. However, only around two in 10 subject leaders had used this time to monitor the quality of provision systematically or to check on standards and achievement. The result was missed opportunities to identify and share good practice or to identify underachievement – key aspects that lead to greater consistency and high quality.

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<sup>22</sup> Further information on assessing pupils' progress can be found at; [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_16884.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_16884.aspx).

157. Good and outstanding subject leaders had worked tirelessly to improve the range of activities for pupils, although few of them formally monitored the quality of these opportunities to evaluate their impact on raising standards. Outstanding primary subject leadership showed itself in robust procedures for monitoring and evaluation, as in this example:

The subject leader used her primary link teacher days very well. This began with drawing up a plan for how the time would be allocated, which was agreed with the headteacher and staff. A number of lesson observations were scheduled. These focused on teaching dance and gymnastics, aspects where staff had received training. After each observation, the subject leader provided written feedback, including reporting on how well each of the four strands of the National Curriculum programme of study was developed. Points for improvement were also identified; these were collated and shared with senior managers and staff.

Other monitoring and evaluation activities in the plan were:

- a scrutiny of teachers' planning and their use of the school's scheme of work
- discussions with pupils about their attitudes and performances in physical education lessons
- termly subject committee discussions, led by the subject leader, with representatives from the governing body and leaders of each key stage.

The latter were used to check on progress in securing the improvements in the subject action plan and to discuss provision across the school.

158. In the primary and secondary schools where subject leaders had identified and were sharing good practice in physical education, young people experienced high-quality provision. However, they had consistently good or outstanding provision overall in only two thirds of the schools in the survey. The challenge is to improve the remaining schools so that they provide consistent high quality.

## Continuity of learning at transition points

159. In 2006/07 the survey of 60 schools focused on the continuity of learning between schools and across key stages within a school; that is, the knowledge and use of prior learning and the exchange of information to support transition and continuous learning. Good communication of assessment information is essential in ensuring that work is planned to match the next stage of pupils' learning. Unsurprisingly, the survey found communicating information was better within than between schools.
160. Continuity between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 was good in half the primary schools visited. Comprehensive records of children's physical development in the Foundation Stage were passed to Key Stage 1 teachers

and, in most cases, these were used effectively to plan the next stage of learning. For example, pupils were supported well to move from the early learning goal of travelling, balancing and using climbing equipment to the early skills of gymnastics.

161. In the primary schools with good continuity, secure schemes of work and planned discussions between staff enabled pupils to move seamlessly between classes and between Key Stages 1 and 2. Good transition work was seen, for instance, in two infant and junior school partnerships where the close working relationship between the subject leaders enabled younger and older pupils to attend the same extra-curricular sports clubs and take part in joint projects, such as making a 'big dance' video. Another infant and junior school partnership had written units of work for swimming to ensure that pupils in years 2 and 3 had similar but suitably challenging activities.
162. However, as reported in Part A, limitations in primary teachers' subject knowledge and the absence of data on achievement and standards in physical education meant that few subject leaders during the survey could talk confidently about how much progress their pupils made each year. In schools which did not track progress thoroughly, pupils said that they sometimes repeated work. In these schools, inspectors found that teachers did not adapt the scheme of work or their planning to match the needs of the particular pupils in their class.
163. A minority of the primary schools passed on formal information on pupils' achievements in physical education to their secondary partners at the time of transition. Eight of the primary schools in this survey sent detailed information but staff were unsure whether or how it was used in Year 7 to plan for continuity in learning. Another six primary schools were trialling the exchange of information, including assessment data, through school sport partnership initiatives. However, it was not clear in any of these schools how judgements between schools were moderated to ensure consistency. Only in one school had primary and secondary teachers observed lessons outside their own phase to help agree on the standards achieved and the next steps in pupils' learning. The following is an example of effective partnership working.

The local authority had devised a transfer document for physical education that all schools in a partnership were using. Pupils recorded the sports in which they were involved, any leadership activities, and out of school sport. Teachers recorded pupils' swimming achievements, if the pupil was gifted or talented in an area of physical education, and their attitudes to physical education or school sport. Teachers also indicated a 'best fit' assessment of each pupil's National Curriculum level of attainment.

164. Inspectors noted limited, although increasing, use of the QCA's core tasks to support continuity. Only two schools used bridging activities to ensure continuity of learning between years 6 and 7.



165. As the majority of the secondary schools in the survey had no information on pupils' achievements in physical education in their primary school, they were forced to use time at the start of the academic year to establish a baseline assessment of Year 7 standards. This was time-consuming and could be frustrating for Year 7 pupils, who often repeated work and saw this as a sign of low expectations.
166. A general exception was the action taken by specialist sports colleges. The following exemplifies successful transition as a result of the emphasis given to it in the sports college's targets.

The school has developed excellent links with its partner primary schools to support transfer between key stages 2 and 3. A coordinator was appointed with special responsibility for delivering the aims of the sports college programme in primary schools. Professional development was offered to primary schools to improve teaching and learning; the headteacher of one of the primary schools pointed to the improved standards in constructing gymnastic sequences as an example of learning gains and higher starting points at the time of transfer.

Because of these successes, the coordinator's role has been expanded to cover all physical education curriculum activities and a Key Stage 1 teaching and learning programme.

The students in Year 7 commented that, more broadly, the process of transfer to secondary school had been made easier because of the summer term visits they made there for physical education activities.

167. The increased opportunities for primary pupils to participate in sports festivals and competitions, mainly organised by school sport partnerships, were supporting pupils' confidence at the time of transition between primary and secondary school. As most of the festivals and competitions are hosted at secondary schools, primary pupils have good opportunities to become familiar with the facilities and layout of the secondary site. Pupils also commented that they liked working with junior sports and community leaders from secondary schools during these activities, as they had role models and saw familiar faces when they moved to the secondary school. Secondary staff were starting to use these opportunities to begin informal assessments of pupils' attainment on entry, particularly of those with additional needs or who were talented.
168. The one in 10 schools that exchanged information well ensured that high expectations were set and good progress was made from the start of Year 7. Good practice included:
- schemes of work introduced in primary schools that were also used in Key Stage 3

- secondary schools successfully adapting their Year 7 curriculum to compensate for weaker aspects of primary school provision or experiences
  - pupils identified as gifted and talented in primary school attending summer schools before starting secondary school
  - Year 7 programmes introduced to tackle identified weaknesses or to extend identified strengths for individual pupils or groups of pupils
  - leadership skills developed in primary schools that were extended through specific roles assigned to Year 7 pupils.
169. Continuity of learning in Key Stage 3 was good in the secondary schools visited because of the improved evaluation of students' progress and well-conceived schemes of work. Teachers had good opportunities to discuss students' progress in depth and share data, increasingly through the use of ICT. Consequently, the majority of work was planned appropriately for different abilities and students made good progress.
170. There was good continuity of learning between Key Stage 3 and examination courses in Key Stage 4, including the use of prior learning to set realistic challenges and targets. This was particularly effective in preparing students to select and follow the appropriate accredited course, including national governing body awards, for their ability and interests. However, the lack of assessment in core Key Stage 4 lessons meant students taking only core lessons made less progress and not all were challenged to reach their full potential.
171. In summary, continuity of learning was generally good within schools but could be improved. It was good particularly where schools had secure procedures for transferring attainment data between teachers. Pupils then experienced continuous learning and made better progress. Continuity of learning was less secure between schools, especially between key stages 2 and 3. In schools that had identified this as a priority for improvement and had started to tackle it, pupils were benefiting from a smoother transition and were able to improve more rapidly.

## Conclusion

172. Government funding in 2002 ensured a greater focus on physical education and school sport. The longer schools have been involved in school sport partnerships, the greater the impact. Where senior leaders recognise the value that physical education adds to young people's health, fitness and overall well-being, the more emphasis they give to promoting its benefits. Professional development has been the key driver in improvement.
173. High quality provision is closely linked to subject leaders who are well informed about their subject through secure monitoring and evaluation. Pupils make

better progress when they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers who have good subject knowledge are able to make better observations and assessments and give comprehensive feedback to tackle underperformance.

174. Links between young people's participation in physical education, school sport and long-term health are being created through Activemark, Sportsmark and the Healthy Schools initiatives, although there is still a long way to go to tackle the increasing trend in childhood obesity. However, physical education cannot be seen as the sole contributor to solving this.
175. The Government's new target of five hours of physical education and school sport for all young people by 2012 maintains its high profile. Rightly, greater focus is being given to increasing the participation of groups that are harder to reach and/or engage in physical activity. But it is also the time to focus on ensuring that provision is of the highest quality; that all teachers have the skills to teach high-quality lessons and know how to help young people attain to the best of their abilities, whether in performing, as a coach or official. The Government's strategy should focus not just towards but beyond 2012, ensuring that young people see the Olympics not as a finishing point but as the start of fulfilling their sporting ambitions, so that the country has fit and healthy citizens.

## Notes

This report is based on evidence gathered through the survey programme for physical education between September 2005 and July 2008 in a range of maintained primary and secondary schools in England. The programme was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors and Additional Inspectors. 183 schools were selected to form a sample of schools from differing geographical areas and by institutional type, including middle schools, voluntary-aided schools, schools with sixth forms and specialist sports colleges. No school judged inadequate in its last whole-school inspection was included in the sample. Twelve of the secondary schools were sports colleges.

The evidence was informed by observations of teaching and learning, the curriculum and a broad range of extra-curricular activities, and discussions with those involved in physical education, including teachers and pupils, subject leaders and senior staff in schools, policy makers and others within the wider physical education community. Further sources of evidence include the Annual Reports of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for the three years from 2005/06 to 2007/08 and other reports published by Ofsted, including on provision for post-16 students and initial teacher education.

## Further information

### Ofsted publications

*The physical education, school sport and club links strategy* (HMI 2397), Ofsted, 2005.

*School sport partnerships: a survey of good practice* (HMI 2518), Ofsted, 2006.

*Reaching the Key Stage 2 standard in swimming* (070023), Ofsted, 2007.

*Identifying good practice: a survey of college provision in leisure, travel and tourism* (070245), Ofsted, 2009.

### Other publications

*Learning through PE and sport: a guide to the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links strategy* (ref. LTPES), DCSF, 2003.

*High quality PE and sport for young people: a guide to recognising and achieving high quality PE and sport in schools and clubs* (ref. PE/HQ) DCSF, 2004.

*An update on the national Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links strategy* (ref. LTPES2), DCSF, 2004.

*PE & Sport Strategy for Young People* (Ref. 00131-2008LEF/EN), DCSF, 2008.

*School Sport Survey* (RW063), DCSF, 2008.

*Healthy weight, healthy lives: a cross-government strategy for England* (Ref 9204), Department of Health, 2008.

### Websites

Physical education and school sport:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/pe/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/pe/)

Association for Physical Education:

[www.afpe.org.uk](http://www.afpe.org.uk)

Inca – international curriculum:

[www.inca.org.uk/1431.html](http://www.inca.org.uk/1431.html)

Youth Sport Trust:

[www.youthsporttrust.org/page/home-welcome/index.html](http://www.youthsporttrust.org/page/home-welcome/index.html)

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Schools visited for this survey

#### Primary schools

Bankfields Primary School	Redcar & Cleveland
Barnabas Oley Church of England Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Barnby Road Primary	Nottinghamshire
Bealings School	Suffolk
Bede Burn Primary	South Tyneside
Bidston Primary	Wirral
Birchwood Primary School	Suffolk
Bratton Primary School	Wiltshire
Britford Church of England Controlled Primary School	Wiltshire
Broadmeadow Infants School	Birmingham
Brown Clee Church of England Primary	Shropshire
Bruton Primary School	Somerset
Burlish Park First School	Worcestershire
Burscough Village Primary School	Lancashire
Burton Leonard Church of England Primary School	North Yorkshire
Canon Johnson Church of England Primary School	Tameside
Capel St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Suffolk
Charville Primary School	Hillingdon
Chase Bridge	Richmond upon Thames
Christ Church Church of England Primary School	Lewisham
Cold Aston Primary	Gloucestershire
Colne Lord Street Primary School	Lancashire
Columbia Primary School	Tower Hamlets
Combs Ford Primary School	Suffolk
Courtney Primary School	South Gloucestershire
Danesfield School	Buckinghamshire
Darfield, All Saints Church of England School	Barnsley
Dinglewell Infant School	Gloucestershire
Donnington Wood Church of England Junior	Telford & Wrekin
Egloskerry School	Cornwall
Ely St John's Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Everton Lower School	Bedfordshire
Freethorpe Community Primary School	Norfolk

Gembling Primary School	East Riding of Yorkshire
Granard Primary School	Wandsworth
Great Bedwyn Church of England Primary School	Wiltshire
Halifax Holy Trinity Primary School	Calderdale
Hardwick Primary School	Suffolk
Haslingfield Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Haymoor Middle School	Poole
Hempstead Church of England Primary School	Gloucestershire
Hollingworth Primary School	Tameside
Ivy Chimneys Primary School	Essex
John Hellins Primary	Northamptonshire
Kemble Primary School	Gloucestershire
Kempsford Church of England Primary	Gloucestershire
Knottingley Church of England Junior and Infant School	Wakefield
Lady Seaward's Church of England Primary	Devon
Laneshaw Bridge Primary School	Lancashire
Lincoln St Botolph's Infant & Nursery	Lincolnshire
Longfleet Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Poole
Longney Church of England Primary School	Gloucestershire
Malin Bridge Primary School	Sheffield
Marden Primary	Herefordshire
Market Drayton Junior School	Shropshire
Marsden Junior School	Kirklees
Meopham Community Primary School	Kent
Minsterworth Church of England Primary School	Gloucestershire
Much Wenlock Primary	Shropshire
Newcomen Primary School	Redcar & Cleveland
North Bradley Church of England Primary School	Wiltshire
North Denes Middle School	Norfolk
Pakeman Primary School	Islington
Penketh Community Primary	Warrington
Putnoe Lower School	Bedfordshire
Roe Green Junior School	Brent
Roe Lee Park Primary School	Blackburn with Darwen

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School	Birmingham
St Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School	Blackburn with Darwen
St James Church of England Primary	Herefordshire
St John of Beverley Roman Catholic Primary School	East Riding of Yorkshire
St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Kirklees
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Lower School	Bedfordshire
St Margaret's Community Primary	Suffolk
St Mary's Bluecoat Church of England Primary	Shropshire
St Matthew's Primary School	Nottinghamshire
St Paul's Primary School	Wiltshire
St Peter's Catholic Primary School	Leeds
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School	Lancashire
Silloth Primary School	Cumbria
South Wingfield Primary School	Derbyshire
Speedwell Infants School	Derbyshire
Sutton Park First School	Worcestershire
The Oval Primary School	Birmingham
The Saxilby Church of England Primary School	Lincolnshire
Todwick Junior and Infant School	Rotherham
Tow Law Primary School	Durham
Towers Junior School	Havering
Welford Primary School	Birmingham
Western House Infant School	Slough
Westgate Primary School	Kent
Weston Shore Infant School	Southampton
Wicklewood Primary School	Norfolk
Wigmore Primary School	Luton
Wilden All Saints Church of England School	Worcestershire
Wimborne Junior School	Portsmouth
Woburn Lower School	Bedfordshire
Worlaby Primary School	North Lincolnshire

### Secondary schools

Allenbourn Middle School	Dorset
Ashby School	Leicestershire
Ashington Hirst Park Middle School	Northumberland
Baysgarth School	North Lincolnshire
Bishop Perowne Church of England	Worcestershire

College	
Bishop Rawstone Language College	Lancashire
Bishop Walsh Catholic School	Birmingham
Blackfen School for Girls	Bexley
Blurton High School	Stoke-on-Trent
Brookfield Community School and Language College	Hampshire
Burgoyne Middle School	Bedfordshire
Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School and Language College	Coventry
Carisbrooke High School	Isle of Wight
Cedar Mount High School	Manchester
Darwen Vale High School	Blackburn with Darwen
Don Valley School and Performing Arts College	Doncaster
Edward Peake CE VC Middle School	Bedfordshire
Ellington School for Girls	Kent
Great Torrington Community School	Devon
Hagley Park Sports College	Staffordshire
Hawkley Hall High School	Wigan
Hereford Technology College	North East Lincolnshire
Highbury Fields School	Islington
Irlam and Cadishead Community High School	Salford
Kendrick Girls' Grammar School	Reading
King Edward VI Community College	Devon
Kingsbrook Specialist Business & Enterprise College	Northamptonshire
Lady Hawkins High School	Herefordshire
Longdendale Community Language College	Tameside
Looe Community School	Cornwall
Lytchett Minster School	Dorset
Mountfitchet Mathematics and Computing College	Essex
Neatherd High School	Norfolk
Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School	Hertfordshire
Norton Hill School	Bath & North East Somerset
Notre Dame Roman Catholic Girls' School	Southwark
Offerton High School	Stockport
Ormskirk School	Lancashire
Ounsdale High School	Staffordshire
Parklands High School	Manchester
Passmores School and Technology College	Essex



President Kennedy School and Community College	Coventry
Robert Clack School	Barking & Dagenham
Rossmore Community College	Poole
Rutlish School	Merton Park
Saltley School and Specialist Science College	Birmingham
Sir James Smith's Community School	Cornwall
Smithills School	Bolton
South Craven School	North Yorkshire
South Wigston High School	Leicestershire
St Clement's High School	Norfolk
St James's Catholic High School – A Specialist Science College	Cheshire
St Katherine's School	North Somerset
St Mary's Roman Catholic High School	Herefordshire
St Peter's Catholic School	Solihull
St Thomas More Catholic School	Derbyshire
Swanmore College of Technology	Hampshire
Testwood Sports College	Hampshire
The Blyth-Jex School	Norfolk
The Dukeries College	Nottinghamshire
The Elton High School Specialist Arts College	Bury
The Gleed Girls' Technology College	Lincolnshire
The Knights Templar School	Hertfordshire
The Mosslands School	Merseyside
The Sydney Russell School	Barking & Dagenham
Tividale Community Arts College	West Midlands
Toot Hill School	Nottinghamshire
Torquay Boys Grammar School	Torbay
Trinity School	Cumbria
Uffculme School	Devon
Walton Priory Middle School	Staffordshire
Wellacre Technology School	Trafford
Welland Park Community College	Leicestershire
West Wight Middle School	Isle of Wight
Whitefields School	Barnet
Wickersley School and Sports College	Rotherham
Windsor High School	West Midlands
Witchford Village College	Cambridgeshire
Witton Park High School	Blackburn with Darwen
Wolgarston High School	Staffordshire
Wolstanton High School	Staffordshire
Worden Sports College	Lancashire
Yewlands School Technology College	Sheffield

## Annex 2: The 10 outcomes of high-quality physical education and sport

- Learners show commitment to physical education and school sport.
- Learners have the confidence to get involved.
- Learners willingly participate in a range of activities.
- Learners show desire to improve and achieve.
- Learners enjoy physical education and school sport.
- Learners know and understand what they are trying to achieve.
- Learners understand that physical education and school sport are part of a healthy, active lifestyle.
- Learners have the skills and control they need.
- Learners think about what they are doing and make appropriate decisions.
- Learners have stamina, suppleness and strength.

The outcomes are taken from *High quality PE and sport for young people*, which provides a detailed description of the outcomes.<sup>23</sup> For each outcome, a list of indicators show schools and sports clubs what they might expect to see young people doing when they are involved in high-quality physical education and sport.

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<sup>23</sup> *High quality PE and sport for young people* (ref. PE/HQ), DfES/DCMS, 2004.