

# the future of school and community sport

Edited by Clive Efford MP



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The 2012 London Olympics gave a huge boost to sport in Britain. You could almost hear the young people in schools and sports clubs up and down the country willing our athletes along. The Games were of course not just about winning, but a national celebration of sporting excellence and a recognition of the fun, excitement and well-being that sport in all its forms can offer. As the essays in this report remind us, the success of the Games was built on sustained commitment and investment in schools sport and school sport partnerships. The challenge facing government today is how best to take forward the Olympic legacy. How to create a consensus for school and community sport that delivers continued, sustained benefits for future generations; how can we ensure that the resources are in place and that they match the vision; and what more can be done to better integrate sport in schools with sport in the community? The expert authors take these issues head-on, and between them offer a progressive agenda for change.

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*Paul Hackett, Director, The Smith Institute*

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## Introduction

### Clive Efford MP, Shadow Minister for Sport

The success of school and community sport is central to changing attitudes among future generations towards sport and physical activity. This publication brings together the views of a highly respected group of people with expertise gained from years of experience in researching, organising, planning and delivering sport and physical activity.

It sets out the vital importance of teaching sport in our schools and the devastating effects of dismantling the network of school sport partnerships. SSPs were the foundation on which sport in our schools and communities could have been developed. Instead, we have spent the past three years trying to recover from the decision to remove the ring fence from their funding. In too many places, head teachers have been compelled to cut the money for sport, leading to a patchwork of provision.

Getting the 2012 Olympic legacy right is absolutely vital for the good of millions of individuals and for the nation as a whole. Even without all the recent successes in UK sports, we would still need to have this debate. The cost to the economy of people developing illnesses owing to inactivity is set to more than triple by 2050, to £49 billion a year. That figure alone should make governments sit up and take note.

First, we must get the terminology correct: when we use the word "sport" we mean every form of physical recreational activity for people of all ages and all abilities. That does not mean the anti-competition dogma of "prizes for all" as the Government has tried to portray this approach in order to justify its cuts to SSPs; it is a pragmatic acceptance that people gain inspiration in a multitude of different ways, and a sports policy that does not recognise this fact is doomed to failure.

The importance of our schools in instilling in the younger generation the sporting habit for a lifetime is recognised by all of the contributors to the volume, but the importance of physical literacy being learned through play is also highlighted, and this starts before school age. Physical literacy must be nurtured in children from day one. Time and again the writers stress the importance of getting this right, because it is key to opening the minds of children to the joy they can get from physical activities.

Sue Tibballs refers to the importance of parents providing the opportunities for play that will instil the right attitudes in children from the earliest ages. Dean Horridge refers to the "journey to sport" and "focusing on engagement of all in physical activity". He then goes on to describe the transition into competitive sport, emphasising the need

for children to experience the enjoyment of sport and develop their physical capacity in their early years.

Without the basic physical skills that can be learned early in life, children can become isolated when they are asked to get involved in activities that make them feel uncomfortable or clumsy. Even at very young ages, they become alert to these situations and can develop strategies to avoid them. These negative feelings will lead to a lifetime's disconnection from sporting activities if left unchallenged, and can lead to a hatred of PE and sport by the time a child reaches secondary school.

Sue Campbell raises the question of whether we attach the status to PE that it should have. She makes the case for sport, stating: "From the first years of a child's life to a young adult's first venture into the world of employment, sport has an unparalleled ability to aid development, boost learning and bring out the best in everyone." Kathy Armour quotes the national curriculum for PE, which states that children will "learn about the value of healthy active lifestyles", and points out this is exactly what it does not do for many children.

Barry Horne, writing from the perspective of inclusion for children with disabilities, states that we fail to equip teachers and coaches with the skills to give them the confidence to organise inclusive activities. Tibballs, again, refers to the excellent study conducted on behalf of the Women in Sport & Fitness Foundation which illustrates how young women can be put off sport for life by the way in which PE is taught in our schools. All the contributions come to the conclusion that improving teacher training, monitoring the quality of PE lessons and listening to young people are all key to improving the experience of children.

Campbell also points out that primary teachers get as little as 10 hours of tuition on PE and makes the case for teacher training to be reviewed. She emphasises the need for PE to be taught by qualified specialists and that modified sport coaching can be introduced at ages seven to 11. As many of the writers point out, there is no single formula that will work for every individual. In some cases, coaching in a specific sport may provide the spark of inspiration that is required, but this cannot happen without children being taught the core physical literacy and skills that can come only with high-quality PE teaching. Peter Crowe asks whether the inspectors "understand the significance and importance" of sport in our schools.

Whether teaching or coaching, practitioners need to be equipped to meet the diverse needs of the young people placed in their charge. Training for primary teachers must be

reviewed to give them the knowledge and understanding that will enable them to deliver good-quality PE and sports education. Similarly, it does not automatically follow that because someone has a coaching qualification, they can teach young children. Coaches must be trained to understand what is required when teaching children. The point that bad PE lessons and bad coaching sessions both have the same devastating consequences on attitudes is repeated several times. Consistent monitoring is highlighted as essential to ensure high standards of delivery.

Several references are made to the potential for too much emphasis on competitive sport to drive people away and become a barrier to participation. Yet a policy that aims to increase overall participation in physical activities is not exclusive of competition. Politicians must have the confidence to emphasise the enjoyment of sport and build a fully inclusive framework of sport from the foundations of mass participation. Who knows whether a child will want to compete in a particular sport unless they have been given the basic physical attributes to even try it in the first place? Who knows how many future champions may be inspired in this way?

Peter Crowe illustrates the successes achieved under school sport partnerships and discusses why the cuts they have suffered are so counterproductive in a variety of ways other than for sport, including educational, emotional and social development. SSPs created networks of sports practitioners in clusters of schools, which became catalysts for greater co-operation between primary and secondary schools in their areas. Many head teachers gave sport a higher priority in their schools as a consequence of becoming part of an SSP. Overall, SSPs generated significant increases in general participation as well as furthering competitive sporting activity.

The structures that SSPs created are one of the reasons for their success. Several of the writers refer to the need for similar structures to those that existed under SSPs to be created in local communities where they have disappeared, following the removal of £162 million of funding for SSPs in 2010.

The case is also made for these networks to include community sport. Several contributors call for the barriers that exist between school and community sport to be removed by creating stronger links between schools and neighbouring sports clubs. I have seen many examples where young people's inhibitions have been overcome because a coach from a local club has provided a welcoming face and got them involved in a community club. This is not the solution to the entire problem of young people dropping out of sport during their teenage years, but where young people have the motivation, these kinds of networks can provide the means for them to stay actively involved in sport.

Alan Watkinson was the PE teacher who spotted the talent of Mo Farah as a schoolchild. He explains that it was his link with the community club that was the key to Mo getting involved in athletics. Watkinson writes with an enormous breadth of knowledge of community and school sport, and he explains how easily Farah's talent could have been missed had he not facilitated the link to the community sports club. Watkinson also demonstrates how sport provided more than just coaching support, and that this was vital to Farah becoming the person that he is today. I have seen several examples of coaches with links to community-based clubs providing the introduction for young people at their local sports clubs. This is one of the benefits to be gained from cultivating closer working partnerships between school and community sport.

Sport has enormous potential to build community cohesion. There are numerous examples of people who offer their time freely to organise, manage and coach sport in their local communities. It has been used to build stronger communities; to fight crime, tackle antisocial behaviour, divert young people away from crime and build individual self-esteem. Many people have been given their first experience of work after long periods of unemployment, or having had a bad experience of school education, through becoming involved in community-based sports activities. All of this is now taking place in many communities underpinned by thousands of volunteers. Any local sport network must encourage and support these types of activities and the volunteers that keep them going.

Jane Ashworth, Chief Executive of StreetGames, highlights the social aspects of sport participation. She gives us statistical evidence of the impact of lower participation among young people from low-income households, which has "multiple consequences that reproduce inequality across a wide breadth of concerns". The contribution of Sporting Equals chief executive Arun Kang reminds us that we need to develop our understanding of how to reach diverse communities if we are to tackle all forms of social exclusion. Ashworth and Kang both make the point that increasing participation alone is not enough. Ashworth also reminds us to look beyond the headline figures: "Raising participation as a whole does not necessarily increase participation among the most disadvantaged." This really brings home the need to get sport education right in our schools to make it easier for people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to get into the habit of sport for life.

The experts writing in this publication recognise the capacity sport has to change lives and communities. They know that in order to deliver the legacy, we have to build the capacity to empower local people to make things happen in their communities. As Watkinson says: "In the brief window that we have to make the most of the Olympic

buzz, we need to commit the investment to people and partnerships; we need to create structures that can make a real difference."

To achieve this, government must play its part. What is needed is a consistent strategy that cuts across all government departments; one that will enhance the sort of activity at local level that we saw under SSPs and will bring schools and community sport closer together. This must be delivered with a consensus across political parties, but also including the people who are involved in sport at every level. Sport has suffered from too many changes of policy in recent years, and it is the duty of any government to set out a long-term strategy upon which we can all agree.

If we succeed, people will look back on this era as the one in which we fundamentally changed the culture of Britain, stitching physical recreational activity into the psyche of the nation – "emphasising the need to change cultural and social ingrained attitudes", as Tibballs writes. To do that, we must get it right from the first day a child is born, and continue to do so throughout their school years. Only then do we have a chance of delivering a sporting legacy that will inspire future generations to achieve long and healthy lives.





## Chapter 1

# The Olympic legacy and sport in schools

Baroness Sue Campbell CBE, Chair of the Youth Sport Trust

## The Olympic legacy and sport in schools

In the UK, our on-going obsession with sport is clear for all to see. Most of us agree that sport is a good thing, and we love to watch it, talk about it and take part in it. But all too often we overlook the true power of sport – its ability to change young lives for the better. Sport and physical education, delivered properly, can support every single area and stage of a child's development – not only giving them the best possible start in life, but also helping them to succeed throughout their education and into their adult lives.

From the first years of a child's life, to a young adult's first venture into the world of employment, sport has an unparalleled ability to aid development, boost learning and bring out the best in everyone. In the early years, taking part in structured play and physical activity not only enables young children to become stronger and healthier, but helps to increase their confidence and self-esteem, develop their social skills, and give them the physical competencies they need to become successful learners across the curriculum. Up to the age of seven, properly delivered physical education teaches children the fundamental movement skills, or "physical literacy", that they need to build healthy, active lives and engage in sporting activity later in life. From seven to 11, an introduction to modified sports and activities allows a young person to further develop their skills and nurture their interests and abilities.

In secondary schools, sport has the ability to help young people as they progress through their education and face the complicated and daunting challenges of adolescence. Some individuals can find themselves in danger of disengaging altogether from school life and from their communities as a whole – the structures, discipline and framework provided by sport can bring these young people back into the fold and help them reconnect with their education.

The experience of schools across the UK also shows that sport and PE can be used to improve levels of attainment across the curriculum. They provide a context in which pupils can engage effectively with their learning – a five-a-side football tournament is an opportunity not just for those competing to play football, but also for others to build their numeracy or literacy skills by measuring out the exact parameters of the court, recording key pieces of data on results and individual performances, or writing detailed match reports. Similarly, the enduring values of sport are powerful tools in enhancing achievement. Values such as determination, teamwork, confidence and courage can be used not only to boost standards in sport or PE but also to foster a culture of aspiration across the school community.

Finally, leadership and volunteering opportunities within sport can help provide young people with the skills they need to become conscientious, engaged citizens. Taking on positions of responsibility, for example in organising sporting events, officiating or assisting with coaching for younger pupils, can dramatically increase their social skills, confidence and employability.

It was this ability of sport to improve every aspect of a young person's life that inspired me to take the role of chief executive at the Youth Sport Trust in 1995. Established as an independent charity, the trust has spent two decades working with schools across the country to drive transformative change in the provision of physical education and sport in schools. We have gained a unique perspective on the history of school sport in this country, the progress that has been made, and the challenges that still need to be overcome.

In 1995, one of the first acts undertaken by the trust was to establish two groundbreaking programmes – Top Play and Top Sport – aimed at leading a step change in the sporting experiences of primary school pupils. Traditionally, many primary school teachers have viewed school sport and physical education as an opportunity for children to “blow off steam”, leaving them ready to re-engage with their lessons having expended any pent-up energy or excitement. Top Play challenged this perception and provided teachers with resources, equipment and training to help them nurture the enthusiasm of young children and develop essential sporting skills such as running, jumping, catching and throwing.

Meanwhile, Top Sport introduced older primary school pupils to a range of age-appropriate, modified sporting formats, giving them an effective introduction into sports such as rugby, football, cricket and hockey. Over a period of four years, Top Sport and Top Play were rolled out to every primary school in the country. Alongside these programmes, the Youth Sport Trust developed Top Sportsability, a programme delivered into every special needs school in the country, making PE and sport inclusive of all young people regardless of disability.

In 1997 the Youth Sport Trust began working with the first 11 specialist sports colleges. Part of a wider specialist-schools programme, these secondary schools were empowered to act as beacons for outstanding PE and school sport, raising their own standards of provision, but also forging partnerships with other schools in their area to enhance local sporting opportunities for all young people. Crucially, sports colleges were able to use sport as a driver for whole school improvement, raising standards across the curriculum through a school-wide commitment to the values of sport and its ability to provide an

effective context for learning in other subjects.

The use of sport as a strategy to bring about whole school improvement was seen as radical by many. However, those schools that chose to use sport in this way experienced its transformative effect on pupil attendance and behaviour, teaching practice, and examination results. Indeed, the rate at which sports colleges improved their GCSE results across the curriculum consistently outperformed the national average. The success of sports colleges attracted the attention of many school leaders, keen to explore innovative ways to improve standards in their own schools. From an initial cohort of just 11, the number of schools embracing the sport specialism grew to over 500.

Part of the central mission of sports colleges was to be outward-looking. They were given licence to develop ways of working within a family of local schools for the benefit of pupils beyond their own school boundaries. They provided local focal points for excellence not only in physical education but also in community sport, extending links between sports bodies and community groups. It was the success of this collaborative approach that led the Youth Sport Trust to conceptualise and establish the first school sport partnerships, with the financial support of the Department for Education.

The fantastic work of school sport partnerships is well publicised and will be familiar to many who read this report. However, it is worth reiterating here the key factors that made them such an outstanding success. Built around the existing sports college infrastructure, each partnership was run by a partnership development manager, based at a hub school and linked to school sport co-ordinators in local secondary schools. School sport co-ordinators were themselves responsible for working with designated primary link teachers from their family of local primary schools.

School sport partnerships were backed by £162 million of government funding. While this investment was certainly crucial in providing a financial platform for school sport to thrive, the network of passionate staff described above was equally – if not more – important in driving improvements across the country. The structure of school sport partnerships, based around families of schools working together for the good of all pupils and the wider community, engendered a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie that led to a transformation in sporting provision. School leaders, teachers and school sport professionals were given the opportunity to pool their resources and nurture their collective passion for getting all young people involved in sport.

The results were breathtaking and, from a baseline of just 25% in 2002, by 2008 some 90% of pupils attending schools involved in their local partnership were undertaking at

least two hours of high-quality PE and school sport.<sup>1</sup> While the quality and quantity of PE on offer to young people improved, the range of sports to which they had access also rocketed. By 2010, schools provided an average of 19 different sports and were busily forging ever-closer links with community sports clubs and other local bodies.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, just as the successes of school sport partnerships are well known, the controversy surrounding their future has become notorious. In October 2010, the newly elected Coalition government took the decision to remove central funding for the partnerships. Many recognised that it would be unrealistic to expect school sport to be insulated from the financial pressures driving spending cuts across Whitehall. Nevertheless, teachers, school sport professionals, young people and elite athletes passionately opposed the wholesale removal of government funding for a system that had delivered such transformative change. The resulting campaign to reinstate funding for school sport partnerships not only led to a partial restoration of investment in the form of £65 million over two years to release secondary PE teachers to work with local primary schools, but also reinvigorated the debate around delivering a sustainable legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

That debate has raged more or less continuously for the last three years and was given yet more impetus when the breathtaking spectacle of the Games themselves illustrated the true power of sport to change lives. Athletes such as Jessica Ennis and David Weir showed what could be achieved through hard work, determination and the refusal to settle for second best. Meanwhile, the omnipresent slogan of London 2012 – *Inspire a generation* – acted as a constant reminder that the city's original bid to host the Games was based on a promise to inspire a generation of young people to choose sport. There were renewed calls from all involved in school sport, including the Youth Sport Trust, for the government to outline a coherent plan for delivering on that promise and providing a lasting Olympic and Paralympic legacy for young people. These calls were echoed in a report published by Ofsted in February of this year. Entitled *Beyond 2012 – Outstanding Physical Education for All*, the report called for a new national PE and school sport strategy that “builds on the successes” of the school sport partnership system.

Throughout the public discourse on school sport, and in our private meetings with ministers and Whitehall officials, the Youth Sport Trust emphasised the particular need for targeted investment in primary-level PE and sport. As mentioned above, the trust's first act as an independent charity was to focus on improving the sporting

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1 Department for Children, Schools & Families *School Sport Survey 2007/08* (2008)

2 Department for Education, *PE and Sport Survey 2009/10* (2010)

provision in our primary schools. Much was achieved through this work, and through more recent initiatives such as our Bupa Start to Move and Matalan TOP Sport programmes, which offer training, support and resources to primary school teachers around the country, but we were aware that yet more needed to be done.

The nature of primary school education means that class teachers are expected to deliver all subjects to their pupils. This is as true of PE as it is of other subjects, but crucially, around half of all primary school teachers receive only 10 hours or less of specialist PE training while studying to become a teacher.<sup>3</sup> The effect of this is that the perception of PE as an opportunity for pupils to expend pent-up energy endures in too many schools, with the loss of the opportunity to build physical literacy among pupils, and provide them with the physical building blocks to engage in all areas of school life. School sport partnerships provided much-needed support for primary schools, but many were left to fend for themselves after funding for the partnerships was removed.

The government's recognition of the on-going challenges at primary level, and its decision to invest £150 million in primary school sport and PE in each of the next two years, is therefore a step in the right direction. The fact that the money will be ring-fenced provides a welcome guarantee of financial resources, while confirmation that Ofsted will report on schools' use of the investment should ensure a rigorous focus on improving standards. However, financial investment alone does not guarantee results. In order to achieve real, lasting change, it is important that this increased resource is used to drive sustainable improvements in schools' ability to provide every child with high-quality PE and sport as a foundation for an active, healthy lifestyle. Head teachers, who will be free to invest their share of the funding as they see fit, may need guidance and support on how it can best be directed to achieve the outcomes we all wish to see. The Youth Sport Trust has recently issued an official guide on this investment, to ensure schools take full advantage of their new funds.

The announcement of new government investment has the potential to be a watershed moment, despite these challenges in ensuring that its impact is maximised. The recognition of primary-level provision as a priority area for a cash injection is incredibly significant, but equally important is the potential for this new money to provide the basis for a renewed cross-party consensus on school sport and PE in this country.

When one considers the brief history set out above, it is clear that in recent years school sport has become an increasingly contentious political issue with strong views

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<sup>3</sup> Youth Sport Trust and Roehampton University *Start to Move Final Report: July 2012* (2012)

on either side about the best way forward. The impassioned nature of this debate should be welcomed, as it shows the belief of so many in the power of sport to change lives, and their commitment to ensuring all young people enjoy the benefits of a lasting legacy from London 2012. But equally, it is important that we now begin the process of building a political consensus around PE and sport in schools – a consensus that recognises the unique ability of sport to galvanise young people's development and acknowledges that while much has been achieved, there is still important work to be done.





## Chapter 2

# From playground to podium – creating world-class PE and school sport for all

Alan Watkinson, Partnership Manager of Sport Impact and Mo  
Farah's former PE Teacher

## **From playground to podium – creating world-class PE and school sport for all**

On the evening of 11 August 2012 in a packed and raucous stadium in Stratford, London, Mo Farah became only the seventh person in history to achieve the 5,000-metre/10,000-metre Olympic athletics double victory. His performance was heralded as a triumph for multicultural Britain, and his attitude and manner were lauded as an example for all sportsmen and -women everywhere. His firm but polite response to the question about whether he would rather be competing for Somalia (his country of birth) – “Not at all, mate. This is my country” – was met with universal approval.

Mo is indeed a product of the British system, a west London comprehensive schoolboy nurtured through our school and club athletics infrastructure. His post-race comment, “It’s all about hard work and grafting,” was a gift to assembly-writing teachers across the breadth of the country. However, while “hard work and grafting” form a large part of his success story, Mo has had to overcome many substantial barriers that have threatened to dislodge him from his destiny. It was my pleasure and privilege to assist him in confronting these barriers. Mentoring Mo through his school days and beyond has had a profound impact on me. Experiencing his success has made me realise that few problems are insurmountable, and this is a philosophy that I have found exceptionally helpful in meeting the challenges we face in physical education and school sport today.

I have been asked many times about how I spotted Mo and have received many plaudits for this phenomenal achievement. In all honesty, picking out his ability was unremarkable. In the same way as it does not take a genius to recognise that our primary school physical education offer is at best patchy and at worst woefully inadequate, it was pretty obvious that Mo could run. However, it is what followed this recognition that is significant.

What I had not bargained for, in my naivety, was the number of barriers in Mo’s path to world championship and Olympic glory. I did not anticipate the initial problems Mo’s lack of language would present or the fact that he was a rather reluctant athlete in the first instance. I did not consider that a culture barrier might exist, and it was also far from my mind that there would be no established support structure to overcome the substantial difficulty presented by a lack of travel documentation.

What followed was a whirlwind seven years that were every bit as enjoyable and rewarding as those two glorious Saturdays in August 2012. This experience, and

subsequent experiences in education and school sport, have given me considerable insight into the long and winding pathway from playgrounds to the podium. While we bask in the collective glory of a hugely successful Olympic and Paralympic Games, there remains considerable work to do. Physical education and school sport lacks rigorous structure and systems; the workforce, particularly at primary school level, is undertrained; specialist teachers at secondary level are forced to compromise or prioritise; relationships between community sport and schools remain largely underdeveloped, and the lack of a long-term, cross-party government commitment provides an uncertain backdrop to sustainable change.

The first decade of the 21st century witnessed a transformation of PE and school sport in this country. In their subject report for physical education, Ofsted reported: "PE is generally in good health. Considerable investment over the last decade has ensured PE is a central part of school life for pupils of all ages."<sup>1</sup> The Physical Education & Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP), which followed on from the Physical Education & School Club Links (PESSCL), produced data that indicated a dramatic rise in time spent on curriculum physical education. Opportunities for young people to become involved in competitive school sport were also significantly enhanced and the development of leadership and volunteering programmes and pathways are nothing short of a profound and resounding triumph.

However, we are still left with a system that needs fundamental change to enable all young people to access high-quality PE and school sport. The Ofsted report recognises access to a high-quality PE and school sport experience as an entitlement and states there is still a significant way to go if we are to achieve this for all children in school. It estimates that about a third of primary schools and a quarter of secondary schools need to improve. I consider that to be a conservative estimate.

### **Partnerships key to success**

The past decade's successes can be attributed to the development of school sport partnerships (SSPs) and the PESSCL and PESSYP strategies. Mo's school experience predated the SSP system, but the principles that underpin the success of SSPs are firmly evident in his development. The strong school-to-club link existed, without which Mo's initial experiment with running would in all probability have come to an early end.

This link brought with it a structure of support that helped to overcome barriers (there

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted *Beyond 2012: Outstanding Physical Education For All* (2013)

were many) and solve difficulties that at any time during his school life could have put an end to his participation in athletics. Relationships with his peers, his coach and me, as his head of year/PE teacher/mentor, enabled a nurturing of his early athletic experiences that are not normally possible without strong family support. In nurturing Mo's substantial talent there was always a feeling of huge responsibility, and no effort was spared to ensure his abilities could thrive and develop. This responsibility was shared with his coaches, Alex Magee and Conrad Milton, who made it clear from the outset that schoolboy success (there was plenty of that) was secondary to the development of a top-class senior athlete.

Olympic glory was 18 years in the making, and those first few years established strong foundations on which this fine talent could be built to perfection. Mo moved on to more sophisticated structures of support and to far more advanced systems that sustained his development. Without the creation and evolution of these structures and systems, and without the relationships and responsibilities within these, Mo would not have come close to his remarkable achievements. Without all this, the pride in his success that we feel as a nation and the warm glow it affords would not exist.

Because of the development of sports colleges and the SSP system there are many examples of outstanding practice in all areas of physical education and sport throughout this country. These are the foundations on which we can build a world-class system for all. The structure and systems led by the Youth Sport Trust allowed opportunities for this practice to be shared and a large number of strong relationships and communities of practice to be developed countrywide.

The most stunning example of this working can be seen in leadership and volunteering programmes nationwide, which have formed the foundation of a booming intra-school competition programme and have provided life-changing opportunities for countless young people. A shining example of this is Rebecca from Hounslow, a quiet student lacking in confidence, who, through leadership opportunities has gained coaching qualifications, worked for the local SSP and has now gone on to be a highly valued employee in sport development for the local authority.

It would be churlish and wrong to decry the recent announcement that £150 million a year would be invested in primary school physical education and school sport. In a time of economic uncertainty it shows recognition of the importance of addressing the deep-rooted challenges faced in primary schools, it raises the profile and importance of the development of physical literacy, and it establishes this at the heart of the battle against childhood obesity. Ring-fencing the money, and utilising Ofsted to

hold schools to account for their PE and sport offer, are enlightened and welcome developments. In areas that are well served with expertise and capacity this initiative will almost certainly have a significant impact, and the very good and outstanding will go from strength to strength.

However, accountability and responsibility should not rest solely with head teachers. This does not provide a robust and rigorous system and adds to an already overburdened workload for school leaders. Because of local authority cuts they are unlikely to have the support of a PE adviser, and in a lot of areas functional SSPs no longer exist.

By not supporting the development of advanced structures and systems, the Coalition government has left this to individual endeavour and enterprise. While I understand the political philosophy that underpins this, it leaves to chance the development of our children's physical literacy, it leaves to chance the ability of our teachers to instil in all children a love of physical activity and sport, and it leaves too much to chance in addressing the obesity time bomb that confronts us.

With this level of funding we surely have the capacity to create advanced local partnerships. Indeed, when setting up the school games, the school games local organising committees were seen as a necessity. Transforming primary school physical education and school sport is a considerably more involved and complex challenge, and without a partnership approach and a mixture of shared and definitive responsibility, success will be limited.

### **Envisioning new partnerships**

It is my opinion that in areas where SSPs were not as effective a combination of variables existed, and if we were to establish a successor to the SSP model we could pay heed to this and develop something even more robust. The new structures would need to concentrate on a holistic approach to providing world-class PE; they would need to be specific about what this involves and to be collaborative, led by head teachers working with higher education institutions, health professionals, local sports clubs, national governing bodies and local coaching organisations. These partnerships will need a "head coach" and these people will need to have the ability to drive the high-quality PE agenda through strong local steering. The development of curriculum physical education must be the bedrock of this; there must be clear criteria of what this involves (national curriculum) and there must be rigorous checks and balances (Ofsted).

Ives<sup>2</sup> maintains that the investment in school sport concentrated too heavily on quantity-led data. She further maintains that the target-focused PESSCL and PESSYP strategies did not sufficiently address the deep-rooted pedagogical issues in primary school physical education and that this was the inherent weakness of many SSPs that failed to survive the withdrawal of funding in 2010. The quantitative successes can be viewed as helpful in establishing solid foundations for a more qualitative approach, but Ives believes that given the amount of funding and time, the qualitative message needed to be stronger, and delivered sooner, in order to sustain the partnerships at a time when government support was not forthcoming.

Where partnerships had moved on from chasing data and had established a commitment to a pedagogical approach, school decision makers were more likely to see their value and were more inclined to contribute to their sustainability. To address this issue we need to develop a sophisticated system that specifically targets what I consider to be the most challenging and deep-rooted problem – the standard of teaching and learning of PE and sport in primary schools.

In Hounslow we had two strong leads with a good blend of education and sport development experience, alongside an experienced and knowledgeable team of school sport co-ordinators who established excellent relationships with their schools. This was a crucial factor in Sport Impact (Hounslow's SSP) going from strength to strength in challenging times. Thanks to head teacher commitment, we are now able to intensively train primary school staff within the school setting and to ethically support head teachers who feel their staff will never have the expertise to provide high-quality PE for their pupils. We have models that support and develop high-quality inset training with in-school support.

In partnership with Youth Sport Trust, Roehampton University and Create Development (a high-quality training company), we are developing diagnostic tools and measurement criteria. Backed up with targeted support, these will, we believe, provide a model for systematic, measurable improvement in our primary schools. I consider that a system of full-time specialists working inside clusters of primary schools provides a relatively inexpensive solution to the catastrophic lack of expertise therein. This provides an immediate sticking plaster and medium-term care. Setting up such support is an excellent use of the new investment in primary school physical education. However, alongside this we have to address the issue of the training of the next generation of primary school teachers and the establishment of a model that provides a long-term

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2 Ives (2013)

solution to the universal provision of high-quality physical education for all. It will be interesting to see how the pilot announced by the government in this area develops.

### **Long-term vision remains unclear**

Should each primary school have a PE expert on its staff? If so, what should their role and status be? Should PE remain the domain of the classroom general practitioner? What role, if any, do coaches have to play in this? There are many questions that need exploring, but the case for long-term systematic change to primary PE is proven beyond doubt. We have to invest in research to establish a preferred model, and from that there needs to be cross-party agreement and commitment to pursue this reform. This, after all, proved to be a winning formula in producing Britain's most successful Olympic Games ever.

Secondary schools have changed considerably since I started teaching in 1990. Physical education is now unrecognisable from what it was. However, the structure and staffing for delivery remains the same. The numbers of academic courses evolving that have become the responsibility of the PE teacher have placed a strain on these teachers' commitment to extra-curricular activity. The role is in desperate need of definition and I believe that their main responsibility should be with a high-quality curriculum.

The introduction of sports clubs on school sites presents us with an opportunity to introduce coaches to schools on a more formal basis, and this is to be welcomed. However, coaches working in primary or secondary schools must have a fundamental understanding of children's physical and emotional development, and we should guard against such personnel creating more problems than they solve.

The relationships between key partners will be critical to such success and the areas that will benefit most will be those with a sophisticated infrastructure. This is another area where a long-term plan is essential. If we are to invest heavily in this development then a long-term cross-party strategy is needed. We cannot afford to waste resources, and we need to investigate and decide on ambitious long-term goals and produce a strategy to implement them. This statement is critical across the whole school sport landscape.

Throughout the joyful months of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, an underlying powerful and challenging message was portrayed. It was ever-present at events, ceremonies, parades and celebrations. Every time I saw the message, I was given hope. Gradually the backdrop slogan *Inspire a generation* eased its way to the front, in the same effortless way that Mo did on those two glorious Saturdays in August. The motto



was launched on 18 April by Lord Coe on a visit to Kew Gardens, and it would prove to be the critical slogan that made the issue of legacy prominent and politically important. In short the motto was a stroke of genius that, coupled with the spine-tingling effect of the Games, has motivated the nation to find the solution to the conundrum of how we achieve this Holy Grail.

For a start, we need a system well integrated from top to bottom. The answer is developing and strengthening a multi-layered and multi-faceted network which relies on enlightened people, solid partnership and genuine multi-agency approaches. The benefits of physical education and sport transcend a whole host of government departments and the whole sporting network. From the development of physical literacy for every individual in primary schools to the appropriate support for our most talented, world-leading performers, we should leave no stone unturned in providing a legacy for all that does justice to the best ever Olympic Games.

In short, we have three immediate and very pressing challenges. In the brief window of time we have to make the most of the Olympic buzz, we need to commit the investment to people and partnerships, we need to create structures that can make a real difference, and we need a long-term strategy that provides unwavering dedication from all to create an innovative, world-leading primary physical education offer. Each topic is huge in isolation, but I am sure that each and every one of these three issues resonates with those who understand the sporting industry in Britain. Let's get to work!

## Chapter 3

# Children and young people need *professional* PE teachers and coaches

Professor Kathleen Armour, Chair in Education & Sport and Head of the School of Sport, Exercise & Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Birmingham

## Children and young people need *professional* PE teachers and coaches

This paper focuses on physical education teachers and youth sport coaches. It analyses the critical role these individuals can play in instilling positive lifetime sporting habits or, too often, a lifetime resistance to sport and physical activity. It is argued that unless PE teachers and coaches are able to act as true professionals – that is, able to diagnose and meet the diverse and complex learning needs of their clients (children and young people) – we will continue to see low levels of physical activity and sport engagement in the adult population.

On a more positive note, some practical suggestions are made that could address this issue. The paper is structured around three questions:

- i) What is the problem?
- ii) What is meant by *professional* PE teachers/coaches and how could they resolve the problem?
- iii) What can be done?

### What is the problem?

There is a broad national and international consensus about the importance of persuading more people to engage in more physical activity, and to sustain their engagement throughout life. The potential personal and social health and well-being benefits of physical activity have been widely reported elsewhere, and so are not repeated here. What is interesting, however, is the tendency to forget that in the UK, most of today's inactive adults participated in compulsory physical education programmes at least once or twice each week throughout their school years. That's a lot of PE!

PE in schools is taught by members of the teaching profession, including classroom teachers in primary schools and specialist PE teachers in secondary schools. Moreover, throughout much of its history, the PE profession has claimed to (a) educate *all* children and young people regardless of ability, and (b) educate for lifelong involvement in physical activity and sport. Certainly for some young people, PE will have been an enjoyable (perhaps the *most* enjoyable) aspect of their school lives and beyond. Yet the statistics on physical *inactivity* in the adult population<sup>1</sup> suggest that for the

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<sup>1</sup> Chief Medical Officers of England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland *Start Active, Stay Active* (Department of Health, 2011)

majority, something about PE is not working as intended or claimed, and many were *not* persuaded of the value of physical activity.

Given the stated aims of school PE, it is interesting to consider why it has failed so spectacularly for so many individuals. Research suggests that there are numerous problems with PE: lack of expertise at the primary level, ill-informed education/PE policies, inappropriate curriculum activities, overemphasis on the elite and adult forms of competition, and inadequate pedagogies. It is certainly instructive to compare the claims made in official documentation about the purposes of PE with the views of young people who have experienced it.

For example, in the national curriculum for PE it is claimed:

*A high-quality physical education helps students to develop the confidence to take part in different physical activities and learn about the value of healthy, active lifestyles. Discovering what they like to do and what their aptitudes are at school, and how and where to get involved in physical activity, helps them make informed choices about lifelong physical activity.<sup>2</sup>*

Meanwhile, comments echoed by children around the world suggest that PE can be a very unpleasant experience that does little to encourage engagement in physical activity; in fact it can have the opposite effect to the one intended:

*PE didn't make me good at anything. It just made me realize how slow I was and how fat I am. Yeah, I always dreaded PE classes. I really dreaded it because I could never do a push-up [or] a curl-up.<sup>3</sup>*

There will be some readers who can recall similar personal experiences, or whose children will report them from school.

The problems in youth sport coaching are different, but the outcome is the same. Children and young people who encounter coaching practices that are inappropriate for their individual needs soon drop out of sport. Coaching is not an established profession in the accepted sense of the word, although it aspires to full professional status. As many readers will be aware, much sport coaching in the UK is still undertaken as a

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<sup>2</sup> Department for Education *Physical Education Programme of Study* (2013) (<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/secondary/b00198952/pe/ks4/programme>)

<sup>3</sup> Lucas, young adolescent boy, quoted in Trout, J and Graber, K "Perceptions of Overweight Students Concerning Their Experiences in Physical Education" in *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* vol 28, no 3 (2009), p277

volunteer activity<sup>4</sup> and this limits the amount of training that is available or feasible for the vast majority of youth sport coaches.

The distinction between teachers and coaches is rooted in important historical and contemporary differences. The specialist PE teaching profession, for example, has fought long and hard to establish a respected place of equal value within the wider education community. Major milestones have included establishing a place in the National Curriculum and the introduction of GCSE and A-level examinations in the subject.

There is also no doubt that the creation of school sports partnerships and the establishment of sports colleges were of major importance for the PE/school sport community, particularly because head teachers became involved and, for example, were encouraged to attend major sports colleges conferences. This was probably the first time in recent history that head teachers had been moved to show such an interest in physical education and school sport. In addition, the link between specialist teachers in secondary schools and clusters of primary schools addressed an acknowledged need for additional expertise at this vital age level.

Coaches, on the other hand, have often been on the margins of (state) schools. Historically, coaches were excluded because they were considered to be comparatively untrained and unable to relate to the complex educational needs of children. Here again, SSPs were responsible for eroding some of these barriers and teachers were encouraged to work collaboratively, through partnership development managers, with all physical and human resources available in the locality. More recently, coaches have been invited into growing numbers of primary schools to fill the gap left by the loss of specialist teachers.

It is of course interesting to consider the teacher/coach (or PE/sport) dichotomy from the perspective of a child or young person. For these "clients", the differences between teachers and coaches and their relative professional status will matter rather less than the quality of the learning experience they encounter with either. Children encounter sport and physical activity in a range of different contexts, but in each one they are learners with the potential to gain much of value from the experience; or, indeed, very little. For example, a child learning to play hockey is the same child, learning the same sport, whether they are learning in or out of school. It seems logical to expect, therefore, that the quality of the learning experience in one context will affect the

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<sup>4</sup> *Sports Coaching in the UK III: A Statistical Analysis of Coaches & Coaching in the UK* (Sports Coach UK, January 2011) ([www.sportscoachuk.org](http://www.sportscoachuk.org))

child's ability and motivation to learn in the other.

The "problem" addressed in this paper, therefore, is the failure of teachers and coaches to (a) work together in the best interests of children and (b) *diagnose* and *meet* the diverse learning needs of diverse children and young people. The consequence is that much time spent in compulsory school PE is wasted, provision in the crucial primary years is inadequate, and large numbers of children and young people lack the inspiration, competence and confidence to become and remain physically active.

Moreover, as is well documented, inactive children are likely to become inactive adults, and the problem is most acute for those groups in society that are least able to supplement state provision.<sup>5</sup>

### **What is meant by *professional* PE teachers/coaches and how could they resolve the problem?**

As noted above, PE teachers are already members of the recognised profession of teaching, and coaches aspire to professional status. Yet it is worth considering what it means to be a fully fledged professional, and what this *should* mean for teachers and those coaches who aspire to be members of a profession.

A dictionary definition of a profession is "an occupation that requires extensive education or specialised training". Importantly, professions have clients, and in physical education and youth sport, the clients are undoubtedly children and young people. This makes teaching a rather curious profession, because whereas most other recognised professions have branches or specialities within a wider professional body to serve this young client group, teaching is focused exclusively on it. It is also worth noting that this places a very great burden of responsibility on teachers to do what is "right" for each young client.

There have been numerous attempts to identify exactly what it is that sets professions apart from other occupational groups. Day identified four distinguishing features that all professions share:

- a specialised knowledge base – technical culture;
- a commitment to meeting client needs – service ethic;
- a strong collective identity – professional commitment; and
- collegial, as against bureaucratic, control over practice and professional standards – professional autonomy.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> CMOs, *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Day, C *Developing Teachers: The Challenges of Lifelong Learning* (Routledge, 1999), p5

Another distinguishing feature of professions is that they "serve" their client groups and, in so doing, are required to uphold high ethical and moral standards in the best interests of those clients. For example, Professions Australia defines a profession as follows:

*A disciplined group of individuals who adhere to high ethical standards and uphold themselves to, and are accepted by, the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised, organised body of learning derived from education and training at a high level, **and who are prepared to exercise this knowledge and these skills in the interest of others** [emphasis added].<sup>7</sup>*

What is clear in all of this is that members of a profession have a specialised body of knowledge that results from high levels of education and training and which can be deployed to serve their clients. In other words, if the knowledge base is inadequate, out of date or inappropriate, then a profession cannot fulfil its primary function. This explains why Brunetti<sup>8</sup> identified continuing professional development as the hallmark of a true profession.

Yet it has long been recognised that across the teaching profession, career-long professional development is woefully inadequate.<sup>9</sup> For PE teachers, this means that professional development has tended to focus on sporadic sports and education policy updates, and has largely excluded the wider subject-based material that would ensure teachers were using the most up-to-date knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Most youth sport coaches have little or no specialised training beyond a basic understanding of a specific sport.

There is a plethora of national and international research published regularly on highly relevant pedagogical topics, such as structuring an effective motivational climate, motor development, fundamental movement skills, meeting the needs of disaffected youth, early-years learning, endurance training for adolescents, engaging pupils with special needs and so on. The tragedy is that few PE teachers – and even fewer youth sport coaches – have either the access or the inclination to spend time reading such research.

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7 Professions Australia (<http://www.professions.com.au/defineprofession.html>)

8 Brunetti, GJ "Teacher Education: A Look at Its Future" in *Teacher Education Quarterly* (Fall 1998), pp59-64

9 Wayne, AJ, Suk Yoon, K, Zhu, P, Cronen, S and Garet, MS "Experimenting with Teacher Professional Development: Motives & Methods" in *Educational Researcher* vol 37, no 8 (2008), pp469-479

10 Armour, KM and Makopoulou, K "Great Expectations: Teacher Learning in a National Professional Development Programme" in *Teaching & Teacher Education* (2012) (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.10.006>, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/help/doi.htm>)

This is not to apportion blame, because the situation is complex, but the reality is that there are some (perhaps many) PE teachers who will not have read a single original research report since they qualified in their early 20s. As a consequence, it is entirely possible that these teachers are using outdated knowledge or practices that are not evidence-based. Coach education has improved over recent years, but there is still little evidence to suggest that the majority of youth sport coaches are trained to the level that would enable them to meet the very diverse needs of their young clients. This state of affairs would only be acceptable if we were prepared to consider sport and physical activity as unimportant – even trivial – endeavours for young people. Perhaps the key lesson that has been learned in recent years, however, is that from a health and well-being perspective, if nothing else, physical activity engagement is a very serious matter indeed.

So instilling lifetime sporting/physical activity habits is a stated aim of physical education, and is an implicit aim of youth sports coaches, who are keen to encourage sustained engagement in their particular sport. Yet as was noted earlier, if teachers and coaches are unable to *diagnose* and *meet* the diverse learning needs of diverse children and young people, it is more likely that they will use pedagogies and delivery practices that are inappropriate to the needs of the majority. Moreover, given the diverse nature of learners, and the complexity of the education challenge, it seems unlikely that anything will change until teachers and coaches are able and willing to take full professional responsibility – with accountability – for the claims that they make and for their practices.

If large numbers of children and young people are dropping out of sports clubs, attempting to avoid physical education lessons or participating unwillingly, then something is not working and needs to be changed. There is little doubt that without changes to the pedagogies and practices – the professional expertise – of teachers and coaches, there will be little change to the quality of learning experiences for the majority of children and young people. It is logical to assume, therefore, that providing more of the same will simply reach – or miss – the same young people. So what can be done to effect the changes required?

### **What could be done?**

Government resources are already deployed to deliver a large, professionally educated physical education workforce in all schools. Through SSPs and, more recently, following the London 2012 Olympics, more resource has also gone into the provision of sport coaches. The question then is, how we can use the existing resource more effectively so that more children and young people are inspired to be active.



I would like to conclude by offering the following eight action points, most of which could be delivered within existing resource:

1. Accept the principle that all children and young people, as clients, have a *right* to physical activity/sport provision that meets their individual and complex needs, and that the adults teaching or coaching young people have a *responsibility* to meet those needs.
2. Build collaborations between the PE teaching profession and the youth sport coaching fraternity centred on their *shared interest* in supporting children and young people to become competent, confident and enthusiastic participants in sport and physical activity.
3. Accept the implications of understanding (diagnosing) the *very different learning needs* of children at different ages, including the importance of developing fundamental movement skills between the ages of three and eight, and the need for more specialised sport support in later adolescence.
4. Build on the success of SSPs and the link with primary schools, shift some of the *specialist PE expertise* away from secondary schools to primary schools, and allow appropriately trained coaches to work at the upper levels of secondary schools.
5. Ensure that the PE profession and the coaching fraternity are held *accountable* for the claims they make about the outcomes of their activities for children and young people.
6. Recognise the breadth of knowledge and expertise required to be successful as a PE teacher or youth sport coach, structure *continuing professional development* accordingly, and make engagement with it compulsory in the interests of children and young people.
7. Consider the benefits that could result from facilitating closer working relationships with *physiotherapists* in an educational context, to ensure that movement problems and issues are addressed before they become entrenched and intractable (following the example of Finland).
8. Ensure that *universities*, in the research fields of both sport and exercise sciences and education, provide input into continuing professional development

structures in ways that are appropriate to the interdisciplinary needs of practitioners working with young people (the development of innovative interdisciplinary pedagogical cases at the University of Birmingham is one possible approach).



## Chapter 4

# Making the best of school facilities

Dean Horridge, Founder and Chief Executive of Fit For Sport

## Making the best of school facilities

At Fit for Sport we have had 20 years' experience leading healthy lifestyle activities and delivering children's and family activities. We are committed to both engaging and educating children, young people and their families on the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle through activity. We encourage all those that we work with through our school partnerships, accredited training and holiday activities for children and families, as well as the successful free Fitter Schools and Fitter Families initiatives, to adopt our simple, achievable and sustainable approach. Working with 250 schools, we help keep 250,000 children active.

As well as engaging young people in physical activity and sport, we have observed some real additional impacts on schools that are a by-product of what we provide. For example, in one school where we set up a playground project we have increased children's activity levels by 39% and, at the same time, we have seen a reduction in accidents and incidents in school playgrounds of 75%.

Whilst we play our part in encouraging young people to be active, much room remains for improvement. At present, there is much discussion around school sport, facilities and inactivity during lessons. It is my belief that there are some fundamental challenges which we need to address and which this paper seeks to outline:

- engaging *all* children in physical activity;
- moving children from physical activity to sport (the journey to sport);
- providing physical activity and sport opportunities throughout the full school day;
- providing appropriate facilities and bridging the gap in local communities;
- quality assurance/checking of physical activity/school sport;
- improving skills; and
- support for schools in an "information overload" era.

### **Engaging *all* children in physical activity and the journey to sport**

The term "sport" is used far too often and far too early with young children. We must stop using this word with young children, especially years 1, 2 and 3. From working with schools for over 25 years it is evident that if we use the word "sport" as an engagement tool, we lose around two-thirds of the class – only around a third of children are good at sports and continue to play outside school hours in local sports clubs. Our focus therefore needs to be making sure all key stage 1 and 2 pupils are (and enjoy being) *active* at school and, along the way, are educated on what's required to

lead a healthy lifestyle. If a child enjoys being active, they build the confidence to take up a sport at a later age.

To engage children in activity at school it is vital that activities are age-appropriate, fun and delivered by *all* school staff. This should range from teachers to midday supervisors to teaching assistants. In short we should look to *create a whole-school physical activity ethos*.

Engaging children in physical activity is simple. However, many schools lack the knowledge, expertise or confidence to do this. Our evidence, from working with more than 250 primary schools, shows that for all children to be engaged, schools must:

- provide a *range* of activities (different intensity levels for different abilities);
- avoid using the term *sport* too early;
- reward *all* children for their efforts;
- encourage all children to *try* their best (it is not all about winning and losing);
- lead by *example* – teachers and school staff are role models for children and should demonstrate activities, without being afraid to join in;
- keep activities *fun* for all; and
- utilise the *whole* school day (before school, during lunchtime and after school) for physical activity opportunities, not just PE lessons.

### **The journey to sport – moving children from physical activity to sport**

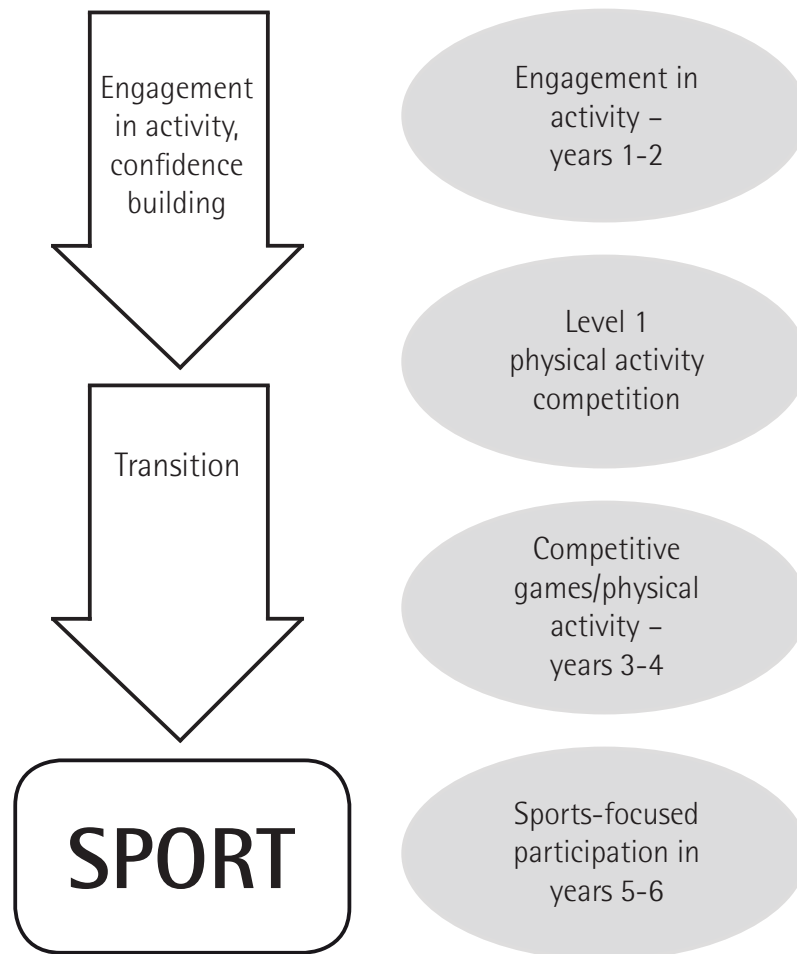
It is my personal belief, and that of Fit for Sport, that we must not focus on sport too early. A current project Fit For Sport is running with Sport England has further highlighted this point. It is necessary for primary school children to experience a "journey to sport".

This journey must begin by focusing on the engagement of all in physical activity. The first step in the journey to sport should be engagement and activity for years 1 and 2, before progressing to level 1 competition (focused on games and physical activity, as opposed to sport), to increase their confidence and sense of achievement. This journey should then be followed by transition into competitive games/physical activity for years 3 and 4, before moving to clear sports-focused participation in years 5 and 6.

### **Providing physical activity and sport opportunities throughout the full school day**

Many schools are missing the opportunity to get their pupils active throughout

## The journey to sport



the *full* school day. A great way to implement a whole-school physical activity and sporting ethos is to implement:

- breakfast clubs – a chance to get children active before school;
- active playtimes/lunchtimes;
- high-quality, engaging PE lessons; and
- after-school activity clubs/sports clubs.

One of the greatest opportunities to get children physically active is at lunchtime. The 30- to 45-minute lunch break allows teachers, midday supervisors and teacher's assistants to engage children in physical activity. All schools need for this is some training and support to implement what is a really simple way of getting pupils more physically active.

The impact of a structured, physically active lunchtime is striking. In our work with

schools we have seen marked improvements not only in activity levels but also in behaviour. Moreover, the benefits affect not only the pupils' physical health but also their academic performance. We have seen up to a 75% decrease in incidents as well as improvements in concentration and motivation in other lessons, all of which help raise achievement. As a school head in Ealing, Am Rai, noted:

*I have noticed a complete transformation of my school at lunchtime: children are more active, everyone is engaged in activity and problems/incidents have decreased dramatically. Children are coming back to the classroom feeling energised and are able to concentrate more!*

## **Responsibility for and quality assurance on PE and school sport**

### *Bespoke support to schools*

Much has been said about the changes in funding, quality of delivery and indeed who should deliver activities. However, no school is the same. We must, therefore, help to give schools the opportunities to plan and deliver through their particular capabilities rather than what's on paper. Making the most of each school's capabilities demands bespoke, rather than one-size-fits-all, support.

### *Best practice*

While bespoke support is crucial, general guidelines could be improved. New guidelines for the leads in schools (heads of PE, co-ordinators and so on) should change the requirements to be an active and sporty school, including best practice and how to move through the journey of sport.

### *Responsible person/lead*

Those responsible and accountable for PE are keys to a successful and active school. Guidelines and support should be focused on this key role in schools if we hope to advance participation at schools. Their remit must be to engage all in activity, and to oversee and aim to achieve an active and sporty school. However, the expectations should not be overcomplicated.

Too often the position is filled by someone who is active and sporty themselves (say, who rides a bike to school or plays a sport outside school), rather than someone who is necessarily qualified. Instead, a fully rounded approach should allow these individuals to plan and deliver PE and sporting provision (some, not all), receive training, monitor and evaluate their school as well as encourage competition with intra- and inter-school opportunities.



These persons will also be responsible for basic requirements that have the potential to go very wrong. An example of this is the provision and maintenance of equipment. A major reason why schools fail to deliver high-quality sessions is that they simply do not have the resources available or ready to use. The funds, time and support with training and guidelines all need to be put in place to deliver successful outcomes. They also need to be flexible enough to be useful for very different schools. For example, a school with 30 children has different needs from that of one with 700 pupils.

The feedback from our staff and head teachers suggests that unless a person takes ownership for the above it very rarely works. So a simple, achievable and sustainable plan needs to be in place for all primary schools to follow. One person needs to be accountable. Schools should be accountable for the degree to which they are an active and sporty school.

In my view we need to start with a clean board. We need to set new guidelines and provide the primary schools with the appropriate training, support and quality assurance systems to make sure the bar is raised and kept high. This is not a quick fix and requires engagement with delivery organisations and heads/key persons from schools and government who have demonstrated successful interventions and good practice. This should then form the new and simple guidelines, first looking at engagement at early years (foundation) level, years 1, 2 and 3, and then with an easy and achievable for all transition from year 4 to sports.

### **Lack of appropriate facilities and bridging the gap in local communities**

School facilities are not being utilised enough for activities and sports. For example, sports halls and school halls are too often used for anything but sport! In many circumstances pressures from other activities – such as lunch, meetings and assemblies – restrict the amount of time children have to use these great spaces. I do not see this improving, with increased demand for places, but new schools should have these in addition to the normal requirements.

However, I feel the answer is not to build new sport halls but to work with our communities. Most schools have great facilities within a few miles of the school, such as local health/leisure clubs. However, in most cases there is little connection and no agreements in place to work together. For the most part these facilities are underutilised during the school day.

Engendering community partnership is difficult:

- Transport costs to and from these facilities and venue costs are very high.
- Health clubs/leisure centres lack the skills and confidence to work with schools and too often have a "members only" mentality for using facilities.

The government should look to address these issues so that schools and local facilities start working together. Funding could also be extended, including to those schools who want to do more activities and sports. If we want more active children it would seem sensible to bridge this gap between schools and community facilities.

### **Support for schools in an 'information overload' era**

Confusion around requirements for schools over who can and should deliver PE (and extended-hours and after-school clubs) needs clarity. There is no "one-stop shop" for schools to gain information/guidance or advice on these deliverables. There are myriad so-called gatekeepers, and the difference in advice causes much confusion among all those who work in and around schools. This must be addressed as a matter of priority.

Schools should also look to improve the skill sets of current staff. This should involve an assessment of what accredited training is available for the staff and where the funds for this and further development are to come from. Schools should also be able to look at using outsourced providers. To do so, though, requires having information readily available, such as a list of organisations qualified to deliver services and advice on things like insurance.

A one-stop shop for schools to gain advice, resource and training should be established to help schools. This may be the role of county sports partnerships or even the newly formed Compass.

### **Compass**

Compass is an industry trade association representing the interests of all providers delivering sport and physical activity in schools and the wider community, including private companies, foundations, charities and the public sector. The organisation is governed by a board whose members all represent leading players in the sports and physical activity sector and is managed on a day-to-day basis by Martin Gallagher, our chief executive. Together they are working with key stakeholders such as Skills Active to establish a quality assurance kite mark for the best providers to use to promote their organisation as a quality provider.

### **Conclusions and summary**

If we are to create healthy lifestyle habits in adulthood it is vital to engage children

at an early age. Children who have a positive experience of activity and sport in school are much more likely to lead an active and healthy life in adulthood. This requires delivering high-quality, engaging and educational PE lessons, playtime and extended school provisions that inspire all children to try their best.

In summary we should:

- create a whole-school sporting ethos, giving pupils the skills to enjoy sport;
- take a different approach to activity in years 1 and 2;
- focus on the journey to sport;
- provide trained and supported staff; and
- control quality.

## Chapter 5

# Female sport in schools

Sue Tibballs, Chief Executive of the Women's Sport & Fitness Foundation

## Female sport in schools

It is depressing to reflect that girls in the UK today are significantly less active than boys. This is despite many years of effort by governments, teachers and charities such as the Women's Sport & Fitness Foundation, as well as overwhelming evidence that girls and women who are fit are healthier and happier.

The statistics are compelling: data recording actual activity levels show that at age 14, just over one in 10 girls is reaching recommended activity levels. And the gender gap is stark: boys of the same age are twice as likely to be fully active.

### The research

Women's Sport & Fitness Foundation research into this subject – carried out by Loughborough University – is the largest ever study that has sought to understand why girls stop being active as they grow up. Published as *Changing the Game for Girls* in May 2012, it involved over 1,500 girls and boys in both quantitative and qualitative research, and included conversations with a small number of teachers to explore the findings in more depth.

### The policy challenge

Too much policy on school sport has been driven from the top. Actually taking the trouble to ask the consumers of school sport – boys and girls – what they thought and wanted has been illuminating. Contrary to what people may think, there is no lack of demand. Pupils want to be active, motivated chiefly by a desire to be fit, healthy and have fun. However, much school sport is not meeting this demand. Half of all girls do not enjoy school sport and 45% think it is too competitive.

This chapter will argue that getting all children active should be the focus of school sport. Competition, elite success and winning medals all have an important part to play, but they should not be the focus of provision. In many schools, a focus on talent development in competitive sport is serving to discourage and alienate many pupils – particularly the least active and so most at risk, the majority of whom are girls.

While some schools are doing a great job of balancing participation with talent development, these are the exception rather than the rule. There is also a tension between empowering schools to tailor physical education to their needs, and the risk that the result will be even more patchy provision that does not meet a national need. Early evidence from the new £150 million fund for sport is indeed that schools are spending the money in countless ways – some of which will have negligible impact on

the key issue: participation.

For girls in particular, it is imperative that school sport becomes focused on participation. It has been realised that the UK faces an obesity crisis, with huge implications for health, well-being and the provision of medical services. Attempts to deal with that must have school sport at their centre – it is, after all, the place where the whole population are present (at some point in their life) for the process of more or less compulsory physical activity. Lack of clarity about what school sport *is actually for* risks missing the best opportunity to address these significant problems. Clear leadership is urgently needed – across government.

### **Girls' activity levels**

Looking at the data in more detail shows how far we are failing to meet the required level of excellence.

Our research found that although activity levels between girls and boys are broadly the same in early years, a growing gender gap emerges in the final years of primary education and is reinforced at secondary school. At year 4 of primary school, about two-thirds of girls and boys are doing the recommended amount of physical activity. However, by year 6, far fewer girls are doing so (39% meeting the target, against 73% of boys). And by year 9, when half of boys report that they had undertaken 60 minutes of physical activity on five or more days in the previous week, the equivalent figure for girls is only 31%.

### **The disengagement conundrum**

These disappointing figures are not because girls are opposed to physical activity per se: *three-quarters (76%) of 15-year-old girls surveyed wanted to do more physical activity.*

So what is driving the collapse in participation? The real reasons girls disengage are many, and some are deeply socially and culturally ingrained. This creates a challenging context in which schools are then striving to engage girls.

### **Family and friends**

Families have a big influence, although that influence declines as children grow older. Generally, the children we surveyed said parents were very positive and played an important role, in terms of both role modelling and facilitating activity. However, some parents – particularly those who didn't have a positive experience of school sport themselves – can be complicit in girls' disengagement from activity.

Interestingly, the research also shows that girls' activity can be inhibited by anxious parents who are setting more stringent rules concerning outdoor play for their daughters than their sons. Creating safe outdoor play spaces and encouraging parents to let their children – and girls in particular – play outside could be a key strategy to increase childhood activity levels.

Friends and peer groups are also influential, particularly as children get older, especially for girls, and most of all for the least active girls. While both girls and boys are primarily motivated to take part by having fun and staying healthy, girls are relatively more likely to say that being active is fun or enjoyable, or that they are influenced by their friends doing it. Boys are more likely to say they like being part of a team or representing the school or that they are inspired by watching others.

Closely connected to friendship is the degree to which social norms around being female and feminine are still affecting girls' attitudes and behaviour. Being sporty is still widely seen as a masculine trait. While sporty boys are valued and admired by their peers, sporty girls are not, and can be viewed negatively. Half of all girls agreed that "getting sweaty is not feminine".

By year 9 both girls and boys agree that being thin is more important for girls than boys, while having lots of muscles is more important for boys. Girls feel that some aspects of sport – getting sweaty, dirty and messy – are unfeminine.

### **School**

Whatever the impact of family and peer groups, school is the place where policy can have a direct effect – and children themselves agree that school is the key location where attitudes to sport and physical activity are formed.

Unfortunately, a large number of girls feel that that too much PE and school sport is still focused on traditional competitive sport, and that attention is reserved for the sporty and talented. Our research shows that this approach is working for a minority of girls – the sporty girls. But it is a huge turn-off for the majority, and in particular for the least active, who are most at risk.

Among girls, the most active are very positive about school sport and PE and want more of it. The least active tend to be very negative about school sport and PE and feel their experiences at school are putting them off being active. Nearly half of the least active girls said they "don't like the activities we get to do in PE", compared with just one in five of the most active, while a significant number of girls – a third – also

perceive their teachers to be only interested in those with talent.

Many girls do enjoy competition and appreciate the opportunity to develop their skills. However, they dislike some of the behaviours that can go with it, such as over-competitiveness and aggression. Overall, only half as many girls as boys said they were drawn to the competitive elements of PE and school sport, and more girls thought an increase in competition would be more detrimental than beneficial. The least active girls had enjoyed the less formal, less rule-based approach experienced at primary school.

For the least active, as you might expect, concerns about their ability and appearance present significant barriers. School sport is very exposing – and for the least confident girls, being seen exercising, particularly by boys, can be excruciating.

Many girls also feel very self-conscious about their bodies and appearance and don't like to be seen exercising. Three-quarters (76% of all girls) agreed that "girls are self-conscious about their bodies". The least active are almost three times as likely to "strongly agree" with this than the most active – 31.3% versus 13.3%.

School space can be dominated by boys playing sport, to the exclusion of girls, and school facilities can be inadequate – girls are more likely to be deterred by dirty changing facilities.

But despite these barriers, girls also had a clear agenda for how school sport could be adapted to drive up their participation levels.

- Girls overall wanted more choice of activities in PE.
- They wanted to be able to take part in girl-only groups, away from the gaze of boys.
- They wanted to be with their friends and have fun while exercising.
- They wanted to feel comfortable in what they wore and to feel encouraged and rewarded for their efforts.
- They wanted teachers to be more encouraging and not just focus on the sporty.

### **Government and school sport**

What the girls in our research have done is give policy makers a very clear basis for the kind of sports policy that could deliver real change – provided that it is driven on the insight that the primary interest of majority of pupils and parents is being fit, healthy and having fun.



The arguments about the role of competitive sport, or about funding levels, are a distraction. The key need is for an attitude based on participation. At a time when UK children are reaching record obesity levels, getting every child active has to be the priority of school sport.

Yes, competition, elite success and winning medals all have important parts to play, but not to the exclusion of overall participation. There is clear evidence that in too many schools, a dominating focus on talent development in traditional sports is serving to discourage and alienate a majority of pupils – particularly the least active and so most at risk. Girls dramatically outnumber boys among this group.

### **Recommendations**

Based on our research, the views of teachers and, critically, of children themselves – the consumers – our recommendations for school sport are that:

- Schools should set their own targets and establish clear and public aspirations for *100% participation* by pupils in physical activity.
- Schools should provide choice in physical activity wherever possible. They should seek the opinions of pupils on what activities are likely to drive maximum participation, and design PE to reflect that feedback.
- Schools should recognise and celebrate higher levels of overall participation as well as successes in competitive sport. A culture that celebrates active girls should be encouraged.
- Schools should ensure that PE staff are welcoming and supportive of all pupils, irrespective of ability, and are open-minded and creative in their delivery.
- Non-PE staff should be encouraged to lead and mentor physical activity, particularly outside PE lessons, before and after school and at break times.
- Schools should find opportunities to discuss issues around body confidence and appropriate "masculine" and "feminine" norms, including in PSHE lessons.
- If there are specific barriers in terms of facilities or clothing that discourage girls' participation, these should be addressed.
- If pupil feedback is that single-sex sporting choices would increase participation,

or that sports space is exclusively used by boys, schools should make efforts to offer choices and provide girls-only space.

- Schools should explore partnerships with external organisations, such as clubs (of all kinds, including less orthodox choices such as dance, aerobics and martial arts), and charities (for fun runs and other motivational opportunities), in order to maximise participation.
- Schools should explore using alternative reward schemes like the notion of "personal best" to motivate participation.

We have brought these recommendations together in our "Changing the Game for Girls" toolkit,<sup>1</sup> which has been created to support teachers in their development and delivery of girls' PE and sport on these lines.

There is a limit to the extent to which ministers and civil servants in Whitehall can ensure that participation increases – much, inevitably, needs to be done at school level. However, it is reasonable to expect that the message from the Department for Education should be clear and unequivocal: the priority for physical education and school sport is to deliver healthy children, and the need is to engage and encourage every child, not just the sporty and talented.

All government departments – especially education, health and the territorial departments – should work together to deliver that aim. And a specific strategy aimed at reducing the endemic gender gap needs to be put in place. For example, the inclusion of dance in the national curriculum shows what can be done.

The role of Ofsted in school sport needs clarification as well: what exactly are inspectors measuring? Is it academic success, activity levels or sporting achievement? These are not the same, and the fact that we do not know how active UK children are is a major impediment to proper policy development and measurement.

### **Next steps**

The Women's Sport & Fitness Foundation is preparing to undertake further work in this vital area. A grant from the Department of Health will enable us to carry out a programme of work to encourage schools to act on the recommendations of our report.

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<sup>1</sup> Available from [www.wsff.org.uk](http://www.wsff.org.uk)

We will be establishing a network of "Gold Medal" schools, helping them to adapt provision and create environments in which it is normal for girls to be active. We will work directly with 25 primary and secondary schools across England to improve the provision of girls' PE and sport, offering the right opportunities and approaches for more girls to get involved. The schools in the network will include both those that currently offer a successful provision for girls and those that are keen to do so, but are struggling to achieve it.

We will look in particular at the transition between the primary and secondary school environment and the journey that girls encounter during this time. A commitment throughout the whole school is crucial to allow for a successful culture change in schools that will allow more girls to be active more often.

We will help these schools to connect with facilities and services in their local communities and promote local sportswomen as role models. The programme also aims to address deeply ingrained issues around body image and self-confidence, which currently prevent so many girls from being more active.

### **Conclusion**

The benefits from getting health and fitness right for girls at school are things that they – and their families, communities and society at large – will enjoy over a lifetime. A small investment of time, commitment and funding will have huge benefits. Let's make that happen.

## Chapter 6

# Taking sport to the doorstep for disadvantaged young people

Jane Ashworth OBE, Founder and Chief Executive of StreetGames

## Taking sport to the doorstep for disadvantaged young people

*Youth sport charity StreetGames was set up because disadvantaged young people have fewer chances to play sport than their more affluent peers. StreetGames advocates taking sport to the doorstep of disadvantaged young people and has enjoyed cross-party support since its launch in 2007. Doorstep sport was developed alongside the community regeneration programmes of the 2000s as an effective route into sport for disadvantaged young people. Since then StreetGames has won many prestigious awards for changing lives, changing communities and changing sport. The 2012-17 DCMS and Sport England strategy – “Creating a sporting habit for life” – opened up the opportunity for StreetGames to create 1,000 doorstep sport clubs in disadvantaged areas.*

*Here Jane Ashworth OBE, StreetGames' founding chief executive, argues that we need a society-wide campaign to provide an attractive, desirable, vibrant and varied sporting offer that makes it easy for disadvantaged young people to take up and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.*

Society would be better off on a broad measure of social indices if more men and women of all ages, from all social classes and income groups, were more physically active, both now and for the rest of their lives. In such a Britain, we would be far healthier, and it would be a richer place too.

Medics who specialise in the economics of inactivity tell us that each year £8.2 billion could be saved on the back of a culture change which led to many more of us taking more exercise. Our sedentary lifestyle accounts for a great many of the reasons that today's 20-year-olds are on target to become the first generation set to live a shorter life than their parents.

Disadvantaged communities – where health inequalities are greatest and where participation in sport is lowest – would benefit most from more people taking up an active lifestyle. Disadvantaged young people can expect to live almost eight years less than their more affluent peers. Table one shows that they play considerably less sport too.

Look beyond health concerns to the wider benefits of taking part in sport and you see a similar picture. The Welsh government's child poverty programme recognises the contribution of doorstep sport to a better life. They, along with many others, know that exclusion from sport has multiple consequences that reproduce inequality across a wide breadth of measures.

**Table 1: Weekly participation in sport among 16- to 25-year-olds by household income**

Household income	Percentage participating in sport at least once a week
Up to £10,399	44%
£10,400-£20,799	51%
£20,800-£31,199	49%
£31,200-£41,599	58%
£41,600-£51,999	67%
£52,000 and over	74%

It is ironic that those communities and individuals most in need of the benefits of sport are those that struggle most to access sport. For example, a community's organising skills increase as people learn to lead sport, and the networks within a community are strengthened through playing together. Again: membership of a community club increases social capital but disadvantaged young people join up at less than half the rate of middle-class young people.

As a final example of low access to sport fuelling wider inequalities, consider how life skills, as well as CVs and university applications, are enhanced through volunteering. But disadvantaged young people are trapped in a vicious circle. There are few sports opportunities in their neighbourhoods and so there are few volunteering opportunities. The result is that less than half as many young people from low-income households volunteer as do their affluent peers.

The inequalities in participation in sport persist throughout sport. The cream does not rise to the top. At elite level, disadvantaged young people lose out too. Seven percent of Britain's schoolchildren attend state schools, yet just under 40% of British medal winners at the last two Olympic Games were former state school pupils. At the London Olympic Games a privately educated child was nearly eight times more likely to win a gold medal for Team GB than a state-educated child.

### **An active Britain**

Sport England funds the governing bodies of the leading sports to make more people more active now. As a result of this, the figures have started to move: initiatives between 2005 and 2013 stimulated an increase of 1.4 million in the number of adults

playing sport at least once a week. This outcome tells us that stimulating behaviour change on a far larger scale will take a campaign on par with those that changed our attitudes to drink-driving, eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, smoking and recycling. It is a very big deal and far beyond the reach of current sports budgets.

The research also tells us that most of the 1.4 million new sports players are from the highest socioeconomic groups; there has been no significant change among the lower groups. Raising participation as a whole does not necessarily increase participation among the most disadvantaged. A society-wide drive to raise participation will increase inequality unless the particular needs of disadvantaged areas are built into the campaign.

Experience in the field shows that this inequality in access to sport can be rectified. The lower rates of participation among lower socioeconomic groups is generally not down to a lack of demand, but to a lack of appropriate opportunity. This view is supported by data from the Active People Survey, which reported that around 70% of disadvantaged young people want to do more sport. The reasons these young people participate less than their more affluent peers are found in a mix of these factors.

- Investment has been in the traditional sporting structures, such as private members' clubs, which are out of reach both culturally and geographically.
- The type of sport on offer is not held in high regard – young people want their sport to be casual and fun.
- Sport is too expensive.
- Disadvantaged young people typically lack the necessary transport and finance to take part in out-of-neighbourhood sport.
- There is less family involvement to provide role models and practical help to get involved.
- Disadvantaged teenage girls are especially alienated from the traditional sporting offer.

Over the last few years sport providers have been getting better at understanding what people want in their sport. Irregular participants and non-participants alike say there is a mismatch between what people want and what they have been offered.

In today's busy world people want a vibrant and varied offer that requires little commitment and veers towards the social above the competitive. They want their sport to suit small groups of friends joining in when they can. A match that takes all day to play is not going to suit most people's lifestyles; leagues that require commitment to play every weekend are not likely to attract many new players either.

We hear a similar story when it comes to competition – some people do not want to compete, others do but cannot face the possible humiliation of being outclassed. Conversely, many people who are not very good at a sport still want to compete.

Where sport has adapted its offer to meet these preferences, the results are clear. The five-a-side football centres that run short, accessible, low-ability – or to put it more kindly, "entry-level" leagues – are a success. England Netball runs successful Back to Netball campaigns that offer casual, non-threatening netball programmes that are all about turning up and playing for fun. Other casual formats are popular too. Go Ride cycle events, informal running groups and casual table tennis, played in city centre and busy thoroughfares via the Ping initiative, are all popular.

These dip-in, dip-out sporting offers are what people want, and this is backed up by the increase in the number of people who prefer to jog, cycle, swim or go to the gym than play in team or ball sports. These sports are easier to fit in with a busy lifestyle and they can be cheaper. They lend themselves well to solo or small group activities, and individuals can easily measure their progress.

In disadvantaged communities the story is slightly different. Large numbers are hungry for the opportunity to play sport and will do so once sport is taken to their doorstep. The current rate of under-participation means that there are more people here who are easier to activate than in affluent areas.

Through the hard work of the StreetGames network of local projects, and financial support from partners including Sport England, the Welsh Assembly, Coca-Cola, the Co-operative and the Pools, hundreds and thousands of disadvantaged young people have taken opportunities to take part in neighbourhood, regional and national competitions – opportunities to volunteer, gain experience and acquire sports leadership qualifications.

Through these experiences we have learned that disadvantaged young people are keen to play sport and they have views about what type of sport they want. Despite definite gender differences in their opinions, many disadvantaged young people tell us they



prefer doorstep sport to school sport or other traditional offers because:

- doorstep sport is informal, flexible and fun, not all about skills and drill and preparing the best players for matches;
- doorstep sport takes place within their neighbourhoods, where they feel safe;
- doorstep sport does not threaten their self-respect or set them up to fail;
- doorstep sport gives them the freedom to influence what sport to play, where and when;
- doorstep sport expects and accepts that young people will chat to their friends and attend to their phones during sessions; and
- young people appreciate the group leaders, who they feel run flexible sessions for their benefit and who they can relate to – often a doorstep sport coach will come from their own estate, or one nearby.

Within the above framework there are gender differences in motivation and in preferences. Young males want a mix of task-oriented goals (skill development, accomplishment, affiliation and fitness) and ego-oriented goals (social, status, competition and recognition). They want bragging rights. By comparison, many young females say they want activities to focus on social activity rather than on traditional competition, and the involvement of friends and family members in sessions is very important.

Young women are concerned about their appearance – both how they look while participating in sport and how they imagine they will look as a result of participating in sessions. Therefore, sessions which emphasis fitness tend to be more appealing. Make a sports offer sound rough and sweaty, and the not-very-sporty woman from a disadvantaged area will be turned off. Tie it in with fitness, health, beauty and a strong social aspect, and then she might join in. Over time that same young woman might grow in confidence to resist the idea that exercise jeopardises her status in her own eyes and those of her reference group.

The young people who hold these strong opinions are typically those who want to be on their way out of school at 16. Their attitude is not to be dismissed, because it is coloured by the adolescents' desire to be treated like adults. Better instead that attention is paid to their opinions: otherwise they remain at high risk of sliding into a sedentary lifestyle. They tell us what they want from sport – and the results that can be gained from giving it to them would be a real bargain for all of society.

### **The lifelong habit**

British sport is on a learning curve, and the current priority is to reshape sport to

encourage more people to be more active now. We do not really know how to encourage and support the mass of people to stay active for life. The connections between playing today (at whatever stage of life) and establishing or reaffirming a lifelong habit are not clearly understood.

However, recent research suggests that people who are active across the demographic bands seem to share attributes that mark them out from the inactive. They tend to be people who score highly in self-assessments regarding:

- their general health and **physical** sporting abilities and skills (such as strength, agility, balance, speed and hand-eye co-ordination);
- their **psychological** affinity with sport: self-confidence in sporting situations and confidence regarding body image; and
- their **social** connectedness to sport – for example, with friends and family members who take part in sport and experience of taking part in sport outside PE lessons while at secondary school.

The working title for the calibration of scores on these indices is *sporting capital*: the higher one's stock of sporting capital, the higher the likelihood of participating in sport. Understanding how to grow sporting capital will help us to prepare age-appropriate interventions and opportunities that increase the likelihood of a sporting habit for life. In disadvantaged areas it seems likely that this process will require a deliberate plan to give young people the skills, knowledge and confidence to make their own way in sport once school days are over.

This amounts to showing youngsters their way around lots of sports in lots of settings: how to make use of facilities – how to use a gym; knowing how to get the best from a leisure centre and not feel out of place; developing a taste for team games but also for the solo sports that are becoming so popular; and taking specific action to help raise their skills, confidence and connections with sport.

Applied market research tells us the type of sport young people want to take up; further thinking around sporting capital will tell us how to help them to stay active. The knowledge curve that drives British sport – whether funded through the four home country sport councils, the lottery, the education or health systems, or the youth justice system – will soon enable us to provide the type of sport that people want to do today, and to know what we can do today to instil the habit for life.



## Chapter 7

# Including disabled children in school sport

Barry Horne, Chief Executive of the English Federation of Disability Sport

## Including disabled children in school sport

Three out of four disabled people are not active in sport – most say "sport is not for me". When we ask why, many will share that it never really was. With an increasing majority of disabled children taught in mainstream schools (as opposed to special schools) any lasting legacy of increased sporting participation must be built on the solid foundations of an enjoyable and inspirational school sport experience.

Effective inclusion in PE brings significant and broad-based benefits that go well beyond developing the physical literacy and skill base to participate fully in sport. It also brings enhanced health and well-being and, ultimately, increased self-efficacy which can be continuously fuelled by external acknowledgment of the individual's skill and proficiency. Gold medal performances take many forms, but when experienced by a child developing their love for physical activity, they can be life-changing.

The vision of the English Federation of Disability Sport is that disabled people are active for life. Lifelong participation – and, for some, access to sporting pathways that can lead to elite success – needs to start in (or before) school. While there is undoubtedly some outstanding practice of inclusive provision within physical education and school sport, we need to aspire towards high-quality provision for *all* across the schools network. Using the backdrop of the London 2012 Paralympic Games with its much-heralded ambition to "inspire a generation", there can be no better time to accelerate our progress in delivering positive experiences within PE and school sport.

### Child-centred

Much of the work of the English Federation of Disability Sport focuses on increasing the participation of disabled people when they are adults. Increasingly, we are working with those within and beyond the world of sport and physical activity to rebalance the historical priority placed on the nature of the "supply side offer" by building a much stronger understanding of the needs and aspirations of existing and potential participants. Any effective strategy to improve the scale and quality of participation in school sport must start from a comprehensive understanding and insight into the hopes and aspirations of disabled children. The EFDS is keen to work with others to strengthen both quantitative and qualitative research insight, but the reality of the current situation is that there is much more we need to know to inform our thinking moving forward.

### Building on what we do know

According to the 2011 School Census data, there are around 8.1 million pupils in all schools

in England, and with approximately 6% of the child population being disabled,<sup>1</sup> this equates to just under half a million young disabled people within our schools. Furthermore, 2.8% (224,210) of pupils across all schools in England had statements of special educational needs (SEN) – a percentage that has remained unchanged in recent years – while some 17.8% (1,449,685 pupils) had SEN but were without SEN statements. More than 80% of these young people will be attending mainstream schools. These statistics alone reflect the need for any future school sport strategies to be both inclusive in nature and targeted in provision.

Despite the size of this target group, the stated focus of government policy and the increasing interest within academia, little is known nationally about their current participation levels within school sport. Far less is known about the actual experiences of those SEN pupils. The latest Ofsted report, *Beyond 2012 – Outstanding Physical Education*, highlighted that “in the best schools rigorous monitoring of participation rates in extra-curricular activity enabled subject leaders to coordinate additional programmes for those who did not regularly engage, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs”. This use of rigorous monitoring is fundamental moving forward, building on previous reporting mechanisms such as the PE and School Sport Survey, by establishing baseline measures, highlighting trends of target groups, evaluating the impact of interventions and providing future directions that are evidence based.

A positive experience within PE and school sport plays a critical role in shaping lifelong participation and access to sporting pathways for disabled people. Young disabled people have previously reported their experiences as “good days” and “bad days”. Good days fostered feelings of belonging that came with companionship, and being able to gain the benefits of physical education and skilful participation in terms of its intrinsic rewards as well as external acknowledgment by others of their skill proficiency. Bad days were characterised as ones when the participants were socially isolated, had reason to question their competence or had active participation restricted in class.<sup>2</sup> In light of this, provision and implementation of an inclusive school sport strategy will impact not only on participation rates but also on the perceptions and aspirations of young disabled people and the society in which they grow.

### **A structured response**

There are plenty of good examples to call up when seeking a more comprehensive route map for engaging young disabled people in sport. For example, the school games actively

1 Papworth Trust, 2010

2 Goodwin, DL and Watkinson, EJ “Inclusive Physical Education from the Perspective of Students with Physical Disabilities” in *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, vol 17, no 2 (2000), pp144-60

sponsored by Sainsbury's (the world's first sponsor to invest exclusively in a Paralympic Games) is beginning to see a much more meaningful engagement of young disabled people. The extension of Sport England's focus down to 14-year-olds is another important and helpful step in the right direction.

Playground to Podium or P2P was a four-year Lottery-funded programme to support young disabled people to progress from school and community sport to high-level performance. Current evidence from the review of P2P delivery alongside other studies supports this picture of inconsistent delivery and demonstrates the extremes of "good day" versus "bad day" experiences. In a report carried out by Whizz Kidz in 2011, 33% of children said that they did not take part in PE as much as other children, and a third of these felt it was because of their disability (with over half of wheelchair users feeling this way); less than half (46%) said they took part in team games and activities all the time, reducing to 22% of powered wheelchair users and 27% of manual wheelchair users.

Conversely, positive inclusion of a young person with double lower-leg amputation, within PE and school sport, led to her identification through P2P and subsequent representation of Great Britain at the London 2012 Olympics. Key to the provision of "good days" are the people who deliver effective practice. In order to create the fundamental changes that are required to foster consistency of provision, we will need to invest in teachers and school staff; by doing so, we will impact on pupils' experiences and lifelong engagement.

The lack of teacher training and of perceived competence, confidence and experience of including young disabled people in school sport remains a central challenge. A study of trainee and newly qualified PE teachers carried out by Liverpool John Moores University<sup>3</sup> found that eight out of 10 (84%) recently qualified and four out of 10 trainee PE teachers identified that their initial teacher training had not prepared them sufficiently to work with young disabled people. Additionally, the Ofsted report *Beyond 2012 – Outstanding Physical Education* reported current challenges in the progression of pupils within PE.

We recognise that inclusive teaching strategies and delivery are of benefit to all pupils regardless of ability or impairment, and this approach provides an environment in which all have the opportunity to be appropriately challenged and make good progress. We have to ask whether we are currently providing the right support to teachers to deliver on the aspiration of inclusive school sport and whether the inconsistency of opportunity that we see is a direct result of this factor. Moving forward, we need to ensure inclusive principles are embedded consistently throughout teacher training. This is particularly important for

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3 Vickerman, P and Coates, JK "Trainee and Recently Qualified PE Teachers' Perspectives on Including Children with Special Educational Needs" in *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* vol 14, no 2 (April 2009), pp137-153

primary education and the non-sport specialists, support staff and external companies who may be delivering activity on their behalf.

In direct response to this challenge, the Sainsbury's Active Kids for All inclusive PE training has been developed as a Paralympic legacy initiative delivered across the UK in collaboration with the home disability sport organisations, the British Paralympic Association and the Youth Sport Trust. In England, the English Federation of Disability Sport, alongside delivery partners at the Youth Sport Trust, will be working through this programme to support both trainee teachers and established teaching networks to embed inclusive practices within their curriculum delivery and support high-quality PE for all.

Often school sport and community sport are each looked at in isolation. However, if we want school sport to provide the platform for lifelong participation, we need to focus on the transition between the two and, more importantly, the relationship between the different aspects. Statistics from Sport England's Active People survey highlights that the drop-off (26.2%) in participation is steeper for disabled people, especially between the ages of 16 and 19, coinciding with school-based education coming to a close. The P2P initiative allowed us to explore this pathway, and in both school and community settings opportunities were available and effective.

However, the greatest challenge faced in delivery was the disconnect and inadequate transition between the two settings. This can be attributed to the lack of clear responsibility, accountability and leadership from either school or community providers. Sport England's significantly strengthened focus on school-to-club links and on the 14-plus agenda will undoubtedly help to address the transition from school to community sport, and insight from P2P and other programmes will inform this development. However, there needs to be an increased focus on how both of these systems (schools and community) work together as opposed to in parallel. Synergy and united leadership will enable complementary delivery in which all young people can and are encouraged to access school and community sport simultaneously. In addition, this approach will avoid duplication of activity and strengthen the offer to all young people.

The focus from Ofsted on the engagement and progression of targeted groups in PE is very much welcomed. But are we doing enough to understand what young disabled people's experiences of school sport actually are? Much has been done through the school sport partnerships network and current programmes to give young people the skills they need to lead and have a voice. It almost seems embarrassing to remind everyone that young people are the central stakeholder in school sport and that their experience will determine continued participation beyond. By empowering young people and allowing them to



inform practice, we will be able not only to deliver a progressive sport strategy but also to ensure that it is reflective of the needs of all young people.

### **Key conclusions**

The experience of sport and physical education at school has the potential to be a positive driver of lifelong activity for disabled people in the future. The more we understand about the negative as well as positive impact of past school experiences, the better we will be to safeguard future best practice.

While we can build on current and past best practice, including so much good work developed by the school sport partnerships, we desperately need a more comprehensive strategic framework to drive school and community sport for young people. The Sport England strategy has taken an important step towards addressing the needs of young people. However, there remains a fundamental fault line which means that during the most important years in shaping a lifelong sporting habit, it can too easily be left to chance whether a young disabled person may happen across the right conditions to feed their hopes and ambitions. Almost as significantly, there needs to be clarity about the responsible body entrusted by government to drive any plans into reality. At the moment an expanded Sport England role still falls short of owning the challenge of young people's sporting participation. The scope and influence of the Youth Sport Trust appears to have been eroded rather than enhanced, and for organisations like my own there is a clear need for the government to clarify which body is charged with ensuring that early intervention will help to deliver our simple vision: disabled people who are active for life.

## Chapter 8

# Increasing ethnic diversity in sport

Arun Kang, Chief Executive of Sporting Equals

## Increasing ethnic diversity in sport

Sporting Equals is the only national organisation working to increase ethnic diversity across sport and physical activity. We are a not-for-profit group with a strong national network of delivery partners on the ground, reaching the heart of black and minority ethnic communities. Sporting Equals works in partnership with providers of sport, including sports governing bodies, in order to:

- increase participation;
- open up a vast new pool of talent for sport in the UK;
- change outdated attitudes and assumptions; and
- enable black and minority ethnic communities to access sports and fitness facilities.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate and discussion on community sport.

### **What we know and the opportunity**

The black and minority ethnic (BME) population in England and Wales is rapidly growing – by some 37% in just eight years, according to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics. The 2011 census indicated that the areas with the largest population growth between 2001 and 2011 also tended to be those with large, thriving BME communities. These acute changes in UK demographics, at both local and national levels, represent one of the biggest opportunities for providers of sport, be they governing bodies, schools or local authorities, to increase sport participation among young people and adults.

This ambition, however, will be realised only if sports providers learn, understand and have the confidence to meet the diverse needs of our increasingly diverse population. Our research suggests that increasingly, a significant proportion of this population will engage in sports activity through faith- and community-based settings. This is largely owing to a greater need among BME communities to participate where they are confident that their cultural and religious needs will be met and respected.

Data from the recent Millennium Cohort Study report also highlighted that half of all UK seven-year-olds are sedentary for six to seven hours every day, and only half clock up the recommended daily minimum of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Those from ethnic minorities, and particularly girls of Indian origin, are identified as particularly at risk. It is vital that sports providers develop their understanding on how

to reach diverse communities. Schools also have a large part to play in educating not only the children, but also their families about the benefits of sport and the options available to them. Being more creative in their offering could help too.

### **The BME 'third sector': an overlooked resource**

An estimated 8,000 BME voluntary and community organisations operate in the UK. They are an important but often overlooked resource in the drive not only to increase participation in sport, but also to tackle social exclusion and deprivation. Mostly based in inner cities, these organisations serve – mainly but not exclusively – particular BME communities on a neighbourhood, town or local authority basis. Many originate from the network of cultural, religious, economic and kinship ties that bind BME communities together.

There are a significant number of local, regional and national strategic infrastructure BME organisations, which usually offer capacity-building support to front-line delivery organisations. These organisations play an active role in advocating change in policy and practice on the part of mainstream service providers, and many have an involvement or interest in the sports sector.

There is also a BME community sports sector, comprising around 2,500 organisations that operate outside the mainstream of sport and are largely run by 10,000 BME sport volunteers. Many of these organisations have their own premises and offer a range of indoor sports, including volleyball, table tennis, badminton, basketball, cricket, five-a-side football, hockey, dance, judo, boxing and weightlifting.

A key feature is the tournaments and leagues that reach out to at least 20,000 BME volunteers and players. Their development can largely be attributed to the perceived lack of support from affiliated leagues, discrimination from the sporting community and the dearth of visible role models involved in sport decision making. However, while this sector is alive with passion and commitment, there is little engagement and awareness of opportunities within the mainstream, for example coach bursaries, subsidised training, facilities and leagues. The BME third sector is a vital engagement tool and is one of the key ways in which many BME communities will access sport.

*I wouldn't dream of taking part in sport anywhere other than with my friends at the local community centre. I don't know where these other clubs are and I would be scared that my English is not good enough to understand the teachers and that they would not understand and respect my culture.*

– Somali woman, 27 years old

## **Conclusions**

We firmly believe that any leading community sports structure should mean real partnership with the third sector, and specifically the ethnic minority third sector, if we are to have a structure that is truly representative and inclusive of all members of society.

National governing bodies of sport and schools are key routes to access sport. They need to significantly develop their ability to engage and retain ethnic minorities, including new and emerging migrant communities. Decision-making structures within both the governing bodies and schools need to engage key influencers from BME communities so that future interventions and programmes come from an informed perspective and have empathy with local communities.

There is a huge opportunity for sports providers to engage a growing untapped audience. Key to this will be a genuine partnership with the BME third sector.

## Chapter 9

# A Derbyshire journey

Peter Crowe, Head Teacher of Tibshelf Community School

## A Derbyshire journey

I am a Derbyshire head teacher. I have served the community of North East Derbyshire for the past 30 years; the last 13 as head teacher of Tibshelf Community School, which proudly became a sports college in 2004. Recently I have chaired the School Sport Strategy Group for the county on behalf of Derbyshire schools and Derbyshire Sport; I am also Derbyshire's head teacher ambassador to the Youth Sport Trust.

The specialist school programme was first devised under a Conservative administration in the 1990s to support the development of technology colleges. As the new century was born we made abortive attempts to become a technology college. The specialist school movement gathered pace under a Labour administration, the range of subjects broadened and we were delighted, with the encouragement and support of the Youth Sport Trust, to eventually achieve specialist sports college status.

By 2005 we were one of nine sports colleges in Derbyshire and before long the movement grew to well over 400 sports colleges nationally. It was an exciting time, and attending an investiture along with other new sports colleges in London in 2004 was one of the proudest moments of my career as a head teacher.

Even in the early stages of our newfound identity as a sports college, we were looking outwards to consider what role we could play in developing high-quality PE and school sport right across our learning community. The chance to host one of the new school sports partnerships mushrooming across the country seemed too good to miss.

We were fortunate in appointing John Barker as our partnership development manager. John's background was as an experienced teacher of history and politics, and he had played an important role in the strategic leadership of his school. His real passion, though, is for sport and he has a burning commitment to the development of high-quality PE. John took responsibility, like most partnership development managers, for five secondary schools, one special school and about 36 primary schools across the Bolsover district.

We quickly became knitted into the larger sporting community of the whole of Derbyshire, with 10 partnerships – eight of them covering this large rural county and two serving Derby city. Under the auspices of Derbyshire Sport, led by their inspirational chief executive, David Joy, we were quick to build a successful, comprehensive and effective series of partnerships, with the single dream of making Derbyshire "one of the most active and successful sporting counties by 2020".

Each of the 10 partnerships in Derbyshire has been fortunate in recruiting outstanding partnership development managers dedicated to the development of PE and school sport for all of Derbyshire's children. By 2010 the results in numeric terms were astonishing; 67% of young people in the county were taking part in three hours of high-quality PE and school sport every week – 12% above the national average; 45% of youngsters were taking part in interschool competitions and over 25% of youngsters were playing sport with community clubs. Perhaps the most significant figure for me, as I watched the massive positive impact on many of our youngsters, was that more than one in five of our students became actively involved in leadership and volunteering roles in sport.

By this time also we had an army of professionals and volunteers supporting these developments. With 60 school sports co-ordinators working under the partnership development managers and nearly 400 primary link teachers developing their skills and confidence in the delivery of regular PE sessions with the guidance and support of their mentors, the future looked bright. It was clear that Derbyshire County Council valued the work we were doing, because in addition to the investment from the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, Derbyshire and Derby city councils invested heavily through their own direct funding systems and through primary healthcare programmes. All schools also spent scarce resources ensuring that the infrastructure created continues to be effective in reaching all students, even in the most remote parts of Derbyshire.

### **Response to funding cuts**

Our perceived strength and sporting infrastructure as a county were put to the test in 2010 when the new government announced a significant cut in funding. Our response was to maintain momentum and strategic direction through the creation of a school sport strategy group. This county forum, inspired and created by David Joy of Derbyshire Sport, was created to ensure that the many stakeholders across a wide variety of sporting endeavours worked together in harmony, to consolidate the gains made as well as to chart a clear path for future success.

Such was the strength of purpose and local support for partnerships, we were confident that it was possible to maintain our 10 partnerships despite the 50% loss of funding, as the new government changed direction and priorities and its austerity measures began to bite.

After much deliberation and discussion, the new countywide plan for PE and school sport was launched in May 2012. It was born with the unremarkable title "Physical Education & Sport Plan for Schools & Colleges in Derbyshire 2012-2015". We felt that



involvement in physical activity and sport could bring huge benefits to young people in terms of their health, confidence and self-esteem as well as their ability to concentrate and their readiness to learn. The new plan presented seven clear ambitions:

- engaging young people and PE teachers in developing an enjoyable and high-quality PE curriculum;
- providing a programme of competitions and festivals for students of all abilities;
- developing and deploying young leaders in roles such as coaching and officiating;
- ensuring that young people were able to continue playing sport in community clubs after leaving school or college;
- ensuring that high-attaining students were signposted to suitable talent development programmes;
- ensuring that more young people took part more often in local physical activity programmes; and
- ensuring all stakeholders involved in the delivery of PE and school sport shared the plan's vision and ambitions and worked together to achieve the targets.

These ambitions were united under the single vision of ensuring that "all young people in schools and colleges in Derbyshire enjoy their experiences in physical education and sport, are fully supported to fulfil their ambition and are motivated to choose an active lifestyle".

The new government had insisted on the use of the title "school games organisers", with the emphasis on competitive sport between schools as the overarching ambition and the *raison d'être* behind the funding. However, we had gone too far down the road of ensuring the strategic function of our district leaders to turn back from that key part of their role. We were very fortunate in having the support of Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Sport in ensuring that our hybrid system and *modus operandi* was able to continue.

However, many of the school sport co-ordinators – secondary PE teachers seconded to provide CPD in the primary sector – gradually became casualties of the budget cuts, while the nine sports colleges were generally keen to continue the CPD role of the co-ordinators. Investment across all 46 of Derbyshire secondary schools was more patchy as school leaders responded to the gradual squeezing of school budgets, often deciding to prioritise their spending elsewhere.

One of the lessons from this for me was the importance of ring-fenced funding for

certain initiatives – it is vital that the newly announced funding going directly to primary schools to develop PE and school sport is used for that purpose – particularly, as Baroness Campbell recently opined, to continue the work which has only just begun in developing physical literacy through high-quality PE and not resort to a quick fix.

Staying true both to ourselves and to the spirit and intent behind the new funding, we have put huge time, effort and energy into the development of large-scale set-piece summer and winter games and sporting festivals, at both district and county level. Over the past three years each event has been bigger and more ambitious than the last. The local organising committee, led by Craig Homer, has done fantastic work in bringing tremendous, slick organisation and Olympic ambition to each of the county events.

On 9 July 2013 the Derbyshire Summer Games was generously hosted by the independent school in Long Eaton – Trent College. As Craig Homer and his team embarked on the planning for this event, I set aside my reservations about working so closely with a private school. How glad I am that I did, because in the event Howard Nelson and James Gregory, the team at Trent College, simply could not do enough for us and put every inch of their magnificent grounds at our disposal.

The day dawned bright and fair, if anything a little too hot. One thousand student competitors and 200 volunteers gathered for a magnificent festival of sport spread across 10 disciplines, with nearly 100 teams taking part across tennis, touch rugby, cricket, boccia, golf, quad-kids, rounders and sports hall athletics for disabled youngsters, as well as a full outdoor athletics programme. Although competition was at times intense, the engagement and enjoyment of all the students was also plain to see.

From the earliest moments of the opening ceremony, with Olympic inspiration given by England's handball captain Bobby White, to the cricket final played in the lengthening shadows finishing well after 6pm, we experienced a veritable feast of competitive sport. I was proud of the four teams from my school that had qualified. I don't think I will ever forget the intense concentration and will to win on the boccia court exhibited by Chloe, perhaps one of our future Paralympic hopefuls.

Successful though the summer festival was, it was only a very small part of our year-long competition programme, so ably organised by our school games organisers. The year 2012/13 saw many successful competitions conducted at district level in soccer, table tennis, basketball, netball, kwik cricket, tri-golf and many others. A total of over

600 events at district level across the county were carried out by the primary schools alone.

### **Future focus**

So where are we now? We are incredibly proud of the fact that we have managed to retain a strong school sports partnership infrastructure. We have agreed a core offer to be delivered consistently by the 10 SSPs, which we think we will be able to sustain until 2015. We have a standard fee structure, to which the vast majority of our secondary and primary schools subscribe. We have secured around £200,000 for two years from Derbyshire County Council to support PE and school sports work and supplement the money received from central government. Each SSP has a management group made up of key stakeholders in its area to guide its work in partnership. And last but not least, the PE and School Sport Strategy Group and the Learning Outcomes Committee will drive the agenda of the 2012-2015 plan.

So where next, and why is this concept of "physical literacy" so important? In the summer of 2006 I was lucky enough to be working in a summer camp on the south coast of Sri Lanka, with a group of our students on an international exchange. The junior school hosting us contained legions of excited, engaging youngsters who rushed out at break time to play cricket.

Access to computers in Sri Lanka at that time was virtually non-existent. The children – mainly boys, it has to be said – raced around the makeshift pitch like graceful gazelles, running, catching and throwing with extraordinary speed, skill and dexterity. In our country, children are cloistered by an at times overweening and misplaced sense of stranger danger through much of their formative years, and then further contained by the lure of computer games, which often provide good mental stimulation but give no opportunity to develop those vital spatial awareness and physical dexterity skills that all children desperately need.

Our primary schools have to be places where some of those issues are addressed and where children have an opportunity to develop their movement, self-awareness, basic fitness and life balance through a mixture of healthy exercise and balanced diet. Many of my staff regularly use "short burst" physical exercises and movement opportunities during longer, sedentary lessons to sharpen students' concentration and readiness to learn. Laudable though this practice is, it is not a substitute for high-quality physical education for at least five hours a week, which needs to be placed at the heart of learning opportunities in all schools from the earliest moments in any child's school career. As Baroness Campbell has argued on many occasions, this cannot be left to

enthusiastic amateurs or non-specialist teachers, any more than we can leave literacy and numeracy learning processes to chance or, for that matter, opportunistic chancers!

The sports partnership community in Derbyshire is delighted that this administration has decided to invest £300 million over the next two years in high-quality PE for all our primary school children. But hard-pressed primary head teachers who are having to respond to a myriad curriculum imperatives need support and guidance to ensure that the money is well spent. Crucially, we have to work out where the army of key stage 2 primary PE experts actually are. In all probability, there simply will be not enough of them to go round, and consequently the bulk of this money needs to be spent on good-quality sustainable CPD to ensure that the next generation of primary school teachers are well equipped to promote physical literacy, along with all the other key skills they need to impart.

Much more thought and preparation also needs to go into initial teacher training. Although there is a strong move towards learning on the job, new teachers need time away from the chalk face to consider, observe, share ideas and reflect on best practice with competent tutors and like-minded ITT students at a similar stage in their professional development. I also hope that the current crop of Ofsted inspectors, charged with ensuring that this ring-fenced funding is wisely spent, are up to the task of challenging head teachers and primary practitioners in ensuring that the funding is properly allocated. How many of our inspectors, immersed as they are in data and academic profiles, understand the significance and importance of this aspect of the work of our schools?

Like many sporting enthusiasts around the country, I was delighted back in 2007 when that fantastic team led by Lord Coe won the opportunity to host the Olympic Games for Great Britain. Despite the thousands of televised hours devoted to the build-up to the Games and its aftermath, the one clip that stands out in my memory is the one from the promotional video supporting our case for the Games. It showed a number of children around the world, including a mesmerised child in Africa, staring at a small screen in a busy market and seeing the flickering images of Olympic heroes from yesteryear. In making his eloquent case for the Olympics in London, Lord Coe made a promise on behalf of all of us that the London Games would bring a lasting legacy to the next generation of children.

By common consent, London 2012 was a fantastic spectacle and a tribute to our organisational skills as a nation. Perhaps our greatest achievement in 2012 was to put the Paralympics on the same incredible level as that achieved by the Olympic Games

themselves. Can we be confident, though, that the legacy Lord Coe promised for our children will be met by families, schools and communities up and down the land? When we look back at the post-Olympic years, I hope the answer to that question will be a resounding yes!

## **The Smith Institute**

The Smith Institute is an independent think tank which provides a high-level forum for thought leadership and debate on public policy and politics. It seeks to engage politicians, senior decision makers, practitioners, academia, opinion formers and commentators on promoting policies for a fairer society.

If you would like to know more about the Smith Institute please write to:

The Smith Institute  
Somerset House  
South Wing  
Strand  
London  
WC2R 1LA

Telephone +44 (0)20 7845 5845  
Email [info@smith-institute.org.uk](mailto:info@smith-institute.org.uk)  
Website [www.smith-institute.org.uk](http://www.smith-institute.org.uk)