

Progress made in the implementation of the PE and School Sport Action Plan in schools

March 2007



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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



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- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ LEAs;
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- ▲ work-based learning;
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Contents	Page
Introduction	1
Background	2
Main findings	4
Recommendations	6
Implementation of the recommendations of previous reports	7
Progress in the different focus areas of the initiative	9
Standards in physical education in development centre schools	9
Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3	9
Continuing Professional Development	10
Initial Teacher Training	11
Specialist projects	11
Management of the initiative	12
Conclusion	13
Appendix 1: The PESS Action Plan for Wales (published 2001)	
Appendix 2: Example of good practice	
Glossary	

Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this report is to respond to the request from the Welsh Assembly Government in the Minister's annual remit to Estyn in 2006-2007, to evaluate progress in the implementation of the Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) Action Plan. The initiative was introduced in response to the Action Plan from the PESS Task Force report (see Appendix 1 for a summary).
- 2 The report summarises the main findings from meetings and discussions with:
 - PESS co-ordinators from 14 local authorities;
 - local managers of five PESS centres;
 - specialist physical education (PE) lecturers from four initial teacher training institutions;
 - advisers with responsibility for physical education in nine local education authorities (LEAs);
 - officers from the Sports Council for Wales (SCW); and
 - PESS advisers appointed to support development centres and develop the specialist projects of the initiative.

Background

- 3 The PESS initiative has a number of strands. These are:
 - improving standards in physical education in the curriculum;
 - making sure that initial teacher education and training gives trainees the necessary confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding to teach physical education;
 - establishing accredited continuing professional development programmes for all teachers;
 - improving the quality of accommodation and resources for physical education in all schools in Wales; and
 - supporting schools in Wales to extend opportunities for school sport beyond the school day by improving the quality and breadth of after-school activities for all young people whatever their age, ability, ethnicity, gender or geographical location.
- 4 The focus on improving facilities has centred on Big Lottery funded initiatives. Most of the work to improve standards takes place in and through the PESS development centres. A number of specialist projects complement and extend this work by producing teaching and learning resources. Work on initial teacher training is led by specialist advisers from within those institutions and the professional development strand is led by the Sports Council for Wales. All the strands, however link very closely.
- 5 During the course of the first five years of the PESS initiative, inspectors have visited and evaluated progress in development centres at least twice in each LEA in Wales (three times in eight LEAs).
- 6 Initially, the Welsh Assembly Government funded a pilot programme of 18 'development centres' across Wales. Development centres are partnerships between a secondary school and its feeder primary schools. Other partners may include post-16 education providers or leisure centres. The nature of each development centre is determined by local and regional needs, interests and specialisms. Appropriate partners are chosen by the local authority to complement their existing plans.
- 7 The key purpose of the development centres is to identify, strengthen and develop good practice in physical education and school sport. SCW PESS managers expect centres to develop innovative approaches to delivering the curriculum, using facilities and developing staff. The centres should contribute to the raising of standards throughout Wales by sharing information with schools that are not currently members of development centres.

- 8 Since the PESS project began in April 2003, SCW has provided support for all local authorities in Wales in establishing 63 development centres across Wales. A number of these centres are no longer receiving funding, but remain committed to sustaining good work and continuing to develop as a cluster of schools. Some of these 'sustainable partnerships' still receive free training and support from key personnel. Some centres have received small amounts of funding to complete elements of their strategic plans or to maintain the partnership meetings. Such centres are called PESS partnerships or focus centres rather than development centres.
- 9 The Welsh Assembly Government continues to fund the initiative at a reduced level, and have advised SCW managers that the initiative should be rolled-out to all schools in Wales as soon as possible. SCW are planning with local authorities and PESS co-ordinators to achieve this by 2009.

Main findings

- 10 The PESS initiative has made very good progress towards meeting all the key recommendations of the PESS action plan for Wales, published in 2001 (see Appendix 1).
- 11 The focus on supporting teachers to develop their skills in teaching PE has been particularly effective in primary schools. The initiative has proved to be more successful and sustainable than initiatives in which specialists visit schools to offer one-off experiences. The PESS initiative has helped physical education teachers and primary subject co-ordinators to take a lead in addressing whole-school issues such as planning pupils' transition from primary to secondary school and the development of key skills.
- 12 Most primary and many secondary headteachers consider that the PESS initiative is a very successful initiative. They say that it has:
 - increased the physical activity opportunities that are available to pupils and raised standards in physical education;
 - contributed to better planning of activities across the curriculum and significantly improved the quality of physical education teaching, particularly in primary schools;
 - had a noticeable effect on improving the behaviour and attitudes of pupils and helped in the development of their key and wider skills; and
 - substantially contributed to the development of cross-cluster and cross-phase curriculum links.
- 13 Where it is very successful, in a significant majority of centres in Wales:
 - a specialist physical education adviser works closely with the PESS co-ordinator and local managers to provide support and to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the initiative;
 - headteachers acknowledge the important contribution of physical education to the academic, social and healthy development of pupils and support the initiative by allowing staff to access training;
 - teachers are fully committed and enthusiastic; secondary teachers work in partnership with primary teachers, and they learn from each other; and
 - the local authority fully supports the initiative, and includes it in its Single Education Plan.

14 Where it is less successful, in a small minority of schools:

- PESS co-ordinators, local managers and schools do not have day-to-day access to local specialist advice and support;
- headteachers and staff are not committed or enthusiastic about the initiative;
- secondary teachers consider that they have little to learn from the initiative or from their primary partners. They do not understand or appreciate that the initiative can have major benefits for them;
- the local authority pays 'lip service' to supporting the initiative and does not include it in its Single Education Plan;

15 It is important that there are good links between the PESS initiative and the Welsh Assembly Government's Qualifications and Curriculum Group. Both bodies must make sure that lessons from PESS are fed in to the review of the school curriculum so that they avoid any potential for duplication of resources and materials for use in schools.

Recommendations

PESS schools should:

- R1 make sure that they include PESS in their school improvement plans;
- R2 identify how they can resource the initiative from the range of alternative funding available; and
- R3 support primary-phase non-specialist PE teachers in the early years of their careers in developing their expertise in teaching physical education.

Local authorities should:

- R4 manage, support and quality assure the work of their PESS co-ordinator; and
- R5 encourage schools to continue funding the initiative.

The Sports Council for Wales should:

- R6 make sure that the initiative retains its focus on the physical education curriculum in the Active Young People's programme (see Glossary for more information);
- R7 quality assure the work of the initiative by sustaining and strengthening the mentoring programme and monitoring the work of the specialist PESS advisers; and
- R8 rationalise the PESS co-ordinators' workload in larger authorities.

The Welsh Assembly Government should:

- R9 make sure that there are good links between PESS and the Quality and Curriculum Group so that good practice from PESS informs the review of the school curriculum and the production of resources and guidance for schools.

Implementation of the recommendations of previous reports

Development centre schools

- 16 The earliest development centres were funded for a three-year period. Many of them therefore no longer receive funding and are called focus or partnership centres. The most imaginative and committed of these centres have investigated and found alternative ways of funding those parts of the initiative that they decided were of most value. Many of these centres have found effective ways of sustaining the work.
- 17 The more recently established centres have benefited from the experiences of earlier centres. Local managers have shared their experiences and newer centres have progressed faster as a result.

Local education authorities

- 18 Most LEAs acknowledge that the PESS initiative is an important part of their plans for school improvement. Most appropriately manage the PESS initiative through their education directorate. They focus the initiative clearly on physical education and school sport as part of the school curriculum and integrate the management of the initiative with their other plans, programmes and priorities.
- 19 The PESS initiative now comes under the Active Young People programme. The other strands of Active Young People are Dragon Sport and 5x60 (see Glossary for more information). Dragon Sport and 5x60 are extra-curricular projects, while PESS is a school-time curriculum initiative. In local authorities where education and leisure are not in the same directorate, the three initiatives should now be managed by its education directorate.

The Sports Council for Wales

- 20 The funding of development centres remains challenging, because of the differences in the timing of budgets allocated by LEAs and the Sports Council. LEAs and school budgets are usually planned over a three-year cycle, whereas the Sports Council has, up to now, only agreed indicative funding for one year, and released funding termly. However, PESS co-ordinators report that the SCW is becoming more flexible in its approach.
- 21 All the specialists appointed to support the development centres receive significant support from the organisations that employ them by releasing them for PESS work. There is a danger that increasing financial constraints on these organisations may endanger the capacity of these specialists to continue supporting PESS.

The Welsh Assembly Government

- 22 The Welsh Assembly Government continues to fund the PESS initiative. The extension of the funding to 2008-2009 will allow the PESS manager to roll-out the initiative to all schools in Wales. This was the original vision of the members of the

PSS Task Force and has been achieved in a shorter period of time than was first envisaged.

Progress in the different focus areas of the initiative

Standards in physical education in development centre schools

- 23 Most development centre primary schools allocate the Welsh Assembly Government's recommended two hours each week to physical education. However, improving standards is not simply a question of allocating more time to any subject, but must also involve improving the quality of the experience. The PESS initiative has succeeded in making the two hours worthwhile for pupils by offering more and better quality opportunities and by improving the quality of teaching.
- 24 Where standards have improved, in physical education, pupils of all ages:
- plan and focus well on performance;
 - understand, appreciate and describe the elements that contribute to good work;
 - observe each others' work accurately and make sensible and sensitive suggestions for further improvement;
 - know about the physical, social and mental benefits of physical activity; and
 - can explain the importance and benefits of exercise to a healthy lifestyle.
- 25 The National Curriculum for physical education is currently under review and is at the consultation stage.
- 26 The new orders will be introduced in 2008. It is important that there are good links between the managers of the PESS initiative and the Welsh Assembly Government's Qualifications and Curriculum Group. They must work together to make sure that lessons from PESS are fed in to the review of the school curriculum and in to any further guidance for teachers so that they avoid the potential for duplication or contradiction in the resources that will be published for use in schools.

Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3

- 27 As noted in previous Estyn PESS reports (www.estyn.gsi.gov.uk/publications), the work on transition has been one of the most successful strands of the PESS initiative and has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the partnership schools.
- 28 The focus on partnership working between primary and secondary teachers has led to regular:
- visits to each others' schools;
 - planning of transition activities and bridging units; and

- joint moderation of teacher assessments.

29 A number of schools have used the PESS transition plans as models of good practice for all other subject departments to follow.

Continuing Professional Development

30 The PESS initiative continues to organise and provide training for teachers across Wales in a range of activities. All courses are led by nationally recognised experts, and the quality of the training is agreed with advisers and PESS consultants. BAALPE (now afPE) has informed these standards¹.

31 The training is often open to teachers from schools that are not development centre schools. Since the start of the PESS initiative 8,971 teachers across Wales have attended training courses provided through PESS courses. Within this number, 1414 teachers have been from schools that are not in a development centre. By the end of this financial year, over 10,000 teachers will have attended one or more courses, with about 1700 of them coming from non development centre schools. The courses include:

- activity specific INSET courses;
- seminars and workshops; and
- conferences.

32 Activity specific courses cover the whole range of practical activities in the National Curriculum Orders for PE, as well as courses to support teachers in improving their planning of teaching and learning. These include:

- using ICT in PE;
- PE for pupils with special educational needs;
- assessment and reporting;
- transition between key stages;
- subject leadership;
- developing links between the school and its community;
- management of playground activities; and
- health and safety.

¹ BAALPE - British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education. In Summer 2006, BAALPE joined with the Physical Education Association to form afPE – the association for Physical Education

- 33 Mentors and tutors who deliver these courses also receive regular national training. This ensures that the quality and content of the courses are consistent for teachers wherever the courses are run in Wales. The range and quality of the courses are making a positive impact on the improvement of teaching and learning in physical education. By focusing on improving teaching, the improvements should be sustainable beyond the life of the PESS initiative.

Initial Teacher Training and Early Professional Development

- 34 The last report on the PESS initiative 'An in-depth look at progress made in the implementation of the PESS action Plan' 2006 (www.estyn.gsi.gov.uk/publications) highlighted the issue of inadequate time for initial training in physical education for primary teachers. Since the publication of last year's report, physical education lecturers in three institutions in Wales report that their time allocation has been further reduced. In one institution, time for non-specialist primary and specialist secondary trainees has been reduced. In another, time for specialist secondary trainees has been reduced, while in the third, time for non-specialist primary trainees has been reduced.
- 35 Last year's report recommended that teacher training institutions should:
- 'identify how they will make sure that trainees acquire the necessary confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding to teach physical education within the time and facility limits of their courses'.

- 36 The Welsh Assembly Government recently wrote to all higher education institutions to ask how they intended to address the recommendation. As a direct response to that letter, one institution in north-east Wales has increased the time allocated for training primary teachers in physical education.
- 37 Inexperienced teachers need to identify physical education as one of their priorities for development in the early stages of their careers. The PESS initiative is currently filling many of the gaps in teachers' skills in teaching PE by providing high quality training opportunities for inexperienced as well as experienced teachers.

Specialist projects

- 38 Work continues on the specialist projects. The projects in gymnastics, health-related exercise, ICT and dance are developing teaching and learning resources, and the inclusion project is conducting action research to develop appropriate physical experiences for pupils with special needs. The most recent projects (dance and inclusion) are making good progress after a slow start. The longer established projects have resulted in the development of high-quality, user-friendly resources which are making a significant contribution to improvements in physical education.
- 39 PESS managers and specialist advisers have developed a framework and guidance for schools on how to carry out a self-evaluation of teaching and learning in physical education. Schools that join the initiative use the framework, supported by training, to establish the baseline from which they can improve. The framework is based on Estyn's seven key questions in the Common Inspection Framework. Schools have

welcomed the guidance and support, and new centres see the framework as a valuable tool when they join the initiative. One LEA considers the framework and guidance to be of such high quality that it has recommended it to all schools as a possible model for all subjects to follow.

Management of the initiative

- 40 The management of the initiative through the Sports Council for Wales is increasingly efficient and effective. Communication and relationships with senior officers in local authorities across Wales are positive. The senior manager has allocated appropriate responsibilities to others and all the managers work well together. However, although PESS co-ordinators speak highly of managers, a significant number are unsure about the responsibility of each manager, and who they should contact over specific issues. Advisers confirm this opinion.
- 41 Most of the PESS co-ordinators manage the growing number of development centres well and deal with administrative issues efficiently. Many co-ordinators work closely with colleagues in neighbouring authorities and across their region. As part of Active Young People, many co-ordinators work closely in their local authority with officers responsible for Dragon Sport and 5x60, and some PESS co-ordinators are leading the Active Young people programme. Plans to roll out the initiative to all schools in Wales by 2009 will put pressure on PESS co-ordinators in authorities with a large number of schools. SCW will need to rationalise the workload of these co-ordinators so that their responsibilities remain manageable.
- 42 The initiative is most successful where a specialist physical education adviser employed within a local authority works closely with the PESS co-ordinator and local managers. The adviser is able to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the initiative within schools and the part it plays in school improvement overall. This arrangement provides the best support for teachers in development centre schools.
- 43 However, there are still seven local authorities that have not identified a specialist physical education adviser. Following advice received from the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel Wales about safety in outdoor activities, the Association of Directors of Education, Wales (ADEW -see Glossary for more information) has agreed that every LEA should have access to advice from a team of outdoor education advisers ('LEA provision of specialist advice to schools on aspects of health and safety in physical education and school sport' March 2007 (www.estyn.gsi.gov.uk/publications)).
- 44 Authorities that do not have their own specialist outdoor education adviser have agreed to recruit a 'point of contact' for schools in collaboration with neighbouring LEAs. LEAs without an adviser for physical education should consider similar partnership arrangements to make sure they provide specialist advice and support for physical education and school sport.

Conclusion

- 45 Physical education and school sport provide valuable means for developing and improving of pupils' social, moral, cultural and educational skills. The PESS initiative has helped physical education play an even more important role in these aspects of pupils' personal development. It has provided a good platform for young people to participate in physical activity and to observe and appreciate the performance of others.
- 46 The PESS initiative is a highly successful education initiative introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government. The initiative has had a significant impact on improving opportunities, experiences and standards in physical education across the country. If its impetus can be sustained, it should continue to motivate young people to aim for excellence and lead healthy and active lives.
- 47 The support for teachers to develop their skills in teaching PE has been particularly effective in primary schools. The initiative has proved to be more successful and sustainable than other initiatives which have focused on specialists visiting schools to offer one-off experiences. A large number of teaching resources covering all the activities in national curriculum physical education are available on the PESS website. The initiative has helped physical education teachers and primary subject coordinators to take a lead in addressing whole-school issues such as the planning for pupils' transition from primary to secondary school and the development of key skills.
- 48 The initiative is well-managed both locally and nationally. The initiative supports and complements other national programmes as set out in 'Wellbeing in Wales', the 'Food and Fitness Strategy' and 'Climbing Higher'.

Appendix 1

The PESS Action Plan for Wales (published 2001)

Summary of key recommendations

- (1) Raise standards in physical education by making sure that all schools:
 - manage the subject effectively within the whole school curriculum;
 - set challenging targets for raising standards in physical education and school sport;
 - provide enough curriculum time to teach the requirements of the National Curriculum for physical education in all key stages;
 - develop young peoples physical skills from one year to the next; and
 - improve their understanding of the importance of health and fitness.
- (2) Make sure that Initial Teacher Education and Training gives trainees the necessary confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding to teach physical education.
- (3) Raise standards in physical education and school sport by establishing accredited continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for all teachers.
- (4) Improve the quality of accommodation and resources for physical education in all schools in Wales.
- (5) Support schools in Wales to extend opportunities for school sport beyond the school day by improving the quality and the breadth of after school activities for all young people whatever their age, ability, ethnicity, gender or geographical location.
- (6) Establish Curriculum Development Centres (CDCs) and make sure they work together for the identification and development of good practice in physical education and school sport.

Appendix 2

Example of good practice

When funding for the Olchfa PESS development centre partnership ceased in 2005, the schools in the partnership decided that they would apply for funding from the General Teaching Council Wales (GTCW - see Glossary for more information). They made the submission under the category of Professional Network Funding.

The partners agreed that they would focus on developing key skills in physical education with each teacher investigating a theme that was relevant to their needs and interests. The themes included:

- (1) Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig;
- (2) ICT;
- (3) improving pupils own learning and performance; and
- (4) working with others/problem solving.

The local authority ICT adviser supported the work in ICT. The focus on improving pupils' own learning and performance is led by the special school in the partnership, and will culminate in the pupils taking part in the Urdd Eisteddfod. The focus on working with others focuses on developing and improving ball skills and is supported by a physical education specialist from Olchfa. All the work is securely based on achieving measurable outcomes for teachers and for pupils.

The partnership has secured £2,275 funding for the financial year 2006-2007 from the GTCW. The partnership plans to use this sum to cover the supply costs of network members. This will allow them to come together for three meetings and share any evidence gathered from their individual projects.

The PESS co-ordinator acts as the network co-ordinator.

This is an example of good practice because it:

- is an imaginative way of sustaining funding from a source other than PESS;
- broadens the impact of PESS by focusing on the whole-school and cluster-group focus on key skills; and
- continues the focus on partnership between schools in different phases.

Glossary

ADEW – the association of directors of education in Wales. Every local authority is represented on this body, which meets to discuss issues and agree responses and strategies.

AYP – The inclusion of Dragon Sport, the PESS initiative and the 5x60 initiative under 'Active Young People'.

5x60 - a new programme managed by the Sports Council for Wales. Its aim is to get secondary school pupils in Wales to be more active. Over the next three years, the Welsh Assembly Government will invest £7.6 million in the scheme. The 5x60 project was piloted in eight schools in 2006.

GTCW – the General Teaching Council for Wales is the statutory self-regulating professional body for the teaching profession in Wales. It aims to contribute to improving standards of teaching and the quality of learning and to maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers.