OFFICE FOR STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

Inspecting post-16

physical education

with guidance on self-evaluation

THE OFFICE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND

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Contents

Introduction

This booklet aims to help inspectors and staff in schools and colleges to evaluate standards and quality in physical education (PE) for students post-16. It complements the *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools* (1999), the supplement *Inspecting School Sixth Forms* (2001) and the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* (2001). It replaces the earlier guidance *Inspecting Subjects and Aspects 11–18* (1999).

This guidance concentrates on issues specific to physical education. General guidance is in the *Handbooks*. Use both to get a complete picture of the inspection or evaluation process.

This booklet is concerned with evaluating standards and achievement, teaching and learning, and other factors that affect what is achieved. It outlines how to use students' work and question them, the subject-specific points to look for in lessons, and how to draw evaluations together to form a coherent view of the subject.

Examples are provided of evidence and evaluations from college and school sixth-form inspections, with commentaries to give further explanation. These examples are included without any reference to context, and will not necessarily illustrate all of the features that inspectors will need to consider. The booklets in the series show different ways of recording and reporting evidence and findings; they do not prescribe or endorse any particular method or approach.

Inspectors and senior staff in schools and colleges may need to evaluate several subjects and refer to more than one booklet. You can download any of the subject guidance booklets from OFSTED's website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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OFSTED's remit for this sector is the inspection of education for students aged 16–19, other than work-based education. In schools, this is the sixth-form provision. In colleges, the 16–19 age-group will not be so clearly identifiable; classes are likely to include older students and, in some cases, they will have a majority of older students. In practice, inspectors and college staff will evaluate the standards and quality in these classes regardless of the age of the students.

The guidance focuses on General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced level (A-level) physical education. You may be asked also to contribute to inspection judgements on the broader college or sixth-form curriculum by looking at provision for non-examined physical education or other sporting or recreational activities. In a few institutions, there may be other examined courses such as General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR), Community Sports Leaders' Award (CSLA) or Higher Sports Leaders' Award (HSLA). Some of these courses rely on links with community clubs and organisations for supporting both practical and theoretical aspects of the courses. You should, therefore, ensure that you evaluate the effectiveness of these arrangements.

This booklet concentrates on the most commonly found courses in physical education for students 16–19. However, the principles illustrated in this guidance can be applied more widely.

Students entering AS or A-level courses will have a range of different experiences of physical education. Find out the skills and experiences that students bring with them on entry to the course. For example, some may not have studied General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) PE, and so will not have had many opportunities to study the subject in any great depth or to experience the theory aspect. For these students, it is likely that there will be knowledge gaps at the outset of the course – particularly regarding aspects such as analysis of performance and principles of training. When making evaluations on progress from GCSE it is essential that you are familiar with the specification and syllabus of each examination board to understand the different structure of each course. Where sixth-forms or colleges recruit from a range of schools, you should ensure that departments have a structured approach to identifying the previous physical education experiences of the students. It is also useful to identify how departments organise the content throughout the duration of the course.

Most A*–C GCSE students will bring with them an ability to perform effectively in their selected activities. They will be able to analyse performance and make modifications and refinements in order to improve its quality, but they will be unused to discussing how skilled performances are developed through the interaction of learning, practice and cognitive influences. Their ability to do so accurately will vary widely and some students will have an incomplete understanding of the relationships between the physical and skill determinants of performance, with contemporary influences on physical education and sport. Good physical education departments will be aware of this: many of them will begin the first year with a course which enables students to bridge effectively the gap between GCSE and the demands of an A-level course.

Common requirements

All inspectors share the responsibility for determining whether a school or college is effective for all its students, whatever their educational needs or personal circumstances. As part of this responsibility, ensure that you have a good understanding of the key characteristics of the institution and its students. Evaluate the achievement of different groups of students and judge how effectively their needs and aspirations are met and any initiatives or courses aimed specifically at these groups of students. Take account of recruitment patterns, retention rates and attendance patterns for programmes and courses for different groups of students. Consider the individual goals and targets set for students within different groups and the progress they make towards achieving them.

You should be aware of the responsibilities and duties of schools and colleges regarding equal opportunities, in particular those defined in the Sex Discrimination Act 1957, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. These Acts and related codes of practice underpin national policies on inclusion, on raising achievement and on the important role schools and colleges have in fostering better personal, community and race relations, and in addressing and preventing racism.[1]

As well as being thoroughly familiar with subject-specific requirements, be alert to the unique contribution that each subject makes to the wider educational development of students. Assess how well the curriculum and teaching in PE enable all students to develop key skills, and how successfully the subject contributes to the students' personal, social, health and citizenship education, and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Judge how effectively the subject helps prepare students aged 16–19 for adult life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society.

1 See Annex *Issues for Inspection arising from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson Report)* in *Evaluating Educational Inclusion*, OFSTED, 2000, p13.

1 Standards and achievement

1.1 Evaluating standards and achievement

From the previous inspection report, find out what you can about standards and achievement at that time. This will give you a point of comparison with the latest position, but do not forget that there is a trail of performance data, year by year. Analyse and interpret the performance data available for students who have recently completed the course(s). Draw on the school's *Pre-Inspection Context and School Indicator* (PICSI) report or, in the case of a college, the *College Performance Report*. Also analyse the most recent results provided by the school or college and any value-added information available. When numbers are small, exercise caution in making comparisons with national data or, for example, evaluating trends. For further guidance on interpreting performance data and analysing value added, refer to *Inspecting School Sixth Forms,* the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* and the *National Summary Data Report for Secondary Schools.*

Where you can, form a view about the standards achieved by different groups of students. For example, there may be data which enable you to compare how male and female students or different ethnic groups are doing, or how well 16–19-year-old students achieve in relation to older students.

Make full use of other information which has a bearing on standards and achievement, including success in completing courses, targets and their achievement, and other measures of success.

You should interpret, in particular:

- trends in results;
- comparisons with other subjects and courses;
- distributions of grades, particularly the occurrence of high grades;
- value-added information;
- the relative performance of male and female students;
- the performance of minorities and different ethnic groups;
- trends in the popularity of courses;
- drop-out or retention rates;
- students' destinations, where data are available.

On the basis of the performance data and other pre-inspection evidence, form hypotheses about the standards achieved, whether they are as high as they should be, and possible explanations. Follow up your hypotheses through observation and analysis of students' work and talking with them. Direct inspection evidence tells you about the standards at which the current students are working, and whether they are being sufficiently stretched. If the current standards are at odds with what the performance data suggest, you must find out why and explain the differences carefully.

In addition to the performance data you analyse, obtain from the institution any information produced by the examination board which breaks down students' recent results. These might, for example, indicate particular strengths and weaknesses in aspects of physical education teaching or learning. Similarly, if there are results from AS modules for the current students these are likely to give you useful information to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. For example, the results in the anatomy/physiology aspect of the courses might be significantly better than other aspects of study. During the inspection, you would wish to investigate why this might be so.

As you observe students in lessons, look at their work and talk to them, concentrate on the extent to which students:

- evaluate aspects of practical performance in selected activities, showing an understanding of the application of physical factors which underpin performance;
- describe and explain the ways in which skills are learnt and applied in practice conditions to improve performance;
- interpret the effects of social, moral and cultural influences on participation and performance in physical activity;
- organise and present information, ideas, descriptions and arguments in a clear, logical and appropriate form, taking into account the use of specialist vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling;

- analyse and evaluate performance in selected practical activities;
- apply appropriate techniques and principles designed to develop an improvement in performance;
- analyse and explain the relationship between the physical and skill determinants of performance, with contemporary influences on physical education and sport. This might include, for example, an examination of agencies which provide and fund activity and influence participation, teaching and coaching provision, and research funding;
- critically evaluate and justify current provision for participation in physical activity in the context of social and cultural issues in the UK, Europe and other comparative cultures;
- analyse these trends through a consideration of global events, such as the Olympic Games, world cups and world championships, which provide opportunity for international competition and reflect a country's policies, priorities and prejudices.

1.2 Analysis of students' work

An analysis of students' work is one of the most important activities for you to undertake in making judgements on standards and achievement. It is the primary source of evidence for identifying relative strengths and weaknesses in the quality and range of students' writing. In examining files of work, you can evaluate the demands which the teaching places on the students and the amount of progress they make as they move through the course. This will help you to judge whether they achieve sufficiently well, given their previous attainment.

In addition, you will be able to form a judgement on the content and organisation of the curriculum: the frequency, range and appropriateness of tasks; the regularity, accuracy and helpfulness of marking and target-setting. This will add weight to your evaluation of the quality of the teaching. You will, if possible, need to see samples of complete student files. They often contain very different amounts of work, according to the diligence with which students chose to organise their work. The amount of practice students get across the whole range of the syllabus is crucial. Look, too, for any evidence of other written work (often coursework) which has been completed, as this may be the most important example of extended writing available to you. There may be evidence of standards elsewhere, too, which you should not ignore – for example, videotapes of students' physical performance.

Example 1: evidence from work of six students in the fourth term of A-level in a sixth-form college; 4 came to the college with GCSE PE – 3 with A* or A and 1 with C.

Students have been working on research studies. For example, two are on Olympic Games, focusing on policies, priorities and prejudices of China; effect on provision for international competition; comparison with UK. Others examine the contemporary influences on participation and performance in physical education and sport.

- *Written work of most students is highly accurate, taking into account the use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and technical vocabulary. Even that of the two weakest students is of a good standard.*
- *Evidence of extensive research. Wide variety of good-quality information gleaned from books, media and Internet sources; used discerningly to support and illustrate views. Work shows excellent understanding – eg, of the moral dilemma between communist beliefs and the needs of a modern society.*
- *Writing demonstrates both the mature and well-informed nature of the students' views and their ability to organise these effectively into a lively, interesting and persuasive discussion. For example, when examining contemporary influences on physical education and sport, students demonstrate a very good understanding of funding agencies influencing participation, teaching and coaching. Conflicting opinions and practices are skilfully used to support the students' own arguments. Writing is supported by evidence in other forms – eg, video clips.*
- *Evidence from files shows very good progress through A-level physical education course. The students have consistently pushed themselves to extend their understanding of the social, political, moral and cultural issues affecting participation in international competition. The two weaker students (one with grade C at GCSE and one who did not take GCSE) have also made very good progress.*
- *The standard of work of three or four of the students is grade A at A level. Their starting point was a very high grade at GCSE, but this nevertheless, points to very good achievement. The other two students are at about grade C standard which, in view of their previous attainment, also indicates very good achievement.*

[Attainment very high (1)]

Commentary

Students have researched their topics very well. Not only do they know a good deal about the topics they have studied, but they also have very clear views and can organise these into a coherent discussion, using a wide variety of presentation forms. They are creative, knowledgeable and expressive writers – particularly the four higher-attaining students. In written work, they score highly on content, range and accuracy.

1.3 Talking with students

Talking with students gives you a valuable insight into the content of the course, their enthusiasm for the subject, and the breadth and depth of their topic-related knowledge. It is unlikely that you will be able to do this during lesson time, and, therefore, you should seek a time when a few willing students can come to talk with you.

Students on the second year of the course should be able to refer to a range of theoretical principles and concepts which influence performance in a variety of physical activities. For example, they should be able to make reference to energy systems and explain the short- and long-term physiological effects of exercise. They should understand the relationship between theoretical concepts, such as social and cultural bases for sport and recreation in the UK and Europe, and how these might inform and explain physical education programmes, élite and recreative sport. They should also have a good understanding of these social and cultural concepts in the UK and Europe, and be able to compare trends and systems which have been developed in different cultures.

It could be helpful to cover, for example:

- their selected activities; the reasons for their choices; their analysis and evaluation of performance level; their strategies for refining their performance;
- their preferred methods of training and reasons for them;
- what they find difficult/interesting (or not) about their A or AS course;
- how sport features in their aspirations for the future; what plans and ambitions they have and the reasons for these choices; university life and how they see their lives changing; plans for a gap year;
- their views on any current sporting topic.

Example 2: evidence from discussion with 6 Year 12 students in final term of AS-level PE in a school sixth-form; all took GCSE PE – one grade B, 4 grade C, one grade D.

The discussion covers chosen activities: the ways in which skills are learned and applied in practice conditions to improve performance.

- *Initially forthcoming and very enthusiastic when talking about soccer in general, but quickly out of their depth when discussing details of their personal skill level and training programme. For example, apart from the highest-attaining students, they are unable to pick out the key points of a topic covered recently about determinants of skilled performance – particularly, the learning of a skill. Their understanding of theoretical principles and concepts of training is too superficial for this level.*
- *Knowledge of the physiological effects of exercise is insecure, with only basic technical vocabulary evident from most students; they have difficulty in applying knowledge of the structure of the body to real practical contexts.*
- *Little progression beyond GCSE in evaluating and improving performance. Indicates unsatisfactory achievement.*

[Attainment below average (5)]

Commentary

The students have made insufficient progress, and the achievement of most of them in analysis and evaluation of determinants of skilled performance, even given a relatively modest starting point, is not as high as it should be for this stage. They appear to be barely coping with the demands of an AS course, yet they may be doing better in other areas of physical education, possibly their practical work. If so, the reasons for this should be pursued.

1.4 Lesson observation

Observing lessons is not only a primary source of evidence for judging the quality of teaching and learning, but it also helps judge standards and achievement. Choose lessons to visit which best suit your objectives and try to visit a range. Prioritise, so that you choose lessons where you can observe students participating in physical and theory activities. This will enable you to judge: their application of theoretical concepts to practical situations; their communication skills, problem-solving skills and their ability to work with others; their depth of understanding of the topic; their ability to analyse; the accuracy and precision of their practical performance; and their fitness levels.

If appropriate, try to sample mixed AS/A-level classes and small cohorts in relation to gender- and ability-ranges. Keep in mind the extent to which mobility, visual or hearing impairment, gender, ethnicity or other inclusion issues affect performance – for example, in the level and intensity of physical activity or the quality of the development of ideas. You should also bear in mind that some practical activities are seasonal, so the activities you are able to observe may not be typical of work covered throughout the course. In these cases, where direct evidence is not available, you will need to consider how you will elicit information about the standard of provision: for example, through videotaped performance, portfolios and teachers' notes.

Example 3: evidence from first year mixed-ability group of students at end of second term in an FE college (9M, 6F, NoR 15).

Observation and discussion of videotape of badminton lesson, where students took turns to teach and coach doubles, focusing on attacking as a pair. For private study, they are asked to produce written points on how the players' skills can be developed, in the next lesson, to defend as a pair; they are to use a range of teaching styles.

- *All students have mastered the ability to create and defend space by introducing high- and low-service and underarm clears. Having mastered the smash, students attempt to defend against this attack.*
- *The highest attaining (20 per cent) participate readily in analysing and evaluating play, making constructive criticism about the focus of the teaching student's coaching and the style of teaching used. They have a secure knowledge of tactics and techniques and use this confidently to convey their views. They react positively to others' opinions of strengths and weaknesses of play and of coaching points.*
- *Majority (60 per cent) express opinions on relatively straightforward issues such as side-to-side or back-and-front attacking formation, albeit somewhat hesitantly. They understand most of the set moves well but fail to adapt their play knowledge from singles to the more tactically complex doubles game.*
- *Below-average-attaining students (all female) are quiet and monosyllabic, despite the teacher's attempt to involve them. They show little interest in the topic, although they clearly understand the issues, and their contribution is minimal. Their play shows an understanding of tactics but inaccuracy and inconsistency in their shots.*
- *Most students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, have made steady progress since the start of the year and some make perceptive comments to help others improve their performance, but they are still hesitant in identifying more technically advanced means of winning the point and defending against attack. Their achievement reflects their ability and starting point on the AS-level course and is broadly satisfactory.*
- *Work appears to be on course for grades C–E.*

[Attainment average (4)]

Commentary

The students are most of the way through their AS-level course and the majority will continue next year. They have mastered the basic concept of attack and defence in badminton. They can analyse play and most of them have the knowledge to improve tactical play, albeit simplistically. They react well to each other's comments and suggestions. The ablest students exhibit a higher-order understanding of tactical problems presented by the doubles game – specifically, attacking and defending as a pair. The majority are more hesitant but nonetheless speak up – their views are less developed and they are less able to identify the strategic differences between singles and doubles play. A few students make little contribution to the discussion, perhaps because they have lower-order analytical skills. This is an average performance from a first year class. The coaching points and the analysis of play are relatively unsophisticated and the discussion is often helped by the teacher's interjection, but students do participate and have developed a satisfactory range of knowledge and performance skills.

2 Teaching and learning

2.1 Evaluating teaching and learning

Interpret the *Handbook* criteria with specific reference to physical education and keep in mind the characteristics of effective teaching by evaluating how well students are learning. Consider the progress they are making, what they are learning, how well they respond to lessons, their attitudes to learning and their behaviour. In order to explain the teacher's effect, or lack of it, you should consider the extent to which:

- knowledgeable, stimulating and exciting teaching of physical education motivates students to work consistently well for extended periods of time and appreciate the joy and satisfaction that can be achieved through observing or participating in high-quality physical activity *(expectations, inspiration);*
- the teacher's competence, technical command and skill enable students to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding, and develop precise, accurate and confident physical skills *(subject knowledge);*
- the setting of clear learning objectives and the use of a range of carefully selected information, tasks and topics allow all students to understand what they are doing, how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve their performance *(planning, students' understanding of what they are doing);*
- through the teacher's high expectations, clear explanations and rigour, students are keen to learn and respond positively to challenges, striving for accuracy, clarity, control, fluency, consistency and precision in the planning and evaluation of their performance *(expectations, students' interest in their work);*
- through carefully pitched questions, sensitive discussion techniques and a good balance of physical and theoretical tasks, the teacher consolidates, extends and verifies what students know and understand; and is able to adapt approaches to the learning preferences of individuals and to the different demands of practical and theory components of the course, thereby enabling all students to learn effectively *(methodology, use of assessment);*
- by establishing good working relationships, valuing and respecting the contribution of all students, giving encouragement to the students lacking confidence and not allowing the more knowledgeable students to dominate, the teacher creates a positive and confident atmosphere in which intellectual and physical achievement flourishes *(management);*
- by imaginative use of a wide range of resources – including information and communication technology (ICT), Internet and video recorders – and through structured guidance from the teacher, students are enabled to organise their ideas into a coherent, logical and extensive spoken and written argument, as they become more familiar with the wider cultural, political, social and moral issues of international sport and develop a better understanding of other countries' policies, priorities and prejudices *(use of resources, students' increase of understanding);*
- through observing individuals' strengths, weaknesses and interests, the teacher stretches them by selecting tasks and projects which make appropriate individual physical, intellectual and creative demands, in order to inspire and motivate all members of the group and enable them to identify how they can improve and give of their very best *(use of assessment, expectations, students' understanding of how they can improve);*
- the curriculum, homework and extra-curricular provision allow students to spend time meaningfully on their chosen activities, in order to improve their performance skill, increase their understanding and contribute effectively to their own progress, by showing initiative, determination, perseverance, good organisation and enquiry, and by undertaking independent research, reading, note-making and additional practice for themselves *(use of homework, students' productivity).*

Be alert to teaching which may have superficially positive features but which lacks rigour, depth, insight and the command of good subject teaching. Examples might be teaching where:

- the curriculum emphasises the activity areas and content of the topics to be covered, but provides insufficient physical or intellectual challenge or practice of performance skills *(planning);*
- tasks are well selected and logical but do not require any corrections to technique, acquisition or transfer of skill, or improvement in performance or presentation *(expectations, methodology);*
- the teacher displays secure understanding of movement but does not encourage the students to develop an understanding of factors influencing performance *(expectations);*
- the pace of teaching is brisk and all students contribute actively, but the level of discussion and focus of tasks are pedestrian and do not access higher-order learning skills – for example, there is a lack of opportunity for students to test their understanding through handling quantities of data, analysing, critical thinking and making evaluative judgements *(expectations, students' intellectual effort);*
- time is spent productively in reading and making notes on a topic, but there is an over-reliance on descriptive or factual writing rather than extended explanation, justification and diagnostic or analytical work *(methodology, expectations);*
- students participate readily in discussions and their contributions are praised irrespective of their brevity, lack of technical terminology or misconceptions, which go uncorrected and are, therefore, reinforced *(expectations, use of assessment);*
- objectives for learning are introduced but are not kept in the forefront during the lesson to give focus to the work *(students' understanding of what they are doing);*
- the teacher uses text as a stimulus for writing, when a videotape or live practical performance might produce more extended and animated work *(methodology).*

2.2 Lesson observation

Example 4: evidence from Year 12 A-level PE lesson in a school sixth-form, halfway through the year; group of 7 students (2M, 5F, NOR 9) working in ICT room.

Revision of somatotypes and their potential appropriateness for performance in specific activities. Revision of performance enhancing drugs, including contemporary examples. Further practice using Internet.

The enthusiastic specialist teacher is confident and competent; he provides excellent examples of each body type. He has a very good grasp of how and why body weight ratios affect performance and is able to pass this on to students through clear, lively explanations. He identifies international performers (including disabled athletes) effectively to illustrate his point. He provides additional information, when appropriate, to clarify issues which are proving difficult for some students to grasp. The session is very well prepared; it moves from whole-class discussion, supported by good use of PowerPoint, to individual work, group work and reinforcement using ICT. Lesson conducted at a very brisk pace; students' interest sustained by the variety of activity. The teacher is demanding; does not allow incorrect or superficial answers to go unchallenged. Good attempt made at end of lesson to recapitulate and check on what has been learnt. Makes sure that the students have all grasped the lesson objectives and know their personal targets for improvement. These are well linked to a range of individual tasks set for homework. Good use of humour to engage the interest of the group. This proves ultimately successful in developing students' recognition and understanding of somatotypes.

Students respond very well to the teacher's skilled and sympathetic prompting. They are eager to answer the questions, although their analytical skills and understanding of theoretical principles of body types vary considerably. Nonetheless, throughout the lesson, every student demonstrates a rapidly growing mastery of the characteristics and

performance potential of mesomorphs, endomorphs and ectomorphs. They are able to improve their written accuracy, and work with the computer on aspects of data organisation which they have found difficult. They seek confirmation from the teacher and discuss their work with each other in a sensible and mature way. They make notes without being reminded by the teacher. When working on the computers, they show a good understanding of the technicalities involved. Work with very high levels of attention and motivation throughout the 70 minutes.

[Teaching and learning excellent (1)]

Commentary

The teacher's expertise is evident; the groundwork had been laid in earlier stages of learning so that he does not have to go back to absolute basics of body types. He is able to make the topic interesting through a clear, humorous and interesting approach and by using ICT. Students' motivation is sustained, because they feel that they are making progress in the areas they have personally found difficult (whatever their previous level of attainment) and because the teacher has carefully planned their individual tasks. The use of visual representation helps memory and increases the impact of the points being made. The use of ICT provides students with the opportunity for further research and individual practice. The planning of the lesson is detailed, but it does not preclude spontaneous and appropriate digressions from the established plan. The summary at the end of the lesson – focusing on identifying what the students have learnt and what they need to do in order to improve – contributes to the success of the lesson. Evidence from students' portfolios confirms the effectiveness of the teaching.

Example 5: evidence from a first year A-level PE lesson near the end of the year in an FE college; group of 10 students (4M, 6F).

Students developing own trampolining routine using criteria and point system to grade style and difficulty. They practise their routines in 2 groups (2 beds); rest of the group make suggestions for improvement. Routines are then judged and marked by students under competition conditions.

The teacher is competent, although not completely confident, in her analysis of high-quality performance. Materials (video, whiteboard and proformas) for ascertaining the trick loading have been well prepared and are effective. However, the criteria for making judgements on the quality of the performance are superficial; most deal with stretching extremities and safety factors rather than accuracy, control or body line. A lively pace with good variety of learning activities. The teacher encourages the higher-achieving female students to be more ambitious in their routines, challenging them to include more difficult moves that they have practised but not necessarily mastered. Does not persevere in drawing into the discussion the male students who have performed high-order tricks, and makes only basic contributions to identifying the factors behind good-quality moves. The technical component of the routine is good, although the explanations are over-simplified and gloss over the difficulties students encounter. Attempts to use group work are worthy but founder on the inability of the weaker students to contribute effectively, and the teacher has to step in frequently to identify coaching points.

The response of the students shows that they are willing, but that some are frustrated by their inability to unpick the tricks performed. The two more confident students persist in raising the technical loading of their routines: their performance is not consistently accurate but they show an encouraging determination to succeed. They are ready to answer direct questions from the teacher, but are unable to take the initiative, ask questions themselves, or communicate with each other. The other female students have little knowledge of the higher-order tricks and the male students are left to practise their routines without much focus. There have been reasonable gains in performance skills through practice, although progress has been limited in developing the ability of the below-average students to identify the factors underlying effective performance. The two higher-attaining students belong to the college trampoline club.

[Teaching and learning satisfactory (4)]

Commentary

This is a lesson which has both strengths and weaknesses but in which, overall, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. There is a clear plan and supporting structure. The materials chosen are interesting and pertinent to the course. There is sufficient variety of activity to sustain students' interest. The use of videotape, whiteboard and individual proformas provides students with helpful supports to learning. The students learn about performing and judging trampoline routines and make progress through intensive practice.

However, they are hampered by lack of confidence, an uncertain grasp of the technical breakdown of individual tricks and a lack of understanding of the factors underlying high-quality movement. The teacher struggles to engage and stimulate all the students, concentrating her attention on the more competent and at times ignoring the male students in the group. They made less contribution to the session and as a consequence gain less from it.

Example 6: evidence from Year 13 A-level PE lesson in a school sixth-form (mid-year); 8 students (6M, 2F); in fitness studio.

The aim of the lesson is to examine the progress made in students' individual fitness schedules.

The teacher begins by placing the different fitness régimes in context and recapping on the need to match an individual fitness schedule to the type of fitness desired, but the students' responses are not forthcoming. Consequently, she has to revert to telling them rather than drawing on their contributions. It is clear that most of the students have not prepared sufficiently for the lesson – they are not ready with the principles and methods of their own chosen fitness schedules.

This lack of commitment is also evident in their attitude during the lesson. A wide range of good-quality, relevant materials has been prepared – OHT, video, newspaper articles, text books – but the students are slow to develop applied knowledge of the structure of the body and energy systems. Therefore, the teacher constantly has to stop and re-cover very basic ground. The teacher's hard work is frustrated by the students' poor commitment and low level of knowledge. Although her explanations are clear and helpful, she is unable to cover the intended ground. The students have to be prompted to take notes and are poorly organised. Their level of knowledge is low; they lack confidence in their discussions and they have not prepared adequately for the lesson. The majority are likely to achieve, at best, very modest results at A level.

Relationships are good, despite the teacher's patience being tried by the inability of the students to be more active participants in the lesson. Two of them engage regularly in fitness training for the county rugby squad; their levels of fitness and understanding of the physiological effects of exercise are noticeably better than those of the other students.

[Teaching satisfactory (4); learning unsatisfactory (5)]

Commentary

Students make insufficient progress over the course of the lesson and are hindered, even at this late stage in the course, by their poor knowledge of how practical performance is influenced by physical factors affecting training, exercise and energy. The fact that they have not prepared for this work puts a strain on the teacher, who is working hard with little return. She is a competent physiologist, has prepared lively and relevant material for the session and explained well the theoretical principles, but her efforts are frustrated by the students' lack of commitment. They do little to help themselves.

2.3 Other evidence on teaching and learning

Lesson observation is usually the most important source of evidence on the quality of teaching and learning, but the analysis of work and discussions with students can also yield valuable information. This is particularly important when the work includes a coursework component undertaken over time. Under these circumstances, the observation of individual lessons may give a very partial picture of the students' learning experiences and of the support provided by teachers.

The work analysis will give you a good feel for the overall rate of progress, and, therefore, the pace of the teaching and learning. It will show the range and depth of the work which the students are required to do. For example, it will indicate whether students have sufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of physical factors influencing performance and whether they are challenged sufficiently to develop the higher order skills of application of knowledge for analysis and evaluation.

Discussions with students will give you a sense of their motivation and the range of their experiences. You can ask questions to show whether they understand clearly how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

3 Other factors affecting quality

Other factors should only be reported if they have a significant effect on standards and achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. Note and evaluate any significant features of the curriculum, leadership, management, staffing, accommodation or resources. The following are possible questions specific to physical education.

Curriculum

Do the range, adequacy and quality of provision allow the course to be taught effectively?

Accommodation and resources

Are there any seasonal variations in accessing the indoor and outdoor specialist accommodation and, if so, what is the impact on progress? Are there sufficient, adequate and up-to-date reference materials, equipment and apparatus for effective teaching of the courses and for meeting the range of students' abilities? Is there adequate access to central learning resources, including ICT, during lesson and private study time?

Staffing

Are there enough specialist teachers with appropriate qualifications, expertise and experience to meet the demands of the courses and to promote high standards?

4 Writing the report

The following is an example of a post-16 subject section from a school inspection report. (It does not necessarily reflect the judgements in any or all of the examples given elsewhere in this booklet.) The summative judgements in these reports use, for schools, the seven-point scale: *excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.* For colleges there is the five-point scale: *outstanding; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; very weak*. The summative judgements *excellent/very good* used in school reports correspond to *outstanding* in colleges; *poor/very poor* used in schools correspond to *very weak* in colleges.

Physical education (PE)

Overall, the quality of provision in PE is **good.**

Strengths
- Attainment is above average and has been so for the last three years.
- Students achieve well; they have a good range of skills and their writing demonstrates a sophisticated understanding.
- Teaching of AS and A-level PE is good; expectations are high and a range of challenging tasks and activities is planned.
- Very good use is made of the excellent resources, particularly the new fitness testing laboratory.

Areas for improvement
- The least competent students demonstrate weaknesses in their knowledge of technical language.

In each of the last three years, A-level PE results have been above the national average. This is true both for the proportion of students obtaining at least a pass grade (A–E) and for the proportion obtaining a higher grade pass (A or B). In this summer's examination, students produced practical performances and coursework which were well above average standard, but their marks in the contemporary studies paper were only slightly above average.

Inspection evidence shows that the students currently in Years 12 and 13 are also producing work which is of above average standard. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Within a wide ability range, most students in Year 13 achieve well, and some of the less able are achieving very well. Students' practical performances show a good range of skills in different activities and high levels of fitness. They can analyse practical performance confidently, applying a range of theoretical principles, and they use their evaluations to refine their work, albeit with varying degrees of precision. They convey their views very effectively in evaluating contemporary influences on physical education and sport, with most students demonstrating a good understanding of funding agencies influencing participation, teaching and coaching. The quality of students' work varies: the highest attainers have a good command of a range of technical language and can apply it accurately and effectively, particularly in their gymnastic performance analysis; the least competent demonstrate some weaknesses in their knowledge of technical language in kinaesthetic and physiological terminology and concepts.

All students in Year 12 have made good progress since they started the course and they are achieving well. The highest attaining students have developed very well their analysis and evaluation of determinants of skilled performance. In discussions, all students make effective use of a wide range of relevant vocabulary. Their writing demonstrates a sophisticated appreciation and understanding of the connections between their chosen activities, particularly in the similarities of fitness training for invasion games. Female students especially have good research skills and use information well to achieve an insight into wider global issues impacting on participation in physical activity.

Overall, the teaching of AS and A-level PE is good. The most effective teaching involves very high expectations and a good pace to lessons, which results in good learning. There is a successful emphasis on getting students to refine their work through setting targets. Teachers ensure that students understand clearly the aims of lessons so that they know what they are to learn. Planning includes a range of challenging tasks and activities which help students to improve their skills in their chosen activities. Very good use is made of the excellent resources, particularly the new fitness testing laboratory.

Students have a responsible attitude to their work and are enthusiastic about physical education. Their learning benefits well from the teaching and they develop a good range of skills in their chosen activities, which they use effectively to increase their fitness levels. Most are able to express themselves clearly in discussions – for example, on the moral issues involved when athletes take performance-enhancing drugs. They make good use of ICT in their research work. In accordance with the teachers' guidance, they use their private study time well and make full use of revision weeks, which aids their progress significantly. Some of the more capable male students in Year 12 have shown particular initiative in devising CD-ROM programmes for coaching soccer skills.

The department is well led and managed. There is a determination to improve further the teaching and the standards attained. A careful analysis of A-level examination results has led to changes in teaching approaches for some topics. The school has an extensive range of extra-curricular provision. A high percentage of A-level PE students hold representative honours in school teams and also at county and regional level. This contributes to developing students' confidence and skills in their chosen activities.

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