

PE and School Sport Action Plan

An in depth look at progress made in the implementation of the PESS Action Plan



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



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Contents	Page
Introduction	1
Background	1
Main findings – summary	2
Recommendations	4
Main findings	5
Implementation of the Recommendations of the last report	5
Standards of Physical Education in the Development Centres	6
Transition for Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3	9
Continuing Professional Development	11
Initial Teacher Training	14
Specialist projects	16
Health-related exercise	16
ICT in PE	16
Gymnastics	17
Dance	18
Inclusion	19
Management of the initiative	20
Central management	20
Local management	21
Conclusion	22
Appendix PESS action plan for Wales (Published 2001)	

Introduction

- 1 In line with the Welsh Assembly Government's annual remit to Estyn in 2005-2006, this report focuses on the evaluation of the Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) initiative. The initiative was introduced in response to the Action Plan from the PE and School Sport Task Force report (for a summary, see Appendix 1).
- 2 This report summarises the main findings from visits to twelve PESS Development Centres, during 2005 and early 2006, and discussions with:
 - advisers with responsibility for physical education in nine Local Education Authorities (LEAs);
 - specialist physical education lecturers from five initial teacher training institutions;
 - head teachers, teachers and pupils;
 - officers from the Sports Council for Wales (SCW); and
 - specialists appointed to develop the different strands of the initiative.
- 3 The main findings are also based on a scrutiny of 247 primary school reports of inspections carried out between September 2004 and December 2005. The report makes a number of recommendations for further action to build on the success of the initiative.

Background

- 4 During the course of the first four years of the PESS initiative, HMI have visited and evaluated progress in development centres in each LEA in Wales at least once and, in 16 LEAs on more than one occasion.
- 5 The Assembly originally funded a pilot programme of 18 development centres across Wales. Development centres are generally based on partnerships between a secondary school and its feeder primary schools. Other partners may include post-16 education providers or leisure centres. The structure 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.
- 6 The key purpose of the development centres is to identify, strengthen and develop good practice in physical education and school sport. The Sports Council of Wales PESS managers expect centres to develop innovative approaches to the delivery of the curriculum, use of facilities and staff development. The centres should contribute to the raising of standards throughout Wales by sharing information with schools that are not currently members of development centres.

- 7 Currently, there are 63 development centres in operation in Wales, 12 of which have started working in 2005. Forty three development centres receive full funding for their operational plans and an additional six receive support to sustain activities and developments but no actual funding. From the centres that were established at the pilot stage of the initiative five have reached the end of their three-year plans. They are being offered support to sustain projects and access to training opportunities, but do not receive any additional funding.

Main findings - summary

- 8 The main findings in this report are obtained from the evidence base shown above.
- 9 This report confirms there is increasing evidence to show that the PESS initiative is meeting its aim of raising standards in physical education across Wales. The quality of physical education in development centre primary schools has improved. Evidence from HMI and consultants' reviews and visits indicates that standards of pupils' work, particularly in gymnastics and dance, are significantly better than prior to the initiative.
- 10 Primary school teachers are becoming even more confident and competent in their teaching of physical education than they were at this time last year. Their understanding and enjoyment of the subject and their appreciation of its value to their pupils are now greater.
- 11 The sustained focus on transition arrangements for pupils moving from key stage 2 to key stage 3 is improving continuity and progression in a number of physical education activities, and is making a significant contribution to the overall transition planning of schools.
- 12 Increasingly, the initiative is meeting well its core aim of raising standards in physical education and school sport through continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for all teachers. This success is having a major impact on improving teaching and learning in physical education. CPD courses, organised and funded through the PESS initiative, continue to attract more and more teachers from schools that are not themselves members of development centres.
- 13 There has been significant progress towards giving trainee teachers the necessary confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding to teach physical education. However, recent developments in the initial teacher training sector pose a serious threat to further progress, and have the potential to undermine the progress made so far (refer to paragraphs 70 – 77).
- 14 All the PESS specialists who work with one or more of the development centres, on continuing professional development and in initial teacher education and training, continue to work effectively. There has been very good progress in all the specialist projects.
- 15 The initiative is most successful in cases where a specialist physical education adviser works closely with the PESS co-ordinator and local managers to drive progress, provide support in development centre schools and monitor and evaluate

PE and School Sport Action Plan

An in depth look at progress made in the implementation of the PESS Action Plan

the impact and effectiveness of the initiative. However, too many teachers and LEA officers still do not understand the difference between physical education and the coaching of pupils in physical and sporting activities (refer to paragraph 100).

Recommendations

- 16 In order to develop and sustain the impact of the initiative on standards in physical education:

The Welsh Assembly Government should:

- R1 continue to develop and sustain the initiative, and clarify for schools the links between its various initiatives and their valuable contribution to improvements in teaching and learning; and
- R2 request LEAs to identify what additional support they provide for the PESS initiative and how they evaluate its effectiveness;

Local education authorities should:

- R3 monitor and evaluate regularly the progress and effectiveness of the initiative in their schools;
- R4 support the initiative by helping to disseminate the best practice highlighted through the work of its development centres to schools that are not currently formally involved in PESS; and
- R5 make sure that they do not use PESS co-ordinators inappropriately as a specialist PE adviser in their schools;

The Sports Council for Wales should:

- R6 make sure that PESS co-ordinators and local managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities;
- R7 encourage PESS co-ordinators to work together on a regional basis to replicate successful events in different parts of the country; and
- R8 continue to develop the PESS website, and publicise it to all LEAs and schools in Wales, immediately before and after its launch in September 2006;

Initial teacher training institutions should:

- R9 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;

Development centre schools should:

- R10 identify alternative sources of funding and partners to sustain and support the initiative in the longer term; and
- R11 share good practice by offering information and access to professional development to neighbouring schools that are not formally involved in the initiative.

Main Findings

- 17 Each sub-section below focuses on a key aspect of the PESS initiative.

Implementation of the Recommendations of the last report

- 18 Significant progress has been made in implementing many of the recommendations in the last report. This progress is outlined below at four levels.

The Welsh Assembly Government

- 19 The Welsh Assembly Government has made additional funding available for the PESS initiative. This has allowed the PESS manager to identify and fund more clusters of schools across Wales.
- 20 In addition, the Assembly Government has provided funding to enable the Sports Council to develop an appropriate initiative for secondary schools, similar to Dragon Sport. Dragon Sport is an initiative, originally aimed at primary schools, to extend opportunities and improve provision for extra-curricular sport. Both of these developments will complement and extend the work of the PESS initiative.

Local Education Authorities

- 21 More LEAs are integrating the management of the PESS initiative with their other plans, programmes and priorities. A significant majority of local authorities manage the PESS initiative through their education department and many co-ordinators are line-managed by LEA advisers who regularly monitor the effectiveness of the initiative. In these cases the focus of the initiative is clearly on physical education and school sport as part of the school curriculum.
- 22 Where leisure departments take responsibility for the initiative, there is a growing understanding and an improving focus on physical education. In the last report it was stated in local authorities where there is no specialist physical education officer, sometimes the LEA expects the PESS co-ordinator to provide specialist curriculum physical education advice and support to schools. In some LEAs this practice continues.
- 23 PESS co-ordinators come from a variety of backgrounds. Most have relatively limited teaching experience, or have a coaching or leisure background. To expect PESS co-ordinators with limited experience and expertise to offer specialist curriculum advice and support remains inappropriate. Furthermore, it may have the potential to present a significant risk to the co-ordinator, the local authority and to teachers and pupils.
- 24 Many local authorities have developed a high-quality PESS page on their individual websites. This will complement the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) PESS website which become accessible to teachers later this year.

Sports Council for Wales

- 25 The PESS section of the SCW website is now an exciting, user-friendly mechanism for reporting good news and good practice and for disseminating advice and resources.
- 26 The funding of development centres remains challenging, but this is mainly because of the differences in the timing of managing budgets between LEAs and the Sports Council. LEAs and school budgets are usually planned over a one-year and a three-year cycle, whereas the Sports Council has, up to now, only agreed indicative funding for one year, and released funding termly.
- 27 The specialists appointed to support the development centres still find it difficult not to spend time on management or organisation because they feel they need to be as well informed as possible about how the centres are progressing.

Development centre schools

- 28 The development centres that piloted the initiative in its early days have all identified the most valuable of their developments and most have found effective ways of sustaining this work. Some have used funding for key stage 2 to key stage 3 transition well, while others are making good use of curriculum development funding or funds allocated to improve teaching and learning and assessment.

Standards of Physical Education in the Development Centres

- 29 Since it began, the PESS initiative has focused particularly on improving provision and standards in primary schools. This is because there are physical education specialist teachers in almost all secondary school in Wales, who did not require the support that their primary colleagues had regularly identified they needed in Sports Council for Wales surveys. Inspection reports over a number of years show that standards in physical education have been more consistently good in secondary than in primary schools. Therefore, for the purposes of this report therefore, scrutiny of Section 10 inspection reports has been limited to the primary sector.
- 30 In order to establish whether or not there was any difference in standards of physical education in development centre and non development centre schools, HMI scrutinised 247 primary school Section 10 inspection reports. All the inspections had been carried out between the introduction of the new Common Inspection Framework arrangements in September 2004 and December 2005. Of these schools, 56 were members of a PESS development centre, while 191 were not.
- 31 In 23 of the development centre schools and 108 of the non development centre schools there was no subject report on physical education. This is because the inspections were either short inspections where there are no subject reports or standard inspections where physical education was not one of the six subjects inspected. The findings in table 1 below refer to the schools who received physical education grades on their inspection report. This represents almost half of the primary schools inspected from September 2004 to December 2005. Some schools are separate infant or junior, while most are primary schools.

32 Estyn's grades describe the following features of standards in lessons:

- Grade 1 – good with outstanding features
- Grade 2 – good features and no significant shortcomings
- Grade 3 – good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4 – some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- Grade 5 – many important shortcomings

	KS1 grades			KS2 grades		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
DC Schools	2	27	1	6	21	4
Non DC Schools	6	45	16	10	47	21
	KS1 percentages			KS2 percentages		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
DC Schools	7%	90%	3%	19%	68%	13%
Non DC Schools	9%	67%	24%	13%	60%	27%

Table 1: Statistics from primary school inspections

- 33 In 97% of key stage 1 (infant) classes in development centre schools, standards were good with no important shortcomings, with 7% of these having outstanding features. This compares with 76% of classes in non development centre schools. However, there was a slightly higher (but not significantly so) percentage of classes with outstanding features in non development centre schools. In 87% of key stage 2 (junior) classes in development centre schools standards were good with no important shortcomings, with 19% of these having outstanding features. This compares with 73% of classes in non development centre schools with 13% having outstanding features.
- 34 These figures show that there is more good work overall in physical education, some of which has outstanding features, in schools that are part of PESS development centres than in those that are not.
- 35 Most development centre primary schools allocate the Welsh Assembly Government's recommended two hours of physical education each week. This is better than the overall picture indicated in the annual SCW publication about physical education provision in primary schools. That report found that most primary schools in Wales allocate only one and a half hours a week for physical education. Only around a quarter of schools in Wales provide two hours of curriculum physical education for pupils in years 3 and 4, and while more schools allocate two hours for year 5 and 6 pupils, the proportion meeting the two hour guideline is still only around a third.
- 36 Head teachers of primary schools included in the PESS initiative are invariably very positive about the value of physical education to the health and well-being of their pupils. These head teachers also speak enthusiastically about the impact on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work.
- 37 Head teachers also report that there has been a noticeable improvement in pupils' key personal, social and learning skills. The wider key skills of finding solutions to

problems, working together and communicating well were reported as an integral element in learning in physical education. Teachers focus well on improving pupils' skills in communication and the use of number within physical education, and many pupils in development centre schools use and develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support and enhance work in physical education.

- 38 As part of the PESS initiative many primary schools are now using technology to support and improve teaching and learning. Primary pupils use computers to create articles for their own school PESS website. Many pupils record work on video to help them observe accurately, evaluate and improve their own and their classmates' performances. This encourages pupils to become more independent learners.
- 39 All of the evidence for this report confirms the view that the quality of physical education teaching in primary schools has improved appreciably through involvement in the PESS initiative. There has been a considerable impact on teachers' confidence, enthusiasm and commitment. Also, in gymnastics and dance lessons observed during visits to development centre schools this year, HMIs found that pupils understand and can demonstrate line, tension and extension. They can also appreciate the importance and value of introducing rhythm and timing into their work. In a games lesson in one school in Blaenau Gwent, children in the reception class were able to control a ball with a racquet whilst moving around a space and most could tip a small, light 'plusball' up to 10 times. This is outstanding for pupils at this stage of their physical development.
- 40 In all activities, pupils of all ages:
- focus well on performance; and
 - can describe the elements that contribute to good work.
- 41 As pupils grow older, they:
- observe and evaluate their own and others' work accurately;
 - appreciate good work;
 - can make sensible and sensitive suggestions for further improvement;
 - are able to speak knowledgeably about the importance and benefits of exercise to a healthy lifestyle; and
 - know about both the physical and mental effects of exercise on the body.
- 42 Extra-curricular opportunities continue to grow and flourish. There is little difference in extra-curricular provision between development centre schools and those schools currently not included in the PESS initiative. This is a testament to the success of the Dragon Sport initiative. PESS co-ordinators reported that they work closely together with Dragon Sport officers to provide worthwhile experiences in both curriculum and extra-curricular time and to organise festivals of sport that include all local schools.

Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3

- 43 There was strong agreement amongst those interviewed that the PESS initiative has helped teachers to manage transition better in a number of ways. At the beginning of this initiative, pilot development centres identified that improving standards in physical education depends significantly on establishing and agreeing the continuum of work across the different key stages. This has rarely been an issue between key stages 1 and 2, or key stages 3 and 4 because most key stage 1 and 2 pupils are taught in the same settings as are pupils in key stage 3 and 4. However, the transition between key stages 2 and 3 has been a barrier to continuity and progression for all subjects of the curriculum.
- 44 The move from primary to secondary school is a major and significant event for children, with a number of features that are specific and unique to physical education. Secondary schools have to manage the fact that many pupils will have differing experiences. The differing experiences of physical education activities in many schools include social factors. Primary pupils will usually have had lessons in mixed-gender groups in a small hall after changing in a classroom. Secondary pupils usually have lessons in single-gender groups in a large gymnasium, with pupils changing in purpose-built changing rooms.
- 45 Secondary schools have, for a long time, done a very good job in maintaining social links with their partner primary schools. Many have had good induction arrangements, and most organise days for year 6 pupils, when they experience a number of activities.
- 46 Traditionally, most teachers have worked exclusively in their own phase, either in primary or secondary, and a significant number had limited understanding of the work programmed for the other phase. Understandably, pupils' attainment varied on entry to secondary school, a situation not exclusive to physical education. Many primary pupils were ill-prepared for key stage 3 work, particularly in skills-based gymnastics. Many secondary PE specialists assumed too low a baseline in games and planned work for year 7 pupils that they had already experienced. Consequently, some pupils found it difficult to manage the progression to key stage 3 work in physical education, while others became bored and disenchanted at having to repeat work they had already done.
- 47 The pilot development centres identified and then provided the support that was required. This support included a number of basic things such as providing units of work in various PE activities to bridge the period between the end of year 6 and the beginning of year 7. This gave year 6 pupils a shared experience to develop at the start of year 7 as well as giving a consistent starting point for the new key stage. It also helped to build pupils' self confidence and self-esteem and make new friends. This strategy proved to be so effective that it has become a central focus for all subsequent development centres.
- 48 Estyn reported on changes in teaching and learning promoted by the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Aiming for Excellence' programme in 2004-2005. The report identified a number of good features that the PESS initiative meets very successfully.

- 49 Interviews and HMI visits confirmed that development centre schools, which are families of primary and secondary schools, are working effectively together to meet pupils' needs better. Visits to each other's schools, the development of bridging units and the joint moderation of teachers' assessments by groups of primary and secondary teachers have had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- 50 More primary and secondary teachers are visiting each others' schools. This is proving to be very effective as the starting point of joint work on curriculum plans and teaching methods. Joint working by year 6 and year 7 teachers, in particular, helps to make teaching more challenging and less repetitious. The best bridging units:
- provide a sequence of increasingly challenging tasks;
 - enable pupils to make progress in what they know, understand and can do;
 - support consistency in the quality of teaching; and
 - enable pupils to assess how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- 51 Some development centres have appointed primary teachers as their local managers because of a vision that improvement should start at key stage 1. Given that the major focus of the initiative to date has been on improving standards in the primary sector, this is a sensible strategy, and has proved to be very successful, especially when there is support and mutual professional respect between primary and secondary schools.
- 52 Many centres share expertise and good practice; primary local managers attend secondary professional development courses and specialist physical education secondary teachers attend primary courses. This has led to a better understanding of the continuum from key stage 1 to key stage 4 and into post-16 provision.
- 53 Head teachers and staff confirmed that improvement in transition is most effective when an officer from the local authority with expertise in physical education or transition, or both, attends all local development centre management meetings and supports the decisions that are made there. In one local authority in North Wales, all partner schools of the development centres have shown their commitment to the transition strategy by becoming members of a steering group which develops plans to manage transition better. This group comprises representatives from all partner primary and secondary schools, including Welsh medium, and officers from PESS and the local education authority.
- 54 Key stage 2 and key stage 3 transition plans for physical education appear in the development plans of all PESS development centres. The vast majority of these plans are well considered and appropriately detailed.

- 55 Many of the activities to improve transition are imaginative, for example:
- training key stage 4 pupils as sports leaders, who then support a variety of extra-curricular activities in their partner primary schools; and
 - primary pupils developing their own physical education profiles, using information and communication technology, which contribute to pupils' records of achievement as well as giving valuable information to the PE department in the secondary school.
- 56 PESS co-ordinators and local managers evaluate all these programmes to assess their impact. In one secondary school in north-west Wales, the senior managers have used the PESS transition action plan as a model of good practice for all departments.

Continuing Professional Development

- 57 One of the core aims identified in the PESS Task Force report was to 'raise standards in physical education and school sport by establishing accredited continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for all teachers'. Increasingly, the PESS initiative is achieving this aim. This success is having a major impact on improving teaching and learning in physical education.
- 58 The protocols for professional development were explained in detail in the Estyn report 'Progress in the implementation in development centre schools in Wales 2004-2005', published in April 2005, and available on Estyn's website at www.estyn.gsi.gov.uk/publications
- 59 The 'PESS CPD Panel' selected three key 'gap areas' for national development within the initiative in 2005. These are:
- the integration of pupils with additional learning needs or physical disabilities into mainstream physical education lessons, and how to adapt activities to suit these pupils' needs;
 - mentoring non-specialist primary teachers in physical education activities to improve their knowledge, understanding and confidence; and
 - the assessment of risk within specific areas of physical education, to raise teachers' and pupils' awareness of risks and how to manage them safely.
- 60 The Sports Council for Wales PESS managers are now working towards producing CPD opportunities and resources to address these issues. This work is additional to the existing specialist projects of gymnastics, dance, health related exercise and the use of ICT to support learning in physical education.
- 61 CPD courses organised and funded through PESS are attracting more and more teachers from schools that are not members of development centres. The Sports Council's PESS managers ensure that all aspects of professional development meet

the quality assurance standards that are agreed with advisers and PESS consultants. BAALPE has informed these standards¹.

- 62 Up to January 2006 more than 5,300 teachers across Wales had benefited through PESS from high quality professional development. The focus of the courses includes all the activity groups of the national curriculum: gymnastics, dance, games, swimming, athletic activities and outdoor and adventurous activities. The initiative has also provided good support and training in health and safety issues, health-related exercise, playground games (using the 'In the Zone' resource developed through PESS), ICT, developing school/community links in physical education and planning transition for pupils moving from primary to secondary education.
- 63 Mentors and tutors also receive national training, which ensures that the quality and content of the courses are consistent for teachers across Wales. All this training has influenced teaching strategies, and significantly improved teachers' knowledge and understanding of physical education. Despite the initiative providing a significant number of courses in gymnastics and dance, these areas remain amongst the most requested. Given that these are two of the three 'core' activities in PE, this raises questions which are pursued in the next section of the report.
- 64 Teachers appreciate the value of the training they are now able to access through the initiative. Following the significant PESS presence in the latest 'Share the Wealth' conference at University of Wales Institute Cardiff, the North Wales PESS co-ordinators organised and managed a discrete PESS conference in Bangor in the autumn term of 2005. As at the South Wales conference, student teachers from the host institution, in this case the University College of Wales Bangor attended the conference.
- 65 This practice has not only forged better links between students and practising teachers in both south and north Wales but also served to share consistent messages about physical education. Comments from delegates at the Bangor conference were extremely positive, with many delegates commenting on the quality of the presentations and workshops, and requesting 'more of the same'.
- 66 One of the most important developments that have taken place during this year is the development of the NGfL PESS website. This is additional to the Sports Council Website, which has a PESS page holding information for the general public, promotional information, reports, professional development opportunities and project updates.
- 67 The NGfL website includes resources, good practice case studies from all parts of Wales and information about all the areas of national curriculum physical education. Currently access to the site is limited, but it will be available to all teachers in September 2006. The high quality resources have been developed to support teachers, following their training in various activities. The website also includes copies of presentations made at the national dance conference and at the ICT

¹ BAALPE - British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education. From April 2006, BAALPE will become AfPE - Association for Physical Education

conference. The website provides a means of sharing good practice effectively across the whole country, and on-going support and advice for all teachers.

- 68 There will also be a PESS Forum on the website from 1 September 2006 to enable teachers to share good practice and new ideas, as well as giving them the opportunity to ask questions of the PESS team and other teachers. Once registered, teachers can post their messages and await responses from other users. This will make the benefits of the initiative available to all.
- 69 At present the information for the primary sector is comprehensive and nationally relevant, while the secondary section contains mostly stories from the parallel initiative, Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) in England.

Initial Teacher Training

- 70 One of the aims identified in the PESS Task Force report in 2001 was to ‘make sure that Initial Teacher Education and Training gives trainees the necessary confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding to teach physical education’. The focus was on the training of primary teachers. There has been significant progress towards achieving this aim, but recent trends pose a threat to further development and have the potential to undermine the progress made so far.
- 71 Lecturers of physical education in all the teacher training institutions in Wales have worked together well since 2001. They have agreed the essential components of initial training in physical education and this has led to more consistent, high quality training for trainees.
- 72 However, the time allocated to physical education by institutions across Wales is a cause for concern, particularly for Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses. The PESS Task Force Report stated that ‘the time allocated to university or college-based training is often not enough to allow trainees to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the subject competently and confidently’. Even so, the time allocated by institutions for physical education has reduced since 2001. The allocation also varies too much between institutions as shown in the tables below.

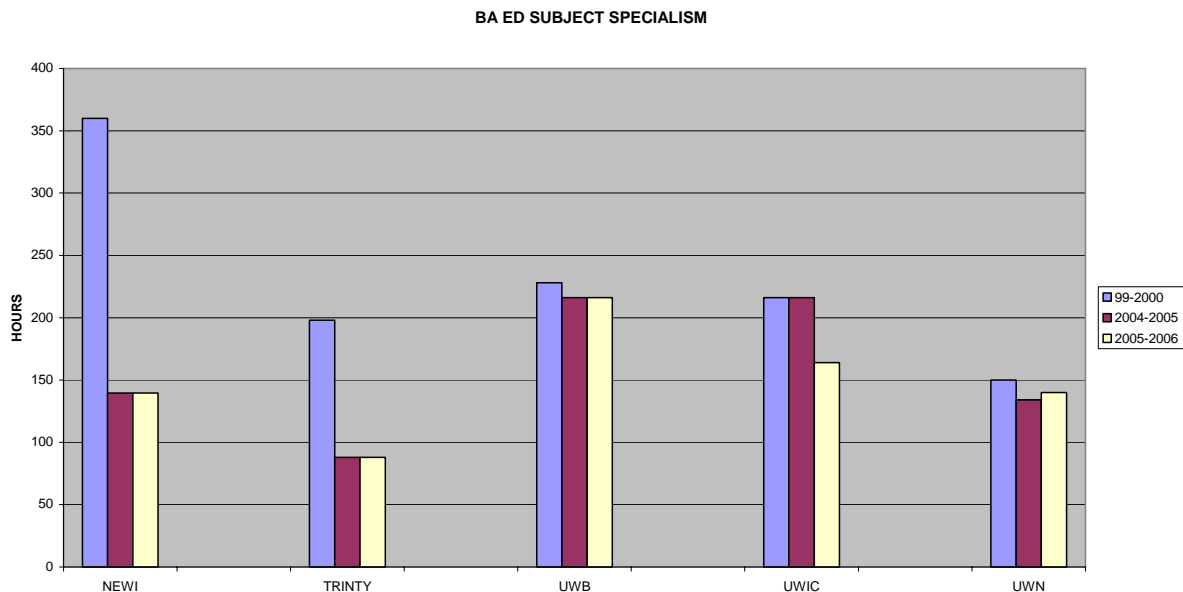


Table 2: Hours allocated for physical education in Welsh teacher training institutions

KEY: NEWI – North East Wales Institute
 Trinity – Coleg Y Drindod, Carmarthen
 UWB – University of Wales, Bangor
 UWIC – University of Wales Institute Cardiff
 University of Wales Newport

(Swansea Institute not included because there was no reduction in time in Swansea over this period)

PE and School Sport Action Plan
An in depth look at progress made in the implementation of the PESS Action Plan

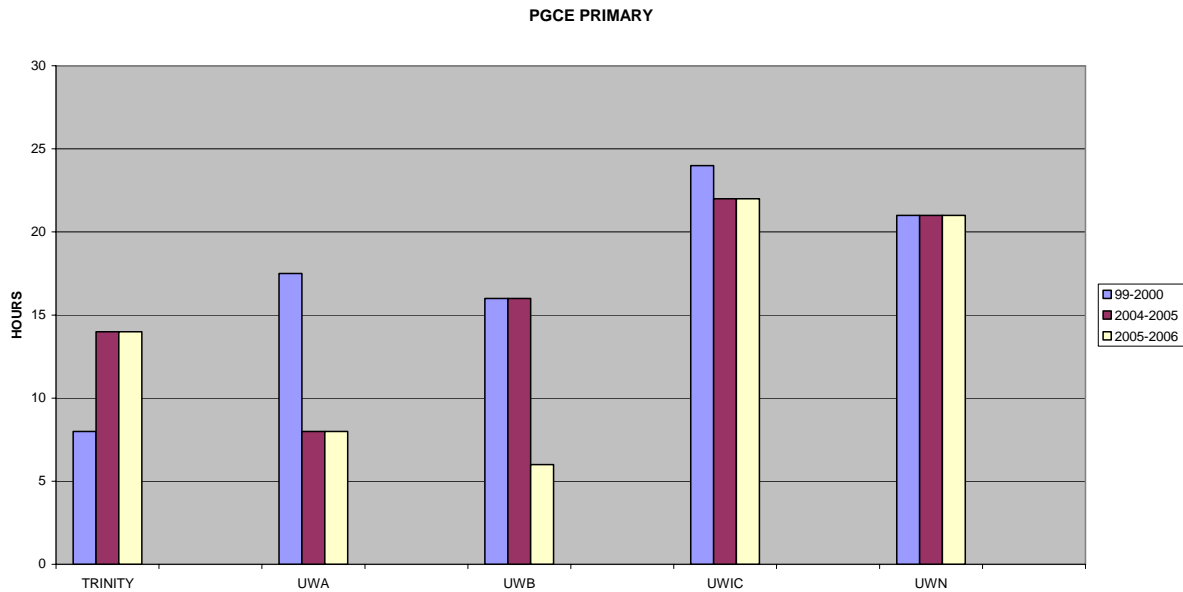


Table 3: Hours allocated for trainees following the one-year PGCE course.

- 73 There are four compulsory elements of physical education in the National Curriculum – dance, games, gymnastics and swimming. The first three activities must be taught in both key stages, while swimming can be taught in either or both key stages. In key stage 2, schools must also teach either athletic activities or adventurous activities. Most of the activities have health and safety and risk management implications for which trainee teachers should be prepared.
- 74 The 15 hours or less allocated by three institutions to physical education on PGCE courses is not enough to cover one or more of the statutory elements of the National Curriculum. Even institutions that allocate more time than this have had to provide optional extra-curricular opportunities for trainees to gain expertise in games and swimming because they cannot include them in the allocated time.
- 75 The inadequate time allocated by institutions to physical education places additional burdens on teachers in the early years of their careers. Gaining qualified teacher status is the first step to becoming a teacher and it would be unrealistic to expect new teachers to be expert in everything they do. However, newly qualified teachers do not always receive good enough support to develop their physical education teaching skills, even if this is identified in their career entry profile. This is because few schools have an experienced teacher with physical education expertise to provide day-to-day mentoring for the new teacher. This is particularly the case in small schools.
- 76 A further compounding issue is that institutions are in danger of losing specialist physical education facilities such as gymnasia. For example, there are well-advanced plans to convert these facilities into accommodation for other subjects or into general lecture theatres in about half the teacher training institutions in Wales.
- 77 There are also concerns about the training of specialist physical education teachers for secondary schools. The time allocated to their training is being reduced by institutions in response to financial pressures. This raises similar, although less significant concerns to those identified above in primary.

Specialist projects

Health-related exercise

- 78 Health-related exercise is a fundamental component of the National Curriculum for PE which complements the WAG agenda for sustaining healthy lifestyles. A structured programme of training for lead trainers, national trainers, local tutors and mentors has already begun. These trainers will be ready to support the implementation of resources through development centres and to all schools.
- 79 Several primary courses have run in different authorities in Wales. The evaluations from the courses have been very positive. As yet, no courses have been run for secondary schools. In order to use the expertise of nationally recognised professionals, the Youth Sport Trust will lead the monitoring of the training. The trust has agreed to support the PESS project in producing the resources on CD Rom during 2006. The resources will only be available to schools that have received training.
- 80 The CD Rom provides teachers and pupils with resources and ideas for events, celebrations and competitions. It is easy to access and will be invaluable to teachers in all key stages. The teaching resources are progressive, starting with work suitable for key stage 1 pupils. It includes bright and jargon-free teaching support materials aimed at non-specialist primary teachers, and more complex and refined materials that are appropriate for examination level pupils in key stage 4.

ICT in PE

- 81 All development centres recognise the contribution that the application of information technology makes to learning and teaching. The specialist project will consist of good practice examples for physical education in all key stages, to show how ICT links with and supports physical education. A working group of PESS Co-ordinators met in October to agree the content. During the spring term 2006, LEA advisors were invited to contribute to the project. This partnership will ensure LEA support for this strand of the PESS initiative.
- 82 In addition to the PESS information page hosted on the Sports Council for Wales's website, there is an extra-net site hosted on the NGfL web site. This site went live for PESS co-ordinators and development centre managers in October 2005. The content, which gives teachers valuable support and teaching resources includes:
- a visual image bank;
 - templates for worksheets, presentations and handout;
 - a bulletin board for posting information for teachers;
 - a key stage search-engine for physical education activities;

- useful case studies, contacts and websites; and
 - research, monitoring and evaluation information.
- 83 A proposal outlining recommendations for continuing professional development for teachers was presented to the Sports Council for Wales in March 2006 for agreement and budget forecasting. The proposal includes the future plans for providing training for teachers and schools. The level of success of this part of the initiative will depend on this training.
- 84 A number of development centre schools continue good developmental work towards meeting the recommendations for using ICT in physical education. The centres share good practice and have recommended a variety of methods of improving the use of ICT in PE. These include:
- pro-formas for organising programmes, tournaments and events;
 - pro-formas for assessment and recording;
 - using ICT to plan lessons and to provide support materials for pupils;
 - research and evaluation; and
 - recording pupil performance and movement analysis using visual imagery.

All these developments illustrate how there are coherent and appropriate plans for developing the use of ICT in physical education in the future.

Gymnastics

- 85 Primary teachers reported that the gymnastics project has been the strand that has been most valuable to them. Gymnastics is the activity area that teachers are most worried about because it is more skill-based and has more attendant safety implications than other activities, such as dance.
- 86 The PESS initiative recommended that a specialist consultant should work with PESS co-ordinators, local managers and development centres to improve standards of gymnastics across the country. He devised an 'alphabet of shapes' which has given non-specialist primary teachers a simple vocabulary on which to base and then to develop their teaching. The accompanying resources are already widely used in development centre schools all over Wales. The simple images and silhouettes show pupils what good work looks like, and this encourages them to use the images to replicate, practise and refine their work.
- 87 Many secondary physical education teachers in development centre schools comment that pupils are now entering year 7 with a better understanding of gymnastics, and a more comprehensive gymnastics movement vocabulary than ever before. This is an exciting prospect, which will enable secondary teachers to build on this work to a significantly higher level in key stage 3 and key stage 4. However, this will need further development of resources and training and further funding through PESS.

- 88 After successful pilots in several authorities, the consultant, co-ordinators and local managers have now agreed the content of the gymnastics tutor courses and manuals. These are ready for future roll-out to all schools from the end of the academic year 2005-2006. The CD Rom is again a high quality resource for schools, which will be most effective when accompanied by support and training. This is all part of the planned package through this strand of the project. Consultants and mentors are currently working on supporting modules of work, which will be accessible to all schools, whether or not they are members of a development centre.

Dance

- 89 Evidence for this report confirms that many teachers still lack confidence in planning and evaluating pupils' work in dance. To answer this need, more than half of all centres' plans include a focus on developing teachers' expertise in dance. This has happened in a number of ways, including:
- the provision of courses;
 - mentoring opportunities; and
 - the development of resources.
- 90 A number of local organisations and personnel with specialist knowledge have provided training courses of high quality. Over 2000 individuals have received dance support and training through PESS to date, many of whom do not teach in development centre schools. Specialists and teachers from within a number of development centres have produced easy-to-use resources. These are subject to PESS quality assurance measures. Mentoring to support the use of the resources has taken place in a number of development centre schools. The development of the national mentoring programme has addressed initial concerns about the quality of mentors.
- 91 The partnership between PESS and Community Dance Wales has resulted in courses to provide dance mentors with the necessary skills to work in schools. The mentors will receive training to provide them with generic skills for mentoring through the PESS project. In addition, dance mentors will receive training to provide practical ideas linked to the national curriculum. The pilot phase ended in March 2006, with an evaluation and review to follow in the summer term. The courses will be widely available later in the year.
- 92 A number of successful events have also contributed to the positive impact of the dance project to date. These include a series of conferences and workshops offered in different regions to provide an overview of dance in the national curriculum. The information and support that these events provided, has assisted co-ordinators in planning the provision of professional development and resources to support dance in schools. The workshops and conferences have generated ideas and inspiration for both teachers and dance practitioners.
- 93 One valuable example involved a presentation and demonstration of the work of key stage 3 boys from a Powys development centre. This showed other centre

managers how well a non-specialist physical education teacher can introduce dance to boys.

Inclusion

- 94 The Sports Council for Wales carried out a professional development survey of teachers from both primary and secondary schools in development centres. Responses to the survey identified a need for more help on the inclusion of pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream physical education. The Sports Council's directory of CPD opportunities showed that there was limited provision covering this topic. As a result of the CPD directory, the sports council produced a gap analysis report to show what support teachers need most. This report shows a significant need to provide support for pupils with additional learning needs and physical disabilities.
- 95 In response to these issues, the PESS initiative appointed an SEN specialist in April 2005 to take this work forward. As part of her role, this specialist has already made significant progress by:
- exploring existing opportunities for staff development on this topic;
 - reviewing and assessing the relevance and value of existing resources to support teachers; and
 - evaluating training courses and other specialist support that local authorities might wish to access to address the needs of their teachers.
- 96 The SEN specialist has presented a proposal outlining her recommendations to the Sports Council for Wales for agreement. The overview for the project includes three aspects, the first of which involves writing a core module. This will address the issues of inclusion, and provide advice, guidance and practical ideas to help teachers in all key stages meet the needs of all children. The second aspect provides advice and guidance to the other specialist project consultants and authors of materials supporting PESS training in order to ensure that the theme of inclusion permeates all work. The third identifies the support modules that are available for teachers and schools to access, and how each module might meet their needs.

Management of the initiative

Central management

- 97 All development centres share good practice effectively. This sharing is not restricted within LEA boundaries, but extends across wider geographic regions. The newly established centres are still benefiting from the experiences of the first centres. In the future, Baalpe Wales - now the Association for PE (AfPE) - have agreed with the Sports Council for Wales to develop an award similar to the former 'Sportsmarc Cymru'. Gaining this award will recognise the continued work of the formerly funded centres and encourage them to sustain their efforts.
- 98 Most of the PESS co-ordinators manage the growing number of development centres very well and deal very effectively with all administrative issues. Many of the co-ordinators use their initiative to work innovatively and co-operatively with colleagues in neighbouring authorities and further afield. Most co-ordinators work closely with local managers to ensure that the managers are able to work to best effect on physical education issues. However, a few LEAs still have not made the roles and responsibilities of development centre managers and co-ordinators clear enough.
- 99 The initiative is most successful where a specialist physical education adviser works closely with the PESS co-ordinator and local managers to drive progress, provide support in development centre schools, and monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the initiative. However too many LEA officers in authorities that do not have specialist PE advice and support 'in-house' still do not understand the difference between physical education and the coaching of physical and sporting activities.
- 100 Physical education is about learning transferable skills through physical experiences and contexts rather than learning a physical activity in isolation. Coaching is more about developing and improving specific performance skills relevant to one or more activity. Physical education is about teaching all children regardless of their ability or interest. Where officers, head teachers and teachers do not understand this difference, they often put pressure on the PESS initiative to employ specialist coaches in their schools to develop specific activities. This strategy may lead to an improvement in individuals' performance in specific activities, but it does not lead to a sustained improvement in teaching and learning in PE.
- 101 Every local authority PESS co-ordinator manages at least two development centres. The Sports Council for Wales has recruited additional officers to support the PESS manager. These officers were previously PESS co-ordinators, and consequently have an excellent working knowledge and understanding of issues that might arise in the centres. Together, the officers manage the whole initiative efficiently and effectively. Most of the issues to do with funding and liaison with LEAs, identified last year, have been addressed by now. For example, indicative funding is agreed for a year and release of funds can now be more flexible where required. This allows local managers to forward-plan more effectively.

- 102 PESS co-ordinators work effectively to support local managers and schools in their development centres. However, the Sports Council for Wales should encourage every LEA to undertake continual review and monitoring of the role and work of the co-ordinator.

Local management

- 103 In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the PESS initiative is managed within the School Improvement service area. The authority believes that this is important as it gives PESS greater authority and status in terms of developing transition initiatives across all schools in the authority. There is an authority-wide emphasis on transition and developing effective cluster groups, and the authority considers that PESS is making a significant contribution to this work. They also believe that the PESS philosophy fits very well with the authority's emphasis on strategies to improve teaching and learning. The authority has identified appropriate strategies to extend PESS across the authority and support the sustainability of the initiative.
- 104 In this authority, there are particularly effective partnerships between the LEA, the specialist PE adviser for the local authority, the PESS co-ordinator, local managers and head teachers from both primary and secondary schools, Dragon Sport and the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator. There are regular monitoring and evaluation reviews of progress and the LEA has allocated additional funding to allow more of its schools to share and benefit from the PESS experience.
- 105 The PESS Co-ordinator contributes to the monitoring and reviews and produces a detailed audit and analysis of progress in individual schools and different clusters. These identify examples of good practice, which she sends to other cluster schools.
- 106 The LEA has also funded a 'mini PESS' initiative for non-PESS schools. Approximately 10 non-cluster schools have attended training and received resources to help improve the quality of Key Stage 1 gymnastics. Headteachers were invited to suggest how they might use specific sums of money to improve the quality of their PE programme. The schools have been required to match fund to demonstrate their commitment to the initiative.

Conclusion

- 107 The PESS initiative in Wales focuses on bringing a range of bodies, such as local authorities, the Sports Council for Wales, specialist consultants, teachers and pupils together to work on improving young people's experience and performance in physical education and school sport. Success in doing this will ensure that young people gain the motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence to aim for excellence.
- 108 The PESS initiative is gathering momentum across Wales. Many head teachers consider it to be the most effective of any national initiative they have experienced. It is well managed, both centrally and locally. The PESS initiative complements and supports the Assembly's wider policies and cross-cutting programmes for encouraging a healthier, fitter society as set out in 'Well Being in Wales', the 'Food and Fitness Strategy' and 'Climbing Higher'. It will need continued funding to sustain and improve these links.
- 109 Standards of physical education are improving, through more and better quality day-to-day experiences for pupils in schools. There is evidence to suggest that the PESS initiative will have a continuing impact because of its clear focus on supporting and developing teachers' skills in teaching physical education, rather than only on providing one-off experiences from specialist providers. The focus on supporting teachers is particularly effective in primary schools.
- 110 Better subject specific training in initial teacher training has greatly improved primary teachers' knowledge, understanding, confidence and competence in teaching physical education. Continuing the focus on supporting primary teachers will become more important when initial training for primary teachers in physical education is further reduced next year.
- 111 Mechanisms for all teachers to access resources and examples of good practice are developing well. There is a large number of teaching resources covering all the activities in the national curriculum orders for physical education available on the PESS website, and accredited professional development courses are now widely available to teachers across the country. Throughout the initiative, physical education teachers and co-ordinators have taken a lead in addressing whole-school issues such as assessment for learning and improving the planning for pupils' transition from primary to secondary school.
- 112 Physical education and school sport are valuable tools in supporting pupils' educational, social, moral and cultural development. The PESS initiative in Wales has helped the subject perform an even more significant role in these aspects of pupils' personal development.

Appendix

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; and
- (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.