



**BRIEFING PAPER**

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# Physical education and sport in schools

By David Foster; Nerys Roberts

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## Summary

This briefing provides information on policies and practice relating to physical education and sport in schools in England.

### PE in the National Curriculum

Under the reformed National Curriculum, which local authority-maintained schools have been required to teach since September 2014, PE remains a compulsory subject at all key stages. Academies and free schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum but are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes, among other things, the physical development of pupils. [National Curriculum programmes of study](#) outline what should be taught at each key stage.

### Funding for PE and school sport

Funding for school PE and sport forms part of the Dedicated Schools Grant, which is not broken down by subject or curriculum area. In addition, since 2013-14, additional ring-fenced funding has been provided to primary schools through the Primary PE and Sport Premium. From 2017-18, revenue from the soft drinks industry levy has been used to double the value of the premium from £160 million to £320 million. The Government has stated that the funding will continue to be provided up to 2020.

In February 2017, the Government announced that that £415 million of funding from the soft drinks industry levy would be allocated to schools in 2018-19 to “pay for facilities to support physical education, after-school activities and healthy eating.” The funding was referred to as the Healthy Schools Capital Programme. In July 2017, the Education Secretary announced that the funding available for the Programme would be reduced from £415 million to £100 million to part fund an additional £1.3 billion for the core schools budget in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The £100 million has been allocated through the current arrangements for schools capital funding for 2018-19.

### The School Games

In June 2010, the Coalition Government announced plans for a national Olympic and Paralympic-style sports competition for schools. The first competition began in September 2011 with the finals taking place in May 2012 at the Olympic Park.

A review published in July 2016 concluded that the School Games are “well placed to make a strong contribution” to the Government’s sports strategy. The report made 17 recommendations aimed at maximising the value and impact of the Games and ensuring that they are “relevant to more children and young people and their lives today.”

### School playing fields

From October 2012, new [regulations](#) have applied to the provision of outdoor space by schools. These require that suitable outdoor space must be provided to enable “pupils to play outside” and “physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum”.

Local authorities and schools must seek the consent of the Secretary of State when seeking to dispose of publicly funded school land, including playing fields. [Guidance](#) on the disposal of school playing fields, which was updated in March 2019, sets out the relevant legislation and procedure relating to the disposal of school land.

## 2015 Sport Strategy

In December 2015, the Government published a new sport strategy, [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#). Regarding school sport, the strategy emphasised the importance of linking together the different stages of education and “more clearly join[ing] up the overall approach”. The strategy contained a number of commitments relating to schools, including that:

- The PE Sport Premium would be retained.
- The effectiveness and future priorities of the School Games would be assessed
- A working group would advise on how to ensure no child leaves school without a minimum swimming capability.
- The Government would seek to better understand the drop –off in engagement from primary to secondary, particularly for those groups most affected such as girls.

The [second annual report](#) on the sport strategy was published in February 2017.

## School Sport Action Plan

In October 2018, the Education Secretary announced that the Government would develop a cross-government school sport and activity action plan that “will consider ways to ensure that all children have access to quality, protected PE and sport sessions during the school week and opportunities to be physically active throughout the school day.” The plan is expected to be launched in spring 2019.

## Surveys and reports on PE and school sport

The final section of the briefing provides information on a number of recent surveys and reports on the provision of PE and school sports.

More information on School Sport Partnerships, including the decision to end ring-fenced funding for them is provided in Library Briefing Paper 6052, [School Sport Partnerships](#).

# 1. Physical education in schools

## 1.1 The National Curriculum

Under the National Curriculum introduced in September 2014, PE remains compulsory at all key stages. Local authority-maintained schools are required to follow the National Curriculum. Academies and free schools do not have to teach it, but are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that “promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils.”<sup>1</sup>

The stated aims of the National Curriculum for PE are to ensure that pupils:

- develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities
- are physically active for sustained periods of time
- engage in competitive sports and activities
- lead healthy, active lives.<sup>2</sup>

The National Curriculum programmes of study for PE outline what should be taught at each key stage:

### Key stage 1 [ages 5-7]

[...]

Pupils should be taught to:

- master basic movements including running, jumping, throwing and catching, as well as developing balance, agility and co-ordination, and begin to apply these in a range of activities
- participate in team games, developing simple tactics for attacking and defending
- perform dances using simple movement patterns

### Key stage 2 [ages 7-11]

[...]

Pupils should be taught to:

- use running, jumping, throwing and catching in isolation and in combination
- play competitive games, modified where appropriate [for example, badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders and tennis]<sup>3</sup>, and apply basic principles suitable for attacking and defending
- develop flexibility, strength, technique, control and balance [for example, through athletics and gymnastics]
- perform dances using a range of movement patterns

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<sup>1</sup> Academies Act 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education, [National curriculum in England: physical education programmes of study](#), September 2013; [HC Deb 28 June 2011 c 763-4W](#).

<sup>3</sup> Schools are not required to teach the example content in square brackets.

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- take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team
- compare their performances with previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best

### Swimming and water safety

All schools must provide swimming instruction either in key stage 1 or key stage 2.

In particular, pupils should be taught to:

- swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres
- use a range of strokes effectively [for example, front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke]
- perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations

#### Box 1: Swimming in the school curriculum

The 2015 Sport Strategy, *Sporting Future*, stated that a working group would be established in early 2016 to advise on how to ensure that no child leaves school unable to meet a minimum capability in swimming. The [report](#) of the Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Review Group was published in July 2017. It stated that almost a third (31 per cent) of Year 6 pupils finish primary schools without being able to swim and without basic water safety skills. The report made 16 recommendations for Government, the education sector and the leisure industry aimed at ensuring that “all children leave primary school with an appropriate level of swimming and water safety ability.”<sup>4</sup> In the second annual report on its Sport Strategy, published in January 2018, the Government stated that it had set up a cross-Government implementation group to review and implement the report’s recommendations.<sup>5</sup>

On 26 October 2018, the DfE announced that primary schools would be given extra support to ensure all children reached the expected swimming standard by the end of primary schooling.<sup>6</sup> The support included encouragement for schools to use the PE and Sport Premium for extra lessons for children who hadn’t met the expected level after core swimming lessons; extra training for teachers provided by Swim England; extra guidance, also provided by Swim England; and a drive to boost partnerships with independent schools.

### Key stage 3 [ages 11-14]

[...]

Pupils should be taught to:

- use a range of tactics and strategies to overcome opponents in direct competition through team and individual games [for example, badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders, rugby and tennis]
- develop their technique and improve their performance in other competitive sports [for example, athletics and gymnastics]
- perform dances using advanced dance techniques in a range of dance styles and forms
- take part in outdoor and adventurous activities which present intellectual and physical challenges and be encouraged to

<sup>4</sup> [Swim Group report to improve swimming and water safety in schools](#), Swim England, 24 July 2017.

<sup>5</sup> HM Government, *Sporting Future: Second Annual Report*, January 2018, p10.

<sup>6</sup> Department for Education, [‘Drive to ensure all children can swim by end of primary school’](#), 25 October 2018.

work in a team, building on trust and developing skills to solve problems, either individually or as a group

- analyse their performances compared to previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best
- take part in competitive sports and activities outside school through community links or sports clubs

**Key stage 4 [ages 14-16]**

[...]

Pupils should be taught to:

- use and develop a variety of tactics and strategies to overcome opponents in team and individual games [for example, badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders, rugby and tennis]
- develop their technique and improve their performance in other competitive sports [for example, athletics and gymnastics] or other physical activities [for example, dance]
- take part in further outdoor and adventurous activities in a range of environments which present intellectual and physical challenges and which encourage pupils to work in a team, building on trust and developing skills to solve problems, either individually or as a group
- evaluate their performances compared to previous ones and demonstrate improvement across a range of physical activities to achieve their personal best

- continue to take part regularly in competitive sports and activities outside school through community links or sports clubs.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Time spent teaching physical education

The *Education Act 2002* prohibits the Secretary of State for Education from prescribing the amount of time to be spent on any curriculum subject, including PE.<sup>8</sup> The Government also does not set a target for how much curriculum time schools must dedicate to PE.<sup>9</sup>

### Box 2: Two-hour target

The former Labour Government's Physical Education and Sport Strategy aimed to increase the percentage of school children in England participating in two hours a week of PE.<sup>10</sup> In October 2010, the Coalition Government ended the requirements of the strategy, including the requirement for schools to report how much time was being spent on PE. The then Secretary of State said, however, that he expected "every school to want to maintain, as a minimum, the current levels of provision for PE and sport each week for every pupil."<sup>11</sup> In a February 2013 report, Ofsted recommended that primary schools should spend at least two hours a week on core PE.<sup>12</sup>

In November 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) published a research report on the use of the PE and Sport Premium (see section 2.1 below). The report stated that the median time primary schools reported spending on curricular PE remained constant at two hours between 2012-13 and 2014-15. The mean increased from 109 minutes in 2012-13 to 124 minutes in 2013-14, before falling to 118 minutes in 2014-15.<sup>13</sup>

The annual School Workforce Census records the number of hours taught by qualified teachers in individual subjects in a typical week in state-funded secondary schools. In a typical week in November 2017, 282,200 hours of physical education was taught, a reduction from 333,800 in November 2010.<sup>14</sup>

## 1.3 Ofsted report on physical activity in schools

In July 2018, Ofsted published a [report](#) on obesity, healthy eating and physical activity in primary schools. The report highlighted the things that schools can do to help tackle childhood obesity, including "providing ample opportunity for children to take physical exercise during the school day – with lots of opportunities to 'get out of breath.'" The report cautioned,

<sup>7</sup> Department for Education, [National curriculum in England: physical education programmes of study](#), September 2013.

<sup>8</sup> [HC Deb 15 July 2013 c 518W](#); *Education Act 2002*, section 87(4).

<sup>9</sup> [PQ 68370](#), 27 March 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Department for Education and Skills and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [Learning through PE and Sport](#), March 2003, p2.

<sup>11</sup> Department for Education, [Refocusing sport in schools to build a lasting legacy of the 2012 Games](#), press release, 20 October 2010. See also, [The Department comments on school sport target](#), Department for Education, 8 August 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Ofsted, [Beyond 2012 – outstanding physical education for all](#), February 2013, p8.

<sup>13</sup> Department for Education, [The PE and sport premium: an investigation in primary schools: Research report](#), November 2015, p53.

<sup>14</sup> Department for Education, *School Workforce in England*, November 2010 and November 2017. Also see: [PQ169642](#), 11 September 2018.

however, that, while the contribution of schools is important, they cannot alone have a direct and measurable impact on children's weight.<sup>15</sup>

Regarding physical activity in schools, the report's findings included:

- 69% of the 60 schools visited as part of the research had two or more hours of PE in the timetable each week.
- Many schools also organised additional activities at the whole-school level; 13 schools, for example, organised a 'daily mile'.
- Parents surveyed as part of the research wanted to see more time for PE in the curriculum.
- Extra-curricular activities can be a good way to broaden the opportunities for children to exercise but a quarter of parents said that their child could not access all the activities they wanted.<sup>16</sup>

### Box 3: Single-sex sport in schools

Department for Education guidance on gender separation in mixed schools states that schools should not generally separate pupils by sex. It explains, however, that section 195 of the *Equality Act 2010* contains an exception, which permits single-sex sports. The guidance also makes clear that, where separate teams exist for different sexes it would be unlawful for a school to treat one group less favourably – for example, by providing a boys' team with better resources than the girls' team.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ofsted, [Obesity, healthy eating and physical activity in primary schools](#), July 2018, p3.

<sup>16</sup> [Schools not 'silver bullet' to tackling childhood obesity](#), Ofsted. 18 July 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education, [Gender separation in mixed schools: Non-statutory guidance](#), June 2018, pp4-6.

## 2. Funding for School Sport

Funding for school sport and PE forms part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is not broken down by subject or curriculum area. Additional funding is also provided through separate dedicated grants outside of the DSG.

### 2.1 The PE and Sport Premium

Since 2013, annual ring-fenced funding has been provided to primary schools through the Primary PE and Sport Premium.<sup>18</sup> The Government has committed to continue providing the funding until 2020.<sup>19</sup>

DfE [guidance](#) provides information on how schools should use PE and Sport Premium funding and how they are held to account for its use. This states that schools must use the funding “to make additional and sustainable improvements to the quality of PE and sport [they] offer.” It should not be used to employ coaches or specialist teachers to cover planning preparation and assessment arrangement, or to teach the minimum requirement of the National Curriculum.

Ofsted assesses how schools use the PE and Sport Premium as part of the inspection process. Schools must also publish details of how they use the funding on their websites, along with the impact it has had on pupils’ PE and sport participation and attainment. The DfE has stated that it intends to sample a number of schools in each local authority and is considering what use it may make of this and other sources of information “in making an assessment of the use and impact of the premium”.<sup>20</sup>

From the 2017-18 academic year schools have additionally been required to publish how year 6 pupils are meeting the National Curriculum requirements relating to swimming.<sup>21</sup> This was in response to recommendations of a [report](#) published by the Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Review Group, which was set up following the publication of the 2015 sport strategy (see section 5.3 below).<sup>22</sup>

#### Increase in funding

Up to 2016-17, the PE and Sport Premium was worth around £160 million per year. In 2016-17, £160.6 million was allocated to schools on the following basis:

- Schools with 16 or fewer eligible pupils received £500 per pupil.
- Schools with 17 or more eligible pupils received £8,000 and an additional payment of £5 per pupil.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> [Primary school sport funding](#), Department for Education, 17 April 2013. [PQ57086](#), 19 December 2016.

<sup>19</sup> [PQ 1993](#), 17 June 2015.

<sup>20</sup> [PQ HL7643](#), 22 May 2018.

<sup>21</sup> [PE and sport premium for primary schools](#), Gov.uk, 24 October 2017.

<sup>22</sup> [Swim Group report to improve swimming and water safety in schools](#), Swim England, 24 July 2017.

<sup>23</sup> [PE and sport premium for primary schools](#), Gov.uk, last updated 21 September 2016.

The March 2016 Budget announced that revenue from the soft drinks industry levy (see section 2.2 below) would be used to “double the primary school PE and sport premium from £160 million per year to £320 million per year from September 2017.”<sup>24</sup> Responding to a debate in January 2017, the Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb, stated that the funding will continue to be ring-fenced and is “committed to 2020.”<sup>25</sup>

Following this budget increase, in 2017-18 schools were allocated funding on the following basis:

- Schools with 16 or fewer eligible pupils received £1000 per pupil.
- Schools with 17 or more eligible pupils received £16,000 and an additional payment of £10 per pupil.<sup>26</sup>

Details of the allocations made to individual schools for 2018-19 are available online: [PE and sport premium: 2018 to 2019](#).

### Department for Education research report

In November 2015, the Department for Education published the final research report of a two-year study to investigate the use of the PE and Sport Premium and its impact on provision. The report, which was based on interviews and qualitative case studies, found:

- The most common uses for the premium were:
  - to up skill and train existing staff;
  - buy new equipment;
  - Provide extra-curricular activities; and
  - employ new sports coaches.
- Since the introduction of the premium, the majority of schools:
  - had introduced new sports;
  - perceived the quality and range of equipment to have increased;
  - reported that participation in inter and intra-school competitions had increased; and
  - reported that the quality of PE teaching had increased.
- The majority of schools used some form of targeting of their premium funds, with the least active and the most disadvantaged the most commonly targeted groups.
- A large proportion of schools reported that the premium had a positive impact on pupil fitness (99%), engagement in PE (84%), skills (98%) and behaviour (96%).
- Risks identified by schools were that:
  - some provision may be lost if funding is ended;

<sup>24</sup> HM Treasury, [Budget 2016](#), HC901, March 2016, p33. £100 million is contributed to the premium by the DfE each year, with the Department of Health contributing £60 million. The remainder is then made up from revenue from the soft drinks industry levy ([PQ 116264](#), 1 December 2017).

<sup>25</sup> [HC Deb 10 January 2017, cc53-4WH](#).

<sup>26</sup> [PE and sport premium for primary schools](#), Gov.uk, last updated 9 May 2019.

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- the long-term impacts may be limited if secondary provision in the local area is poor; and
- staff turnover in smaller schools has the potential to limit the long-term benefits of investing in continuous professional development for teachers.<sup>27</sup>

The report concluded that schools welcomed the introduction of the PE and Sport Premium and that it had “provided new opportunities to increase the quality of PE and sport provision in primary schools.” The report further stated

The premium has enabled schools to enhance both the quality and range of PE teaching and sports provision. As a result of this investment, schools reported a range of positive impacts on pupils including increased pupil engagement and participation in PE and sports as well as impacts on social and inter-personal skills, behaviour, and PE skills and fitness. Schools also perceived positive impacts on the skills and confidence of teachers to deliver PE.

The findings of this study have also highlighted challenges for the future of PE and sport in primary schools. To sustain the impact of the premium, schools have used it to invest in training for existing staff. However, a question remains over how to maintain this investment in CPD for new teachers entering the profession, once premium funding ends. Schools also raised issues related to sourcing good quality provision in their local area, and may need further support to robustly assess the quality of the provision available. The survey also found that monitoring and evaluation of the premium was not consistent and schools may require further advice and guidance to support them to first assess impacts and then put in place strategies for continuing quality improvement.<sup>28</sup>

### Ofsted survey report

In October 2014, Ofsted published a report on the use of the PE and Sport Premium based on evidence from visits by inspectors to 22 primary schools known to be performing well in PE.

The report stated that in the majority of the 22 schools visited, head teachers were using the additional funding to make improvements to PE and sport for pupils, with the result that pupils were generally being provided with better quality PE teaching. The employment of sports coaches or specialist teachers, and the extension of extra-curricular sports activities, were found to be the most common uses of the funding. Providing staff with professional development was also found to be popular.

The report stated that the majority of headteachers felt that there was a lack of guidance on how the new funding should be used when it was first allocated, meaning that they did not initially feel confident to use it effectively. Poor strategic planning and a lack of rigorous monitoring of the impact of actions were reported to be common weaknesses.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Department for Education, [The PE and sport premium: an investigation in primary schools: Research report](#), November 2015, pp12-14.

<sup>28</sup> As above, p14.

<sup>29</sup> Ofsted, [The PE and sport premium for primary schools: Good practice to maximise effective use of funding](#), October 2014, pp7-8.

The report made a number of recommendations for schools, including to improve the measurement and evaluation of the impact that the premium is having. It also recommended that the Government should:

...provide further advice to schools about how to engage with health agencies and parents to promote pupils' health and well-being, especially concerning those pupils who are overweight or obese.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.2 Soft drinks industry levy funding

In addition to increasing funding for the Primary PE and Sport Premium (see section 2.1 above), Budget 2016 announced that revenue from the soft drinks industry levy would, among other things, also be used to:

Provide up to £285 million a year to give 25% of secondary schools increased opportunity to extend their school day to offer a wider range of activities for pupils, including more sport.<sup>31</sup>

### Healthy pupils capital fund (HPCF)

On 28 February 2017, the DfE announced that £415 million of funding from the soft drinks industry levy would be allocated to schools in 2018-19 to “pay for facilities to support physical education, after-school activities and healthy eating.” It added that schools would be able to use the funding – referred to as the healthy pupils capital fund (HPCF) – to “improve facilities for children with physical conditions or support young people struggling with mental health issues.”<sup>32</sup>

A *Schools Week* article on 1 March 2017 stated that funding originally planned for extending the school day in secondary schools, as announced in the 2016 March Budget, would instead be used for the HPCF.<sup>33</sup> The Government’s announcement on the HPCF stated that the funding “built on” plans for schools to provide a longer school day:

The healthy pupils capital programme will build on the government’s plans for schools to provide a longer school day by changing the focus of the scheme to provide new facilities or improve existing ones to make it easier for a range of extra-curricular activities to be provided.<sup>34</sup>

### Reduction of funding for HPCF

On 17 July 2017, the Education Secretary announced an additional £1.3 billion for the core schools budget across 2018-19 and 2019-20, which would, she said, be “funded in full from efficiencies and savings that I have

<sup>30</sup> Ofsted, [The PE and sport premium for primary schools: Good practice to maximise effective use of funding](#), October 2014, pp7-8.

<sup>31</sup> HM Treasury, [Budget 2016](#), HC901, March 2016, p33. The Budget also stated that revenue from the levy would also be used to “provide £10 million funding a year to expand breakfast clubs in up to 1,600 schools starting from September 2017.” More information on the funding for breakfast clubs (which was increased to £26 million) was announced by the Government in March 2018: [Funding boost to give more children healthy start to the day](#). Also see [PQ162146](#), 17 July 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Department for Education, [New funding to boost schools facilities and healthy lifestyles](#), 28 February 2017.

<sup>33</sup> [Government scraps longer school day pledge](#), *Schools Week*, 1 March 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Department for Education, [New funding to boost schools facilities and healthy lifestyles](#), 28 February 2017.

identified in my Department's budget." She went on to explain that "efficiencies and savings" from the Department's capital budget would release £420 million, £315 million of which would come from the money originally committed for the HPCF:

Efficiencies and savings across our main capital budget can, I believe, release £420 million. The majority of this will be from healthy pupils capital funding, from which we can make savings of £315 million. This reflects reductions in forecast revenue from the soft drinks industry levy. I will be able to channel the planned budget, which remains in place, to frontline schools, while meeting our commitment that every single pound of England's share of spending from the levy will continue to be invested in improving children's health; that includes £100 million in 2018-19 for healthy pupils capital.<sup>35</sup>

A subsequent response to a parliamentary question confirmed that £100 million would be invested in the HPCF in 2018-19, with the funding for one year only.<sup>36</sup> The funding for the PE and Sports Premium and breakfast clubs announced at the 2016 Budget remains unchanged.<sup>37</sup>

### HPCF allocations

The HPCF has been allocated through the current arrangements for schools' capital funding. Single and small academy trusts and sixth form colleges were able to bid for funding through the Condition Improvement Fund, with [guidance](#) published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency stating that the HPCF "is intended to improve children's and young people's physical and mental health by enhancing access to facilities for physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and wellbeing and medical conditions, such as kitchens, dining facilities, changing rooms, playgrounds and sports facilities."<sup>38</sup> In March 2018 the Education and Skills Funding Agency [published](#) the list of schools who had successfully bid for funding from the Condition Improvement Fund. £38 million will be provided for specific projects supported by the HPCF in 2018-19.<sup>39</sup>

Local authorities, large multi-academy trusts and other bodies are not eligible to bid for the Condition Improvement Fund and instead receive School Condition Allocations (SCA). They received a direct allocation from the HPCF in addition to their normal SCA for 2018-19.<sup>40</sup> School Condition Allocations for 2018-19 were [published](#) in March 2018.<sup>41</sup>

### Essential Life Skills Programme

In addition to the doubling of the PE and Sport Premium and the HPCF, £22 million of revenue from the soft drinks industry levy is being invested in an Essential Life Skills programme in the 12 Opportunity Areas. The

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<sup>35</sup> HC Deb 17 July 2017, [cc563-66](#).

<sup>36</sup> [PQ 107301](#), 18 October 2017.

<sup>37</sup> [PQ 3745](#), 24 July 2017; [HC Deb 17 July 2017, c564](#).

<sup>38</sup> Education and Skills Funding Agency, [Condition Improvement Fund](#), last updated 14 December 2017.

<sup>39</sup> [Condition Improvement Fund: 2018 to 2019 outcome](#), Education and Skills Funding Agency, March 2018.

<sup>40</sup> [PQ 118920](#), 19 December 2017.

<sup>41</sup> [School capital funding allocations](#), Education and Skills Funding Agency, March 2018.

programme is aimed at enabling disadvantaged children to participate in regular extra-curricular activities, including sporting activities.<sup>42</sup>

## 2.3 Primary School Sports Facilities Fund

The Autumn Statement 2013 announced a new lottery-funded scheme to improve sports facilities in primary schools:

Sport England will launch a £18 million Lottery-funded scheme Primary School Sports Facilities Fund from 2014 to improve sports facilities in primary schools, to benefit both school children and the wider community.<sup>43</sup>

Sport England's website explained how and where the funding was to be allocated:

The Primary Spaces fund, which will help more schools create sports spaces, is similar to our Inspired Facilities programme. Schools will receive up to £30,000 to spend on a range of specially created packages which can be tailored to meet their needs.

The fund aims to help provide outdoor multi-sport areas which can be used both within the curriculum and out of school hours. As well as helping provide sports facilities, staff and volunteers at the school will receive information on how best to use the new facilities and equipment to help children get active.

Whilst we want to help as many schools as possible, priority is given to those primary schools which currently have little or no outside space which can be used for P.E. or sports sessions.<sup>44</sup>

The fund closed to applications on 24 March 2014 and there are no current plans for further funding rounds.<sup>45</sup> A written ministerial statement of 5 March 2015 outlined progress with the projects:

The Primary Spaces Facilities Fund will enable 601 schools to improve their outdoor facilities and create spaces that will inspire and encourage pupils to take part in play.

Schools were awarded grants up to £30,000. All 601 schools have their projects planned this year; they are being installed in five waves throughout the academic year. Approximately 150 projects have now been completed with children enjoying their newly enhanced outdoor facility.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.4 PE Teacher Release funding in 2011-12 and 2012-13

In December 2010, the Coalition Government announced £65 million of non-ring-fenced funding until 2013 to fund one day a week of secondary school PE teachers' time to be spent out of the classroom encouraging intra and inter-school competition in primary schools.<sup>47</sup> In a letter to schools in

<sup>42</sup> [PQ162146](#), 17 July 2018.

<sup>43</sup> HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2013](#), Cm 8747, December 2013, para 2.164.

<sup>44</sup> [Primary Spaces](#), Sport England, last accessed 4 January 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Primary Spaces FAQs, Sport England, last accessed 21 July 2015.

<sup>46</sup> [HCWS349](#), 5 March 2015.

<sup>47</sup> [New approach for school sports: decentralising power, incentivising competition, trusting teachers](#), Department for Education, 20 December 2010; [HC Deb 20 Dec 2011 537 c1232-3W](#).

May 2011, the Coalition Government provided details of how the funding would be allocated:

All state maintained secondary schools and Academies; middle-deemed secondary schools and special schools (including non-maintained schools; and pupil referral units with secondary aged pupils.

Level of funding: this will be a fixed, flat-rate grant of £7,600 per school, per academic year. (There will be no additional London weighting or 'on costs'.) Schools can choose to use their own budgets to increase the amount of time spent on this role, if they wish.

Funding period: funding will be for two academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13.<sup>48</sup>

#### Box 4: Sport England training for secondary teachers

In September 2018, Sport England announced that it would invest £13.5 million in a teacher training programme, run in partnership with the Teaching Schools Council, to offer free training to 17,000 secondary school PE teachers by 2021.<sup>49</sup> This followed on from a commitment in Sport England's five year strategy, *Towards an Active Nation*, published in May 2016, "offer specialist training to at least two teachers in every secondary school by 2020." The strategy said that the aim of the training would be "to better meet the needs of all children, irrespective of their level of sporting ability, and to involve them in shaping the sporting opportunities that are provided."<sup>50</sup>

The strategy also stated that Sport England would:

- Improve the experience that children get in school through supporting the effective use of Primary PE and Sport Premium funding and its investment in the School Games.
- Help to ensure that there is a good "sports activity offer" before and after the school day by supporting satellite clubs and exploring Government investment into breakfast clubs.
- Recognise the importance of transitions between primary and secondary school (and then to further education and higher education), with an "increased focus on supporting inactive children and students to take up sport and exercise."
- Measure the engagement of children between the ages of 5–14 outside school through questioning parents in the Active Lives survey.<sup>51</sup>

## 2.5 Funding for school sport partnerships

In October 2010, the Coalition Government announced that it was ending the previous administration's PE and Sport Strategy and discontinuing ring-fenced funding for School Sport Partnerships.<sup>52</sup> Originally, the funding was to continue until March 2011 but this was extended to August 2011 following an announcement in December 2010. It was emphasised in the December 2010 announcement that although central Government funding was ending schools could continue, if they wanted, to fund School Sport Partnerships themselves.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> [PE Teacher Release Funding, Letter from DfE](#), 20 May 2011.

<sup>49</sup> [New Teacher Training to Target Attitudes to PE in Schools](#), Sport England, 24 September 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Sport England, *Towards an Active Nation: Strategy 2016-2021*, May 2016, p21.

<sup>51</sup> As above, p21.

<sup>52</sup> [Refocusing sport in schools to build a lasting legacy of the 2012 games](#), Department for Education, 20 October 2010.

<sup>53</sup> [New approach for school sports: decentralising power, incentivising competition, trusting teachers](#), Department for Education, 20 December 2010.

Library Briefing Paper 6052, [School Sport Partnerships](#), provides further information.

### 3. The School Games

On 28 June 2010, the then Culture Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, announced plans for a national Olympic and Paralympic-style sports competition for schools. In the statement, Mr Hunt said he wanted the School Games to “boost” the promotion of competitive sport in schools and that the initiative would be a key part of the 2012 Olympic sporting legacy.

There are four levels of competition within the School Games, which take place over the year and culminate in a national event:

- **L4. National multi-sport event** - the most talented young people in the UK are selected to compete in high-performance venues.
- **L3. School Games Festival** - regional or countywide festivals and competitions are usually held twice a year to find the best performers in the area as a culmination of school sport competition.
- **L2. Inter-school competition** - individuals and teams are selected to represent their schools against other local schools in competitions run by School Games Organisers, with the winning teams progressing to a School Games Festival.
- **L1. Intra-school competition** - sporting competition for all students held within their school, culminating in a School Games Day.<sup>54</sup>

The first competition began in September 2011 with the finals taking place in May 2012 at the Olympic Park.<sup>55</sup> The finals of the [2018 School Games](#) took place at Loughborough University between 30 August and 2 September.

#### Box 5: School Games Mark

The [School Games Mark](#) is a Government led awards scheme aimed at rewarding schools in England for their commitment to and participation in the School Games. Schools in England are able to assess themselves across bronze, silver and gold levels, with external validation of the gold level.

The Sport England website provides further information on how the games are delivered at a national level:

School Games is being delivered through partnerships and the national partnership consists of:

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, who have overall policy leadership, supported by the Department for Education and the Department of Health
- Sport England, who is the Lottery distributor and is supporting the engagement of sports governing bodies and county sports

<sup>54</sup> [School Games](#), Sport England website, last accessed 4 January 2017.

<sup>55</sup> [Olympic-style Sports Competition for Young People launched as part of 2012 Legacy](#) DCMS Press Release 28 June 2010.

partnerships, and is a key partner in shaping the strategic direction of the programme

- The British Paralympic Association, who bring the vision and inspiration of the Paralympics to the Games
- The Youth Sport Trust, who is commissioned by Sport England to provide development support to schools, sports and other local partners. Sport England work closely with the Youth Sport Trust to deliver the School Games at Level 1-3 and also the Level 4 School Games.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.1 School Games Review

In its sport strategy, published in December 2015 (see section 5.1 below), the Government stated that it would, along with Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust, “assess the effectiveness and future priorities of the School Games” before the Level 4 Finals in 2016.<sup>57</sup>

The [report of the School Games Review](#) was published in July 2016. The review concluded that the School Games “is well placed to make a strong contribution” to the Government’s sports strategy and made 17 recommendations aimed at maximising the “value and impact of the School Games.”<sup>58</sup>

The report recommended that the mission and focus of the School Games should be updated to ensure that “it is relevant to more children and young people and their lives today.” An appendix to the report sets out an updated mission, vision and characteristics for the Games.<sup>59</sup>

Other recommendations included:

- updating guidance and training to ensure that “the need to engender a sense of competence; promote enjoyment and avoid negative and bad experience will be embedded across all levels”;
- reducing the cost of the level 4 national finals and reviewing the sports and athletes participating in them;
- increasing the number and diversity of children participating in the School Games;
- strengthening volunteering opportunities across the School Games to enable young people to volunteer after they leave school; and
- widening the criteria for the School Games Mark.<sup>60</sup>

An [update on the review](#) was published in November 2016. This stated that implementation of the recommendations had begun and would be monitored by the School Games Project Board. A brief update concerning each of the 17 recommendations was also provided.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> [School Games](#), Sport England website, last accessed 10 October 2018.

<sup>57</sup> As above, p36.

<sup>58</sup> Sport England, [School Games Review: Executive Summary Report](#), July 2016, p1.

<sup>59</sup> As above, p7.

<sup>60</sup> As above, pp2-6.

<sup>61</sup> Sport England, [School Games Review November 2016 – update](#), November 2016.

## 4. School Playing Fields

Since October 2012, new regulations have applied to the provision of outdoor space by schools. The previous regulations<sup>62</sup> specified a minimum space to sustain team games, depending on the number and age of pupils, while the current regulations state:

Suitable outdoor space must be provided in order to enable—

(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and

(b) pupils to play outside.<sup>63</sup>

### 4.1 Disposal of playing fields

Local authorities and schools must seek the consent of the Secretary of State when seeking to dispose of publicly funded school land, including playing fields.<sup>64</sup> The DfE publishes a list of approved applications at:

[Decisions on the disposal of school land.](#)

Department for Education [guidance on the sale and protection of school land](#) was updated in March 2019.<sup>65</sup> The guidance sets out the relevant legislation and procedure relating to the disposal of school land. Regarding the disposal of school playing fields in particular, the guidance states:

Potential applicants should remember that the Secretary of State wishes to ensure that playing fields continue to be protected. The Department for Education will usually only agree to the sale of school playing fields if the sports and curriculum needs of schools and their neighbouring schools can continue to be met. Sale proceeds must be used to improve sports or education facilities and any new sports facilities must be sustainable for at least 10 years.

The Secretary of State expects applicants to have first investigated and exhausted all other possible sources of funding before considering the sale of school playing fields.<sup>66</sup>

Further information, including the criteria used to assess applications to dispose of playing fields, is provided in non-statutory advice published by the DfE, [Advice about the protection of school playing fields and public land.](#)

The Government's position on the disposal of playing field land was set out by the then-Minister, Lord Nash, in response to a parliamentary question in November 2016:

Local authorities and schools must by law seek consent from the Secretary of State to dispose of playing field land. The department has a strong policy presumption against the disposal of school playing fields and only provides consent to dispose of playing field land if the

<sup>62</sup> [Schedule 2 of The Education \(School Premises\) Regulations 1999](#), SI 1999/2

<sup>63</sup> [The School Premises \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), SI 2012/1943

<sup>64</sup> Department for Education, [Disposal or change of use of playing field and school land](#), May 2015, p7.

<sup>65</sup> [Land and property: Sale and protection of school land](#), Department for Education, 23 January 2014.

<sup>66</sup> As above.

criteria set out in the departmental guidance are met; which includes an expectation that proceeds from sales are reinvested in sports and education facilities. The department publishes a list of department decisions on applications for consent to dispose of school playing field land.

It would neither be practical or desirable to artificially curb the sale of school playing fields, when such disposals may represent the most effective use of public assets. Often changes are made to education provision, such as school closures or mergers, which mean it is no longer necessary to retain playing fields for school use. In such cases it is only right that local communities are able to benefit from space that otherwise would not be used. Converting surplus or unwanted assets to invest in school grounds has benefits that extend far beyond the school gates. No operating school has disposed of its entire playing field.

It is therefore right that schools should continue to determine what is suitable for their individual circumstances; subject to strong statutory protections including the Secretary of State's consent and the application of rigorous criteria for what is best for pupils' education and wider school and community life.<sup>67</sup>

### *The Local Area Referendum (Disposal of School Playing Fields) Bill 2015-16*

On 29 June 2015, Tom Pursglove presented the [Local Area Referendum \(Disposal of School Playing Fields\) Bill 2015-16](#).

The Bill provided for a scheme by which local area referendums could be held on the proposed sale of school playing fields. Under the Bill's provisions, a body proposing to sell playing field land of a publicly funded school would be required to conduct a public consultation on the proposed sale. Following the consultation, if more than a certain threshold of people signed a petition objecting to the sale, then a local referendum would be held. If the referendum decided against the proposed sale, the land would not be able to be offered for sale, except in exceptional circumstances, for 10 years.

The [Bill's Second Reading Debate](#) on 22 January 2016 was adjourned and the Bill did not progress any further before falling at the end of the session.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> [PQHL2535](#), 1 November 2016.

<sup>68</sup> [HC Deb 22 January 2016, cc1739-47](#).

## 5. Government policy and strategies

In a [letter](#) to the Chair of the Youth Sport Trust in October 2010, the then Education Secretary, Michael Gove, announced that the Coalition Government was lifting the requirements of the previous Government's physical education (PE) and Sport Strategy and would end ring-fenced funding for School Sport Partnerships. The letter, along with a further [announcement](#) made in December 2010, outlined the Coalition Government's approach to school sport. This included:

- revising the PE curriculum to place a new emphasis on competitive sports (see section 1.1 above);
- encouraging more competitive sport through the creation of an annual Olympic-style school sport competition (see section 3 above); and
- funding for secondary schools to allow PE teachers to spend one day a week encouraging greater take-up of competitive sport in primary schools (see section 2.4 above).

This section outlines Government strategies relevant to school sport that have been published since the requirements of the former Labour Government's PE and Sport Strategy in 2010.

### 5.1 2012 Youth Sport Strategy

In January 2012, the then Culture Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, announced the publication of a five-year youth and community sport strategy aimed at increasing the number of young people developing sport as a habit for life. Among other things, the strategy aimed to improve the link between schools and local sports clubs, with the objective that by 2017 "every secondary school and many primary schools will have links with at least one local club." The strategy additionally committed funding "to allow schools to open up their sports facilities ... to the public."<sup>69</sup>

### 5.2 Olympic Legacy

In September 2012, the Coalition Government announced a ten point plan as part of a commitment to secure a lasting sporting legacy from the 2012 London Olympic Games.<sup>70</sup> The written ministerial statement announcing the plan referenced the youth sport strategy, the schools games and role of PE in the school curriculum.<sup>71</sup>

#### Update on progress

The written ministerial statement announcing the "10 point sports legacy plan" also included an undertaking to provide quarterly updates to the House on its delivery. In a written ministerial statement on 5 March 2015, Helen Grant, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, provided an [update](#) on progress in delivering the plan, which included information on the Youth Sport

<sup>69</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [Creating a sporting habit for life: A new youth sport strategy](#), January 2012, p4.

<sup>70</sup> [HC WMS 18 Sep 2012 c 36WS](#).

<sup>71</sup> As above.

Strategy, the School Games, the PE and Sport Premium and the Primary Spaces Facilities Fund.<sup>72</sup>

Further information on Government efforts to secure a sporting legacy from the 2012 London Olympics is available in Library Briefing Paper 4868, [London Olympics 2012: a sporting legacy?](#)

### 5.3 2015 Sport Strategy

During an Opposition day debate on sport and the 2012 Olympics legacy in June 2015, John Whittingdale, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, stated that the Government would “review our sports strategy and look to adopt a fresh approach to seeing what more we can do to increase participation.”<sup>73</sup>

A [consultation](#) on a new sport strategy was published on 31 July 2015. It set out the following areas the Government wanted to address:

- a. How to make sure that the impact of the PE and Sport Premium is sustainable over the long term – in terms of both:
  - i. improved provision in primary schools
  - ii. continued participation and engagement of current primary school pupils as they progress through to secondary level
- b. How to encourage young people to be active, and the role that schools can play in supporting this;
- c. How to continue to make the School Games relevant both in encouraging competitive sport and as part of the talent pathway;
- d. How to make the sporting offer for children and young people outside of school and school hours as attractive and accessible as possible;
- e. How we can encourage sport participation in further and higher education;
- f. How to ensure that schools, community sports clubs, central government and its agencies work together as effectively as possible to maximise opportunities for young people to take part in sport and be physically active.<sup>74</sup>

#### The Strategy

The consultation closed on 2 October 2015 and the new sport strategy, [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#), was published in December 2015. The strategy stated that the Government was “redefining what success looks like in sport by concentrating on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.”<sup>75</sup>

Regarding school sport, the strategy emphasised the importance of linking together the different stages of education and seeing them “as part of the

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<sup>72</sup> [HCWS349, 5 March 2015.](#)

<sup>73</sup> [HC Deb 24 June 2015 c978.](#)

<sup>74</sup> DCMS, [A New Strategy for Sport: Consultation Paper](#), August 2015, p20.

<sup>75</sup> HM Government, [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#), December 2015, p10.

wider ‘taking part’ strategy”.<sup>76</sup> The strategy also contained a number of Government commitments relating to school sport:

- A working group would be established in early 2016 to advise on how to ensure that no child leaves school unable to meet a minimum capability in swimming (see box 1 above).<sup>77</sup>
- The Primary PE and Sport Premium will be continued.<sup>78</sup>
- The Government will “seek to better understand the barriers and issues around the drop-off in engagement from primary to secondary as well as identify good practice, particularly for those groups who are most affected, such as girls.”<sup>79</sup>
- The Government, along with Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust will “assess the effectiveness and future priorities of the School Games”. This will take place before the Level 4 Finals in 2016.<sup>80</sup> See section 3.1 above for information about the review.

The strategy announced that the remit of Sport England would be extended so that it becomes responsible for sport outside school from age 5, rather than 14. In addition, the Active People Survey, which Sport England uses to measure participation in sport and physical activity, will be replaced with a new Active Lives Survey. The strategy stated the Government would consult with Sport England and other stakeholders in the first half of 2016 to develop “the most appropriate extension of the Active Lives method for measuring children’s engagement in sport and physical activity.”<sup>81</sup>

The strategy set out a number of key performance indicators for each output. These included, but were not limited to:

- KPI 2b - Percentage of children (5-15) physically inactive
- KPI 3b - Percentage of children (5-15) taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last month
- KPI 5 – Increase in the percentage of children achieving physical literacy standards.
- KPI 6 – Increase in the percentage of children achieving swimming proficiency.
- KPI 8 – Increase in the percentage of young people (11-18) with a positive attitude towards sport and being active.<sup>82</sup>

## First annual report on the strategy

The first [annual report](#) on the sport strategy was published in February 2017.<sup>83</sup> As well as outlining the increased funding for the PE and Sport Premium, and the review of the School Games, the report stated that “sport in secondary schools will also benefit from Sport England’s

<sup>76</sup> HM Government, [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#), December 2015, p32.

<sup>77</sup> As above, p33.

<sup>78</sup> As above, p35.

<sup>79</sup> As above.

<sup>80</sup> As above, p36.

<sup>81</sup> As above, p33.

<sup>82</sup> As above, p78.

<sup>83</sup> HM Government, [Sporting Future: First Annual Report](#), February 2017.

commitment to offer specialist training for at least two teachers in every secondary school by 2020.”<sup>84</sup> It also said that:

- To extend the Active Lives survey to 5-15 year olds, Sport England was “developing a system to measure how children engage with sport and physical activity”, with data collection intended to start in autumn 2017.<sup>85</sup>
- The first data from the Active Lives survey relating to the four KPIs cited above are expected to be published in the 2019 annual report.<sup>86</sup>
- The working group had been set up “to explore ways to ensure that no child leaves school unable to meet a minimum standard of swimming.” The [report](#) of the Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Review Group was published in July 2017 (see box 1 above).

### Second annual report on the strategy

The second annual report on the sport strategy was published in January 2018. As well as outlining the funding for the PE and sport premium and the HPCF, this stated that:

- The [Active Lives: Children and Young People survey](#) was launched in September 2017 and the first set of baseline data will be available in January 2019.
- The Government has set up an implementation group to review and implement the recommendations of the Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Review Group’s report (see box 1 above).<sup>87</sup>

## 5.4 2016 Childhood obesity action plan

In August 2016 the Government published [Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action](#), with the aim of significantly reducing the rate of childhood obesity in England within the next 10 years.

The action plan highlighted the health benefits of physical activity and cited evidence of a link between improved academic performance, and physical activity and participation in organised sports. It stated that every primary school child should “get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day”, with at least 30 minutes delivered in school and the remaining 30 minutes supported by parents outside of school time. A new online tool will be made available that will help schools plan at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day.

#### **Box 6: Public Health England Guidance on increasing physical activity in schools**

In October 2015, Public Health England published [advice for schools](#) on what works in schools and colleges to increase physical activity. The advice includes practice examples and also highlights links to Ofsted inspection criteria and useful sources of support.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> HM Government, [Sporting Future: First Annual Report](#), February 2017, p17.

<sup>85</sup> As above, p16.

<sup>86</sup> As above.

<sup>87</sup> HM Government, [Sporting Future: Second Annual Report](#), January 2018, p10.

<sup>88</sup> Public Health England, [What Works in Schools and Colleges to Increase Physical Activity?](#), October 2015.

With regards to physical activity and sport in schools, the action plan also said:

- Public Health England will develop advice to schools for 2017-18 on how they can “work with the school nurses, health centres, healthy weight teams in local authorities and other resources, to help children develop a healthier lifestyle.”
- County Sports Partnerships have been asked to work with other providers, including National Governing Bodies of sport, “to ensure that from September 2017, every primary school in England has access to a co-ordinated offer of high quality sport and physical activity programmes, both local and national.”
- A new healthy rating scheme for primary schools will be introduced from September 2017, which physical activity will be a key part of. In August 2017, the Association for Physical Education [announced](#) that the launch of the rating system had been delayed as a result of the general election.<sup>89</sup>

### Plan of action: chapter 2

In June 2018 the Government published chapter two of its childhood obesity action plan. Among other things, the plan announced that the Government would “review how the least active children are being engaged in physical activity in and around the school day.” The review, it added, will also “consider how the Primary and PE and Sport Premium is being used.”

The action plan also set out a “national ambition” for every primary school to adopt an active mile initiative, such as the Daily Mile. Such initiatives can, the plan states, be a simple means of contributing to the recommendation that schools should deliver at least 30 minutes of the total recommended 60 daily minutes of physical activity for children. The Government will review how the PE and Sport Premium can be used to support the ambition.<sup>90</sup>

## 5.5 School Sport Action Plan

In October 2018, the Education Secretary announced that the Government would develop a cross-government school sport and activity action plan that “will consider ways to ensure that all children have access to quality, protected PE and sport sessions during the school week and opportunities to be physically active throughout the school day.”

The announcement stated that:

- Government departments will review what steps can be taken “to support schools to train teachers to deliver high quality provision in school and ensure that every child can participate in the sport and physical activity that is right for them.”
- Ministers will be with National Governing Bodies and sporting associations “to ensure that school sport platforms offer our young people the best opportunities to compete.”

<sup>89</sup> [Healthy Schools Rating Scheme Update](#), Association for Physical Education, 11 August 2017.

<sup>90</sup> HM Government, [Childhood obesity: a plan for action: Chapter 2](#), June 2018, pp27-8.

The plan is expected to be launched in spring 2019 and to be informed by data from the Active Lives Children Survey (see section 5.3 above).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> [New education and skills measures announced](#), Department for Education, 2 October 2018.

## 6. Surveys and reports

This section provides brief information about a number of surveys and reports on school sport.

### 6.1 Taking Part Survey, August 2018

Taking Part is a household survey in England which has been running since 2005 and looks at participation in the cultural and sporting sectors.

Statistical releases from Taking Part are available at: [Taking Part: statistical releases](#).

In August 2018, the annual data on child participation was published for the year ending March 2018. The key findings concerning participation in school sport included that in 2017-18:

- 90.9% of 11-15 year olds had taken part in sport in school lessons and/or outside school in the four weeks prior to interview. The report noted that this was “significantly less than in 2016/17 (94.0%).”
- 67.8% of 5-15 year olds had participated in competitive sport in school in the last 12 months. The equivalent figure for 2011-12 was 76.9%.
- The proportion of 5-10 year olds who had played sport in their school in organised competitions (e.g. school sports day) fell from 62.4% in 2016-17 to 55.6% in 2017-18.
- Participation rates for 11-15 year olds for various competitive sporting activities were similar to those in 2016-17.<sup>92</sup>

### 6.2 Youth Sport Trust’s Class of 2035 report, June 2015

In June 2015, the Youth Sport Trust published a report it commissioned from the Future Foundation: [The Class of 2035: Promoting a brighter and more active future for the youth of tomorrow](#). The report examined the current state of PE and sport in the UK before looking to the future and outlining four possible scenarios for what PE and sport may look like in 2035.

On the current state of PE and sport, the report’s findings included:

- 75% of young people say they enjoy PE lessons in school
- 23% of young people think playing a computer game with friends is a form of exercise
- Young people who described themselves as 'always happy' are twice as likely to take part in two or more hours of physical activity per day, and three times as likely to be a member of a school sports club
- Over 40% of young people would like to do more exercise.<sup>93</sup>

Regarding the future, the report concluded that of the four possible scenarios outlined for 2035, the most likely (“the digitally distracted

<sup>92</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Taking Part 2017/18: annual child release](#), August 2018, pp12-14.

<sup>93</sup> [“Young people at risk of becoming ‘hostages to handheld devices’ warns Youth Sport Trust”](#), Youth Sport Trust, 23 June 2015.

generation”) was not the most nor the least desirable. The report outlined a number of actions that it believed necessary in order to achieve the most desirable scenario (“the fit-for-purpose generation”). The recommended actions included:

- Better alignment between schools and sports clubs
- Active promotion of physical literacy to both parents and pupils
- A longer-term approach to policy development
- Putting technology at the forefront of future sport engagement strategies
- Better recognition in the school curriculum of the broader benefits of sport.<sup>94</sup>

A full list of recommendations is provided on pages 41-43 of the report.

### 6.3 Youth Sport Trust’s PE, School Sport and Physical Activity Survey Report, January 2015

In January 2015, the Youth Sport Trust published the findings of its PE, school sport and physical activity survey, which was carried out in June and July 2014.

The report stated that some of the survey’s findings were “extremely encouraging”, including that 97% of primary schools and 85% of secondary schools surveyed actively encouraged physical activity as part of the school day”. In addition, the majority of schools surveyed recognised “the positive role sport can play in helping change the lives of young people”.<sup>95</sup>

Whilst noting that the results of its survey could not be directly compared against the last PE and School Sport Survey, conducted in 2009/10, the report stated that the data suggested a decline in certain areas since 2009/10, including in the average minutes of PE offered to pupils per week:

- The average number of minutes spent taking part in PE in a typical week was found to be 102 for Key Stage 1 and 114 for Key Stage 2 in the 2013/14 survey. However, respondents to a similar question in the 2009/10 survey indicated higher values of 126 minutes in Year 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) and 127 minutes in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Key Stage 2).<sup>96</sup>

When asked what they considered to be most important in ensuring high quality PE and sport, the top three factors highlighted by the schools surveyed were:

- Continued investment in primary sport provision (82%)
- Infrastructure or support for schools to work together (51%)
- Continued investment in the Sainsbury’s School Games (45%).<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Future Foundation, [The Class of 2035: Promoting a brighter and more active future for the youth of tomorrow](#), June 2015, pp38-43.

<sup>95</sup> Youth Sport Trust, [YST National PE, School Sport and Physical Activity Survey Report](#), January 2015, p3.

<sup>96</sup> Youth Sport Trust, [YST National PE, School Sport and Physical Activity Survey Report](#), January 2015, p3.

<sup>97</sup> As above.

## 6.4 Ofsted's report on excellence in competitive school sport, June 2014

This report was produced in the context of the 2012 Olympics and the “high proportion of English competitors who had been educated in independent schools.” External research was commissioned into the educational background of people participating in elite sport and the “relative success of independent and state schools in a range of sporting completions.” Ofsted also conducted visits to independent and state schools and surveyed headteachers and young people about their views in competitive school sport.

The report found that:

- Independent schools produce proportionally more elite athletes and have greater success in sporting competitions than state funded schools.
- At independent schools with a track record of producing sporting excellence, “competitive sport is part of a wider and established culture that promotes individual academic and sporting excellence.” The expectations placed on students and staff to participate in competitive sport is also “crucial in delivering success.”
- At the state-funded schools visited the “picture was very mixed.” Some schools were matching the success seen in the best independent schools, but in many “the quality of competitive sport was average at best and in a significant number it was weak.”
- Surveys suggested that competitive sport remains optional in the vast majority of state schools.
- At state schools where competitive sport flourished it was valued by headteachers and governors and used to build school culture and ethos. The schools also invested in specialist teachers and coaches and build links with local sports clubs.
- In “too many” of the state schools visited students had few opportunities to excel in competitive sport because it was not seen as a priority and was undervalued by school leaders.
- Some state schools “take full advantage” of the opportunities offered by the School Games, “but not enough do.”<sup>98</sup>

## 6.5 Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Olympic and Paralympic Legacy, November 2013

The Select Committee on Olympic and Paralympic Legacy published [Keeping the flame alive: the Olympic and Paralympic Legacy](#) in November 2013.

The summary stated that physical education needed a greater emphasis in the school day:

The interaction between sports clubs and schools, as well as wider social infrastructure, is key to establishing life-long patterns of physical activity. We support the findings of a recent study by

<sup>98</sup> Ofsted, [Going the extra mile: Excellence in competitive school sport](#), June 2014, pp5-7.

Baroness Grey-Thompson on sport in schools in Wales<sup>99</sup> and believe the principles underlying her findings should be applied throughout the United Kingdom.

In particular, PE needs a greater emphasis in the school day and that teachers, particularly in primary schools, need the training and skills to teach PE if we are to achieve meaningful progress. Improving PE is fundamental—where it starts and ends—and we call on the DfE and Ofsted to take more active roles in making this change happen.<sup>100</sup>

The report's conclusions and recommendations on school age sport included:

- School Sport Partnerships were not universally successful but did provide a shared infrastructure which should be maintained.
- Ofsted should include time spent on PE in school inspections to ensure development of teachers and coaches and there should be a review of initial training for PE teachers.
- There should be cooperation between schools in developing and sharing facilities and Ofsted should monitor use of the Sport Premium to ensure this.
- Competition between schools and school age competition should be developed and expanded to include children with a limiting disability; however participation must be widened to include the greatest number of children by including other forms of physical activity.<sup>101</sup>

In February 2014 the Government and the Mayor of London published a [response](#) to the Committee's report. The report and the Government's response were debated in the House of Lords on 18 March 2014.

Responding to the debate on behalf of the Government, Lord Bates said:

Let me try to deal with the point relating to school sport, as that is something that all noble Lords talked about. The government are trying to focus attention on primary school teachers and club coaches through investment in primary schools, with £150 million a year for primary school sport for two years from September 2013. Many schools are using the funds to invest in professional development—which is exactly what my noble friend Lord Moynihan urged us to do—and to encourage high-quality coaches. Sport England is also investing more than £400 million in the 46 governing bodies to deliver whole-sport plans. The National College for Teaching and Leadership has already developed a new specialist primary PE course for trainee teachers.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group, [Physical Literacy - an all Wales approach to increasing levels of physical activity for children and young people, The Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group](#), June 2013.

<sup>100</sup> Committee on Olympic and Paralympic Legacy, [Keeping the flame alive: the Olympic and Paralympic Legacy](#), HL 78 2013-14, summary.

<sup>101</sup> As above, pp9-10.

<sup>102</sup> [HL Deb 19 March 2014 c267](#)

## 6.6 Education Committee report on school sport, July 2013

In July 2013, the Education Committee published its report, [School sport following London 2012: No more political football](#).

The report noted the importance of school sport in improving outcomes in education, health and society, and in developing a lifelong sporting habit. Its summary reported a consensus around primary school as the correct focus for Government investment in school sport, and noted that the Government's emphasis on competitive sport brought with it many benefits. The summary also raised a number of concerns, including:

- The problems an overemphasis on competitive sport can cause
- The short-term approach of successive governments to school sport
- Staff training and the accountability of schools for the use of the primary sport premium.<sup>103</sup>

The Committee's press notice highlighted the following conclusions and recommendations from the report:

The report:

- Recommends that the Government sets out a plan for the sustained support and development of its school sports policy.
- Recommends that the Government devises a new strategy for school sports that builds on the many strengths of the school sport partnership model.
- Recommends that the Department for Education does more work to make its guidance on the effective use of the primary sport premium as practical and useable as possible.
- Concludes that on its own, the primary sport premium is inadequate.
- Concludes that further action is needed to ensure that the 2012 legacy in schools benefits all children and lasts beyond the two years of the primary sports premium.
- Recommends that further accountability measures are needed to ensure that schools are delivering high quality sport for their pupils.<sup>104</sup>

The [Government's response](#) was published in October 2013.<sup>105</sup> On the accountability of schools for how they use funding for PE and sport, the response said:

Sustainability and accountability are also addressed through the broader elements of the strategy: it is vitally important that the money committed is spent well. Through the conditions of grant, schools are required to publish online for parents the details of their full PE and sport offer and the impact upon pupil attainment. This will

<sup>103</sup> Education Committee, [School sport following London 2012: No more political football](#), 22 July 2013, HC164 2013-14, pp3-4.

<sup>104</sup> [School sport following London 2012: no more political football](#), Parliament website, 22 July 2013

<sup>105</sup> Education Committee, [School sport following London 2012: No more political football: Government Response](#), HC 723 2013-14.

strengthen the ability of parents to hold their children's schools to account for the funding. The additional investment in primary school sport has also been ring-fenced, a unique position in school funding and one which demonstrates the importance we place on PE and sport in schools.<sup>106</sup>

The report, and the Government's response, were debated in Westminster Hall on 5 December 2013. Issues debated included:

- the cost-effectiveness of school sports partnerships;
- the need for long term funding and appropriate training for teachers in its use;
- the duty on schools to provide adequate sport and PE and their accountability;
- the effect of a competitive focus;
- the adequacy of facilities, particularly for swimming;
- the protection of school playing fields; and
- the limited benefit of a small number of primary school specialists.<sup>107</sup>

## 6.7 Smith Institute report on school sport participation, May 2013

In May 2013, the Smith Institute published a report on school sport based on an online survey of school teachers, school games organisers and school sport partnerships staff.<sup>108</sup> The key findings of the survey, as highlighted by the report, included:

- 34% of primary school teachers and 35% of secondary school teachers reported a decrease in participation since the removal of ring-fenced funding for school sports partnerships.
- 36% of primary school teachers reported a worsening of sport in their school under the new funding system, 48% said it had stayed the same and 16% said it had improved.
- 37% of secondary school teachers reported a worsening of sport in their school under the new funding system, 55% said it had stayed the same, and 8% said it had improved.
- A majority of teachers were signed up for School Games but "significant minority" stated that they were not.
- The majority reported that their School Sports Partnerships had remained in place after ring-fenced funding had ended. 28% of primary school teachers and 34% of secondary school teachers reported that they were no longer a part of a School Sport Partnership.
- Over 90% believed that non-competitive physical activities must be encouraged alongside competitive activities.
- 97% agreed that schools should have a minimum target of two hours PE and Sport a week.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Education Committee, [School sport following London 2012: No more political football: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2013–14](#), HC 723 2013-14, pp1-2.

<sup>107</sup> [HC Deb 5 December 2013, c355-76WH](#)

<sup>108</sup> Smith Institute, [School sport participation and the Olympic legacy](#), May 2013.

<sup>109</sup> Smith Institute, [School sport participation and the Olympic legacy](#), May 2013, pp4-5.

## 6.8 Ofsted's Beyond 2012 report, February 2013

In February 2013, Ofsted published a report based on inspections of physical education in schools between September 2008 and July 2012.<sup>110</sup> The report's introduction acknowledged improvements made to physical education and school sport, but stated that improvement was still needed:

This report...acknowledges the improvements made to PE and school sport over the last four years. However, inspectors found that despite significant investment during much of this time, not all pupils have a good physical education. In some schools, there is not enough physical education in PE. In other schools, PE is not taught in enough depth and there is only limited access to a high standard of competitive sport. PE requires further improvement in about one third of primary schools and one quarter of secondary schools.

In primary schools, some teachers lack the specialist knowledge needed to teach PE well and outcomes for pupils are not as good as they could be. More able pupils are not always challenged to achieve their very best, levels of personal fitness are not high enough and not all pupils are able to swim 25 metres before they leave school. PE in secondary schools does not always contribute to improving pupils' fitness. More able pupils do not have enough time to practise and achieve their very best. Only a minority of schools play competitive sport to a very high level. Only a few schools have achieved a balance between increasing participation and generating elite performance: in these schools sport was played to a very high standard.

Nevertheless, the report confirms there is more good and outstanding PE than at the time of the last Ofsted PE survey in 2008. Sustained government investment has enabled schools to make significant improvements in PE and school sport. However, continuing these improvements will present a formidable challenge for schools against a backdrop of greater expectations. Ofsted recommends that the Department for Education considers devising a new national strategy for PE and school sport that builds on the successes of school sport partnerships and enables schools to make a major contribution to the sporting legacy left by the 2012 Olympic Games.

The press release accompanying the report highlighted the following recommendations from the report:

The Department for Education should build on the improvements made to PE and harness the interest and momentum generated by the 2012 London Games by devising and implementing a new national strategy for PE and school sport.

The Department for Education should ensure that those responsible for the initial training of primary teachers should provide them with sufficient subject knowledge to enable them to teach PE well.

Teachers should improve pupils' fitness by keeping them physically active throughout all lessons and engaging them in regular, high intensity vigorous activity or sustained periods of time.

<sup>110</sup> Ofsted, [Beyond 2012 – outstanding physical education for all: Physical education in schools 2008–12](#), February 2013.

Teachers should raise their expectations of where more able pupils are capable of achieving and provide them with challenging, competitive activities that lead to high standards of performance.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> [“Not enough physical in physical education”](#), Ofsted, 14 February 2013.

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