



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

INSPECTING SUBJECTS AND ASPECTS 11-18

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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INSPECTING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

As an inspector of physical education, you need to find out how good the pupils are at the subject, to what extent they have the knowledge, skills and understanding that lie at its heart, and whether it captures their interest. You are likely to be able to explain your findings largely by evaluating how stimulating and effective the teaching is.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

These are the main questions which your inspection should answer.

- How high are the standards in physical education, and are they high enough?
- How well are pupils progressing?
- How well is physical education taught?

Before you begin your inspection in the school

- Revise your knowledge of the *Handbook* and associated guidance.
- Where necessary, make sure you are familiar with the course objectives and examination syllabuses used by the school.

You should already have a good knowledge of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for physical education and the 'end of key stage descriptions' for pupils by ages 14 and 16.

- Analyse performance data to form a view of the standards achieved in recent years and any trends, and to establish hypotheses about strengths and weaknesses in physical education.
- Study any departmental documentation which has been made available, and evaluate its potential contribution to the quality of teaching and its coverage of curricular requirements.

When you are in the school

- Use the first-hand evidence mainly from observation of lessons, but also from talking with pupils, to assess what the current pupils are like at the subject, what they do well and where they could do better. Consider also any written work such as that done by pupils on a GCSE course. Focus on the current pupils in the year groups in which they become 14, 16 and 18. Refer to the records of teachers' assessments of pupils' work. Assess what progress pupils are making through the school - how fast it is, on how wide a front and in what depth.

- Observe teaching, talk to teachers about their work, look at their plans and records, and judge how effective the teaching is - how it contributes to pupils' attitudes to learning, progress and standards. See which approaches work well and which are unsuccessful.
- Take stock of any other factors which affect the teaching of physical education and the standards achieved. Assess, in particular, how effectively the subject is led and managed and the impact of facilities, accommodation and resources.
- Make sure that your observation forms contain enough evidence to support your judgements; telling examples are needed for your subject report.

Literacy, numeracy and information technology

- Evaluate any contribution physical education teaching makes to developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy or, perhaps, information technology.
- Be alert to situations where weaknesses in these skills impede progress in physical education.
- Record your evidence and evaluations in the 'Other significant evidence' section of the observation form.

Feeding back your inspection findings

- Feed back your findings clearly and helpfully to the head of physical education and to the individual teachers by:
 - identifying the most important strengths and weaknesses in the teaching, and supporting your assessments with illustrations from the lessons you have seen;
 - giving convincing reasons for what you judge to be successful or otherwise, making clear how the teaching affects what is achieved;
 - showing the head of department how other factors - particularly, leadership and management, facilities, accommodation and resources - affect the quality of teaching and the standards achieved;
 - ensuring that there is opportunity to discuss the findings and that points for development are identified.

Writing the subject section

- Make sure that the physical education section of the report tells a coherent and convincing story. It should explain why the standards achieved are as they are. In particular, report on the effectiveness of the teaching. The following questions will help you to check the quality of your reporting.

- Are examination results interpreted so as to give a clear view of the standards attained, to show how they compare with other subjects in the school, and to identify any trends over time?
- Are there clear judgements of what is currently achieved by the pupils in the year groups in which they become 14, 16 and 18? Are the strong and weak features identified in the different aspects of the subject?
- Is there a convincing explanation of any significant differences in standards between what is seen and what the results indicate?
- Are variations in the progress of different groups of pupils or in different years evaluated and explained?
- Does the evaluation of teaching spell out how it affects pupils' response and what they achieve? Is it clear which teaching methods are successful and which are not? Is there an explanation of any other factors, such as leadership and management, which are significant in affecting standards?
- Is it clear how far standards and teaching have improved since the last inspection, and are reasons given?
- Are the main judgements supported by the most telling examples?
- Is it clear what needs to be done to improve standards in physical education?

ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

Your judgements on attainment will be based on **performance data** and direct **observations** in the school. Any differences between these judgements **must be explained convincingly**.

Interpreting data

- For pupils aged 16 who have followed examination courses, compare the school's GCSE results with:
 - the results achieved in schools nationally;
 - the results for schools of 'similar type' (comprehensive, selective or modern);
 - the results achieved in other subjects in the school.

Small numbers of pupils may be involved. In these cases, comparisons with how pupils do in their other subjects are the most realistic and helpful. You need to be alert to the size of the entry and to comment on how it relates to the entry policy or the opportunities for pupils to take the subject.

In some schools, pupils may take 'half' GCSE courses. National comparisons are unrealistic, but you should record and evaluate results from these courses and entries for other validated courses such as NPRA units of accreditation and the junior sports leader awards.

- For students post-16, resist placing too much emphasis on comparison with the national A-level and AS statistics. It is more helpful to compare individual students' results in physical education with their results at GCSE and in other subjects in the school.

Using evidence from observations

- Judge the attainment of pupils by 14 and 16 years according to what is typical in relation to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Base your judgement on evidence from across all the areas of activity chosen by the school, wherever possible.

*Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills should develop through activities which involve them in the continuous process of **planning, performing and evaluating**. Alongside the specific knowledge, skills and understanding, you should consider how far pupils have an awareness and understanding of 'healthy lifestyle' and safe practice in physical education.*

Significant weaknesses in any aspect compared with others means that the standards cannot be high enough.

- For pupils by age 14, use **teachers' assessment** alongside your observations as an indicator of attainment and a means of investigating such matters as the relative achievements of boys and girls.
- Form a view about the performance of students post-16 who follow a physical education programme as part of their 'additional' or 'enrichment' studies, where it is possible to sample this work.

Judgements should be based on the extent to which students consolidate or build on what was done up to age 16.

- Assess the standard of work of those pupils who follow physical education related examination courses from 14 to 16 and post-16, identifying strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the course syllabuses and objectives.
- Judge the **progress** which pupils make in each year, referring to any significant differences between particular groups, such as able pupils, those with special educational needs, and boys and girls.

The evidence comes from talking with pupils, looking at their written work and seeing how they get on in lessons - how much do they learn and at what rate?

For pupils with special educational needs, including those in special schools, judgements about attainment and progress should take account of any need to modify programmes in accordance with individual plans, because of sensory, physical, emotional or learning disabilities.

- As you **watch pupils at work** and **talk with them**, focus on the extent to which and how well they:
 - **plan** either before or during performance, making decisions in envisaging or anticipating action, showing understanding and displaying the effect of their planning on subsequent performance;
 - **perform** in a variety of areas of activity, showing their competence and versatility, their mastery of dynamic qualities and use of space, and their understanding of safety principles;
 - **evaluate** either during or after performance, using their skills in observing and comparing, and employing their evaluations to improve their work;
 - demonstrate **quality** in, and control of, movement in different contexts;
 - apply and adhere to **rules and conventions** in co-operative and competitive activities;
 - consistently demonstrate a variety of increasingly **refined techniques**;
 - undertake different **roles**, such as performer, coach, choreographer or official, in an activity;
 - recognise the benefits of engaging in health-promoting activity, and understand the short- and long-term effects of exercise on the body.

Your observations of these factors will help you to shape your analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the subject as well as the overall judgement about attainment. Remember in your reporting that you need to draw on concrete evidence to exemplify them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES TO LEARNING

- Look out for characteristics which apply particularly to physical education. They might include whether pupils:
 - are motivated and confidently strive to perfect their skills and movement competence through practice;

- are determined and willing to explore and use a range of different approaches for solving problems or meeting tasks;
- can cope with success and limitations in their performance;
- are willing to make critical comment about their work and to accept the comments of others;
- show awareness of fair play and sportsmanship in their competitive activities;
- work effectively in groups or teams;
- act responsibly in relation to their own safety and that of others.

TEACHING

- Judge the quality of teaching by weighing its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the criteria in the *Framework*, and assess its **impact on educational standards**, but be open to other features which make lessons particularly effective or ineffective.

Teaching cannot be satisfactory in lessons where pupils, or a significant minority of them, learn less than you would expect considering what they have mastered before. The same is true where they do not firmly consolidate their learning.

- Inform your judgement by reference to characteristics of effective teaching in physical education, bearing in mind that good teaching is based on secure understanding and knowledge of the subject and that good teachers provide a role model for pupils in dress and personal conduct. Some characteristics are:
 - clear and effective instruction and use of demonstration (*subject knowledge, planning, methodology*);
 - good observation skills by the teacher, providing supportive but critical feedback to foster and encourage improvement (*subject knowledge, assessment*);
 - judicious balance between the introduction and practice of new skills, and consolidation of previous learning (*subject knowledge, planning*);
 - carefully planned and managed tasks and problems so that work moves on, providing increasing challenge and avoiding needless repetition of known or established skills (*planning, methodology, expectations, use of time and resources*);
 - a focus on the quality of the pupils' movement (*subject knowledge, expectations*);
 - productive use of grouping of pupils, reflecting their stages of development, so that pupils can support and encourage each other in the planning, performance and

evaluation of their work at the right level for them (*expectations, management, methodology*);

- opportunities for pupils to discuss, investigate, solve problems and, where appropriate, use information and communications technology to meet new challenges (*subject knowledge, methodology, expectations*).
- Do **not** be misled by teaching that may have superficially positive features but results in slow progress or insufficient depth and breadth of learning - for example, where:
 - pupils are neatly turned out, behave co-operatively and are very active but on tasks which are repetitive, lead nowhere or make limited demands - activity does not necessarily mean quality;
 - the teacher organises pupils and equipment well but simply manages the activity, teaches nothing new and only interacts with pupils to keep them moving, to referee or to maintain good behaviour;
 - there is regular interaction with the class but errors, poor performance and misunderstanding go unheeded by the teacher - there is little or no emphasis on quality planning or performance;
 - pupils are asked to offer comments on others' performance, but superficial appraisal is accepted and there is little rigour in moving performance on.

OTHER ASPECTS OF PROVISION OR MANAGEMENT

Curriculum and assessment

- Be alert to factors which can affect the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. However, recognise that they are only significant if they have an effect. You might consider, for example, whether:
 - the full and half unit options which are chosen for pupils up to 14 years, and the choices to 16 years, provide a well-balanced programme of work for pupils;
 - the balance of time devoted to each area of activity is reasonable to enable sufficient depth and breadth in what is achieved;
 - planning, performing and evaluating are diagnostically assessed and clearly recorded to enable teaching for improvement to be effectively directed;
 - the grouping of pupils has a beneficial or inhibiting effect on their progress and attainment.

Extra-curricular sporting activities

Extra-curricular activities in secondary schools should include physical activities which extend the pupils' learning in physical education.

- Evaluate the range and quality of this provision and what pupils achieve as a result of it.

You should be alert to provision made for pupils with a disability or special educational need and matters related to equality of access to the curriculum.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- Evaluate the extent to which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively promoted - for example, through:
 - the creative exploration of ideas in dance and gymnastics;
 - activities involving co-operation, competition, rules, self-discipline and fair play;
 - exploring the cultural differences and spiritual dimensions in dance;
 - concern for the environment through outdoor and adventurous activities;
 - individual activity which provides the opportunity for development of self-awareness and personal reflection, such as athletic activities and swimming, as well as outdoor and adventurous activities.

Resources, facilities and equipment

- Highlight strengths and weaknesses where there is an impact on the quality of teaching and the standards achieved, paying attention to:
 - the condition and maintenance of indoor and outdoor spaces, including changing facilities;
 - the range and quality of physical education equipment;
 - arrangements for maintenance and replacement of equipment.

Health and safety

You are not required to do a health and safety 'audit', but, as part of your inspection:

- evaluate whether health and safety matters are dealt with effectively, including the provision for risk assessments¹ as part of your inspection of leadership and management;
- be alert to any significant threat to pupils' or teachers' well-being.

OBSERVATION FORMS

There follow two sample observation forms for physical education. These are intended to show how evidence and judgements contribute to a coherent picture of attainment in these lessons. In one lesson, the teaching is judged to be 'very good' (grade 2) and in the other it is considered 'satisfactory' (grade 4).

¹ The reference document 'Safe Practice in PE' (1995) published by the British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (BAALPE) provides clear guidance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION YEAR 8 MIXED ABILITY - Very good teaching**CONTEXT:**

Lesson 4 of 8 in unit on gymnastics: floor sequence work developing main theme of balance and overbalance with changes of direction.

TEACHING:

CT is a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic specialist - evident in e.g effective use of demonstration to secure standards and perceptive observations of pupils' progress. Well prepared with clear and suitable learning outcomes that build on and extend previous work; shared at the outset; PPE is planned for. Very high expectations, in terms of work rate, attitude and self-challenge are evident and sustained throughout the lesson. CT uses assessment well to make sharply focused comments on the work of individuals and the whole class to take work forward. Lesson pace is brisk - effective use of time throughout. CT communicates well with pupils and manages her class with ease.

Grade 2

RESPONSE:

High work rate sustained throughout the lesson in response to CT's high expectations. Worked very well together and shared space with skill and sensitivity. Obvious willingness to comment critically on what they have seen. All abilities took pleasure in a degree of success in their work. Developing into good and effective independent workers.

Grade 2

ATTAINMENT:

Many have very good body line and extension; most are confident when inverted. Controlled overbalances, to take stillness into the next planned movement, are developing well and pupils show good understanding of key gymnastic principles and safety issues. They plan very effectively, use their own judgement to adjust repeated attempts and thereby ensure improvement. They also make perceptive comment on each other's work.

Grade 2

PROGRESS:

Most able achieve highly with fluent sequences; growing confidence with more difficult and challenging moves is clear. Average and least able also make very good progress at their own levels - e.g least able are beginning to link appropriate, if less adventurous, movements into very effective simple sequences. High level of engagement with obvious willingness to strive for improvement.

Grade 2

PHYSICAL EDUCATION YEAR 11 MIXED ABILITY - Satisfactory teaching**CONTEXT:**

GCSE group in the pool. Planning and preparing for and undertaking timed 10-minute swim as part of overall swimming assessment component. Paired work in planning, warm up, timing and observing each other and warm down. Introduction and short de-brief from teacher: pupils little involved.

TEACHING:

Careful briefing to group indicates teacher's sound knowledge and understanding of eg strokes, stamina and safety. Tasks set indicate reasonable expectations of pupils. Plans carefully, although unhurried pace of preparation for and timed swim in pairs, leaves too little time for warming down and evaluation. Methodology sound but rather mundane.

Grade 4

RESPONSE:

All work responsibly and become involved in encouraging and supporting partners in timed swim. Good cooperative work and most pairs, particularly the most able swimmers, are well-motivated. Good relationships within the group - B/G and more and less able swimmers. Three only sitting out and given timing and recording roles.

Grade 3

ATTAINMENT: Ps show appropriate understanding of how to prepare for timed swim. A reasonable level of skill [frontcrawl and breaststroke] from most of the group, with a small number of boys and girls showing high levels of performance. Sound application from all the group of basic safety principles - e.g vigilant regard for partner when in the water.

Grade 4

PROGRESS:

For several ps, the distances for this 10 minute swim were their best performances and demonstrated progress over the term. Lack of time for discussion and development restricted potential of the lesson. Ability to engage in cooperative work has improved through this module.

Grade 4

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This is one of a set of booklets which make up *Inspecting subjects and aspects 11-18*. The set consists of:

- an introductory booklet, *General guidance*, which is for all inspectors who evaluate the work of secondary age pupils - it is mainly about inspecting subjects;
- separate booklets on inspecting specific subjects and aspects; the contents page of *General guidance* shows the subjects and aspects which have booklets.

The main points in the *General guidance* are summarised in each subject, but if you are inspecting the work of secondary age pupils you should read the introductory booklet so that you are fully in the picture of what you have to do.

The contents of all the booklets are on the Internet and can be accessed from OFSTED's website [<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>]. This will allow you to obtain guidance for individual subjects or aspects.

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Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Telephone: 0171 421 6800

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