



House of Commons
Education Committee

**School sport following
London 2012: No more
political football:
Government Response to
the Committee's Third
Report of Session 2013–14**

Third Special Report of Session 2013–14

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The Education Committee

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Committee staff

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Third Special Report

On 22 July we published our Third Report of Session 2012–13, *School sport following London 2012: No more political football*.¹ The Government response was received on 2 October 2013 and is published as an Appendix to this Special Report.

Appendix

Government Response

Government's response to School sport following London 2012: No more political football—Education Select Committee

Response to the Summary

The Government wants to ensure that all children have the opportunity to lead healthy, active lifestyles; to participate in and enjoy sport and physical activity both within and outside school; and to compete against their peers. These three objectives reflect a strong commitment from across Government, with the Department of Health and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport joining with the Department for Education to secure the greatest impact. Working across Government we have provided £300m of joint funding for primary school sport, increased the number of Change4Life clubs and increased access for older children to Satellite and Sportivate clubs.

We welcome the Committee's positive response to the retention of PE as a compulsory subject in the new national curriculum and to our emphasis on improving primary school PE and sport provision. That emphasis was identified throughout detailed discussion with schools, teachers, and sporting organisations prior to the Prime Minister's announcement in March of substantial cross-Government investment in PE and sport in primary schools.

We agree with the Committee's view that it is important to secure a lasting, sustainable legacy from the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Encouraging an enthusiasm for PE and sport early in life is key to an enduring healthy lifestyle. We believe that our focus on primary school children is therefore the right approach.

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

¹ Education Committee, Third Report of Session 2013-14, *School sport following London 2012: No more political football*, HC 164

full PE and sport offer and the impact upon pupil attainment. This will 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.

The role of Ofsted has also been strengthened. During our consultation prior to the March announcement, the consensus among the external sporting organisations was that the use of Ofsted in this role would send a clear message to schools. Ofsted has embraced the challenge of this new role: they have updated their Inspection Handbook to include specific reference to the additional funding, and have published a supporting note for Inspectors online, detailing the funding and effective ways schools may consider spending it.

I also agree with the Committee about the importance of ensuring that primary school headteachers have access to high quality advice to support best use of the new funding. The Department for Education's website includes a range of useful information, including: case studies showcasing excellent practice from some of the best-performing schools; domestic and international research material; detailed advice from professional sports organisations such as Sport England (SE), the Youth Sport Trust (YST) and the Association for Physical Education (afPE); and school offers from national governing bodies for a wide range of individual sports. We have continued to update the web material, recently adding additional case studies on PE and sport for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and more information from national governing bodies.

The Government agrees with the Committee's identification of the need for the impact of the additional funding to be sustainable. Following the Spending Review announcement we are now exploring how we might fund school sport in future years. Improving initial teacher training, placing greater emphasis on PE and sport so that pupils develop healthy lifestyles and the continuing professional development of established staff will be essential to the success of our investment.

Edward Timpson MP

Response to recommendations

We have responded to each numbered recommendation below. Some of the recommendations and responses have been grouped. Where a recommendation is blank no response was judged necessary.

Recognition of benefits by Government

1. Although the evidence of the impact of school sport specifically on an individual is still emerging, the evidence of the benefits deriving from physical activity and

involvement in sport more generally for individuals and the nation is conclusive. Recognition of this should underpin Government policy for school sport and is the basis for all the recommendations in our Report. (Paragraph 24)

The Government strongly agrees that lifelong benefits derive from physical activity and sport. Our major, cross-Government investment, boosting school and community sport and thereby improving health, reflects this. An overview of the evidence on physical education and sport in schools including the benefits to pupils of developing healthy lifestyles, is available on the gov.uk website².

Competition in school sport

2. The balance of evidence to our inquiry supports the view that competition in school sport deters some young people from participating in sport and physical activity. We therefore recommend that the Department for Education makes clear to all schools that they must offer both competitive and non-competitive sporting opportunities to their pupils. (Paragraph 30)

We strongly believe that there are benefits for children in competing against their peers and participating in competition both within and between schools. However, we also recognise that some pupils may not respond as well as others to competitive engagement and teachers should use their professional judgement in this matter. The new national curriculum programme of study for PE exemplifies a range of team and individual sports and other activities, including dance, which will appeal to a broad range of pupils. Government investment in Change4Life Clubs offers schools a way of reaching the least active, including those who may not be attracted to competitive sport. This is something in which headteachers can invest, using the new school sports funding.

3. In order to deliver a strong school sport offer, schools must ensure that all pupils are given a firm grounding in physical education in key stages 1 and 2 and the early years. We welcome the inclusion of PE in the draft national curriculum. (Paragraph 33)

We welcome the Committee's support for the retention of PE as a compulsory subject at all four key stages in the new national curriculum. The new programmes of study outline an approach that will ensure all pupils in key stages 1 and 2 receive an excellent grounding in PE. Useful guidance for serving teachers and new trainees on the new PE programmes of study has been developed by an expert group on PE, which has representation from teaching schools, subject associations and HE institutions.

2 www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-on-physical-education-and-sport-in-schools.

Government policy

Long-term support

4. School sport is too important to rely on occasional efforts at pump-priming; the Government must commit to a long-term vision for school sport accompanied by long-term funding. We recommend that the Government sets out a plan for the sustained support and development of its school sports policy, to include measures to ensure a cross-departmental vision and effective working across all relevant departments. (Paragraph 43)

Time-frame of primary sport premium

10. We are concerned that the timeframe of the primary sport premium is not sufficient to allow a long-term provision to be built. It risks replicating previous short-term fixes rather than creating a long-term solution. On its own, the primary sport premium is inadequate. If the Government is to secure a legacy from London 2012 and demonstrate its commitment to school sport, the primary sport premium must be embedded within a long-term strategy, with sustained funding. (Paragraph 70)

Ministers and officials from the three funding Departments, as well as key external partners, meet regularly to drive progress of the PE and sport strategy. As noted above, following the Spending Review announcement we are also exploring how we might fund school sport in future years.

Our approach supports effective delivery and reinforces our strong cross-Departmental vision to secure sustainable improvements in school sport. Our key objectives, backed by our significant investment, are indicative of our commitment to effective working across Departments and our shared vision. We want all children to have the opportunity to lead healthy, active lifestyles; to participate in and enjoy sport and physical activity both within and outside school; and to compete against their peers.

The strategy in place provides significant long-term benefits, deriving from instilling an early enthusiasm for sport and physical activity in primary school pupils; the creation of primary PE specialists who will play a lead role in improving provision across groups of schools; the expansion of Change4Life clubs addressing the needs of less active pupils; and the extension of Satellite Clubs and Sportivate to include pupils from the age of 11 onwards, ensuring that early enthusiasm for sport is maintained as children progress from primary to secondary education.

Delivery of school sport

School sports partnerships

5. There is clear evidence that the ending of the school sport partnerships funding has had a negative impact, including on the opportunities for young people to access competitive sporting opportunities in school. School sport partnerships were expensive but delivered benefits for children. The Government needs to show that an alternative programme (at lower cost) can deliver significant increases in participation in school sport. (Paragraph 51)

We agree with the Committee's assessment that school sport partnerships (SSPs) were not flawless and were particularly expensive. Whilst the Government removed the requirement for schools to take part in SSPs, it did not remove the ability for schools to choose to take part, should they so wish. Schools are free to work in partnership with neighbouring schools and other organisations, including SSPs where they continue to support schools. There is information on the Department's website for headteachers should they wish to pool their funding to ensure greater impact, if that is appropriate for local circumstance.

The impact of the new strategy will be monitored closely, both by Government and through external evaluation, in order to ensure significant, sustainable benefits for children and schools and to secure better value for money for taxpayers.

Building on SSP model

6. We concur with Ofsted, and we too recommend that the Government devises a new strategy for school sport that builds on the many strengths of the SSP model. We recommend that the Government promotes co-operation and partnership between schools, clubs, county sports partnerships and others to assist the delivery of school sport. (Paragraph 55)

We agree with the Committee about the benefits that can accrue from partnership working and will promote such co-operation where that is appropriate. This includes partnerships between groups of schools, or between schools and external bodies such as the county sport partnerships (CSPs), sports clubs or national governing bodies. We will also seek to build on the success of current intra- and inter-school competitions such as the School Games.

7. We were particularly attracted to the idea that any future model should include the role of a peripatetic PE specialist who works with a cluster of schools as a primary specialist, rather than secondary specialist. (Paragraph 56)

Schools are free to pursue this model if that is appropriate for their local circumstance and this is something that we will be monitoring closely as funding progresses, both through our independent evaluation and through inspection evidence from Ofsted.

Advice and support on such approaches is available on our website and from partners such as the Youth Sport Trust, afPE, Sport England and local County Sport Partnerships. As we set out in our evidence to the Committee, the Department has asked the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) to pilot a Primary PE specialist approach, working with three school partnerships. The first tranche of trainee teachers is already in place and another is due to begin training in January 2014 (more detail at recommendations 11 & 13).

Primary sport premium

8. We agree with the Government that the priority in funding should be primary schools and that the ring-fencing of funds is necessary to ensure it is spent on sport. (Paragraph 61)

Guidance for head teachers

9. We welcome the fact the Department for Education has produced comprehensive guidance for head teachers on the effective use of the primary sport premium funding, but more work needs to be done to make it as practical and useable as possible. To assist head teachers further, we recommend that the Department for Education produce a simple step-by-step approach to auditing the needs of the pupils and the training needs of staff which could then be used to guide decisions about spending. (Paragraph 66)

We agree that advice to schools on the use of the funding should be as practical as possible and we are grateful for the Committee's recognition of the value of the material that has already been published. We will continue to post additional, high-quality material to ensure that headteachers have access to as much information on current best practice as possible. We trust headteachers to understand the needs of their pupils and staff, and to address them accordingly. We have made clear that the additional funding for primary schools can be used to pay for continuing professional development for teachers to boost their ability and confidence to teach PE effectively.

The Association for Physical Exercise (afPE), for example, provide carefully developed tools in order that schools might audit the needs of pupils and staff. The Department does not consider it necessary to duplicate the work of an expert professional organisation.

Primary teachers

Teacher training and development

11. The number of hours spent on physical education by trainee primary teachers is inadequate. Initial teacher training of primary school teachers must include a more substantial course on physical education, including for children with special needs.

We recommend that Ofsted takes this into account when inspecting and assessing initial teacher training provision. (Paragraph 77)

13. We welcome the Government's plans to begin training a cadre of 120 primary PE specialists from this summer. The Government needs to set out how this initiative will build into an improvement of sport provision in all 17,000 primary schools in England. (Paragraph 82)

NCTL is continuing to support innovative work to identify and develop routes to produce high quality primary teachers who can teach the PE curriculum more effectively. NCTL will also continue to explore, with Ofsted, how physical education can be best inspected in initial teacher training.

The Government is committed to attracting the best graduates into teaching. For PE trainees beginning their secondary ITT course in 2013/14, those with a first class degree will receive a £9,000 bursary and those with a 2:1 degree will receive £4,000.

All primary trainees also receive a £9,000 bursary if they hold a 1st class degree and £4,000 if they hold a 2:1.

As already noted, three school partnerships are piloting primary PE specialist routes.

The findings from this pilot, including cost and effectiveness, will inform future decisions that will aim to build a sustainable improvement in primary PE teaching. While ITT providers retain autonomy over the delivery, structure, content and length of their programmes, we will continue to work with them to ensure the needs of trainee teachers are being met.

12. We conclude that the best long-term use of the primary sport premium may well be through investment in high-quality training of staff. (Paragraph 78)

The Government agrees that the quality of staff is of particular importance, a point also noted in Ofsted's report on school sport released in February 2013.

As noted above, headteachers are best placed to decide what support their staff need to help them to make best use of the funding and we are providing information about support available through expert professional organisations.

Schools involved in the primary specialist pilot anticipate that their trainees will be deployed in a coaching role for teachers within and beyond their own schools to support further delivery of higher quality PE lessons across federations and formal school-to-school partnerships.

Special needs and disability sport

Competitive sporting opportunities

14. We recognise the role that school sport can play in engaging children with special needs in school and education. We recommend that further, specific training for teachers in the provision of PE and sport for children with special needs—be they for physical disabilities or special educational needs—should be provided in both initial teacher training and continuous professional development. (Paragraph 91)

We recognise the importance of specific training for teachers in the provision of PE and sport for children with disabilities and/or special education needs.

The Government already supports a number of excellent initiatives in this area, including in 50 School Games ‘Project Ability’ schools that receive direct funding. We will be building on the valuable work done there and sharing practice more widely.

The Department for Education website includes a number of case studies focused on inclusion of children with SEN and/or disabilities. Lancasterian Specialist School, for example, runs a training module to equip other local practitioners with practical ideas and strategies to include all young people in PE more effectively. Staff then put this into practice with pupils who have special education needs, a disability, or who are ‘PE phobic’, through Inter-School Competitive Sports Festivals.

Education, health and care plans

15. We were attracted by Baroness Grey-Thompson's suggestion that EHCPs include a section, where appropriate, on physical activity. We were pleased to note that the DfE is looking at how the new SEN Code of Practice could incorporate information on access to school sport and physical activity. We welcome the Minister's openness to our suggestion and await the outcome of the Department for Education's consideration of it. (Paragraph 94)

Where it is appropriate and where there is an assessed need, local authorities may set out in an education, health and care plan (EHCP) how a child or young person will achieve their educational outcomes which may include opportunity to engage in school sports and physical activity in whichever way is best for them in school. As the recommendation suggests, it is not appropriate to specify generally that every plan must include reference to physical activity, given the range of needs of young people.

The Department for Education will publish a new SEN Code of Practice for public consultation this autumn. It will provide guidance on how to carry out statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children and young people with special educational needs. Where the draft code touches on sport and physical activity, we would welcome suggestions on whether there is potential for a clearer approach within the Code.

London 2012 legacy

A missed opportunity?

16. It is telling that witnesses could not agree what the Government's London 2012 legacy for schools would be. We believe that the opportunity to realise a London 2012 legacy for school sports has not yet been lost, although further action is needed to ensure that the legacy in schools benefits all children and lasts beyond the two years of the primary sports premium. (Paragraph 100)

As set out in the Government's evidence to the committee and in the introductory remarks above, our view is clear. A lasting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will ensure that all children have the opportunity to lead healthy, active lifestyles; to participate in and enjoy sport and physical activity both within and outside school; and to compete against their peers. The sustainability of this legacy is of paramount importance and our focus on supporting schools to achieve this has already been explained.

Delivering the legacy

School Games

17. We welcome the School Games as a 2012 legacy activity for sporty young people. Longer-term funding is needed, beyond 2015, to establish the Games and ensure that it does not become another short-term fix. (Paragraph 106)

The School Games creates a year-round programme of regular school sport competition—giving the opportunity for every school and every child to participate in competitive sport.

The Government is committed to ensuring a lasting legacy from London 2012, and the School Games is an important aspect of this. Led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the School Games Project Board consists of members from the Department for Education, the Department of Health, Sport England, the British Paralympic Association and the Youth Sport Trust (as delivery agents). The Board meets regularly to discuss progress, supporting effective delivery and reinforcing our shared vision to secure a lasting sporting legacy from London 2012.

With currently over 60% of all schools in England actively taking part, we are confident that the School Games will continue to provide young people, of all abilities, more opportunities to participate in competitive sport.

18. We agree with witnesses that the School Games does not provide opportunities for everyone. We recommend the 2012 school sports legacy includes programmes and opportunities for all, not just for committed young sportsmen and women. (Paragraph 107)

We agree with the Committee that all young people should have the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity. Our overall strategy includes a range of initiatives to address this including significant investment in Change4Life clubs—encouraging the least active pupils; providing support for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs through Project Ability schools; as well as grants to promote ambassadorial roles for young people to encourage and motivate their peers.

Through the School Games, 38 national governing bodies of sport have created new, innovative sports formats at Levels 1 and 2 of the School Games, to encourage all young people, regardless of ability or disability, to take part. Schools have the flexibility to decide which sports they provide but they should aim to involve as many pupils as possible by creating breadth in the sports they offer and depth through the creation of additional teams. Schools applying for a School Games kitemark must demonstrate that they provide their pupils with appropriate competitive sporting opportunities.

In addition, Sport England, through the Youth and Community Sport Strategy, is investing over £1bn towards growing grassroots sports, including a number of initiatives designed to get the least active into sport, for example Sportivate and Satellite Clubs, which are focused on fun and mass participation activity.

Facilities

19. We recommend that the Government encourages partnerships between local schools to promote the sharing of facilities. This includes encouraging the private sector to make available its facilities to local state schools. (Paragraph 113)

The opening up and sharing of facilities in a local area for wider use is something the Government already actively encourages: increased access to facilities is an excellent way to encourage more people to take part in sport. Sport England's educational advisors are currently looking at how more private sector facilities could be made available to local schools.

There are a number of examples where schools share facilities, and this is something that we are keen to promote. The King Edward VI School in Birmingham is part of a pilot scheme whereby local state primary schools use the sports facilities in the mornings. We will be working with sports governing bodies and others to pursue this.

20. While we welcome the inclusion of swimming in the national curriculum, we are concerned that many schools do not have access to a pool. We recommend that the Government undertakes mapping of the provision of swimming pools to assess the scale of the problem, and develops a plan to ensure all schools can fulfil their requirements under the national curriculum. (Paragraph 114)

Mapping of swimming pools in England, including school pools, has already been conducted by Sport England. This information is used to inform discussions with local authorities who are responsible for pool provision and can be obtained through the

Active Places Power website. Sport England works with local authorities to support them in developing a strategic approach to the provision of sports facilities, including pools, in the local area.

Elite athletes

21. We recommend that all schools develop a plan for the development of their gifted and talented pupils. Integral to this will be the creation and maintenance of links with clubs and other local schools—including independent schools—to improve the availability and choice of sport for their pupils. (Paragraph 121)

All schools should think carefully about how best to develop talented pupils. Resources and advice are available from national governing bodies to support them in doing so. We agree with the Committee that local links, including with independent schools, can support this aim. Work is in hand with UK Sport to understand better the use of elite athlete visits to inspire pupils.

Every secondary school in England is also being offered the opportunity to host a club led by a national governing body on a school site (a Satellite Club), with the aim of creating 4,000 satellite clubs by 2017. Satellite clubs help pupils in transition from school to find a suitable community-based sports club.

Accountability

Primary sport premium

22. While Ofsted's monitoring of the use of the primary sport premium is welcome, we are concerned by the limits of this as an accountability measure. We believe that the idea that Ofsted can hold primary schools effectively to account during the two-year period of the funding is flawed. We welcome the requirement that primary schools publish details of how they will use the sport premium, but we recommend that schools should go further and report on what has been achieved by their pupils as a result of the funding. This would lead head teachers to focus on the outcomes for pupils when considering how best to spend the premium funding. (Paragraph 126)

There is an important balance to be struck between holding schools to account and trusting schools to make appropriate decisions based on local circumstance. We believe our accountability plans are proportionate and sensible; Ofsted's inspection judgements are a vital part of this and a significant proportion will be inspected during this period. The requirement on schools to report online to parents not only on how their sport funding was used but also on its impact is also an important feature of our accountability arrangements.

More detail on schools' reporting is at recommendation 23.

Wider accountability

Quantity

23. We recommend that schools are required to report annually on their websites the proportion of children involved in at least two hours of core PE each week. Schools should also indicate whether or not they provide weekly opportunities for pupils to participate in school sport, and the proportion of pupils who do so for at least two hours per week. (Paragraph 133)

It is important that schools are accountable to parents so that parents can understand the sporting provision in their school and compare that with other offers in their local area. This includes activities in and outside the school day.

The conditions of grant regulating the issue of the additional funding require schools to report online about the way in which they have used their funding, and what impact has been achieved. The Government does not set targets for the number of hours that schools should dedicate to PE and sport.

Quality

24. We note that there are kitemark schemes for the quality of PE and school sport provided by national bodies such as the afPE and the Youth Sport Trust, and recommend that schools are encouraged by the Department for Education to achieve these quality marks. (Paragraph 137)

The kitemark schemes offered by national bodies such as afPE and the Youth Sport Trust provide a good opportunity for schools to work to widely-acknowledged quality standards. We encourage schools to work towards these standards where that is appropriate for them.

October 2013