



Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties

Physical education



Qualifications and
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Introduction

What is the purpose of this guidance?

This guidance supports the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. It draws on effective practice across a range of schools and can be used in mainstream and special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. It also provides support to the range of services that work with these schools.

The guidance can be used with the school's own material, the national curriculum and the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics to:

- confirm the statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils and build on the principles of inclusion set out in the national curriculum
- help schools develop an inclusive curriculum by:
 - setting suitable learning challenges
 - responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
 - including all learners by overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment
- provide a stimulus to revisit and revise existing schemes of work or a basis to develop new ones.

Who are the pupils?

The guidance relates to all pupils aged between 5 and 16 who have learning difficulties, regardless of factors such as their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background or gender, or the extent of their other difficulties. This includes pupils who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4. (These pupils are usually described as having severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.) This also includes pupils with learning difficulties who may be working at age-related expectations in some subjects but are well below this in others. (These pupils, along with those with other significant difficulties, are often described as having moderate learning difficulties.)

Who is the guidance for?

The guidance supports the work of a range of adults who are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. This includes class teachers, subject coordinators, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), senior managers, teaching assistants, parents,

carers, governors, therapists, local authority and advisory support services, and professionals from health, social services and the voluntary sector. Throughout these materials, the term 'staff' is used to refer to all those concerned with the education of these pupils.

What is in the guidance?

The guidance contains:

- support on developing and planning the curriculum
- support on developing skills across the curriculum
- subject materials on planning, teaching and assessing each national curriculum subject; religious education (RE); and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. These include descriptions of pupils' attainment showing progress up to level 1 of the national curriculum, which can be used to recognise attainment and structure teaching.

What are the subject materials?

The subject materials support staff in planning appropriate learning opportunities. The materials do not represent a separate curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties or an alternative to the national curriculum. They demonstrate a process for developing access to the national curriculum and support staff in developing their own curriculum to respond to the needs of their pupils at each key stage. The materials offer one approach to meeting this challenge. Schools may already have effective structures or may wish to adopt different approaches.

The materials identify learning opportunities relevant to each subject. They demonstrate appropriate learning across the scope of the national curriculum from the earliest levels. They are intended to increase schools' confidence in their capacity to provide appropriate access to the national curriculum.

A common framework for these materials has been used. In each subject, appropriate learning for pupils with diverse needs at each key stage has been identified. Those aspects of the programmes of study that may create particular difficulties are also discussed, as well as aspects that may be unsuitable at a particular key stage. The suggested activities can be used to develop ideas for relevant, accessible and challenging experiences in curriculum plans.

Responding to pupils' needs when teaching physical education

The importance of physical education to pupils with learning difficulties

Physical education (PE) gives all pupils opportunities to develop their physical skills and to apply those skills in different situations. It also enables personal and group achievements to be acknowledged.

In particular, PE offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

- develop their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement
- enhance appropriate areas of health and fitness and contribute towards their physical development
- develop their personal qualities of commitment, fairness and enthusiasm
- develop their thinking, appreciation and evaluation skills
- compete against themselves and others, and take part in challenging activities
- develop their ability to express themselves and be creative
- work individually and as part of a team
- build their self-confidence and self-esteem.

In response to these opportunities, pupils can make progress in PE by:

- consolidating, securing, tuning and developing fluency in whatever movements and skills they acquire and develop
- increasing the range of skills they use in activities
- improving the control and manipulation of objects
- improving appropriate areas of health and fitness
- knowing the different purposes of different types of activity.

Modifying the physical education programmes of study

The statutory inclusion statement of the national curriculum requires staff to modify the programmes of study to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage. Staff should teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge their pupils' abilities.

Staff can modify the PE programmes of study for pupils with learning difficulties by:

- choosing material from earlier key stages
- maintaining, practising, consolidating and generalising, as well as introducing new knowledge, skills and understanding
- using the programmes of study as a resource or to provide a context for planning learning appropriate to the age and needs of pupils
- focusing on one aspect, or a limited number of aspects, of the age-related programmes of study, *such as acquiring and developing technical skills for different purposes.*

Acquiring and developing skills

Acquiring and developing skills begins with pupils becoming aware of themselves and their bodies, tolerating and accepting passive movement, and knowing the different positions and movements they can make.

Acquiring and developing skills across the key stages can help pupils to:

- explore, develop and establish basic movement patterns and actions they can make, *for example, the development of travelling skills that involve moving from one place to another*
- develop coordination and control of their bodies and increase the range of gross and fine skills and movements, *for example, whole or part body actions where movements or actions are performed without travelling, manipulative skills that involve the handling and use of objects and equipment*
- combine and then sequence movements, linking them fluently
- move spontaneously and improvise in a range of different activities.

Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas

Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas begins with pupils exploring the body movements they can make, developing them and applying them to particular purposes.

Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas across key stages can help pupils to:

- make choices about what to do and how to do it
- learn to react to stimuli and move appropriately

- copy and then repeat actions, *for example, using mirrors to watch different parts of their bodies move*
- play, use and understand cause and effect games, *for example, predicting their own actions, in games such as skittles, boccia and polybat*
- perform, then combine and sequence actions and change their performance, *for example, responding appropriately to different music and tempos, such as relaxing, fast/slow*
- follow and then understand rules
- use equipment safely for a purpose.

Evaluating and improving performance

Evaluating and improving performance begins with pupils being aware of what movements they can make, what they can achieve through those movements, and then tuning the movements and varying what they can do with them.

Evaluating and improving performance across key stages can help pupils to:

- improve the quality of their own performance and presentation
- develop their skills in communicating thoughts about an activity using their preferred mode of communication and appropriate vocabulary
- develop their listening skills and the ability to collaborate with others and share ideas when exploring different options and possibilities
- adapt and change actions and responses
- become aware of the needs of others
- improve their personal best and develop ideas further
- recognise and cope with personal success and limitations
- appreciate and acknowledge others' good work
- explore and improve the quality of group work and the monitoring and recording of their own progress.

Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health

Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health begins with tolerating pain, maintaining good physical posture and correct positioning, and a willingness and desire to move and exercise.

Developing knowledge and understanding of fitness and health across key stages can help pupils to:

- become aware of the range of activities, including exercise and movement, necessary for their own health and personal well-being, *for example, eating, sleeping, hygiene*
- establish and develop positive attitudes to exercise and regularly take part in physical activity
- understand the importance of getting ready for, and recovering from, exercise and activity, *for example, using repetitive warm up and cool down exercises, getting changed, washing.*

Health and safety

As with the teaching of PE in any establishment, schools must meet the requirements laid down by governors and their local authority and take account of the national guidance published by the British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (BAALPE), *Safe practice in PE and school sport* (7th edition, 2008).

Staff should be aware of, and carry out, risk assessments at regular intervals and make sure that pupils are engaged in appropriate activities and wear appropriate clothing.

Improving access to the physical education curriculum

Staff can make PE more accessible by helping pupils to participate at first hand. They can improve access by:

- using materials and resources that pupils can access through sight, touch, sound or smell, *for example, different-sized, textured, noisy and fluorescent balls*
- using a range of activities where the first steps are for pupils to get involved, *for example, in indoor and outdoor play, playground games, action songs and rhymes*
- making effective use of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy and mobility programmes, designed to meet individual needs and promote access to a range of physical activities
- ensuring pupils have first-hand and direct experiences in the different areas of activity of the national curriculum
- ensuring consistent coactive support
- making use of all appropriate available resources in the school, the local community and sporting organisations that can enhance the range

of opportunities on offer to pupils, *for example, sports centres and grounds, swimming pools and a range of other facilities, such as bowling, roller-skating or dry ski slopes*

- using ICT, visual and other materials, *such as video or television*, to increase pupils' knowledge of their personal surroundings and the wider world
- using specialist aids, equipment and adapted workspaces to ensure the safe handling of tools, materials and equipment, *for example, soft play area, adapted bikes, larger targets, shorter distances, balls with roughened surfaces*
- providing support from adults or other pupils when needed, but giving pupils space and freedom to do things for themselves and allowing pupils time to respond and use a range of equipment
- providing alternative activities, where necessary, to overcome difficulties with manipulating tools, equipment or materials, *for example, while some children may be able to explore whole body movements in the gym, some may need to explore them in the swimming pool where their bodies have greater freedom to move*
- taking account of the pace at which pupils work and of the physical effort required, and giving them time to be correctly positioned for the activity
- ensuring a balance of consistency and challenge, according to individual needs.

PE can help pupils develop their broader communication and literacy skills through encouraging interaction with other pupils as well as staff. With some pupils, communication and literacy skills will develop through using a range of visual, written and tactile materials, *for example, large print, symbols and symbol text*. These skills will also develop as pupils use ICT and other technological aids. Other pupils' skills develop as they use alternative and augmentative communication, *for example, body movements, eye gaze, facial expressions and gestures including pointing and signing*.

All aspects of the programme of study are appropriate for all pupils if they are suitably adapted. When planning schemes of work, staff should:

- select a specific focus from the programme of study
- make it relevant to pupils' experiences
- identify clear expectations for pupils
- reinforce and consolidate learning by repetition and variety.

The examples provided in the following sections provide staff with approaches they can use in planning other work in PE.

Opportunities and activities at key stage 1

Much of the PE programme of study at key stage 1 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities. All pupils can contribute in group work with others at their own level of ability.

The focus of teaching PE at key stage 1 may be on giving pupils opportunities to:

- develop a simple single action repertoire
- increase the range of movement in single actions
- develop basic control and coordination of single actions
- develop a small range of consistent reactions to different stimuli
- begin to develop an element of purpose or intent in some actions.

Given these opportunities in PE at key stage 1:

all pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)	learn to control and coordinate a small range of mainly single actions. They control some of their spontaneous movement and develop a small repertoire of actions and whole body movements.
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most pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject	respond to some stimuli and produce actions or movements as reactions to them in a consistent manner. They begin to be aware of what they want to do and move with some intent.
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a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject	produce a wider range of actions and whole body movements with greater control. They use two or more single actions consecutively and respond to stimuli more clearly and consistently. There is greater intent in their actions.
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The following activities show how units of work can be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and provide examples of an approach staff can take with other units.

Dance activities

Pupils explore basic body movements and actions using different parts of their bodies.

Pupils acquire and develop skills

They may:

- explore moving and/or using objects in a variety of ways in response to different types of music, *for example, crawling, sliding, rolling, rocking, rowing with a partner, moving backwards, forwards and sideways, waving streamers, ribbons and material*
- use action rhymes and songs, *for example, 'Follow my leader'*
- move different parts of their bodies to different instruments, *for example, fingers to the sound of a triangle, feet to the sound of a drum beat*
- use mirrors to watch different parts of their bodies moving.

Pupils select and apply skills, tactics and compositional ideas

They may:

- be helped to follow and respond to simple instructions, *for example, 'stretch', 'bend', 'curl', 'stop', 'start'*
- be helped to select one or two familiar actions or movements to make a short sequence, *for example, symbols and photographs may be used to help them remember or as a prompt for what to do next.*

Pupils gain knowledge of fitness and health

They may:

- look at photographs of themselves doing different activities or use symbols to communicate how they feel, *for example, hot, sweaty, panting.*

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- watch and communicate about each other moving in different ways.

Swimming activities

Pupils explore different ways to move in the water independently, with an adult, or using a variety of appropriate aids. Songs and rhythms may be used to encourage pupils to move.

Pupils acquire and develop skills

They may:

- experience being in the water with an adult guiding their body movements, *for example, splashing, being moved from side to side*
- explore ways of moving in the water, *for example, walking, stretching, kicking their legs or moving their arms freely*
- explore and use a range of swimming and buoyancy aids
- explore ways of travelling with a partner, *for example, holding hands and walking together or going round and round*
- feel the buoyancy and support of the water.

Pupils select and apply skills, tactics and compositional ideas

They may:

- with help, propel themselves in the water on their front and back using different parts of their bodies, *for example, kicking legs or pushing arms back and forth*
- be helped to feel safe in the water and encouraged to put their heads and different parts of their bodies under the water
- be encouraged to listen and attend to instructions.

Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of fitness and health

They may:

- communicate how their bodies feel in the water and the temperature of the water, *for example, recognising when they are warm or cold*
- be helped to understand about the dangers of water and rules to keep them safe.

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- demonstrate the movements they can make and copy others' movements
- be helped to select appropriate swimming aids
- communicate what they like or dislike about swimming.

Opportunities and activities at key stage 2

Much of the programme of study for key stage 2 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities. Throughout key stage 2, staff can maintain and reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding introduced during key stage 1 by applying these in different areas, and introduce new learning.

The focus of teaching PE at key stage 2 may be on giving pupils opportunities to:

- use a number of single actions consecutively
- improve control and coordination of actions and movements
- respond more consistently to a range of stimuli and situations
- repeat actions and movements with consistency
- vary their response to situations and stimuli through feedback, help and copying
- begin to realise that activity and movement change the way their body feels.

Given these opportunities in PE at key stage 2:

<p>all pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)</p>	<p>have opportunities to acquire a wider range of skills, actions and whole body movements. They begin to develop a range of skills, select skills, actions and movements for a purpose, and are aware that familiar situations or stimuli need specific types of responses. They have opportunities to experience or take part in games and to use equipment.</p>
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<p>most pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject</p>	<p>start to move and use skills with greater intent and purpose. They recognise that responses they make achieve their intentions and repeat these with increasing control, coordination and consistency. They become aware of a few possible variations and begin, with help, to try out alternatives.</p>
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a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject start to use whole body movements to travel with greater coordination and purpose. They recognise familiar stimuli and situations and react to these in a consistent manner. They use single actions and skills with greater intent and perform them consecutively with greater fluency and control. They begin to vary actions and skills with help. They carry out basic sequences of movements and collaborate in simple games or partnered activities with other pupils.

The following activities show how units of work can be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and provide examples of an approach staff can take with other units.

Dance activities

Pupils create and link a range of dance actions and perform a dance. They work with a partner or in small groups. Their partner may be an adult.

Pupils acquire and develop skills

They may:

- watch how different toys work and use these as a starting point to copy actions and understand how they link together, *for example, jack-in-the-box, spinning top, jumping frogs, remote-controlled car, computer 'Roamer' toy where an adult could programme sequences to match the abilities of the pupils*
- listen and respond to action words, *for example, walking, marching on the spot, moving around the room*
- imitate movements of other pupils or an adult, *for example, mirroring activities*
- use the sound beam to make large and small movements.

Pupils select and apply skills, tactics and compositional ideas

They may:

- learn to stop and start, and change direction (taking care to avoid others) in response to sounds *such as a clap* and instruments *such as a drum*
- change their own movement in response to sounds, instruments and music, *for example, slowing down, moving faster*
- be helped to freeze their position when the music stops
- learn that a sequence has a beginning, a middle and an end
- link actions they have explored and developed to make a simple dance.

Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of fitness and health

They may:

- learn to warm up at the beginning of the session
- learn to relax at the end of the session, *for example, tighten, clench and release different body parts, spend a few minutes breathing and listening to calming music*
- use symbols or a photograph to show how they feel, *for example, cool, calm*
- communicate what happens to their breathing when they are dancing and when still
- communicate about what happens to their heartbeat before and after dancing.

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- watch and communicate about actions and movements others make and what body parts they use.

Games activities

Pupils explore and use a range of equipment and develop skills in games with a partner or in a team. Before this, pupils will have explored and used a variety of balls, beanbags and quoits and developed single action skills.

Pupils acquire and develop skills

They may:

- use equipment in different ways, *for example, throwing or kicking a ball at a large target, playing swing ball, throwing and bouncing balls on Lycra, throwing a ball or beanbag through an upright hoop, reaching for, and placing, equipment in a space, hoop or basket with the distances increasing*
- track balls or quoits of different shapes and sizes.

Pupils select, and apply skills, tactics and compositional ideas

They may:

- explore different ways of sending equipment to a partner or in a team, *for example, pushing, throwing, catching, releasing, passing, striking using a variety of bats, sticks and rackets*
- explore ways of using space, *for example, dodging, finding and moving into a space*
- be helped to understand the concept of a team and working with a partner, *for example, what a team is, how it is made up and the different roles in it*
- be helped to keep simple scores, *for example, one point for hitting the target.*

Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of fitness and health

They may:

- take part in activities that will increase their heart beat (if appropriate) and are shown ways to warm up
- be helped to understand that physical activities are enjoyable, and communicate why it can be good to exercise and get out of breath.

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- watch each other playing and use their skills, *for example, passing a ball to a partner*
- communicate what is happening, what others are doing and copy how others act and work
- watch videos or live games and communicate what is happening.

Opportunities and activities at key stage 3

Teaching PE during key stage 3 can reinforce earlier learning as well as develop new skills. Any modifications will need to take into account the age of the pupil.

The focus of teaching PE at key stage 3 may be on giving pupils opportunities to:

- develop the range and quality of skills, actions and whole body movements
- select skills, actions and movements with clear intent to suit the purpose of a specific activity
- develop a wider range of responses to specific situations, stimuli and activities
- use movement to explore their world and to learn about it
- be more aware of others and how to relate to them in different activities
- develop a basic understanding of rules and conventions in activities
- move and use equipment safely
- recognise differences in responses to situations and stimuli, and in how their bodies feel during activities and exercises.

Given these opportunities in PE at key stage 3:

all pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)	become more confident and coordinated in their ability to move and produce actions that link together. They use movement to explore their world.
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most pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject	select and apply movements and actions to suit specific activities. They work in the context of different areas of activity and play simple games and produce short sequences in dance and gymnastic activities that they remember and repeat. They begin to express ideas and feelings through movement. They use a greater variety of responses to different situations and stimuli.
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a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject describe and comment on their own work and that of others, recognising some differences. They develop an awareness of how to move and use equipment safely. They can describe in simple language how their bodies feel during activities.

The following activities show how units of work can be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and provide examples of an approach staff can take with other units.

Dance activities

Pupils focus on creating characters and narrative through movement and gesture. They work in pairs or small groups or with adults.

Pupils explore

They may:

- visit a fun fair, *for example, riding the roller coaster, ghost train, dodgems, water splash*
- communicate about super heroes, *for example, Batman, Joker and Catwoman.*

Pupils develop skills

They may:

- watch extracts of films or visit different places to observe actions and movements and explore pattern in movements, *for example, starting slow, speeding up and slowing down*
- explore how poses, stances and movement express different emotions and characteristics, *for example, anger, fists clenched; relaxed, hands in pocket; frightened, hands over ears and eyes closed; old age / weariness, slow, bent; excitement, fast, skipping.*

Pupils make and apply decisions

They may:

- be encouraged to use the space under and around each other
- work with others to create arches and tunnels
- be helped to form and sustain shapes and build up sequences

- create dance motifs that bring out the character or dramatic effect of the theme chosen, *for example, the fun fair or super heroes*, using movements that they have explored and practised.

Pupils learn to make informed decisions about healthy, active lifestyles

They may:

- communicate why dance is a healthy activity
- learn why it is important to warm up and cool down
- be encouraged to stretch to warm up and cool down.

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- practise and refine dance phrases
- communicate about actions, simple dynamic qualities and the way space is used
- communicate how different dances and movements make them feel, and what they like and dislike.

Gymnastic activities

Pupils use the floor and/or apparatus to create and perform a sequence of contrasting actions or body shapes. They work individually or in pairs with either another pupil or an adult. Before this, they will have made sequences of different actions, *for example, jump, balance, roll*, and linked actions on the floor with actions on the apparatus.

Pupils develop skills

They may:

- explore ways to vary and apply their actions, moving in different directions, changing speed and/or level and using apparatus set out in different ways, *for example, climbing on, over and through low gym tables with inclined benches attached, sliding in different directions using a glide sheet and varying the speed of their rolling, turning around to continue moving, changing direction to avoid obstacles or other people*

- practise controlling their movements, *for example, holding a shape or fixed position before moving on to the next, transferring weight from one part of the body to another*
- explore and practise ways to balance, *for example, on their bottom, back, tummy*, and how to link them, moving in and out of positions of stillness
- explore the same basic shape and how to vary it slightly and explore and link different body shapes.

Pupils make and apply decisions

They may:

- devise, perform and repeat sequences
- demonstrate easy combinations of contrasting actions, *for example, high to low*
- be helped to devise and remember sequences using symbol cards or verbal prompts
- demonstrate ways to start and finish a sequence
- copy or mirror sequences
- learn how to put the apparatus away safely.

Pupils learn to make informed decisions about healthy, active lifestyles

They may:

- communicate which parts of the body are important for gymnastic activities
- make up, practise and remember different stretching exercises
- communicate why it is important to warm up and stretch
- describe the short-term effects of exercising on the body, *for example, comparing and contrasting breathing and heart rates when resting, and during and after exercise*
- be helped to find their pulse and feel the changes before and after exercise
- be helped to work safely on their own and with a partner.

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- compare and contrast sequences
- be helped to select the best performance and communicate why it was chosen
- be helped to look at ways of improving their performance
- develop an appropriate vocabulary.

Opportunities and activities at key stage 4

Teaching PE during key stage 4 can reinforce earlier learning as well as develop new skills. Any modifications will need to take into account the age of the pupil.

The focus of teaching PE at key stage 4 may be on giving pupils opportunities to:

- develop greater consistency in the selection and application of skills
- develop basic skills specific to the needs of different activities
- use simple tactics and compositional ideas
- develop a better understanding of the nature and purpose of different activities
- know the value and enjoyment of exercise and activity
- know that preparation for, and recovery from, activity and exercise is important
- identify differences in their own and others' work and know some ways to improve work
- know about different types of exercise and how they help to develop fitness, health and well-being
- meet challenges in outdoor activities and in the community.

Given these opportunities in PE at key stage 4:

all pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)	experience a wide range of activities designed to meet their individual needs. They start to identify and choose to be involved in activities they prefer.
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most pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject	have a limited but secure range of skills and movements they can select from, and apply in, creative, competitive and challenging contexts. They recognise some of the benefits of exercise and activity, and know that warming up before, and cooling down after, activity are important.
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a few pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject identify aspects that are good about performance, recognising differences between their own work and that of others. They can suggest some ideas to improve their own and others' work. They understand that exercise and activity are enjoyable and important to their fitness, health and well-being.

The following activities show how units of work can be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and provide examples of an approach staff can take with other units.

Dance activities

Pupils focus on different visual images. They compose, perform and watch dance.

Pupils develop skills

They may:

- watch dance video and select a theme to work with, *for example, communicating about movements and what they mean*. They explore costumes and settings
- mirror and copy movements from video
- respond to lights and images
- improvise freely in response to different music, tempos and atmospheres.

Pupils make and apply decisions

They may:

- learn to identify and form recognised patterns, *for example, ABA, ABCCBA*
- select the music they want to use and discuss how they are going to put the performance together
- be helped to plan a simple dance framework.

Pupils learn to make informed decisions about healthy, active lifestyles

They may:

- understand and become involved in some dance activities that make them feel warmer, mobilise their joints and stretch their bodies
- discuss why they need to warm up, mobilise joints and stretch muscles before dancing and why they need to stretch, relax and breathe slowly to gradually calm the body down after dancing.

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- practise and refine their dance phrases
- be encouraged to suggest ways to improve their own and others' dances.

Athletic activities

Pupils continue to develop, practise and refine basic skills specific to the activity they are engaged in. They may set challenges and targets for distance or time and improve their own performance in a range of athletic activities. Before this, they will have been timed in running or completing (that is, using their wheelchair) long and short distances and have made up and measured a range of throwing and jumping events.

Pupils develop skills

They may:

- practise the basic skills of running/travelling, jumping and throwing for speed, height, distance and accuracy, appropriate to the individual, singly, and in combination, with precision, power or stamina
- practise, combine and refine skills, *for example, running, stopping and throwing a ball, throwing a range of objects using different actions.*

Pupils make and apply decisions

They may:

- select equipment suited to the task
- take part in different activities in a range of venues, *for example, running, jumping and throwing, obstacle and/or relay races*
- explore a range of roles, *for example, starting a race by banging a drum or blowing a whistle, judging an activity by comparing and making a fair judgement about the outcome*
- be helped to understand the need for pacing themselves, *for example, keeping a steady pace for longer distances*
- be helped to set personal targets in different events and to understand how to use their skills to meet targets and record their achievements.

Pupils learn to make informed decisions about healthy, active lifestyles

They may:

- be helped to understand what fitness, strength and stamina are and how they benefit the body
- be encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety during athletic activities
- demonstrate warm up exercises they have devised.

Pupils evaluate and improve performance

They may:

- be helped to evaluate their own and others' performance and recognise improvement, *for example, the distance thrown or times achieved*, and to improve their performance.

Performance descriptions

These performance descriptions outline early learning and attainment before level 1 in eight levels, from P1 to P8.

The performance descriptions can be used by teachers in the same way as the national curriculum level descriptions to:

- decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long-, medium- and short-term planning
- track linear progress towards attainment at national curriculum level 1
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across their subjects
- record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a key stage.

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that some pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

Levels P4 to P8 describe pupils' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject. The descriptions are characteristic of the types of attainment the learners are likely to demonstrate.

P1 (i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, *for example, startling at sudden noises or movements*. Any participation is fully prompted.

P1 (ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, *for example, turning briefly towards fast-moving group activity*. They may give intermittent reactions, *for example, sometimes turning away from people or objects moving close to them*.

P2 (i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, *for example, showing surprise when moving into an outdoor environment*. They begin

to show interest in people, events and objects, *for example, patting at footballs brought towards them*. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, *for example, moving about in the swimming pool with the support of a member of staff*.

P2 (ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, *for example, smiling in dance or movement activities*. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, *for example, gesturing or vocalising in a particular way on arrival at the poolside*. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, *for example, pushing away a ball when it is repeatedly rolled towards them*. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, *for example, being guided in creating patterns of movement*.

P3 (i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, *for example, pointing to a particular piece of PE equipment*. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, *for example, tapping one item of equipment with another*. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, *for example, dabbling their hands in the swimming pool and attending to the effects*. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, *for example, bouncing up and down on a trampette*.

P3 (ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, *for example, pushing a ball towards a peer or adult*. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, *for example, beginning to move when the music starts*. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, *for example, moving towards one outdoor activity rather than another*. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, *for example, moving around a space and encountering a range of objects or obstacles*. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, *for example, reaching out a foot or a hand to intercept a moving ball*.

P4 Pupils' movement patterns are established and they perform single actions, *for example, rolling, running, jumping or splashing*. They respond to simple commands, *for example, 'stop'*. They recognise familiar pieces of equipment, *for example, a ball or hoop*. They show awareness of cause and effect, *for example, knocking down skittles*.

P5 Pupils link two actions in a sequence, *for example, crawling and walking, or climbing and jumping*. They follow simple instructions although they may need the support of symbols or other prompts. They explore a variety of movements and show some awareness of space. They understand some basic concepts, *for example, taking big and little steps in movement activities or placing big and small balls in different baskets*. They take turns with a partner or in a small group. They recognise and collect, on request, familiar pieces of equipment, *for example, a mat to lie on or a hoop to jump into*.

P6 Pupils work in pairs and in small groups cooperatively, although they may need support to follow instructions and keep on task. They move in a variety of ways, *for example, slowly and quickly*. They link movements in a simple sequence, although they may require support to do this. They recognise small and large apparatus and use it with some basic control. They throw and kick a ball, but lack direction.

P7 Pupils express themselves through repetitive and simple sequences and movement patterns. Their control and coordination skills are developing, *for example, they kick a ball towards a target or throw a ball to a partner*. They listen to instructions and stop and start with some accuracy. They work closely in pairs, trios or small groups. They share and wait their turn. They are aware of the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active.

P8 Pupils move with some control and coordination, *for example, they travel under and over climbing equipment*. They follow and imitate sequences and patterns in their movements. They use small and large apparatus safely. They are aware of space, themselves and others. They play simple games and may require support to keep score and follow game rules. They recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active.

About this publication

Who's it for?

This handbook is for all those who work with pupils with learning difficulties. This includes pupils who are often described as having severe, profound and multiple, or moderate learning difficulties. The guidance relates to all pupils aged 5 to 16 who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4.

What's it about?

It provides support materials to schools for planning learning opportunities and activities in physical education for pupils in each key stage. It includes performance descriptions of early learning and attainment in the national curriculum.

What's it for?

It will be useful in developing an inclusive curriculum. It can be used in mainstream schools, special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. It can also support the range of services that work with pupils with learning difficulties.

Related material

This handbook is part of a set of guidance on planning and teaching the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. The entire set, which includes general guidance, guidance on developing skills and subject guidance, can be found on the QCA website at www.qca.org.uk/ld.

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