

A report on how well schools in Wales support children and young people to be healthy and active

May 2008







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- nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities (LAs);
- primary schools;
- secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education:
- adult community-based learning;
- youth and community work training;
- ▲ LAs;
- teacher education and training;
- work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
- ★ the education, guidance and training elements of The Department for Work and Pensions funded training programmes.

Estyn also:

- provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Definition of terms

In this report, the following terms are used broadly to describe proportions.

nearly all with very few exceptions

most 90% or more

many 70% or more

a majority over 60%

half 50%

around half close to 50%

a minority below 40%

few below 20%

very few less than 10%

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Introduction

Background

- The Chief Medical Officer for Wales' Annual Report for 2006¹ recommends that one of the top five priorities to improve health in Wales should be 'Food and Fitness'. The report says that "the rising epidemic of obesity in children and adults needs to be strategically addressed by working on all the factors which contribute to our obesogenic society which encourages a sedentary lifestyle, and over-consumption of convenience foods and sugary drinks"².
- In 2006, the Welsh Health Survey reported that 22% of boys and 17% of girls aged 13 are overweight or obese³. Obesity in childhood increases the likelihood of obesity in adulthood, leading to life expectancy being reduced by nine years. Obesity in childhood can cause:
 - high blood pressure;
 - extra strain on the heart;
 - diabetes;
 - increased risk of asthma;
 - defects of foot function and structure due to strain; and
 - depression, poor self-esteem, eating disorders and other psychological problems.
- 3 The Welsh Health Survey also found that only 36% of the 16-24 age group consume five or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day, the lowest proportion of any age group.
- Schools are important partners in addressing health issues in Wales. A majority of schools in Wales are now part of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS)⁴. The Welsh Assembly Government has a five-year Food and Fitness Implementation Plan⁵ that outlines action to improve nutrition and levels of physical activity amongst children and young people. It funds a range of initiatives to help promote healthy living in schools, including:
 - food and fitness grants though the WNHSS;
 - The Physical Education and School Sports (PESS) initiative;

¹ http://wales.gov.uk/dphhp/publication/cmo/reports/report2006/cmoreport2006?lang=en

² Page 3, Annual Report 2006, Chief Medical Officer for Wales

³ www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/568/Childhood%20Obesity%20Booklet%20%28E%26W%29.pdf

⁴ http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/children/schools/wnhss/?lang=en

⁵ http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/food/action/?lang=en

- The Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative;
- The '5x60' programme⁶;
- The Class Moves! ®7;
- A Cooking Bus for Wales⁸;
- key stage 1 school milk scheme; and
- Safe Routes to Schools⁹.
- The Welsh Assembly Government has also provided schools with guidance on the following aspects of healthy living: Think Healthy Vending, Fruit Tuck Shop Guidance, Healthier Lunchboxes, and Healthier Children. It published a progress report on the implementation of Food and Fitness Promoting Physical Activity for Children and Young People: 5 Year Implementation Plan June 2006-June 2007.
- The Welsh Assembly Government introduced Personal and Social Education (PSE) as a statutory part of the basic curriculum in primary and secondary schools from September 2003. A new PSE Framework for 7-19 year-olds will be introduced from September 2008 and PSE for 3-7 year-olds will be at the heart of the Foundation Phase curriculum¹⁰.
- The Food in Schools Working Group published a report, Appetite for Life, that offers proposals to improve the quality and nutritional standards of all food and drink served in schools. This report included preliminary findings from a study commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government and Food Standards Agency, Wales, on pupil food choices and the factors influencing choice in 18 primary and 18 secondary schools in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government published the final report of this study in October 2006 and launched an action plan in November 2007¹¹.
- The WNHSS issued a book of case studies¹² in relation to food and fitness in July 2006, featuring one school's work in each of the 22 local authority areas in Wales. Guidance on developing a whole-school food and fitness policy was published in March 2007.
- 9 The Eco-Schools programme supports schools in addressing environmental and sustainable development issues. For many schools their involvement in the programme leads to the use of local, healthier food options. It also encourages

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⁶ See glossary

⁷ http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/children/schools/exercise/?lang=en

The Cooking Bus is a mobile classroom that provides schools with practical cooking lessons for pupils, teacher training sessions, and sessions for parents of young children. It is initially visiting schools in Communities First areas and will work with between 35 and 50 schools a year on average.

http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk/index.php?f=wales.htm

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/curriculum_and_assessment/arevisedcurriculum forwales/?lang=en

¹¹ http://wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/4038232/403829/1822473/appetiteforlifeactionplane?lang=en http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/cmo/improvement/food/in-perspective-food-e?lang=en

pupils to be more active as a result of walking or cycling to school or taking part in gardening, landscaping and building work¹³.

In 2004, the Children's Commissioner for Wales published a report¹⁴ on school toilets. The Commissioner concluded that there was "some serious cause for concern about the undermining of children and young people's rights and entitlements through the lack of suitable sanitation facilities within their schools". The National Public Health Service published the report¹⁵ of the Outbreak Control Team into the outbreak of *E.coli* in South Wales in the autumn of 2005. One of the nine recommendations of this report is that "national minimum standards for ensuring good hygiene within the school environment should be developed".

This report and related work by Estyn

- 11 From April 2007, inspectors were required to comment in Key Question 4 on whether a school has arrangements that encourage and enable learners to be healthy. This new inspection requirement was proposed in Estyn's report 'School meals: advice on the role of inspection in monitoring school meal standards' in 2006¹⁶. Estyn published guidance in advance about inspecting healthy living within 'Inspection Matters 8' in September 2006 and followed this with 'Supplementary guidance on inspecting healthy living (including physical activity and food and drink)' in May 2007. The guidance was summarised in Estyn's newsletter to schools in September 2007¹⁷.
- 12 Estyn published a number of reports in 2007 that relate to aspects of healthy living:
 - Progress made in the implementation of the PE and School Sport (PESS) Action Plan¹⁸;
 - Girls' participation in physical activity in schools¹⁹;
 - Sex and relationships guidance²⁰; and
 - Education about substance misuse²¹.
- This report is published in response to a request from the Welsh Assembly Government in the 2007-2008 remit to Estyn to identify how well primary and secondary schools are doing in Wales in improving pupils' health with an emphasis on physical activity and healthy eating.

¹³ http://www.eco-schoolswales.org

¹⁴ http://www.childcomwales.org.uk/publications/School_Toilets_Report.pdf.

¹⁵ http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/719/E%20coli%20O157%20OCT%20report.pdf.

http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Estyn_report__school_meals.pdf

¹⁷ http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Estyns_Newsletter_for_Schools_September_2007.pdf

¹⁸ http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Sport_Action_Plan_progress_03_07.pdf

http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Girls_participation_in_phyisical_activity_in_schools_July_07.pdf

http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Sex_and_Relationships_Guidance_2007.pdf

http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Substance_Misuse_Children_and_Young_People_in_Welsh_ Assembly_Government_June_2007.pdf

- 14 The evidence base for this report includes:
 - reports on primary and secondary school inspections between September 2005 and December 2007;
 - survey visits to 12 primary schools and 8 secondary schools in the autumn term 2007, which included listening to learners as well as discussions with staff²²; and
 - discussions with 15 local authority school improvement officers and Healthy School co-ordinators.
- The judgements in this report relate to all schools inspected between September 2005 and December 2007 unless specified otherwise in the text.

²² Most of these had been identified as having areas of good practice in relation to healthy living either in a recent inspection report or by a local authority officer. Schools from 15 local authorities were in the sample. The size of schools visited ranged from 50-500 pupils for primary schools and from 600-1,600 pupils for secondary schools. Eighteen of the schools are in a Healthy School scheme and nine of the schools are part of a PESS project.

Main findings

Food and drink

- Breakfast clubs, particularly in primary schools, have a positive impact on the health and well-being, behaviour, punctuality and attendance of the pupils who participate.
- 17 The quality of the dining experience affects whether or not pupils choose to have a school meal. Pupils are more likely to have a school meal where:
 - food is freshly prepared;
 - queues are not too long;
 - · the dinner break is long enough;
 - the dining hall is attractive, warm and clean and not overcrowded or noisy;
 - there are small tables and individual chairs rather than long tables with fixed seats;
 - food is served on individual plates and bowls rather than on all-in-one trays; and
 - members of staff dine at tables with pupils.
- Many schools have kitchens that require investment in new facilities. A few schools do not have kitchens on site and meals are prepared elsewhere and transported to the school; the delay between the cooking and serving of food results in meals that are less appealing for pupils.
- Pupils who are allowed off-site at lunch times often buy food in local shops and cafes. Whilst this can be cheaper it is usually not as nutritious as food provided in school. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals often do not take up their free meal if they are allowed off-site, because they wish to be with their friends.
- 20 All schools have improved the range of healthy food and drinks on offer in recent years. Almost all offer healthy options at breakfast clubs, tuck shops, snack bars, canteens and vending machines. Even so, most schools still sell food and drinks of little nutritional value as well.
- Almost all schools provide opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy living issues as part of the curriculum. As a result, pupils generally have a sound knowledge and understanding of healthy living. However, in a majority of the schools surveyed, there are not enough facilities to teach pupils how to cook and prepare food for themselves.
- 22 Many schools do not co-ordinate learning about healthy living effectively across the curriculum. This can lead to repetition and the use of confusingly different models to explain the right balance of foods in a healthy diet. Most members of staff who are responsible for co-ordinating healthy living work receive enough training but this is usually focused on teaching aspects of healthy living rather co-ordinating the delivery of healthy living work across the school.

Physical activity

- 23 Schools that participate in initiatives such as Physical Education and School Sports (PESS) and Dragon Sport are effective in encouraging pupils to be more active. These schools normally provide pupils with the recommended minimum of two hours a week of physical education. However, six out of every 10 of the schools surveyed do not provide this minimum. Many schools find it difficult to provide a wide range of physical activities that all pupils can enjoy and only a few provide alternatives to traditional physical education or sports activities.
- 24 Most schools have good arrangements to encourage pupils to be active during break times and lunch times, but only a few are successful in getting pupils to walk or cycle to school.
- 25 Many schools use community sport facilities well and often this leads to pupils using the facilities outside school time. Many schools have generally good equipment for physical activities, although changing areas and shower facilities are of more variable quality.

Strategic approaches for healthy living

- School leaders are committed to young people's health and well-being. Most schools are actively developing their policies and practices for healthy living, particularly in relation to food and drink. Many use award schemes as a catalyst for this work. This is particularly true of Healthy School schemes and the Eco-Schools programme.
- Nearly all schools rely on extra funding to sustain healthy living work, particularly on targeted funding from the Welsh Assembly Government. Few schools have planned how to continue this work when funding ceases.
- Most schools work well with parents, health and social care professionals, police officers, and local and national voluntary organisations to encourage healthy and active lifestyles. Most pupils think that members of staff in their school are good role models for healthy living.
- Aspects of toilets are unsatisfactory in half of the secondary schools and in a quarter of primary schools surveyed. Where pupils are not happy with the condition of school toilets, they are more likely not to drink enough water during the school day so as to avoid using them.
- The school council in every school surveyed has discussed healthy living in the last two years. In most schools, taking account of the views of pupils has resulted in minor changes to the food and drink available and the arrangements at break times and lunch times. Most school councils have discussed issues that impact on physical activity, particularly the safety of walking to and from school and the range of after-school clubs on offer.
- Only a very few schools have effective systems for evaluating the impact of their healthy living work. Most schools monitor whether planned actions have been carried out rather than evaluating the effectiveness of their actions in improving pupils' health.

Recommendations

Schools should:

- R1 review their lunch time arrangements to ensure that they support healthy living in line with the good practice highlighted in this report;
- R2 plan for and set targets to increase the take-up of free school meals;
- R3 plan to meet the new nutrient, food and drink standards in the Appetite for Life Action Plan²³;
- R4 improve the co-ordination of healthy living work across the curriculum, provide more opportunities for pupils to learn how to prepare food and use a consistent approach to teaching what makes a balanced diet;
- R5 provide pupils with the recommended minimum amount of physical education and offer pupils a wider range of physical activities;
- R6 ensure that toilets and changing facilities meet appropriate minimum standards; and
- R7 evaluate the effectiveness of their actions to improve pupils' health.

The Welsh Assembly Government should work with schools and local authorities to:

- R8 ensure that all schools meet the new nutrient, food and drink standards in the Appetite for Life Action Plan as soon as is practicably possible and set a target date for this;
- R9 fund improvements to catering and dining facilities and facilities for teaching pupils how to prepare and cook food;
- R10 introduce minimum standards for school toilets and changing facilities; and
- R11 provide guidance for schools on how to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions to improve pupils' health.

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²³ http://wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/403829/1822473/appetiteforlifeactionplane?lang=en

How well are schools doing in relation to healthy living?

32 The chart below shows the proportion of grades awarded to schools inspected²⁴ between 1 April 2007 and 31 December 2007 for the question related to healthy living within Key Question 4 of the common inspection framework: 'How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?'.

4.8 To what extent do schools assure the healthy development, safety and well-being of all learners?

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	No schools	
23%	68%	8%	received grade 4 or 5	

- Overall, most schools are doing well in assuring the healthy development, safety and well-being of pupils. The proportion of primary and secondary schools receiving each grade is very similar.
- The good and outstanding features that led to these schools being awarded grade 1 or grade 2 reflect the full range of aspects of healthy living covered in this report. The fact that 70 schools (41%) participated in a Healthy School scheme has had a particularly positive impact in developing healthy living work.

Food and drink

Breakfast

The proportion of pupils attending breakfast clubs varies greatly. In primary schools, attendance ranged from 5% to 59%. Breakfast clubs in secondary schools usually only cater for a very small proportion of pupils. A breakfast club was noted for its contribution to encouraging healthy living in the reports of 17 primary schools and one secondary school inspected between April and December 2007. Research carried out for the Welsh Assembly Government shows that having breakfast at school has a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being, behaviour, learning and social skills²⁵. It also results in improved punctuality and attendance for some pupils.

Most breakfast clubs offer cereal, toast, fruit (in various forms), fruit juice and milk. Cereals are usually low-sugar although a very few schools surveyed offer chocolate-coated cereals. Only a very few schools offer wholemeal bread for toast.

²⁴ This chart is based on the inspection reports from 171 schools.

²⁵ 'A Process Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative', Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Ethics, Cardiff University, March 2007. http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/4038232/1814733/breakfast-process-eval-e?lang=en

Snacks

- Many primary schools sell healthy snacks at break time. This nearly always includes a selection of fresh fruit. Between April and December 2007, 43 primary school inspection reports (29%) noted the contribution a fruit tuck shop made to encouraging healthy living although two schools were criticised for the number of pupils who brought chocolate or crisps from home as a snack. Many schools sell toast in the colder months, although only a few schools use wholemeal bread. Where cereal bars are sold, these are not always healthy and some bars are high in sugar. A few schools still sell biscuits during morning break time.
- A very few primary schools source fruit and vegetables from local community food co-operatives to serve as snacks at break times. This practice effectively supports the promotion of healthy eating within the community.
- 39 Secondary schools sell a variety of products at break time. While healthy options are nearly always available, the majority of pupils choose a bread-based item such as pizza slice, bacon roll or white toast. In many schools, biscuits and cakes, including doughnuts, are available.
- Of the schools surveyed, a few only sell healthy food and drink in vending machines whereas many other schools sell crisps, high-sugar cereal bars, artificially-sweetened flavoured water and sugared soft drinks, and a minority sell chocolate bars. The less healthy products make a significant profit for the school and it is primarily for this reason that these schools are reluctant to stop selling them. One secondary school inspected between April and December 2007 allowed its pupils to buy sugared soft drinks and chocolate at break and lunch times from vending machines at the on-site leisure centre.
- 41 Most schools sell sweets, chocolate, crisps and sugared soft drinks at school events such as school discos, Christmas parties and summer fêtes, although many schools surveyed also used such occasions to promote healthier alternatives such as fruit kebabs and fruit juice cocktails. Banning treat foods at all special events can be counter-productive and alienate pupils from supporting wider healthy-eating work. Only one school surveyed has banned the sale of treats at special events.

Lunch time

42 All the schools surveyed offer healthier food and drink at lunch time than they did five years ago. The number of high-sugar, high-fat or high-salt products available has reduced significantly in many schools. Most schools introduce changes gradually rather than making wholesale changes to menus. Only one school inspected between April and December 2007 had shortcomings in the provision of school meals: pupils reported that the food on offer had a limited nutritional value and there was a limited choice²⁶.

²⁶ School meals are not currently inspected against nutrition standards as part of school inspections. However, inspectors may make broad comments about school meals.

Case study: Sensitive approaches to changing meals in a secondary school

The catering manager in a secondary school has overseen the transformation of the school's catering facility. Over a three-year period she made many small adjustments to the salt, sugar and fat content of the meals without the pupils noticing. Less healthy options such as pastry-based snacks have been removed from the menu one at a time and replaced with healthier alternatives.

During this period, the number of pupils choosing to have a school meal has steadily increased.

The school canteen has recently received a Gold Healthy Options Award²⁷.

- 43 Most primary schools offer chips only once a week whereas chips are available four days a week in many secondary schools. Chips have a high profit margin and caterers are reluctant to reduce the number of days when they are sold because of the impact that it will have on their profit, particularly if they feel under pressure to contribute to local authority or school income targets.
- In the schools surveyed, the average length of lunch time is as follows:
 - 65 minutes for pupils up to Year 2;
 - 59 minutes for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6; and
 - 51 minutes for pupils in Year 7 and above.
- Of the half of primary schools that do not give extra lunch time to pupils up to Year 2, nearly all have a staggered lunch times that allow these pupils to eat first.
- In secondary schools with a lunch time of 45 minutes or less, pupils were noticeably less likely to eat a meal as they felt it took up too much of their lunch time and they wanted to be able to take part in leisure or social activities. One school with a short lunch time counters this disadvantage successfully by offering no lunch-time activities but has a comprehensive after-school programme of activities instead.
- 47 Pupils from Year 7 to 11 are not allowed off-site during lunch time in two-thirds of the secondary schools surveyed. The majority of pupils who are allowed to go off-site usually do so. These pupils buy similar products to those served in the school canteen at a lower price in local shops. However, some of these pupils receive free school meals and instead of taking the free meal they are paying for food off-site. They do not want to stay in school for their free meal because they want to be with their friends, who go off-site during lunch time.
- The length of the queue for food and drink at break times and lunch times affects a pupil's decision about what to eat and drink. Pupils complained about queues in all the secondary schools and in a minority of primary schools surveyed. Around half

²⁷ This award is part of a Pilot Scheme run by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) in 2007-2008 and will be available more widely in the future.

the secondary schools enable pupils to pre-order certain foods – particularly filled baguettes and sandwiches – at the start of the day or during break time. This helps to reduce gueues at lunch time.

- 49 Many school canteens cater well for vegetarians and pupils who have special diets for medical, cultural, ethical or religious reasons. However the range and availability of vegetarian options in a few schools are poor.
- The cost of school meals does not seem to significantly affect whether pupils eat healthy food or not. The price of school meals varies between local authorities and schools within local authorities. The proportion of pupils that have a meal in schools that charge the most is often higher than the average take-up of school meals in Wales. This is because cost is only one factor that affects pupil choice. Most pupils (and their parents) that have to pay for school meals are prepared to pay more for better-quality, healthier food and a pleasant dining experience.

Case study: High quality 'food court' in a large secondary school

A secondary school has worked in partnership with a private catering firm to create a high quality 'food court' catering facility. A cashless system means that all pupils use a personal payment card.

A wide range of good quality meals are available at very competitive prices. In addition to the hot meal of the day (meat and vegetarian options) there is a salad bar, fresh fruit salad bar, baguette bar, jacket potato counter, sandwiches and an extensive range of fruit juices, water and hot drinks.

Most of the items available are sourced locally and have been adapted to healthier options through the reduction in sugar, salt and fat content. Chicken and beef burgers use locally-sourced meat that often comes from one of the pupils' home farms.

Since the introduction of the food court, the school has seen a significant increase in the number of students using the facility. Over 700 students are served at both break and lunch time. Significantly, before the changes, only 60 of the 117 eligible pupils were taking their free school meal but now 114 pupils take it.

- Most schools choose not to suggest to parents what is or is not allowed in packed lunches brought from home. However, the few schools that have tried to limit the content of packed lunches have done so sensitively and successfully and the average packed lunch in these schools was healthier than in other schools.
- One school in an area of high deprivation has an effective tooth-brushing scheme. Pupils in this school are supervised while brushing their teeth after lunch time every day. The school's dental health nurse helps to monitor the scheme. Many pupils' dental health has significantly improved since the scheme was introduced.

- In a minority of primary schools, midday supervisors are very effective in supporting pupils to:
 - make healthy choices in the canteen;
 - try new foods;
 - use good table manners; and
 - play actively and safely in the playground.

Drinking water

- Almost all schools encourage pupils to drink enough water during the day²⁸. They allow pupils to drink at any time so long as it is safe to do so and provide suitable facilities for pupils to access free water. Of the schools inspected between April and December 2007, 33 (19%) were noted for their good practice in encouraging learners to drink water, although one school was criticised for not giving pupils enough access to water. A very few schools or individual teachers do not allow pupils access to drinking water during lessons without good reason.
- A very few schools have water fountains or points for filling water bottles within toilet areas and this is not hygienic.

Learning about healthy eating

- Learning about healthy living is included in the schemes of work for several areas of the curriculum science, PSE, physical education and design and technology in particular. This ensures that all children and young people in schools in Wales receive enough education about healthy living. However, coordinators for these different aspects of the curriculum often do not work together to plan their contributions. This means that different and confusing messages about healthy living are sometimes given to pupils and that time is wasted by repeating work already covered.
- Within a school, different teachers often use different teaching models to help pupils understand a healthy diet. This can be confusing for pupils, especially if the model used in lessons is not the same as a model used at the school canteen. The best schools consistently use the 'eatwell plate' teaching model²⁹, which shows the recommended balance of foods in the diet as portions on a plate.
- In around half the schools surveyed, the design and technology curriculum is used flexibly to teach pupils practical food preparation and cooking skills. A requirement to

²⁸ The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales includes a target that 'all settings that deliver services to children and young people have drinking water readily available in an appropriate place and at no charge' (target 2.42). Further information available from http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?orgid=441.

This 'eatwell plate' was known as the 'Balance of Good Health' model until September 2007. It is promoted by the Food Standards Agency. A full explanation of the model is available from http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/eatwellplate.

teach practical food preparation and cooking skills at key stages 2 and 3 is included in the revised school curriculum for Wales to be introduced in September 2008.

- An increasing number of primary schools involve pupils in growing, cooking and eating their own fruit and vegetables. A small number of schools with large grounds grow enough produce to supply the school canteen from time to time. Involving pupils in this 'planting to plating' cycle gives them a very good understanding of where food comes from, how it grows and is harvested, and how it is prepared, cooked and eaten.
- One school had the Welsh Assembly Government's Cooking Bus on site during the survey. This resource was used very effectively by the school to teach children, to promote healthy cooking to parents and to train teachers. However, only a very small proportion of schools in Wales benefit from this resource each year.

Case study: High profile event to promote health in a primary school in a Communities First area

A primary school that is part of a Healthy School scheme has a well-developed approach to supporting pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle that includes an annual activity week focusing on healthy living. In 2007, a wide range of activities were delivered in partnership with community and health organisations.

The many highlights included a visit to the Cooking Bus for healthy cookery sessions, cycling proficiency training, 'Walk on Wednesdays' walk to school initiative, and various sports sessions featuring sports not usually included in the primary school curriculum.

Parents, governors and members of the community were involved in the event and also attended a training session on the Cooking Bus. The week was advertised in the regular 'Health Update' feature of the school newsletter to parents.

Events like this help to raise the profile of the school's healthy living activities, encourage pupils to try new foods and new activities and engage parents in the work of the school.

- A few secondary schools helpfully include learning about eating disorders in the curriculum. Research shows that an increasing number of young people are affected by eating disorders and that anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are most common amongst girls and young women, generally developing between the ages of 15 and 25 years³⁰.
- A few schools run after-school cooking clubs and these are very popular and often over-subscribed. As well as contributing to a pupils' learning about food they often encourage parents to take a more active interest in what their child is eating.

³⁰ Further information is available from beat (the working name of the Eating Disorders Association) at http://www.b-eat.co.uk/NewsEventsPressMedia/PressMediaInformation/Somestatistics.

Physical activity

- Only 38% of the schools surveyed provide all their pupils with the recommended minimum amount of time for physical education. The Welsh Assembly Government recommends that all pupils have at least 120 minutes of physical education each week³¹. In the schools surveyed, the average amount of time for physical education each week is as follows:
 - 102 minutes for pupils in reception and key stage 1;
 - 115 minutes for pupils in key stage 2;
 - 113 minutes for pupils in key stage 3; and
 - 87 minutes for pupils in key stage 4.
- The percentage of these schools that provide the weekly recommended amount of time at each key stage is as follows:
 - 56% at reception and key stage 1;
 - 78% at key stage 2;
 - 71% at key stage 3; and
 - 29% at key stage 4³².
- As Estyn has previously reported³³, the PESS initiative has led to improvements in almost all the pilot schools in:
 - the quality and range of physical activities on offer;
 - an increase in the curriculum time allocated;
 - an increase in the number of pupils choosing to take part in activities out of school hours; and
 - a decrease in the number of pupils who self-exclude from physical education lessons.
- The specific impact of PESS on healthy living was recognised in the reports on six of the schools inspected between April and December 2007.

http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Sport_Action_Plan_progress_03_07.pdf

³¹ Providing a minimum of two hours of PE for all pupils in primary and secondary schools is stated within health targets 2 and 3 of the Welsh Assembly Government's Climbing Higher Strategy. http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/strategypublications/climbinghigher/targets/?lang=en. The same targets apply to schools in the PESS initiative, as detailed in the guidance notes available at www.sports-council-wales.org.uk/15252.

This figure includes one school where a few pupils who choose to study triple science at key stage 4 only have 60 minutes of PE per week. The figure also excludes one school where about three quarters of the pupils choose to study GCSE PE and as a result have 120 minutes of PE per week.

- Oragon Sport is used extensively and effectively in many primary schools to support 7 to 11 year-olds to take part in more physical activities. The specific impact of Dragon Sport on healthy living was recognised in the reports on seven of the schools inspected between April and December 2007. The 5x60 programme is beginning to make a positive impact in secondary schools that are involved. Successful projects are targeting pupils who tend not choose to take part in physical activities in school.
- A few schools provide good or very good opportunities for pupils who do not like traditional physical education or after-school sports clubs to take part in alternative physical activities. Contemporary dance, yoga, Pilates, kick-boxing, boxercise, martial arts, cheer-leading and gardening are particularly effective activities in this respect.
- Many schools find it difficult to provide some of the physical activities that the pupils ask for. This is usually because these activities are expensive, suitable facilities do not exist locally, teachers are not suitably skilled or qualified to provide them or there are concerns about health and safety. Such activities include mountain biking, skateboarding, trampolining, skiing, rock-climbing and canoeing. Many schools provide 'taster' sessions for these but cannot provide sustained opportunities.
- Many schools have developed good relationships with local sports clubs. In most cases, these are football or rugby clubs but there are examples of schools working well with cricket, tennis, basketball, swimming and life-saving clubs.

Case study: Life-saving club in a primary school

Using Community Focused Schools funding, a primary school has linked with a local beach life-saving club to offer an innovative after-school club for pupils. At the school's junior life-saving club pupils learn water skills and First Aid skills and have a lot of physical activity on the local beach.

This club appeals to many pupils who might not attend more traditional sports clubs after school. It encourages pupils to gain skills that will be useful throughout their life and for the local community.

Physical activity at break times

- Most primary schools set aside areas of the playgrounds for different uses during break and lunch times³⁴. This helps to make sure that pupils are safe and able to enjoy activities of their choice. Football games are not well managed in a few playgrounds; this increases the risk of accidents and injuries and restricts the opportunities for pupils who would prefer to play other games.
- Pupils have access to a range of play equipment in most primary schools. Sixteen schools (11%) inspected between April and December 2007 were praised specifically for the equipment they provide for pupils and the contribution this makes to encouraging them to be active and healthy.

³⁴ The Welsh Assembly Government's 'In The Zone' initiative promotes the effective management of playgrounds. Further information is available at http://www.sports-council-wales.org.uk/12045.

Case study: Encouraging activity in a primary school with limited outdoor space

A medium-sized primary school in south-east Wales has limited space for physical activities in two small playgrounds. To make the best use of the space available and promote pupils' fitness, the school has introduced fitness challenges at break time.

Challenges are announced in assembly on Monday mornings and equipment is provided for pupils. The challenges are simple but energetic. An example for infant pupils is to count the number of hops they can make on one foot for sixty seconds. Older pupils are asked, for example, to try to spin a hoop on their hips for sixty seconds. Pupils are encouraged to practise and develop their skills before taking the challenge towards the end of the week. They work in pairs to time their challenges and results are recorded. Small prizes are awarded in assemblies for those who succeed.

Previous challenges are sometimes repeated and pupils are encouraged to improve their scores. Pupils enjoy these activities and persevere to improve their performance. The challenges help to improve pupils' fitness levels in an enjoyable way and they solve the problem of how to accommodate physical activities in small grounds.

- Many primary schools have effective peer-support schemes at break times and lunch times. Children are trained to help other children to play games, as well as to support children who are upset and to mediate in low-level disputes.
- A few primary schools have innovative schemes to encourage children to exercise every day. In one school, the children are asked to jog a lap of the yard at the end of break time before going back inside. In another school, the children have personal targets in kilometres that they reach over time by jogging several laps around a measured section of the yard.

Travel to school

Most schools have tried to encourage more pupils to walk or cycle to school. However the success of schemes such as 'walking buses' is variable and usually relies on the goodwill and voluntary support of parents.

Case study: 'Walking bus' in a primary school with a high proportion of pupils who receive free school meals

As part of its Eco-Schools work, this primary school set up a 'walking bus'. Pupils are taken by their parents to a convenient meeting point in the community. From here they walk in a line of pairs (forming a 'bus' shape) to school together, supervised by parent volunteers at the front, side and rear. The scheme is well supported by parents and pupils. It encourages children to walk to school, which has health and social benefits. It also reduces the number of cars around the school, which has environmental and safety benefits.

In schools where the majority of pupils rely on transport (for example, many schools in rural areas and some Welsh-medium schools) there is a limited range of breakfast and after-school clubs.

³⁵ A walking bus involves pupils meeting at convenient start point in the local community and walking safely together with adult supervisors to the school.

How strategic are schools' approaches to healthy living?

Leadership and management

77 Headteachers are committed to the health, safety and well-being of pupils and most have made this a core part of their vision for the school. Schools with the best practice in healthy living usually have a member of the senior manager team who has overall responsibility for this. The manager effectively oversees the work of all members of staff that have responsibility for co-ordinating or delivering aspects of healthy living.

Case study: Staff as role models in a secondary school

A secondary school headteacher actively encourages all members of staff to adopt a healthy lifestyle. An INSET day was set aside for members of staff to learn about healthy living and how they can be good role models. Members of staff were encouraged to follow a healthy diet and be more active.

All members of staff had health screening sessions using the local health facilities. Cholesterol, blood pressure, weight and sugar levels of all staff were tested. Activities provided for staff during the day included golf, dancing, badminton, walking and massage and health treatments.

The pupils at the school say that members of staff are 'very good role models'. In support of their view, they say that they had never seen any of them drinking sugared soft drinks and they can list members of staff that cycle to school.

- The governing body in most schools is very supportive of healthy living. Governors often challenge the staff on health issues and are particularly keen to see improvements in school meals and accommodation.
- A few schools already have a healthy-living policy or separate policies for food and for physical activity. Ten schools (6%) inspected between April and December 2007 had their healthy eating policy recognised in their report for its impact and a further two schools had a wider healthy-living policy. Many schools are in the process of developing a policy.
- 80 Many schools use award schemes well as a catalyst for improving healthy living work. This is particularly true of Healthy School schemes and the Eco-Schools programme.
- Most teachers responsible for coordinating aspects of healthy living receive enough training on healthy living. Much of this training has been facilitated by the local Healthy School co-ordinators or PESS co-ordinators. Personal and social education advisers and teacher advisers, in authorities where they exist, contribute well to the professional development of staff.

- Sustainable development is a priority for most schools. The cost of changing suppliers to take account of the desire to promote fair trade, discourage intensive farming methods and reduce 'food miles'³⁶ has to be balanced alongside the cost of providing healthier food and drink. Schools and caterers often have to compromise between cost and sustainability in relation to the procurement of food.
- Many schools rely on extra funding for work on healthy living and only a few have planned how to continue the work if and when funding ceases. Most of the extra funding schools receive comes from the Welsh Assembly Government and this supports, for example, breakfast clubs, PESS, the 5x60 programme and work as part of a Healthy School scheme. A few schools are using British Council grants well to link with schools across Europe to share good practice on healthy living and develop aspects of policy and the curriculum. A few schools have a member of staff who works to secure additional sources of funding that are often related to healthy living activities. The funding secured for the school by this person usually far exceeds the cost of their time.

Approach to health issues

- All schools regard 'healthy living' as being about the health of the whole person in a broad sense rather than just a focus on 'food and fitness'.
- All schools provide support for pupils' mental health and well-being. A pupil in a secondary school included in the survey said: "you cannot concentrate on taking care of your health if you are unhappy." Good work to support pupils' mental health and well-being in primary and secondary schools includes the effective provision of:
 - peer support schemes;
 - · school-based counselling services;
 - learning coaches; and
 - curriculum activities such as the use of a 'box of feelings'³⁷, Persona Dolls³⁸, circle time and a theatre forum.

³⁶ 'Food miles' refers to the distance food has travelled from where it is farmed to where it is eaten.

³⁷ A 'box of feelings' supports the social and emotional development of two to seven year-olds through activities around four basic feelings. More information is available from http://www.cego.be/CEGO_C01/default.asp?CustID=550&ComID=7&ModID=100&ItemID=0.

³⁸ Persona Dolls effectively help children to explore their feelings and to help develop care and respect for others. More information is available from http://www.persona-doll-training.org.

Case study: Healthy minds in a junior school

A junior school believes that a healthy lifestyle includes a healthy mind and therefore the strategy for healthy living has a strong emphasis on developing emotional well-being. The strategy is delivered across the curriculum and through pastoral support systems.

The pupils are encouraged to reflect often on their development. Pupils regularly evaluate their own progress in learning. Children are encouraged, publicly or privately, to share any concerns they have. Some children have been trained by the school, in partnership with the local authority, to be peer mediators. They lead games and help to resolve arguments in the yard at break times. They support vulnerable or unhappy children by looking out for them and encouraging them to take part in activities.

The school also effectively uses a secure system on the internet to enable pupils to support each other and to share concerns with members of staff in their school.

The pupils value the variety of opportunities they have to receive and give support in the school and believe it means that they are healthier as they are happier.

- Learning about sexual health and substance misuse is linked well to health overall in most schools. Estyn reported on how well schools support pupils in relation to sex and relationships and substance misuse in 2007³⁹.
- Faith schools in particular often have a focus on spiritual health. The spiritual ethos in these schools often supports other work on healthy living.

Case study: Rights-based approach in a primary school with a high proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals

A primary school has worked in partnership with UNICEF to emphasise the link between children's rights and healthy living. Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child refers to the 'right to health care of a high standard, clean drinking water, nutritious food and a clean environment to stay healthy'. Stimulating rights-based learning activities enables the pupils to have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities with regard to their own health and that of others.

The school is the first primary school in Wales to receive UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award Level 1.

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³⁹ See paragraph 12 of this report.

Accommodation and facilities

- Most schools use their grounds well as a learning resource. Schools that have little or no grassed areas in their grounds usually use alternative local facilities well. Some schools have problems with vandalism and this limits what the school can provide for pupils out-of-doors if schools cannot afford enough security.
- Many primary schools have installed extensive climbing and play equipment in the grounds. However, a minority of these schools do not allow pupils to use this equipment during break and lunch times because of concerns about health and safety, and these are missed opportunities.
- A few schools do not have enough shaded areas outside to protect pupils from the risk of the sun damaging their skin, potentially leading to skin cancer.
- 91 Many primary and secondary schools use community facilities for physical education and sports well or very well. Often this means that pupils will use community facilities more after school.
- Inspection reports for primary and secondary schools show that conditions in toilets are improving, although too many are still in an unsatisfactory state. In primary schools, 8% of toilets were found to be unsatisfactory during inspections between 2006 and 2007, compared to 9% between 2003 and 2004. Toilets in 19% of secondary schools were found to be unsatisfactory during inspections between 2006 and 2007, compared to 33% of schools between 2003 and 2004.
- 93 Conditions in toilets are unsatisfactory in half of secondary schools and a quarter of primary schools surveyed. The aspects that are unsatisfactory include:
 - a lack of toilet paper, locks on toilet doors, soap, hot water, mirror, paper towels or working hand-dryer;
 - inadequate sanitary provision for girls in primary schools;
 - an unpleasant smell;
 - a lack of maintenance during the day;
 - the general condition of the room or cubicles;
 - closed toilets during lesson time;
 - a lack of access for wheelchair users; and
 - not enough toilets for the number of pupils in the school.
- The report into the *E.coli* outbreak in South Wales in 2005 found that hygiene standards in some schools were 'below what was required to prevent disease transmission'⁴⁰. Furthermore, if pupils are not happy with the school toilets they are

⁴⁰ http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/719/E%20coli%20O157%20OCT%20report.pdf, p53

more likely to not drink or eat enough during the day so that they do not need to use them and this can cause physical and psychological problems. Standards for toilets are set out in the School Toilet Charter⁴¹.

- Changing and shower areas in schools are of variable quality. One secondary school has invested money in the girls changing rooms and has seen more girls take part in physical activities as a result. Showers are not always provided and the shower areas in two secondary schools were unusable when surveyed.
- The quality of the dining experience impacts on whether pupils choose to have a school meal or not. Pupils are more likely to have a meal where:
 - the dining hall is attractive, warm and clean and not overcrowded or noisy;
 - there are small tables and individual chairs rather than long tables with fixed seats and food is served on individual plates and bowls rather than on all-in-one trays; and
 - members of staff dine at tables with pupils.
- 97 The dining facilities in many secondary schools restrict how quickly pupils can be served and how many pupils can sit at a table. Many headteachers believe that their school canteen would not cope with a significant increase in the number of pupils choosing to have a school meal and this affects how strongly they promote it.
- Many schools have kitchens that require investment in new facilities. A few schools do not have kitchens on site and meals are prepared elsewhere and transported to the school. This can adversely affect the quality of the food. In a majority of schools surveyed there are not enough facilities to teach food preparation and cooking skills.

Partnership working

In the schools that are most effectively addressing healthy living issues, the whole school community works together to common aims. Teachers, support assistants, caterers, caretakers, visiting specialist workers and others all share the same vision and understand the role that everyone has to play.

100 Almost all parents cooperate when schools work in partnership with them to address health issues. The most successful schools communicate regularly with parents through letters, meetings and special events and consult with them before making any significant changes to policy. This ensures that there is a shared understanding about the school's approach. Only a very few parents have objected to requests for pupils not to bring chocolate, sweets, crisps or sugared drinks to school on the grounds of 'civil rights'.

⁴¹ This Charter has been developed by the national charity ERIC, the Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence. The charter is available from www.bog-standard.org/charter.aspx.

- 101 An increasing number of schools are using parents and community volunteers well to support healthy living work. This includes maintaining fruit and vegetable allotments and grounds for play, supervising outdoor learning such as Forest School⁴² activities and staffing 'walking buses'. Most schools involve parents and members of the local community with specialist skills in supporting learning activities, particularly those working in hospitality, health care, environmental activities and sports activities.
- 102 Many schools use health and social care professionals, police officers, and local and national voluntary organisations effectively to support pupils' learning about healthy living. In a minority of schools, sessions delivered by outside visitors are given in isolation and pupils are not prepared enough for the visit and do not have enough follow-up activities to consolidate their learning.
- 103 Many schools work well with local or national companies to promote healthy living and develop interesting learning experiences for pupils. This often includes stimulating visits to places such as farms, factories, supermarkets, sports stadiums and leisure venues.
- 104 Schools that are part of the PESS project have developed good links with other local primary and secondary schools. They have shared facilities, expertise and training and this has helped to improve work on physical activity in these schools.

Listening to learners

105 The school council in every school surveyed has discussed healthy living in the last two years. Most school councils have discussed issues that affect physical activity, particularly the safety of people walking to and from school and the range of after-school clubs on offer. The school council's role in the development of healthy living was significant enough for it to be specifically noted in the reports of 10 schools (6%) inspected between April and December 2007. In most schools, taking account of the views of pupils has resulted in minor changes to the food and drink available and the arrangements at break times and lunch times.

106 Almost all the pupils questioned:

- have a good knowledge and understanding of healthy living;
- can describe recent learning activities at school about healthy living;
- think that school meals are improving every year in terms of how healthy they are and their quality;
- think that food is significantly less healthy in secondary schools than in primary schools; and
- think that, overall, the members of staff in their school are good role models for healthy living.

⁴² Forest School activities use trees, timber and the forest environment to enable children and young people to develop skills, confidence and self-esteem. Many activities are physically demanding. More information is available from: www.foresteducation.org/forest_schools.php.

Case study: Developing a healthier school meals service in a secondary school

This new school has developed a comprehensive catering service using a private company who have a service-level agreement with the local authority. The general manager of catering is responsible for the catering needs of the whole campus – crèche, primary school, secondary school and the lifelong-learning centre.

The manager is following the proposals in Appetite for Life proactively. Food in the canteen is very clearly labelled, explaining dietary need and food groups. Large colourful posters promote healthy choices. For example, calcium products were shown on charts with information about why boys and girls need calcium.

A very good selection of fresh salad and fruit is always available. Most of the food available is low in fat, sugar and salt. Healthy pasta dishes are proving popular with pupils. Free tasting sessions are held to encourage pupils to try new healthy foods. The canteen uses local products as far as possible including local dairy products, Welsh beef, fresh vegetables and fruit.

The school holds regular meetings for parents to explain what is available in the canteen. There is a healthy-eating forum for parents, pupils and staff to discuss issues to do with food and drink in the school. The local authority's dietician usually attends these meetings to support the school and answer parents' questions. The school council feeds back to the catering manager once a month the views of pupils about the food and drink available and the service provided.

Overall, the continued participation of pupils and parents in developing the catering service coupled with the enthusiasm and attention to detail provided by the catering manager means that pupils in this school have an excellent facility.

Monitoring and evaluation

Only a very few schools have effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of healthy living work. Almost all schools rely on the processes required for at least one relevant award scheme to monitor and evaluate aspects of healthy living work – Healthy School schemes and the Eco-Schools programme being the most common. Monitoring and evaluation work in most schools is focused on whether actions have been carried out rather than attempting to measure the effectiveness of their actions to improve pupils' health, by considering pupils' health-related attitudes and behaviours, for example.

Case study: Fitness monitoring in a secondary school

The physical education department at a secondary school has introduced a programme of fitness-monitoring as part of their health-related fitness module in key stage 3. All pupils take part in the assessment and monitoring of the four areas of fitness. Increasing pupils' levels of physical activity is particularly important.

Trends in performance are used to target specific support to individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils receive awards for improvements and a 'Centurion' leader board is displayed in the sports halls. Results are reported to parents and form the basis of discussions at parents' evenings.

This approach to personalised targets for fitness motivates young people and enables them all to achieve.

- Involving parents in evaluating the effectiveness of a school's work on healthy living is increasing. Many schools have surveyed parents about healthy living issues but only a few have repeated surveys to be able to identify trends. Parents of pupils in one school were asked: "does the school actively promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles?" The proportion of parents agreeing rose significantly from 64% in 2004 to 96% in 2007. Another question in this school asked parents whether they agreed with the statement: "I am satisfied with the meals provided by the local authority catering service". The proportion of parents agreeing rose slightly from 62% in 2004 to 64% in 2007.
- 109 Few schools surveyed have detailed data about the food and drink that pupils were choose at breakfast clubs, tuck shops and canteens. Where data is available only a very few schools analyse this information enough to evaluate how well they are promoting healthy choices or to inform the need for further developments.
- 110 One school is carrying out a controlled trial with a university research department to monitor the health and concentration of pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 while taking supplement tablets over a period of time. Schools that are involved in research such as this benefit from what they learn about themselves and their pupils as well. Other schools also benefit from the dissemination of the research findings.

Glossary

5x60 The 5x60 programme is run by the Sports Council for Wales and

funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. It aims to encourage secondary school pupils to be more active. The

programme was piloted in eight schools in 2006.

Cooking Bus A Cooking Bus is a mobile classroom that provides schools with

practical cooking lessons for pupils, teacher training sessions,

and sessions for parents of young children.

Dragon Sport Dragon Sport is run by the Sports Council for Wales and funded

by the National Lottery. It aims to encourage 7-11 year-olds to be more active by introducing them to a range of sports outside

school physical education lessons and by giving them opportunities to feed into and progress through sports development programmes in clubs and the community.

E.Coli Escherichia coli (E.coli) bacteria are found in the intestine of

humans. Infections with this type of bacteria pose a serious threat to public health with outbreaks arising from contaminated

food and water.

Eco-Schools A highly structured system for the environmental management of

schools programme covers litter, waste minimisation, transport,

healthy living, energy, water, school grounds and global

citizenship.

Forest School Forest School activities use trees, timber and the forest

environment to enable children and young people to develop skills, confidence and self-esteem. Many activities are physically

demanding.

Healthy School There is a Healthy School scheme in each of the 22 local

authorities in Wales. Each scheme is part of the Welsh Network

of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS).

PESS The Physical Education and School Sports (PESS) initiative is

funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and aims to improve

all aspects of PE and school sports.

PSE Personal and Social Education (PSE) comprises all that a school

undertakes to support and promote the personal and social

development and well-being of its learners.

The Class Moves! The Class Moves!® is a programme of relaxation exercises for

primary school children. The programme aims to encourage children to take part in physical exercises, with the objectives of: increasing motivation; improving concentration; raising physical awareness; encouraging sensory-motor development; and

promoting self-care and injury prevention.

UNICEF The United Nations Children's Fund

WNHSS The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS)

encourages the development of local healthy school schemes within a national framework. Each local authority works in partnership with local staff from the National Public Health Service to support schools to develop actions to address health

issues.