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PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS – RESULTS OF AN ELECTRONIC SCHOOL SURVEY (STAGE 1)

October 2012



Education & Training

RESEARCH REPORT

Introduction

1. The Department of Education wishes to express its appreciation to all the schools which contributed responses to the electronic survey on Physical Education in Schools.
2. Physical Education (PE) is a compulsory part of the revised curriculum for all pupils from age 4 to 16. The Department of Education has encouraged schools to give pupils at least two hours quality curricular PE per week.
3. The statutory Minimum Content for PE requires schools to deliver Athletics, Dance, Games, and Gymnastics at Foundation and Key Stage 1. At Key Stages 2 and 3 the same areas must be delivered (apart from Dance at Key Stage 3), plus swimming is also statutory. At Key Stage 4 pupils may study PE at GCSE or equivalent level, but must have the opportunity to plan and participate in a regular, frequent and balanced programme of PE that, among other things, contributes to, and helps sustain, a healthy and active lifestyle.
4. "Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009 - 2019" has been developed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland. The strategy aims to promote a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport and sets out a number of actions/targets involving a range of stakeholder organisations. The key action for the Department of Education is to establish a baseline for the number of children of compulsory school age participating in a minimum of two hours quality physical education per week. The Department is also contributing to opportunities for children to participate in extra-curricular physical recreation through the Extended Schools Programme and funds the Curriculum Sports Programme which aims to develop the physical literacy skills of our youngest pupils.
5. In order to establish the baseline for the number of children participating in the recommended two hours curricular PE per week it was decided that there would be a three stage process, namely an electronic survey of schools (Stage 1) in early 2012, followed by Education and Training Inspectorate survey visits to primary (Stage 2) and post-primary schools (Stage 3). The electronic survey was issued to all schools on 21 March 2012. The online survey covered the following key areas:
 - Measurement of pupil participation/provision
 - Target setting/Quality assessment of Physical Education
 - Assessment of obstacles to meeting recommended levels
 - Programmes/Initiatives
 - Professional development, support/capacity building
 - Facilities/Community use
6. Information about the electronic survey and its findings are set out in this report. Stages 2 and 3 have not taken place as yet.

Methodology – Stage 1

7. The method chosen for Stage 1 was an electronic web based survey which provided schools with a web address and an individual user name and password. Some questions were not applicable to all respondents and, as they were automatically routed to the next relevant question, the number of respondents varies for each question. Analysis is based only on those to whom the question applied.
8. Some of the questions were qualitative where respondents provided a variety of comments. Similar responses were grouped together into more general key themes for analysis. For these questions, the key themes have been quantified as a proportion of all comments received for that particular question. The total is likely to be greater than the overall number of respondents since a respondent could submit more than one comment. Percentage totals in the report may not always add to 100% due to rounding.

Response rates

9. The overall response rate and response rates by school type are shown in the table below.

Table 1 Survey response rates

School type	No of responses	Total schools	% response rate
Primary	491	854	57
Post-primary:			
Secondary	106	148	72
Grammar	35	68	51
Post-primary total	141	216	65
Special	9	41	22
TOTAL	641	1,111	58

10. It is important to note that, although the response rates were robust for primary and post-primary schools, the results for special schools must be treated with caution, due to the small number of respondents. In the special schools section, results are primarily presented as actual numbers rather than percentages, since percentages could potentially be misleading in light of the low response rate.
11. Section 1 of the report outlines key quantitative findings for all schools, and detailed analysis by school type is provided in Sections 2, 3 and 4. Separate analysis by school type was required because of the different numbers of respondents in each school type and the variation in the issues. Given that there were many more responses from primary schools the overall findings could be overly representative of the primary viewpoint. In relation to the qualitative responses, the issues differed according to school type, reflecting different approaches and attitudes to PE, a distinction which could be lost by analysing responses altogether.

SECTION 1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – ALL SCHOOLS

Measurement of Pupil Participation/Provision

Amount of curricular PE undertaken

12. Schools were asked to provide details of how many minutes per week their pupils in each year group engaged in curricular Physical Education. This included activities such as dance, gymnastics, games, swimming and athletics. Table 2 shows that, regardless of year group, the majority of pupils undertake between 60 and 90 minutes of curricular PE per week.

Table 2 Time spent engaging in curricular Physical Education by year group (%)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
<30 mins per week	<1	<1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1	0	0	0	<1	0
30-60 mins per week	27	28	27	24	19	16	17	17	18	18	30	30
60-90 mins per week	43	43	41	41	40	38	37	37	37	41	50	50
90-120 mins per week	22	22	26	30	32	36	36	22	22	24	15	17
120 mins or more per week	7	6	5	5	8	9	10	24	23	17	4	3

Notes:

The percentages are based only on those schools with pupils in that particular year group.

Target Setting/Quality Assessment of Physical Education

Target setting for PE

13. In total, almost one quarter (24%) of the 641 schools which responded set pupil level targets for PE, with post-primary schools more likely to do so than primary (55% and 14% respectively). Overall, 44% of schools set both quantitative and qualitative targets, 31% set only qualitative and 24% used only quantitative targets. Most schools which set targets for PE used their PE policy document to record these (68%), 7% used the school development plan while 18% used both. The remainder did not specify.

Assessment of Obstacles to Meeting Recommended Levels

Reasons for limited PE in schools

14. The key contributory factors to limited PE in the respondent schools were all time related e.g. lack of time, timetabling issues and other competing priorities. This was true of both primary and post-primary schools. The table below provides more detail.

Table 3 Reasons why pupils undertake less than 2 hours curricular PE per week

Reason	Number of respondents	% of total respondents (Base = 641)
Lack of time	355	55
Timetabling issues	309	48
Other competing priorities	216	34
Lack of facilities	166	26
Lack of expertise	70	11
Lack of equipment	41	6

Note: The percentages do not add to 100% since respondents could tick more than one option.

15. Although this does not suggest that lack of facilities / equipment was an issue, when asked what further support was required, 55% of respondents selected facilities/equipment from the options provided. Almost half (49%) suggested staff training while one third (33%) reported that additional resources were required. These included some already mentioned including facilities and equipment, as well as new suggestions such as time, resource materials, storage, transport and funding.

Programmes/Initiatives

Additional sports programmes in schools

16. Just over half (51%) of all schools which responded used other programmes in addition to their planned PE provision. More primary schools (56%) reported using other programmes than post-primary (32%). Over 60% of those who used other programmes did so in both curricular and extra-curricular time, while 18% used them only in curricular time and the same proportion, only in extra-curricular time.

Professional Development, Support/Capacity Building

Physical Education staff in schools

17. Eighty-eight percent of the schools which responded had a dedicated co-ordinator or Head of Department for PE – 86% of primary schools compared with 97% of post-primaries. Two-thirds of the PE co-ordinators had been in post for up to ten years, 24% were in post for 10 to 19 years while 9% had 20 years or more of service. Respondent schools confirmed that almost half (49%) of these co-ordinators were PE specialists. However, this varied according to school type, since over 99% of post-primary schools had a PE co-ordinator who was a PE specialist, compared with 32% in primary schools.
18. In total, 35% of all respondent schools had specialist PE teachers, comprising all post-primary schools and 16% of primary schools. Overall, 85% of schools reported that they had teachers who were not PE specialists teaching PE, however this proportion was 52 percentage points higher in primary schools (97%) than post-primary schools (45%). Of the 547 schools with non-specialists teaching PE, 44% provided capacity building, 41% did not and the remainder did not specify. The main source of capacity building training was the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) followed by external training organisations then a small number of university programmes. Of the 242 schools which reported that they provide capacity building for non-specialist teachers, 60% believed that it was adequate, 36% did not and the remainder did not specify.

Facilities/Community Use

Facilities for Physical Education in schools

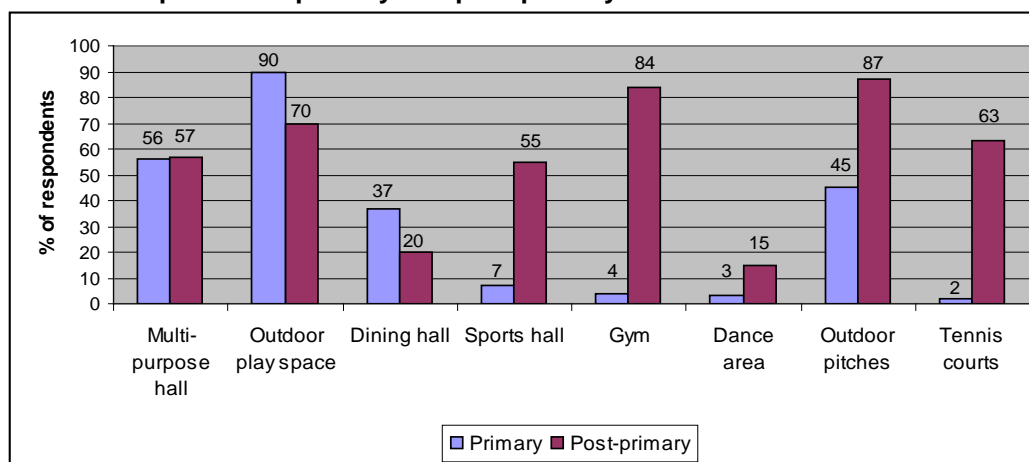
19. The most prevalent PE facility in schools is outdoor play space. Most respondents also reported having a multi-purpose hall and outdoor pitches. One third of respondents had a dedicated dining hall while one fifth had a gym. Fewer respondents had a dedicated sports hall, tennis courts or dance area. Primary schools were more likely to have outdoor play space than post-primary schools, however they were less likely to have outdoor pitches, gym, tennis courts or a sports hall.

Table 4 PE facilities in schools

Facilities	Number of respondents	% of total respondents (Base = 641)
Outdoor play space	549	86
Multi-purpose hall	364	57
Outdoor pitches	345	54
Dining hall	213	33
Gym	142	22
Sports hall	114	18
Tennis courts	97	15
Dance area	35	5

Note: The percentages do not add to 100% since respondents could tick more than one option.

Chart 1 Comparison of primary and post-primary school PE facilities



20. Only 14% of all schools shared their facilities with other schools, in most cases sharing with other primary schools. Again there is a notable difference between primary and post-primary schools, with 5% and 43% respectively sharing facilities. Ninety percent of all respondents used additional facilities in order to enhance PE provision for their pupils. The most common supplementary facility was the local leisure centre (Table 5).

Table 5 Other facilities used by schools to enhance PE provision for pupils

Facility	Number of respondents	% of respondents (Base = 641)
Local leisure facilities	512	80
Local football club	178	28
Local post-primary school	118	18
Local primary school	15	2
Local FE college	9	1

Community use of schools

21. Over half (55%) of all schools which responded made their sports facilities available for community use, primarily for sporting purposes (87% of those reporting they made facilities available) and for 'other' activities (53%). Post-primary schools were more likely to share their facilities than primary schools (92% and 44% respectively). Community use of schools was most likely to take place outside school hours (77% of participating schools).

SECTION 2 PRIMARY SCHOOL FINDINGS

Measurement of Pupil Participation/Provision

Amount of curricular PE undertaken

22. Table 6 shows that, across all year groups, the majority of primary school pupils undertake between 60 and 90 minutes of curricular Physical Education (PE) per week. The figures suggest that as pupils get older, curricular PE time increases for example, 72% of Year 1 pupils undertake an hour or more of PE compared with 82% of pupils in Year 7. Furthermore, while a minority of pupils generally undertook two hours or more of PE per week, this was more likely in older Year groups.

Table 6 Time spent engaging in Curricular Physical Education by year group (%)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
<30 mins per week	<1	<1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1
30-60 mins per week	27	28	27	23	19	16	16
60-90 mins per week	43	43	41	41	41	39	37
90-120 mins per week	22	23	26	30	32	35	35
120 mins or more per week	7	6	5	5	8	9	10

Notes:

Due to a small number of missing responses and/or rounding, totals will not always add to 100%. The majority of the missing responses were because the school does not have pupils in that year group, for example split site / very small / new schools.

Target Setting/Quality Assessment of Physical Education

Pupil level targets for PE

23. The majority of primary schools which responded (86%) reported that they did not set pupil level targets relating to Physical Education, while the remaining 14% did set targets. Of the 71 schools which did set targets, almost half (48%) set both quantitative and qualitative targets, 23% set just quantitative targets and 30% set only qualitative targets.
24. Examples of quantitative targets included a minimum amount of time spent on PE each week, for example one school had targets of three 30 minute PE lessons for Foundation Stage and two 40 minute lessons for subsequent year groups. Other schools had swimming lessons for one term each year for older pupils while others had attainment targets for PE. In relation to qualitative targets, many schools mentioned the *Fundamental Movement Skills continuum while others assessed the child's abilities in certain areas such as running, skipping and ball skills.
25. Of the 71 primary schools which set targets for PE, the majority (40) used their PE policy document to set these out, 11 used the school development plan while 16 used both. The remainder did not provide details of where the targets were recorded.

Evaluating the quality of PE provision in school

26. Respondents were asked to describe how their school evaluates the quality of its PE provision. Table 7 shows the most common responses grouped into similar themes.

* FMS are movement patterns that involve different body parts such as the legs, arms, trunk and head, and include such skills as running, hopping, catching, throwing, striking and balancing.

Table 7 Evaluating the quality of PE provision in primary schools

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Staff monitoring	Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of quality by staff. This is often the responsibility of the PE co-ordinator with input from other staff and/or the Principal. The most common methods were through lesson observation and completion of regular planners e.g. monthly / termly.	343	41
Comprehensive lesson planning	Ensuring that effective, high quality and varied schemes of work or lesson plans are in place, which are reviewed regularly. Key elements mentioned were a wide variation of available activities and tailoring these to different levels of ability.	111	13
External support	Using and getting feedback from specialist coaches for example, through the DE Curriculum Sports Programme or local leisure centres / clubs	70	8
Skills assessment	Formally monitoring and assessing particular skills acquired, for example using the Fundamental Movement Skills Continuum.	61	7
Pupil feedback	Formal or informal feedback from pupils, self and peer assessment.	60	7
Participation	High levels of pupil participation and achievement in both curricular and extra-curricular sporting activities.	45	5
Resources	Ensuring adequate levels, quality and range of materials are available, with regular monitoring to identify needs.	35	4
Whole school planning	Monitoring and delivery of PE is included as an element in the School Development Plan.	34	4
Training	Ensuring staff undertake relevant training for example, through the ELBs and sharing this knowledge throughout the school.	22	3
Pupil outcomes	Evidence of pupils' enjoyment of PE and displaying behaviours such as sportsmanship, teamwork and confidence.	17	2
Parental feedback	Liaison with or feedback from parents on PE provision.	15	2
Target setting	Setting targets for individuals or lessons and monitoring achievement of these.	12	1
None	No formal evaluation currently in place.	4	<1
	Total number of comments	829	100

27. The most common method of evaluating the quality of PE provision among respondents was through staff monitoring, which comprised two-fifths of responses. This primarily involved observation of lessons by staff or the PE co-ordinator and recording or addressing any issues in their regular planner. Many of the respondents using this method reported that it was done in collaboration with other staff / Principal or discussed at staff meetings. Another measure used to indicate quality was comprehensive lesson planning and review, ensuring that a wide range of activities was available and suited to varying levels of ability. Almost one in ten responses referred to using and obtaining feedback from external experts or coaches provided through DE (coaches from the Irish Football Association and the Gaelic Athletic Association deliver the Curriculum Sports Programme for primary schools on behalf of DE) or the local community, for example, swimming coaches at the leisure centre. Some schools monitored the attainment of specific skills to assess PE quality, for example, using the Fundamental Movement Skills Continuum. Other methods of evaluation were obtaining pupil feedback, monitoring participation levels and ensuring adequate and high quality resources are available. Some schools built evaluation of PE quality into the School Development Plan while others ensured staff avail of relevant training. Pupil behaviours and outcomes such as enjoyment and confidence were considered to be an indicator of PE quality while some schools liaised with parents on quality. Target setting and peer assessment were less common methods of evaluating quality. Only 4% of responses reported that there was no formal evaluation currently in place, with some reporting that it would be introduced in the near future.

Assessing primary pupil performance in PE

28. The survey asked schools to explain how they assess pupils' performance in relation to PE, particularly how they gather, record and report information to support the child's development. Similar themes emerged within each of these three areas therefore the comments have been grouped to show how schools gathered, recorded and reported information (Table 8).

Table 8 Assessing primary pupil performance in PE

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Gather information	Teacher assessment usually through observation.	303	26
	Assessment or observation by external coaches involved in the delivery of sports programmes within the schools.	38	3
	Formal and informal pupil feedback for example discussion or questionnaires. Self assessment by pupils.	37	3
	Peer assessment.	20	2
Record information	Formal recording such as specific evaluation forms or assessment sheets. This can include checklists for individuals or classes against key competences or targets e.g. Fundamental Movement Skills.	110	9
	Informal recording by teachers in planners or observation notes / reports.	102	9
	Using the Pupil Annual Report.	29	2
	Records of achievement including individual records, awards ceremonies / charts or qualifications.	28	2
	No formal or official method of recording PE performance in place.	28	2
	Digital evidence – photos, videos, photo diaries.	26	2
Report information	End of year pupil annual report.	234	20
	Report to parents mainly via regular parent teacher meetings or if any developmental issues are identified.	106	9
	Report and discuss with other teaching staff such as the pupil's class teacher or subsequent year teacher at transition time. The usual method is through staff meetings or discussion.	72	6
	Informal feedback to pupils, usually orally during lessons.	33	3
	Report any developmental issues to internal staff such as the SENCO or external specialist such as occupational or physical therapists.	17	1
	Total number of comments	1183	100

29. In terms of gathering information to assess pupils' performance in PE, the most common method was through teacher observation in lessons, as reported in over one quarter of responses (26%). This method was also popular for monitoring quality as discussed in the previous question. Three percent of responses referred to using self assessment by pupils while the same proportion obtained feedback from external coaches. Two percent used peer assessment to gather information to assess pupil performance.

30. Performance in PE was recorded in a number of ways, the most common of which was using specific assessment forms or informal recording by teachers in the form of notes or planners, both of which represented 9% of the overall comments. Additional methods, mentioned in equal proportions (2% of total responses) were pupils' annual reports, records of achievements / awards, and digital evidence such as photos and videos. Two percent of responses noted that there was no formal method of recording performance in PE.
31. The most common way of reporting progress in PE was in the pupil's annual report at the end of the year (20% of responses). Progress was reported to parents (9%) through regular parent teacher meetings or as required if developmental issues were identified. Six percent of responses stated that performance was reported to other teaching staff through discussions or meetings, particularly with the pupil's class teacher or their teacher for the subsequent year. Three percent of responses reported performance to pupils informally such as orally during lessons and 1% of responses specified that pupils were referred to internal staff e.g. SENCO or external specialists such as physiotherapists, if there were any concerns with a pupil's development.

Assessment of Obstacles to Meeting Recommended Levels

Reasons for limited PE in primary schools

32. Where this was the case, schools were asked why pupils were receiving less than 2 hours curricular PE per week. The responses are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9 Reasons why pupils undertake less than 2 hours curricular PE per week

Reason	Number of respondents	% of total respondents (Base = 491)
Lack of time	269	55
Timetabling issues	207	42
Other competing priorities	175	36
Lack of facilities	136	28
Lack of expertise	65	13
Lack of equipment	36	7

Note: The percentages do not add to 100% since respondents could tick more than one option.

33. The most common reason cited for limited PE time in primary schools was lack of time, with over half of respondents (55%) providing this reason. Possibly related to this were timetabling issues which was given as a reason by 42% of respondents while over one third (36%) mentioned other competing priorities. Lack of facilities was a reason for over a quarter of respondents. Lack of expertise and lack of equipment were mentioned by a small number of respondents therefore seemed to be less of an issue.

Further support

34. Schools were asked what, if any, further support they required in order to increase pupils' participation in PE. Of the options provided, over half (55%) said that staff training was required, followed by improved facilities and equipment (53%). Respondents were asked if any other resources were needed. Around one third agreed that additional resources were needed, however some reiterated the options above or explained them in more detail, as shown in Table 10. The most common suggestion was for more equipment particularly for specific sports such as gymnastics and athletics, as well as outdoor equipment (24% of responses). Almost one third felt that either indoor space or outdoor facilities were lacking, in particular a dedicated PE hall, outdoor pitches and courts. Eleven percent of responses suggested more

specialist expertise was needed for specific activities. Other schools found it difficult to timetable PE due to the pressures of the curriculum, while 8% of responses suggested that materials such as schemes of work, manuals and DVDs would be useful. The remaining responses focused on increased storage, staff training, transport and funding.

Table 10 Additional resources required in primary schools

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Equipment	Equipment for specific sports such as gymnastics, dance and athletics as well as equipment for outdoor sports / play areas.	54	24
Indoor facilities	More space, preferably in the form of a dedicated PE hall. Changing facilities.	44	19
Outdoor facilities	New / enhanced outdoor facilities such as pitches and courts.	30	13
Expertise	Specialist coaches or peripatetic staff for specific activities e.g. gymnastics / dance. Subsidised access to swimming lessons and continued access to specialist support programmes. This supplies direct provision and also builds the skills / knowledge of staff.	24	11
Time	The current curriculum is demanding, making it difficult to timetable desired levels of PE. Time taken to travel to activities such as swimming and changing time exacerbates this.	21	9
Materials	More current resource materials such as sample schemes of work / lesson plans suitable for various stages, clear requirements for different age groups, manuals, DVDs.	18	8
Storage	Increased indoor storage, primarily for equipment.	14	6
Training	Training for staff to increase confidence, knowledge and skills e.g. in particular areas such as dance, sharing of best practice.	12	5
Transport	Transport such as a school minibus to travel to other facilities such as leisure centres for swimming.	5	2
Financial resources	Increased level of funding per pupil to cover some of the suggested areas.	4	2
Total number of comments		226	100

Programmes/Initiatives

Additional sports programmes in primary schools

35. In total, 274 (56%) of the primary schools which responded used other programmes in addition to their planned PE provision. Forty three percent did not use other programmes and the remaining 1% did not respond to the question. Of the 274 schools using additional sports programmes, 62% did so in both curricular and extra-curricular time. Similar proportions of schools used them only in curricular time (18%), or only as extra-curricular activities (17%). The respondents provided a very comprehensive list of specific programmes which they used including the Curriculum Sports Programme, Fit for Life, football coaching schemes, Active Communities,

swimming programmes, Youth Sport, Grassroots. A wide range of organisations were involved in the programmes for example, DE (in relation to the Curriculum Sports Programme – see paragraph 27), Irish Football Association, Gaelic Athletic Association, a local football club, universities, councils, Sport Northern Ireland, Irish Rugby Association, boxing clubs.

Enjoyment of Physical Education in primary schools

36. Schools were asked how they encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to and enjoy PE. Schools suggested many ways in which they achieved this, the main examples of which are presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11 How primary schools encourage a positive attitude to and enjoyment of PE

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Curricular PE	Certain characteristics were believed to make curricular PE enjoyable, particularly lessons that are fun, incorporate a wide variety of activities, inclusive of all abilities allowing progression for all pupils and participative as well as competitive. Well planned lessons at allocated times, including specialist activities by external coaches where possible were also considered important.	305	27
Extra-curricular activities	Many schools offered a wide range of physical activity outside school hours, for example through Extended Schools. Activities include golf, tennis, football, dance, hockey, rugby, Gaelic games and more, often providing opportunities to participate in competitions. Many schools encourage outdoor play during break times and occasional outdoor residential for older pupils.	214	19
School ethos	The school ethos and policies promote the importance of healthy living, particularly physical activity and healthy eating. Strong links between PE and other aspects of the curriculum e.g. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), The World Around Us. The school hosts regular events focusing on the importance of health and physical activity e.g. Get Active Week, Sports relief, sponsored fun runs / walks, healthy eating events, walk/bike to school week etc.	181	16
Staff attitude and expertise	Teaching staff and coaches encourage and motivate children to fully participate in PE. Staff are enthusiastic, highly trained and lead by example through full participation, enjoyment and dressing appropriately for PE lessons. Varied, positive and encouraging teaching styles are employed to increase enjoyment for children.	137	12
Praise and recognition	Both participation and achievement are recognised formally and informally through prizes / certificates, acknowledgment during school assembly, school newsletter, notice boards, local papers etc.	128	12
Wider community involvement	In order to increase the range of sports and expertise available, many schools have links with or use local clubs / facilities such as leisure		

	centres, football clubs, GAA, rugby, parks, other schools, councils etc. The school promotes participation in local clubs, events and competitions.	82	7
Parental involvement	Schools inform and promote participation by parents in regular or occasional events e.g. dads' football, fitness classes in evenings, sports days.	25	2
PE uniform	Pupils dress appropriately for PE or have a school PE kit to emphasise the importance of PE as part of the curriculum.	21	2
Pupil input	Input from children to establish what activities they enjoy, as well as specific exercises such as setting targets or success criteria, self/peer assessment.	17	2
Total number of comments		1110	100

37. The most common way in which schools tried to promote enjoyment of PE was to ensure that their curricular PE lessons are fun, with a wide variety of activities available to cater for all levels and abilities. Some schools also offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities and encouraged outdoor play at break times. A healthy school ethos and integration of PE into other areas of the curriculum was considered important and reinforced by regular events to promote the importance of healthy living. Teachers were integral in promoting participation and enjoyment of PE by encouraging participation and setting an example through their own taking part, expertise and teaching style. Praise and recognition were used to encourage a positive attitude to PE through awards or acknowledging achievements in various forms. Other methods of promoting enjoyment of PE were to involve the wider community, parents and pupils themselves. A few schools reported that having a PE uniform or ensuring that pupils got changed for PE reinforced the importance of the lessons.

Professional Development, Support/Capacity Building

Physical Education staff in primary schools

38. A dedicated co-ordinator or Head of Department was in place for Physical Education in 420 (86%) of the primary schools surveyed. Over half of these co-ordinators / Heads of Department had been in post between 0 and 5 years (52%), a further 27% between 6 and 10 years and the minority (2%) were in post for over 20 years. Almost one-third (32%) of the 420 schools with a PE co-ordinator reported that this person was a PE specialist, 66% said they were not, while 2% did not respond.

39. In terms of the qualifications possessed, the majority of PE co-ordinators had a Bachelor of Education (B Ed) in Primary Education with PE as the main subject or a B Ed in Physical Education. Others had achieved specialist sports degrees and completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Many also reported having coaching qualifications in a range of sports including football, hockey, cricket, rugby, gaelic games and netball.

40. Almost all schools (97%) reported having teachers who were not PE specialists teaching PE. Over two-fifths (44%) of all respondents reported that capacity building was provided for non-specialist staff, 39% said it was not and the remainder failed to respond. The capacity building was primarily provided by the Education and Library Boards, followed by external training organisations / consultants, with a minority provided by universities. Of those schools using capacity building, 57% agreed that it was adequate, 38% disagreed and 5% did not respond.

41. While there was positive feedback from schools in terms of the quality of training and materials offered, specifically by the ELBs, areas where more is required were identified, as outlined in the Table 12. The main suggestion, featuring in over half of responses, was to provide more investment in training, particularly in ELBs which schools perceived to be under-resourced in recent times. The purpose of this would be to provide more structured and available training and support in a wider range of areas. In terms of the type of training, schools were keen to receive training in specialist areas such as dance and gymnastics. Additional funding for schools would help to facilitate training, primarily by funding substitute cover. The emphasis should be on whole school training for all teachers. As with earlier questions, some suggested that more time, specialist coaches and improved facilities would help to facilitate capacity building. A small number of schools felt that there should be more emphasis on the importance of PE in the curriculum.

Table 12 Further capacity building required

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Investment in training	Providers, particularly ELBs, are very under-resourced in terms of funding and staff. More resources must be made available to allow them to provide more structured and frequent training and support in all areas of the PE curriculum. In particular, schools expressed a need for training in specific activities such as gymnastics and dance.	53	54
Funding for schools	Schools require more funding, for example, to provide substitute cover to allow for training.	14	14
Whole school training	All teachers in the school should receive training, particularly non-specialist teachers.	13	13
Time	Given the demands of the curriculum it is difficult for schools to find time for training / capacity building. Training should be at a suitable time of day for teachers.	9	9
Specialist support	Expert coaches in schools to help and train staff or PE Support Officers.	4	4
Facilities	Improved PE facilities in schools to increase participation and quality.	3	3
Importance of PE	Needs to be more emphasis on the importance of PE in the curriculum and in schools.	3	3
Total number of comments		99	100

Facilities/Community Use

Facilities for Physical Education in primary schools

42. As demonstrated in Table 13, the most common PE facility in primary schools was an outdoor play area, used by 90% of schools. Over half (56%) also had a multi-purpose hall, 37% had a dining hall and 7% had a sports hall. Previous questions indicated that lack of space is an issue in many primary schools, with one hall being used for a range of activities such as lunch, assembly, music and sports. This posed problems for some when trying to timetable PE lessons. Almost half of schools which responded had outdoor pitches for PE, while less than five percent had a gym, dance area or tennis courts.

Table 13 PE facilities in primary schools

Facilities	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Outdoor play space	442	90
Multi-purpose hall	277	56
Outdoor pitches	222	45
Dining hall	183	37
Sports hall	34	7
Gym	22	4
Dance area	14	3
Tennis courts	8	2

Note: The percentages do not add to 100% since respondents could tick more than one option.

43. Only 5% of respondents (25 schools) shared their facilities with other schools, most of whom (15) shared with other primary schools. Almost nine out of ten schools used other facilities to enhance their PE provision, most commonly local leisure facilities (79%). Thirty percent used their local football club while 22% used their local post-primary school facilities. Other primary schools and local Further Education colleges were less widely used to supplement PE facilities.

Community use of primary schools

44. Over two-fifths of schools (44%) reported that they made their sports facilities available for community use, while 56% did not. There was less community use of school facilities in BELB than in other ELB areas (29% compared with 44% in WELB and 46% in NEELB, SEELB and SELB), the survey did not explore the reasons for this. The main reason for community use was for sport, however, some used them for other activities such as music, community meetings, festivals, slimming clubs, parent and toddler, classes including languages, ICT and cookery, group meetings such as GAA, Women's Institute. Over three-quarters of the community use took place outside school hours, with 17% both during and outside school hours and a minority was during school hours only.

SECTION 3 POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL FINDINGS

Measurement of Pupil Participation/Provision

Amount of curricular PE undertaken

45. Table 14 shows that, regardless of year group, the majority of post-primary school pupils undertake between 60 and 90 minutes of curricular PE per week. In contrast with primary schools, the figures suggest that pupils in older year groups undertake less PE than those in younger year groups. By Year 12, 3% of pupils receive two hours or more of PE compared with 24% of pupils in Year 8.

Table 14 Time spent engaging in curricular Physical Education by year group(%)

	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
<30 mins per week	0	0	0	<1	0
30-60 mins per week	16	18	18	30	29
60-90 mins per week	35	35	38	48	48
90-120 mins per week	23	23	24	15	16
120 mins or more per week	24	23	17	4	3

Notes:

Due to a small number of missing responses and/or rounding, totals will not always add to 100%. The majority of the missing responses were because the school does not have pupils in that year group, for example Junior/Senior Highs.

Target Setting/Quality Assessment of Physical Education

Post-primary pupil level targets for PE

46. Over half (55%) of the post-primary schools which responded set pupil level targets for participation in PE. Of the 78 schools which used pupil level targets, 41% set both quantitative and qualitative ones. One third (33%) used only qualitative, 23% only quantitative and the remaining 3% did not specify.
47. The most common quantitative target employed by post-primary schools was participation rates, ranging from 90% - 100%, which some schools recorded on the School Information Management System (SIMS). Others ensured that a minimum amount of PE was provided each week and some set achievement targets, or encouraged pupils to set their own targets, in various sports or skills. Fitness tests were used in some schools to measure any improvements over time. Qualitative targets included a general improvement in individual skills, performance or fitness, as well as their attitude to sport / teamwork etc.
48. The majority of schools which set targets (81%) outlined them in their PE policy document. Ten schools (13%) used the school development plan and the PE policy while 5 did not specify.

Evaluating the quality of PE provision in post-primary schools

49. Table 15 shows the main methods used to evaluate the quality of PE provision in post-primary schools.

Table 15 Evaluating the quality of PE provision in post-primary schools

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Regular evaluation and review	Mostly formal, regular evaluation and review of PE provision and delivery, primarily through self evaluation by the PE department but some use a specific Quality Management Tool. Often carried out annually to feed into the School Development Plan or more regularly at the end of specific units. The review can inform an action plan, identify new activities to offer pupils or make changes to enhance the Curriculum / Scheme of Work.	87	27
Pupil feedback	Feedback from pupils on the quality or content of lessons and on their own performance through self/peer assessment. Can be achieved using focus groups, questionnaires and discussion.	69	21
Staff feedback	Primarily from staff within the PE department at departmental meetings however information can be invited from and fed back to other staff and the Principal.	49	15
Performance monitoring	Monitoring and reporting pupil progress and achievement. Can be formal e.g. GCSE grades and comparison with other schools, or more informal through self and teacher assessment.	43	13
Participation	High levels of participation and achievement in curricular and extra curricular sporting activities. Uptake of PE as an exam subject.	31	9
Lesson observation	Formal lesson observation usually by the PE department staff or Head of Department	15	5
Good practice	Identify, develop and share best practice.	10	3
Pupil outcomes	Evidence of pupil enjoyment of PE and displaying confidence, enthusiasm and a positive attitude towards the subject.	8	2
Parental feedback	Liaison with or feedback from parents on PE provision.	7	2
Target setting	Setting targets for individuals or lessons and monitoring achievement of these.	7	2
Training	Staff undertake relevant training courses where possible.	2	1
Total number of comments		328	100

50. The table shows that the evaluation of PE provision tends to be more formal in post-primary schools than in primary schools. Many schools mentioned carrying out self-evaluations, with PE provision and delivery being reviewed regularly by the PE department. This was done annually in many cases to feed into whole school planning however others carried out reviews at the end of each learning unit. The main purpose was to inform the action plan for the subsequent year and improve or enhance the Schemes of Work. Pupil feedback was more dominant in post-primary, with a fifth of responses referring to obtaining pupil views on PE provision. Departmental meetings were a regular occurrence in many PE departments and sometimes the information was shared with other staff and the Principal. The

performance of pupils was monitored, often formally through GSCE results and comparisons of these with other schools. Participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities was used as an indicator of quality, as well as the uptake of PE as an exam subject. Lesson observation was less commonly used to assess quality in post-primary than in primary, where it was the most common method. Post-primaries also identified good practice and shared it with staff, mostly internally. Other methods used on occasion to indicate quality of PE provision were pupil enjoyment and attitudes, parental feedback, target setting and levels of staff training.

Assessing pupil performance in PE

51. The table below shows the most widely used methods of gathering, recording and reporting information about a pupil's performance in PE.

Table 16 Assessing post-primary pupil performance in PE

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses	
Gather information	Teacher assessment usually through observation.	56	14	
	Formal and informal pupil feedback for example discussion or questionnaires. Self assessment by pupils.	39	10	
	Peer assessment.	14	3	
Record information	Formal recording such as specific evaluation forms or assessment sheets. This can include checklists for individuals or classes against key skills or targets.	64	16	
	Records of achievement, mainly grades or marks awarded.	48	12	
	Pupil records primarily using School Information Management System (SIMS) and its functions including Pupil Tracker and Assessment Manager.	31	8	
	Informal recording by teachers in planners or observation notes / reports.	16	4	
	Digital evidence – photos, videos, photo diaries.	3	1	
	Report information	End of year or mid-year pupil annual report.	82	20
		Report to parents mainly via regular parent teacher meetings or as required.	40	10
Informal feedback to pupils, usually orally during lessons.		11	3	
Total number of comments		404	100	

52. As with primary schools, the most common way of gathering information on pupil performance in PE was from teachers, usually through observation. Self assessment or pupil input was more prevalent in post-primary schools, with ten percent of responses referring to this method and a small proportion (3%) using peer assessment. The main way to record information about a pupil's performance was using specific evaluation forms or assessment sheets as reported in 16% of the overall responses. In terms of recording achievement, there was a greater emphasis on grades and marks awarded for the subject at post-primary school, whereas in primary the focus was on praise and recognition. SIMS was also more widely used for recording information in post-primaries, in particular the Assessment Manager and

Pupil Tracker functions. Informal recording and digital evidence were less widely used. Pupil reports, termly or annually, were the primary method of reporting information, followed by parental feedback i.e. meetings. A small proportion of responses referred to using informal feedback.

Assessment of Obstacles to Meeting Recommended Levels

Reasons for limited PE in post-primary schools

53. Where this was the case, schools were asked why pupils were receiving less than 2 hours curricular PE per week. The responses are summarised in Table 17.

Table 17 Reasons why pupils undertake less than 2 hours curricular PE per week

Reason	Number of respondents	% of total respondents (Base = 141)
Timetabling issues	98	70
Lack of time	80	57
Other competing priorities	38	27
Lack of facilities	29	21
Lack of equipment	5	4
Lack of expertise	4	3

Note: The percentages do not add to 100% since respondents could tick more than one option.

54. The majority of respondents (70%) reported that, if pupils were not receiving two hours or more PE per week, it was due to timetabling issues, followed by lack of time which was cited by 57%. Another factor was other competing priorities, which was given as a reason by 27% of respondents. Around one-fifth of respondents believed that they had a lack of facilities while small proportions reported lack of equipment and lack of expertise (4% and 3% respectively).

Further support

55. When asked what further support they required to increase participation in PE, 62% of respondents suggested improved facilities or equipment. This somewhat conflicts with the previous responses which did not suggest these were a key limitation in PE provision. Thirty percent of respondents require more training in PE while 15% did not require any further support. In addition, 45% of respondents suggested other additional resources required to increase pupil participation in the subject (Table 18).

Table 18 Additional resources required in post-primary schools

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Indoor facilities	Primarily larger or more PE halls available, particularly at exam time when existing facilities are required, as well as fitness suites and changing rooms.	28	26
Outdoor facilities	New / enhanced outdoor facilities, for example tennis courts, athletic tracks, full size pitches.	20	19
Expertise	Additional staffing, particularly in specialist areas to provide wider range of activities and increase the appeal to pupils e.g. gymnastics / dance, zumba, swimming lessons. Multi-agency approach or better links with agencies such as Health Promotion and sports bodies.	17	16
Financial resources	Increased level of funding per pupil to cover some of the suggested areas.	12	11
Time	With the demands of the current curriculum, schools require some flexibility in order to prioritise PE, however the focus on exam results means they will usually take priority.	10	9
Training	Training to increase range of activities and appeal to pupils therefore increasing participation e.g. zumba, hip hop dancing	8	7
Equipment	Specialist equipment such as orienteering equipment, hurdles, goal posts, cones and appropriate ICT facilities.	7	6
Storage	Increased indoor storage, primarily for equipment.	3	3
Transport	Transport such as a school minibus to travel to other facilities such as leisure centres for swimming.	2	2
Materials	Curriculum and delivery materials in Irish.	1	1
Total number of comments		108	100

56. The most requested additional resource by post-primary schools was improved indoor facilities for PE. About a quarter of responses require more or larger PE halls particularly for use at exam time when the large halls are being used for these, making it difficult to facilitate PE classes. Outdoor facilities such as courts and pitches were also considered to be lacking in some schools. Additional staffing would help to broaden the range of activities offered and therefore increase participation. A small number of schools noted that it was not solely the responsibility of schools and links with other agencies such as Health Promotion would be useful. Lack of funding and time available to schools was an issue for some, as was staff training which is required particularly in new areas such as zumba. Other useful additional resources for schools would be specialist equipment, storage and time. One school felt that curriculum and delivery materials should be available in Irish.

Programmes/Initiatives

Additional sports programmes in post-primary schools

57. Of the 141 post-primary schools which responded, 32% use other programmes in addition to their planned PE provision, 67% do not and the remaining 1% did not respond to the question. Of the 45 schools using additional sports programmes, 25

use them in both curricular and extra-curricular time, 12 in extra-curricular time only and 5 during curricular time only. Three schools did not provide a response. A wide range of sports are offered through additional programmes, including rugby, cricket, aerobics, tennis, Gaelic football, hurling, camogie, zumba, cheerleading, archery, canoeing, judo, orienteering, volleyball and golf. Specific programmes used include Active Communities, Sir Steve Redgrave rowing programme, Belfast City Council Falls Mountain Bike and orienteering, Fermanagh Trust Shared Education Programme, Community Sports Leadership Award as well as coaching from a range of local clubs.

Enjoyment of Physical Education in post-primary schools

58. Schools were asked how they encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to and enjoy PE. Many different ways were suggested, the main examples are presented in Table 19 below.

Table 19 How post-primary schools encourage a positive attitude to and enjoyment of PE

General theme	Detail	Number of responses	% of responses
Curricular PE	Certain characteristics were believed to make curricular PE enjoyable, particularly lessons that are fun, incorporate a wide variety of activities, inclusive of all abilities allowing progression for all pupils and participative as well as competitive. Well planned lessons, emphasising the importance of healthy living in general and specialist activities by external coaches were considered important.	97	25
Extra-curricular activities	Many schools offered a wide range of physical activity outside school hours, for example through Extended Schools. Activities include golf, tennis, football, dance, hockey, rugby, Gaelic games and more, often providing opportunities to participate in competitions.	64	17
Staff attitude and expertise	Teaching staff and coaches encourage and motivate children to fully participate in PE. Staff are enthusiastic, highly trained and lead by example through full participation, enjoyment and dressing appropriately for PE lessons. Varied, positive and encouraging teaching styles are employed to increase enjoyment for children.	56	15
Praise and recognition	Both participation and achievement are recognised formally and informally through prizes / certificates, acknowledgment during school assembly, school newsletter, notice boards, local papers etc.	52	14
School/Departmental ethos	The ethos and policies of the PE department and the school promote the importance of healthy living. Links between PE and other aspects of the curriculum. Regular events focusing on the importance of health and physical activity e.g. Getset network - a London Olympic Games	37	10

	programme, fun days, healthy eating programme, Living For Sport, Fit For Life, guest speakers.		
Pupil input	Input from children to establish what activities they enjoy, as well as specific exercises such as setting targets or success criteria, self/peer assessment, peer mentoring.	29	8
Wider community involvement	In order to increase the range of sports and expertise available, many schools have links with or use local clubs / facilities such as leisure centres, football clubs, GAA, rugby, parks, other schools, councils etc. The school promotes participation in local clubs, events and competitions.	24	6
Qualification opportunities	School offers or encourages PE as an examination subject e.g. GCSE or A-Level.	10	3
PE uniform	Pupils dress appropriately for PE or have a school PE kit to emphasise the importance of PE as part of the curriculum.	8	2
Parental involvement	Schools inform parents of progress and liaise with parents if participation is an issue. Parents can take part in occasional events e.g. fitness classes in evenings.	5	1
	Total number of comments	382	100

59. As with primary schools, high quality curricular and extra-curricular activities were the key way to promote participation and enjoyment of PE, particularly through provision of a wide range of activities. Post-primary schools rated the staff as central to the promotion of PE through learning by example, encouragement and high quality, varied learning approaches. Praise and recognition for participation and achievement in sport was widespread in post-primary schools. The wider school or the PE departments' attitude to PE was important, with many schools promoting healthy living in general, through linking PE to the curriculum and hosting health / fitness events. Pupil input was more common in post-primary school, particularly peer mentoring as well as input into the content of lessons. The schools' promotion of local clubs and facilities provided opportunity to avail of various activities and expertise. PE was also promoted by offering qualifications in the subject, use of a formal PE uniform and liaison with parents to resolve any issues.

Professional Development, Support/Capacity Building

Physical Education staff in post-primary schools

60. The vast majority (97%) of post-primary schools which responded had a dedicated PE co-ordinator or Head of Department, most of whom (64%) had been in post for up to and including ten years. Of the 137 schools with PE co-ordinators, 136 reported that these staff were PE specialists while one did not complete the question.

61. In terms of the qualifications possessed, the majority of PE co-ordinators had a BA or BSc in a sport related subject and a PCGE, while others had a BEd in Physical Education. In addition to this, some teachers had a relevant Masters or coaching qualifications in specific sports. All schools which responded employed specialist PE teachers. Five percent of schools which responded employed one, 35% employed two, 14% had three specialists and one-quarter employed four PE specialists. Eighteen percent employed 5 or more specialist PE teachers.

62. Forty-five per cent of respondents (63 schools) had teachers who were not PE specialists teaching PE. Of the 63 schools, 23 said capacity building was provided, 33 reported that it was not while 7 did not respond. Where available, the capacity building was mainly provided by external training organisations or consultants (15 schools). Only three schools felt that the capacity building was inadequate and suggested that more courses and funding would be useful for non-specialist teachers.

Facilities/Community Use

Facilities for Physical Education in post-primary schools

63. Table 20 shows that the most common PE facilities in post-primary schools were outdoor pitches (87%), gym (84%), outdoor play space (70%) and tennis courts (63%). Over half of respondents had a multi-purpose hall and a sports hall (57% and 55% respectively). One fifth (20%) had a dining hall while 15% had a dance area.

Table 20 PE facilities in post-primary schools

Facilities	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Outdoor pitches	122	87
Gym	119	84
Outdoor play space	99	70
Tennis courts	89	63
Multi-purpose hall	81	57
Sports hall	78	55
Dining hall	28	20
Dance area	21	15

Note: The percentages do not add to 100% since respondents could tick more than one option.

64. Over two-fifths (43%) of post-primary schools shared their facilities with other schools. Of these 60 schools, 29 shared with local primary schools, 13 with local post-primaries and 18 with both. The majority - 91% of post-primary schools to respond - used other facilities to enhance PE, primarily local leisure facilities (95% of those using additional facilities).

Community use of post-primary schools

65. The majority of respondent post-primary schools (92%) made their sports facilities available for community use, primarily for sporting purposes (94% of those which made their facilities available). Half of these schools made their facilities available for 'other' activities for example, scouts, summer school, evening classes (fitness, cookery, ICT), training, youth clubs, community events / meetings, music, driving theory test, Women's Institute meetings, young farmers, church organisations etc. Over three-quarters of the community use took place outside school hours, with 21% both during and outside school hours and a small proportion only during school hours.

SECTION 4 SPECIAL SCHOOL FINDINGS

66. The survey results have been reported for special schools in this section, however it is important to treat the figures with caution due to the small number of respondents (9 in total out of 41, a response rate of 22%). Due to the small numbers involved, these results are usually reported in terms of actual numbers rather than percentages.

Measurement of Pupil Participation/Provision

Amount of curricular PE undertaken

67. Table 21 shows that although there is no consistent pattern in special schools, there is an indication that, as in primary schools, older pupils may spend more time engaging in PE than younger pupils (55% of Year 6 and 7 pupils received over 90 minutes compared with 11% in Year 1-3). The majority of pupils in Year 8 to 12 received between 60 and 90 minutes of PE per week.

Table 21 Time spent engaging in Curricular Physical Education by year group (%)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
<30 mins per week	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30-60 mins per week	44	33	44	44	33	33	33	11	11	0	11	11
60-90 mins per week	33	44	33	11	11	0	0	44	44	56	44	44
90-120 mins per week	0	0	0	22	33	33	33	0	0	0	11	11
120 mins or more per week	11	11	11	11	11	22	22	11	11	11	0	0

Notes:

Due to a small number of missing responses and/or rounding, totals will not always add to 100%. The majority of the missing responses were due to special schools not having pupils in every year group.

Target Setting/Quality Assessment of Physical Education

Pupil level targets for PE

68. Three of the special school respondents set targets for PE while 6 did not. Two of the schools had quantitative targets, one had both quantitative and qualitative. Examples of the targets were a minimum amount of PE to be undertaken or specific skills to accomplish. One school recorded targets in the PE policy document while the other two also used the school development plan.

Evaluating the quality of PE provision in special schools

69. Most of the comments relating to the evaluation of quality referred to monitoring and evaluation by teachers through, for example, classroom observation and recorded in planners and pupil records. Others brought in external coaches and monitored the quality of the input. Feedback was obtained from pupils and teachers sometimes used specific skills assessment such as FMS. Other schools monitored participation and pupil outcomes, obtained parental feedback, reviewed targets and ensured lessons were well planned following the NI curriculum.

Assessing pupil performance in PE

70. Information on pupil performance was usually collected by teacher observation and less commonly peer assessment or feedback from external coaches. Records tended to be held at pupil level in Individual Education Plans, noting attendance, progress and achievement. Others used digital evidence or informal recording in teacher planners. Performance information was generally reported through the pupil's annual report and occasionally parent teacher meetings or informal feedback to pupils during lessons.

Assessment of Obstacles to Meeting Recommended Levels

Reasons for limited PE in special schools

71. Where this was the case, schools were asked why pupils were receiving less than 2 hours curricular PE per week. The responses are summarised in Table 22.

Table 22 Reasons why pupils undertake less than 2 hours curricular PE per week

Reason	Number of respondents
Lack of time	6
Timetabling issues	4
Other competing priorities	3
Lack of facilities	1
Lack of expertise	1
Lack of equipment	0

Note: The number of respondents exceeds the total since respondents could tick more than one option.

72. As with primary and post-primary schools, the main reasons for not ensuring two hours PE per week were lack of time, timetabling issues and other competing priorities. In terms of further support required to increase participation in PE, 5 schools felt that improved facilities / equipment were needed, 3 said none was required and two suggested staff training. Under other 'additional resources' suggestions included playing fields instead of unused space around the schools, fitness suite, additional staff hours, transport and an extension of the school day.

Programmes/Initiatives

Additional sports programmes in special schools

73. Six out of nine special schools to respond benefitted from additional sports programmes, for example the cross-border Football 4 Peace programme, Co-operation Through Youth Sport West Programme. Others used coaches from Disability Sport NI, Active Sport, GAA, IFA, Derry Council, Ulster Rugby to deliver a range of sport including cricket, soccer, athletics, and basketball. Three schools used these programmes in curricular time while three used them in both curricular and extra-curricular, one as part of their Extended Schools Programme.

Enjoyment of Physical Education in special schools

74. The main way to encourage enjoyment of PE in special schools was by ensuring that curricular PE is fun, varied and suited to all abilities. Staff attitude and expertise were also very important, with staff and external coaches facilitating highly participative and enthusiastic lessons. Three of the schools link PE to other areas of the curriculum and promote healthy living generally, particularly healthy eating and exercise, throughout the school. Schools promoted physical activities at break times and one facilitated a highly enjoyable and varied annual residential for older children. Pupils were

encouraged to participate in external events and achievements were recognised through prize giving.

Professional Development, Support/Capacity Building

Physical Education staff in special schools

75. Seven out of the nine special schools which responded had a designated co-ordinator or Head of Department for PE. Two had been in post for less than ten years, three for ten or more and one for over 20 years. Of those schools with a designated co-ordinator, only one was not a PE specialist. Most of the specialists had a B Ed in Physical Education and/or various coaching qualifications while one had a Diploma in PE.
76. Two of the nine schools did not have any specialist PE teachers, while the others had either one, two or three specialist PE teachers. Six out of nine schools had teachers who were not PE specialists teaching PE, five of these schools provided capacity building for these staff. The training was provided by ELBs or external organisations. Three felt that the capacity building was adequate. The other two schools would like more courses on the PE curriculum, particularly primary and opportunities to share expertise with other schools on training days, as well as substitute cover to facilitate this.

Facilities/Community Use

Facilities for Physical Education in special schools

77. Table 23 shows that the most common resource for the special schools which responded was outdoor play space, followed by a multi-purpose hall. Less common were a separate dining hall, sports hall, gym and outdoor pitches. One school noted that they had an onsite swimming pool.

Table 23 PE facilities in special schools

Facilities	Number of respondents
Outdoor play space	8
Multi-purpose hall	6
Dining hall	2
Sports hall	2
Gym	1
Outdoor pitches	1
Dance area	0
Tennis courts	0

Note: The number of respondents exceeds the total since respondents could tick more than one option.

78. Only two schools shared their facilities with other schools, both of which shared with primary and post-primary schools. The majority (8 schools) used other facilities to enhance PE provision, mostly local leisure facilities which were used by 4 schools. Three used local post-primary schools, one used a local primary school and another used a local football club.

Community use of special schools

79. Three of the respondent schools made their facilities available for community use, for sporting and/or other purposes, both within and outside school hours. For example, Belfast Met College used the school classrooms and pool for night classes, others facilitated community yoga classes etc.