

improve school sport facilities which means over £1 billion being invested. (Kirk, 2005 and Learning through PE and Sport, 2003)

High Quality PE

What exactly does high quality mean? It has been said that “*high quality PE and School Sport produces young people with the skills, understanding, desire and commitment to continue to improve and achieve in a range of PE, sport and health-enhancing physical activities in line with their abilities*” (Learning through PE and Sport, 2003:3)

The words ‘high quality’ are part of the PSA target but there is a lack of evidence as to whether the programme is delivering high quality outcomes. (Casbon and Walters, 2004)

How are they going to measure it, and equally how will they deliver it, will they measure across all schools, and continually monitor and evaluate to ensure this is being delivered? Is the government suggesting that the current PE being delivered is not high quality?

Casbon and Walters (2004) suggest the ten high quality outcomes led to the realisation that no data was being collected to assess the quality of PESS in schools, partnerships or clubs.

Some of the characteristics that young people would acquire through participating in high quality PE and sport outlined by Learning through PE and Sport (2003) include confidence, making more appropriate decisions, showing desire, being creative, having the skills to take part in PE. So how are these going to be measured, do they all need improved and how will PESSCL achieve them?

identifying and developing the talented pupils in PE. Only 70.7% of schools had both a whole school and departmental policies for identifying and developing talent, 6.5% had neither. (Bailey et al. 2009)

The majority of schools identify pupils on their current level of achievement and only a small percentage of schools identify on potential ability basis, the most common form of identification was with school and club sport, and especially within the area of their teachers expertise which was game activities (85.7%). This should not be an influence, it is open to dance, swimming, trampolining and gymnastics to name a few.

OfSTED (2004) stated that talent identification should not just be based on current performance, but on potential to achieve a high ability. Although 63.5% of heads of department identify on current performance levels, 94.6% identify on school sport and 72.9% on club sport, and only 20.2% on potential achievements. This is certainly a concern, a very elitist approach which takes away the opportunity for pupils aspiring to the Gifted and Talented programme and who are late developers, this could lead to drop-out of PE and Sport. Also not many subject leaders use skill tests as a test for physical abilities. (Bailey et al. 2009)

Bailey et al. (2009) suggest that many of these school policies identify and develop talented pupils lack policy direction and programme theory. They include an uneven distribution of staff expertise and a lack of focused professional development, these factors affect the effectiveness and equity of the policies.

The impact of the programme was interesting, 58.8% of subject leaders believed that they had benefited and 41.2% believed there had been no benefit in terms of

Communities with a higher social capital are those with better infrastructure, more active citizens, lower crime rates, better health and less child abuse. New Labour believed that civil society, social inclusion, active citizenship and social capital were all linked together and that sport could help these in a positive manner and develop communities so they were keen to invest in sport.

However, New Labour placed importance on “*evidence-based policy making, value for money, welfare effectiveness and outcome evaluation of various forms of public investment.*” (Coalter, 2007:19)

Sociological

The School Sport Partnership Programme’s (SSPP) remit is to increase the participation levels of several under-represented groups including girls and young women. The SSPP focuses on gender equity issues, and the programme is having a positive impact by extending the range and provision of extra-curricular activities and increasing the number of young people who are physically active, however this is only a snap-shot. (Flintoff, 2008)

Flintoff (2008) suggests that current practice of PE is assumed by teachers to be acceptable for girls, and all that’s needed are small changes to make PE a little more girl-friendly. Kirk (2005) suggests that teachers lack awareness of girls interests, if they offer activities for girls they are more likely to participate.

Flintoff (2008:395) asks three questions “*What kind of PE and school sport do we want for all young people, boys as well as girls? How should gender equity permeate and impact on all our practice in PE, so that all girls and boys have a quality*

Kirk (2005) suggests there are several structural problems with how PE and sport are available to young people that PESSCL does not address due to the absence of research and programme theory in the strategy. Kirk (2005) suggests that the investment in PE through PESSCL may only have had limited impact on long-term outcomes such as increasing the number of pupils participating in life-long involvement in physical activity and sport.

Structural problem one, is the importance of early learning experiences for life-long involvement participation, it is thought this will trigger a rethink of PESSCL and aspects of Game Plan. Another structural problem is that only particular groups can access experiences in school or club sport as lower socioeconomic groups, girls or young disabled people miss out.

Structural problem three is that primary schools are unable to deliver quality experiences because of no PE specialists and PE teachers in secondary schools come too late to impact on the majority of children in their motivation or perception never mind ability.

Kirk (2005) presents three problems for PESSCL, firstly that children who attend sport's clubs have a greater experience of sport than those who just attend school PE, hence making primary school teachers' jobs harder as experience and abilities' gaps widen. Secondly, volunteer coaches in clubs are facing larger, mixed ability groups who have mixed interest and motivation towards a particular sport. Thirdly, the importance of social background on club participation makes ethnic, girls, disabled, low socioeconomic groups further disadvantaged.

It has been suggested that there is no significant relationship and a lack of robust evidence between being part of a SSP and improved attainment scores in exams. Bloyce and Smith (2010) supports this along with teachers interviewed that it is extremely difficult to measure the improvement if any in behaviour, attainment and attendance.

Although teachers, others involved in SSP, PESSCL and government claim and publish all these benefits of PESS there is very little empirical research and evidence. However with the competition from other public services for public funding, they need to bolster their work, show that they can address many issues socially and boost their claim for funds and under pressure and vulnerable to deliver short-term outcomes. (Bloyce and Smith, 2010; Coalter, 2007)

Conclusion

The PE and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) was launched in 2008 to build on the assumed success of PESSCL and £783 million was invested over the first three years. PESSYP aimed to deliver the '5-hour offer' which meant two hours of high quality PE each week within the school day for all 5-16 and an additional three hours of sporting activity each week for all 5-16 year olds and the creation of new opportunities for all 16-19 year olds to participate in three hours of sport a week, delivered by schools, community and clubs beyond the school day.

YST in 2010 is merging with Sport England due to the 2012 Olympics, which will lead to less funding or a possibility of all funding being withdrawn due to the 2012 Olympics and also what impact will the change of government have on funding? Will