Physical Education
Supporting high quality physical education in the primary school
Introduction

This booklet provides additional information to support all sections of the DVD entitled *Physical Education: Supporting high quality physical education in the primary school*. Definitions and explanations of terms used in the DVD are given, as well as links to further reading and websites.

The target audience for this DVD is primary teachers and their key partners who work with children and young people in schools and learning communities. This resource will support teachers to implement the Scottish Government’s recommendation of at least two hours of high quality physical education for every child, every week.

The DVD is a resource that can be used as a professional development tool. It supports and challenges teachers to make learning in physical education more relevant, engaging, creative, challenging and enjoyable.

As a continuing professional development (CPD) resource with built-in flexibility, the DVD allows users either to select sections that are most relevant to them or to engage with the full resource. The reflection and action prompts at the end of all sections provide opportunities for users to reflect on their current practice either as individuals or with other practitioners and partners.

The following terms are referred to in the DVD:

- Physical education
- Physical activity
- School sport
- Physical literacy.
In this resource, the definition of ‘teachers’ includes primary teachers, early years practitioners, primary specialist physical education teachers and secondary specialist physical education teachers.

The explanations below offer a helpful guide to clarify the roles and responsibilities of teachers, key practitioners and partners working with children across physical education, physical activity and sport.

Physical education (PE)

PE is the planned, progressive, inclusive learning experiences that take place as part of the curriculum in early years, primary and secondary education, and acts as the foundation for a lifelong engagement in physical activity and sport.

The learning experiences offered to children and young people in PE should be developmentally appropriate to help them acquire psychomotor skills, cognitive understanding, social skills and the emotional learning they need to lead a physically active life.

Teachers are best placed to offer developmentally appropriate PE because they know their children very well and have detailed understanding of the developing child and how this development influences their engagement and learning in PE.

It is expected that schools will continue to work towards the provision of at least two hours of high quality physical education for every child, every week.

Physical activity

Physical activity is a broad term referring to all movement that uses energy. Physical activity therefore includes not only PE, sport and dance, but also energetic play and habitual activities such as walking and cycling, as well as housework and gardening.

In addition to planned physical education sessions, children are entitled to daily opportunities for energetic play, physical activity and sport. Partnership working is key to ensuring that learning communities provide these daily opportunities for all children.


School sport

School sport has the potential to develop and broaden the foundation learning that takes place in school physical education and also forms a strong link with community sport and physical activity. Whilst all children are encouraged to be involved in school sport, not all choose to, or are able to do so. As such, it is important that schools create opportunities for all children and young people to be involved in a range of different physical activities in addition to the specified allocation of physical education curriculum time.

Physical literacy is a term used by professionals that best describes ‘excellence’ within physical education. A main aim of physical education is that through the provision of rich learning experiences children progress to become autonomous learners who are physically literate.

A physically literate individual:

• has the motivation to use their physical capacities
• can move with poise, economy and confidence in a wide variety of physically challenging situations
• is perceptive in ‘reading’ the physical environment
• has a well-established sense of self
• has the ability to build relationships with others
• can identify and articulate their own movement performance.

Everybody has the potential for physical literacy.

*(Physical Literacy throughout the Lifecourse, Whitehead, M, 2010, p 42)*
Curriculum for Excellence is for all children and young people in all educational settings, and it should support them in a range of ways which help to maximise their potential. Curriculum for Excellence is coherent, flexible and inclusive, focusing on the needs of every child and young person, from 3 to 18.
Section 1. Curriculum for Excellence

This section of the DVD includes film which demonstrates the contribution PE makes to the development of the four capacities. Learning in, through and about physical education contributes to all children being:

- **successful learners** with enthusiasm and motivation for learning and the ability to think creatively and independently
- **confident individuals** with a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and the ability to pursue and sustain a healthy and active lifestyle
- **responsible citizens** with respect for others and the ability to make informed choices and decisions
- **effective contributors** with resilience and the ability to work in partnership and in teams.

The potential of PE to develop the attributes and capabilities of learners can be further enhanced by creative planning and delivery of PE within the four contexts for learning:

- ethos and life of the school as a community
- curriculum areas and subjects
- interdisciplinary learning
- opportunities for personal achievement.

It is important that the seven curriculum design principles are taken into account to support learning.
Challenge and enjoyment

One of the key elements of challenge is problem solving. PE can provide real-life contexts for learning using problem solving within a wide range of physical activities and sports. Children should be active learners and have opportunities to develop and demonstrate their creativity. They can gain confidence and develop resilience through appropriate management of success/failure and winning/losing.

Children should find their learning in PE challenging, engaging and motivating. They actively engage in their learning in PE because the enjoyment they derive from the experience gives them a sense of purpose and is intrinsically rewarding.

Relevance

Appropriate activities in PE should be selected which provide real-life, interesting contexts for learning, building on what is familiar to the child and the local environment. The potential to develop skills for learning, life and work becomes more apparent when children see the value of what they are learning and its relevance to their lives, both present and future. Active engagement within PE and a commitment to a healthy, active lifestyle should lead to physical activity becoming a central part of their lives both within school and in the wider community.
Coherence

Children understand that PE is fundamental to leading a healthy, active life. There should be clear links across PE, physical activity and sport to capture learning wherever it takes place. A more coherent learning experience is achieved when learning takes place across a wide range of contexts. Achievement in PE, physical activity and sport should be celebrated.

A wide range of opportunities for participation and performance should be available both within school and in the wider learning community, leading to a sustained level of participation from 3 to 18 and beyond.

Within PE, the application of skills and the cultivation of transferable skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life should be planned.

Personalisation and choice

To meet the needs of all learners, there should be opportunities for personalisation and choice. PE should offer children and young people opportunities to exercise choice over content and methodology as learning progresses. Learners should take greater responsibility and be closely involved in decisions about their learning, including the generation of evidence for assessment.

Depth

Within PE, learners are expected to reflect on their own learning, to demonstrate understanding and to be capable of applying their learning in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. PE provides opportunities for critical thinking skills through problem-solving approaches. Practical contexts for learning allow for connections
to be made to become physically literate. Physical literacy can be revisited from different perspectives, allowing for deeper learning and the mastery of movement skills and skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life.

**Breadth**

PE is well placed to develop a breadth of learning across a wide range of physical activities and sports. These include competitive and non-competitive activities, creative and challenging activities and sports. Children can participate as individuals, in pairs, as part of a group or in teams. Teachers should be creative in using a wide range of locations within the school and wider community both indoor and outdoor to broaden experience and provide a wide range of learning experiences. Partnership working is key to achieving breadth across the curriculum.
Progression

Progression within PE ensures that learning is appropriately sequenced and involves learner engagement. Learners should be supported to understand how much and how well they have learned and should be involved in planning next steps. It is about building on prior learning as children develop skills and deepen their understanding as they apply these skills in practical contexts.

Reflection and action

Curriculum for Excellence

How do you capitalise on all available resources within your learning community to enable all children to learn and achieve in physical education, physical activity and sport?

How could you make better use of the space and resources available in your setting, both indoors and out?
Section 2. Health and Wellbeing

‘Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future.’

(Principles and Practice Paper, Health and Wellbeing, p 1)

Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing across learning is the responsibility of all within a learning community.

Physical activity contributes to the healthy functioning of the body and mind and is a key feature of a healthy lifestyle. Children who exercise regularly from an early age form good habits and are more likely to continue exercising into adulthood.

Appropriate, safe and enjoyable physical activity and exercise has a positive impact on physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing.
Reflection and action

Health and wellbeing

In the role you play within the learning community, what is your contribution to health and wellbeing across learning?

How do you make meaningful links with other practitioners within the learning community to ensure that all contributions lead to coherent and progressive learning from 3 to 18?

How could you further develop partnership working to maximise learning experiences?
Section 3. High Quality Physical Education

Physical education experiences and outcomes

The experiences and outcomes describe the expectations for learning and progressing within PE. The experiences and outcomes are arranged with the intention of giving teachers flexibility and scope in providing appropriate learning experiences for all children.

PE provides a variety of opportunities to develop and progress thinking skills and teachers should ensure that these skills are planned for within the learning experiences.

Physical education movement skills, competencies and concepts

HWB 0-21a, 1-21a, 2-21a/3-21a, 4-21a

In PE, children learn and build a movement vocabulary and develop an understanding of what a quality action looks like and feels like. They need regular practice to consolidate and refine their movement skills.

A single activity may cover various aspects from all three lines of development within PE: movement skills; cooperation and competition; evaluating and appreciating.

PE offers a breadth of learning through
the wide range of contexts for learning. Some useful examples include:

- Replicating actions/phrases and sequences with accuracy, eg gymnastics
- Exploring and communicating ideas, concepts and emotions, eg dance
- Identifying and solving problems to overcome challenges, eg orienteering
- Outwitting opponents – invasion games; net/wall games; striking and fielding games; combat activities, eg football, badminton, rounders, judo
- Performing at maximum levels in relation to speed, height, distance, strength and accuracy, eg athletics, swimming
- Exercising safely and effectively to improve health and wellbeing, eg fitness activities including yoga, circuit training
- Experiencing a range of roles within physical activity, eg umpire, leader
- Engaging in increasing complex and challenging tasks and activities, eg outdoor or adventurous activities
- Engaging in a broad range of activities that, in combination, develop the whole body
- Performing as an individual, group or part of a team.

Physical education movement skills, competencies and concepts
(HWB 0-22a, 1-22a, 2-22a/3-22a, 4-22a)

FITNESS
Children develop physical strength, speed, stamina and flexibility to cope with the demands of different activities. Agility (a combination of speed and flexibility) and power (a combination of speed and strength) should be developed when appropriate for the learner and the activity.

These aspects of fitness are necessary for positive health, independent living, and participation in physical activity.

PERFORMANCE
Children should be given opportunities to perform to the best of their ability. This may be a performance in class or at school, local or national level. A high quality performance includes a combination of appropriate fitness, technical ability and cognitive functioning, ie the ability to calculate and process information. Children adapt to the demands of the activity by using this information to prioritise actions and make decisions. When correctly applied, the combination of movement and thinking skills leads to a high quality performance.
Physical education cooperation and competition

HWB 0-23a, 1-23a, 2-23a, 3-23a, 4-23a

Imagination, independent thinking and creative collaboration involve skills that children and young people need for the 21st century.

PE offers many opportunities for children to develop these qualities and intrapersonal skills of confidence, self-esteem and resilience as well as interpersonal skills of leadership and working with others. Through communicating, negotiating, taking turns, taking the lead, sharing ideas, sharing equipment and problem solving, children acquire key transferable skills for learning, life and work in an enjoyable, supportive environment.

Physical education evaluating and appreciating

HWB 0-24a, 1-24a, 2-24a, 3-24a, 4-24a

PE is well placed to develop children’s literacy skills of listening and talking. They are able to communicate their learning in relevant ways showing a consideration for others, for example demonstrating collaborative working and reflective learning when receiving and giving feedback.
Reflection and action

High quality physical education
How do you know the activities you provide are challenging and progressive?
What support do you need to ensure children are engaged in high quality learning within physical education?

Experiences and outcomes
Building on the example shown on the DVD, how will you plan for and contribute to the development of thinking skills in physical education?

Movement skills participation
In planning for physical education, how do you build on the existing movement skills that children have? How could you develop your practice to ensure progression?
How do you plan learning to take account of different ability levels and children’s additional support needs? How could you do this more effectively?
Reflection and action cont’d

Movement skills performance and fitness

Reflect on the ways in which you deliver the principles underpinning performance (eg co-ordination, rhythm and timing), rather than simply the technical details of skill development.

In what ways will this inform and develop your future practice?

Co-operation and competition

Co-operative and competitive learning experiences are embedded within the delivery of physical education.

How do you ensure all children have the opportunity to experience all facets of performing?

How do you provide learning experiences that enable all children to appreciate winning and losing, and to develop the resilience to cope with either outcome?
Reflection and action cont’d

Evaluating and appreciating

To what extent do you offer good opportunities for children to learn to value, appreciate and respect the contributions and skills of others?

Building on the example given on the DVD, how would you plan interdisciplinary learning based on the experiences and outcomes in physical education?
Section 4. Physical Activity and Sport

Within health and wellbeing, learning is enhanced by partnership working between teachers and colleagues such as Active Schools and sports coaches who can make complementary contributions through their specialist expertise and knowledge.

Effective partnership working:

- engages the active support of parents and carers
- reinforces work across transitions and cluster planning across sectors
- maximises the contributions of the wider community
- draws upon specialist expertise
- ensures, through careful planning and briefing, that all contributions come together in ways which ensure coherence and progression.

(Principles and Practice Paper, Health and Wellbeing, p 4–5)

Teachers working in partnership with Active Schools co-ordinators, sports coaches and other key partners provide:

- a sharing of curricular and pastoral information when and where appropriate
- CPD opportunities for teachers
- opportunities for teachers to observe and assess children’s performance and relationships with others
- a sharing of learning intentions to ensure that the learning outwith PE is captured and contributes to a coherent, progressive learning experience
- consistency in ethos, approach and pedagogy.
A professional learning community makes best use of teaching staff and key partners working across PE, physical activity and sport to sustain participation and performance pathways. Planning together and the understanding of roles and responsibilities to support children are central to good, effective partnership working.

Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning provides real-life contexts for learning and teaching and encourages children and young people to learn in, through, and about the outdoors. Planning experiences outdoors for children can help to contextualise and enhance learning across curriculum areas whilst also raising levels of physical activity. There is a growing body of research which suggests that many aspects of health and wellbeing are enhanced through time spent outdoors and in the natural world. For example, research has shown that being outside in nature impacts positively on mental health, recovery and levels of stress.

The main curriculum guidance for outdoor learning is *Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning*, which can be viewed or downloaded on the Learning and Teaching Scotland website.

www.LTScotland.org.uk/outdoorlearning
Reflection and action

Physical activity and sport

How will you further develop your links with partners, including parents and volunteers, to support the provision of daily opportunities for physical activity and sport for all children in your learning community?
Section 5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The DVD highlights effective learning and teaching. The following steps may be useful as you plan high quality PE:

• Examine the experiences and outcomes within PE. Are there further links with physical activity and sport, the other organisers within health and wellbeing and other curriculum areas?

• Examine your aims and objectives. What do you want the children to learn? Be clear about why you have selected the particular activity as the context for learning.

• Speak to colleagues within school, across the local authority and via Glow. Is there a health and wellbeing co-ordinator within your school and within the local authority who can help you?

• Explore partnership working opportunities within the learning community. Is there a professional learning community for PE?
Assessment

Assessment has to be used flexibly to meet the needs of all learners, regardless of where the learning takes place. This is important in recognising achievement across PE, physical activity and sport.

Teachers need a range of approaches that reflect the breadth, challenge and application of learning in order to gather good evidence of learners’ progress. Through relevant experiences in PE, children should have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills that will provide a view of the whole learner.

Within PE, assessment evidence is predominantly going to come from what children ‘do’ but opportunities for children to ‘say’, ‘make’ or ‘write’ should be considered, if appropriate to the learning experience. Success criteria must relate to the learning experience. Sharing learning intentions and success criteria helps learners understand what they are trying to achieve and how to know when they have achieved it. These should be integrated into the learning process in order to encourage learners to think more deeply about what they need to do to meet the criteria for success. Success criteria are agreed by learners in advance and then used by teachers with learners to judge how much and how well learning has progressed.
In order to share standards and expectations through dialogue and discussion, teachers should:

- work together from the experiences and outcomes to plan learning, teaching and assessment
- build on existing standards and expectations
- engage with colleagues to share and confirm expectations.

Reflection and action

Learning, teaching and assessment

Building on the examples given on the DVD, how do you ensure high quality learning in physical education?

How could learners be more involved in generating evidence of their learning?

How do you promote learners’ achievements in physical education, physical activity and sport through monitoring, tracking and sharing information with learners to help them plan their next steps in learning?

To what extent do you use indoor and outdoor learning experiences to promote teamwork and motivation?

How could you support children to recognise, assess and manage risk?
Further reading

Teachers use their skills and competencies in learning to support children in PE. Further support for professional reflection and development can be found in the following resources.


British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (2008), Safe Practice in Physical Education, Dudley: Dudley LEA.


Useful websites

Association for Physical Education: www.afpe.org.uk

Youth Sport Trust: www.youthsporttrust.org/page/home-welcome/index.html

Sportscotland: www.sportscotland.org.uk

Physical Activity and Health Alliance: www.paha.org.uk

HMIE: www.hmie.gov.uk

Learning and Teaching Scotland: www.LTScotland.org.uk

Teachers TV: www.teachers.tv/subjects/primary/physical-education

The Journey to Excellence website: www.LTScotland.org.uk/journeytoexcellence

Grounds for Learning: www.gflscotland.org.uk


Curriculum for Excellence: www.LTScotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/curriculumoverview/ataglance.asp

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