

Terry Graves – Supplementary written evidence (NPS0162)

House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee – Roundtable

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A Physical Education practitioner for over forty years and counting; covering a myriad of roles including: PE teacher, Leader of PE (34 years), PE Associate Adviser (Hertfordshire), Assistant Headteacher - Greneway School, Royston (20 years), School Sports Coordinator and currently a PE consultant for the Association for PE (afPE) on the Sport England Teacher Training Programme and afPE Quality Mark Validator.

Also still an active player/coach/referee for football and basketball (including coaching in my community for over 25 years).

Opening Statement

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further formal evidence regarding how community sport can enhance and enrich the physical education, school sport and physical activity (PESSPA) offer, and how PESSPA can support participation in sport and physical activity within the community.

Q1. What are the main challenges you face when delivering PE to pupils?

- The Status/value of PE – we need to 'put PE at the Heart of School life' (afPE).
 - Core subjects are generally considered to lay the foundation for learning in other subjects and, as a result, are generally advantaged in terms of their status, preparation for teaching, and their time and resource allocation in schools.
 - As a consequence, key foundation subjects such as PE tend to be marginalised and 'squeezed' in terms of time and resources.
 - This has led to a narrowing of the curriculum in primary and secondary phases
 - You can be the most passionate and talented Leader of PE but if you do not have the full 'buy-in' of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership team in the school then barriers are always there for PE. There are indeed some visionary School Leaders who do understand and value PE but many do not. All school leaders would **have** to

'buy into' PE if it was a **core** subject and truly get to understand and value PESSPA.

- Curriculum time: Too many schools allocate too little time to PE. There needs to be a minimum of two hours of High Quality* PE every week for every pupil in secondary and one hour a day in primary
- Resources - facilities, funding, equipment – these can be poor in many schools, PE as a core subject would ensure that this changed
- Previous Learning: KS2 - 3 Transition. Secondary Schools with a huge number of feeder schools have real challenges in this area. Schools constantly work on this but it is a never ending challenge.
- Pedagogy - Developing positive relationships through inclusive physical literacy needs to be central to all PE programmes but unfortunately some PE curriculums are still too Games heavy.
- Relevant CPD – More easily accessible, better quality, quantity and relevance for ITE and in-school inset
- When the Primary PE and School Sport Premium is being used on coaches to 'teach' the PE curriculum and not on 'upskilling' QTS teachers to teach their own PE, this model actually 'de-skills' primary teachers

*Ofsted/afPE Quality Mark standards

Q2. Is the curriculum for PE fit for purpose and how could it be improved?

- It allows context-specific implementation as the foundations for a broad, balanced and deep curriculum and high quality PE practitioners apply the framework appropriately to deliver a high quality PESSPA curriculum offer for all.
- However, it can be poorly interpreted and implemented leading to a very narrow, unbalanced and shallow games dominated curriculum offer that disengages learners and fails to be **Powerful Education**.
- The NC Learning activities which each school applies needs to be school and community context-specific and have to answer these key questions:
 - What is the purpose of this activity?
 - What is most valuable to our pupils?
 - How will each activity enable pupils to learn more and do more?
- When these questions are effectively answered the relevant content needs to be progressive, scaffolded and sequenced so that learning can be remembered, deepened, added to and applied across all other areas of learning
- The PE curriculum needs to be aligned with pedagogy and assessment enabling learners to acquire and secure their knowledge and understanding.

- Being able to relate to others, having a sense of belonging are crucial for ALL learning and therefore these fundamentals MUST underpin all PESSPA curriculum considerations.
- HQ PESSPA is all about relationships/connections/social interactions and these are key to children's development.
- In all schools these all need to be rebuilt, rebooted and supported in the recovery phase of this Covid-19 Pandemic using PESSPA as the vehicle.
- A carefully planned and implemented HQ PE curriculum must have:
 - Ambitious/aspirational and exciting end points
 - Cover carefully, context specific content
 - Be effectively sequenced and scaffolded from simple to complex
 - Enable and show impact by ensuring learners know more, remember more and do more.

Q3. How would you describe your relationship with local sports clubs, external providers and coaches, and parents?

As stated earlier, building, developing and nurturing positive relationships are vital in learning communities. We pride ourselves in Royston, a small rural town on the Hertfordshire/Cambridgeshire border with limited sporting facilities, on developing mutually beneficial partnerships with:

- **Our Local Sports clubs:**
 - We worked tirelessly in establishing, developing and nurturing positive relationships with our local community clubs who shared the same values and ethos as us i.e. inclusive, equitable, enjoyable ,sustainable, supportive
 - All school-linked clubs signed formalised agreements which were annually reviewed
 - The school facilities were used by the local community sports clubs at very low costs
 - Club coaches often supported the school's extra-curricular activities where appropriate
 - PE teachers (NGB Qualified coaches) supported some of the linked clubs e.g. basketball
 - NGB CPD programmes are aligned/shared e.g. Saracens Coaching seminars, basketball coaching and officiating courses
- **Our External Providers:**

Because of our geographical isolation we had to make the school a sporting centre or hub for our community and have developed beneficial partnerships with:

 - Association for PE (afPE) to ensure our PESSPA programmes are as high quality as possible including achieving afPE Quality Mark Distinction twice.
 - North East Herts Schools Sport Partnerhip (NEHSSP) which we helped to drive as PE teachers and SSCos

- Herts Sports Partnership - active supporting partners
 - Hertfordshire PE advisory TEAM up to 2010 - including roles within
 - Sport England - ActiveMark and Sportsmark Gold programmes
 - Youth Sport Trust - School Games Gold x 5 and Platinum
 - North Herts District council - Sports Development Team including Herts Youth Games participation for pupils and coaches
 - Arts Council England - ArtsMark Gold x 5 (Dance)
 - NGBs for coaching support and Mini-Basketball England based at our school
- **Coaches:**
 - Club coaches often supported the school's extra-curricular activities where appropriate
 - PE teachers (NGB Qualified coaches) support some of the linked clubs e.g. basketball
 - NGB CPD programmes are aligned/shared e.g. Saracens Coaching seminars
 - Local feeder schools use our expertise to upskill their inexperienced teaching staff to teach NC PE - coaches were not used in Royston for curricular PE
 - **Parents/Carers:**
 - Communication with our parents/carers has always been a key driver for our PESSPA programmes and forums used have included:
 - Information sharing evenings
 - Newsletters
 - Website updates
 - Twitter accounts
 - PE Parent governor
 - Local press
 - Parental volunteering – officiating, tours, visits, clubs

Q4. The Committee has heard that secondary school is a key 'drop off' point when many pupils lose interest in PE and sport. Do you see that in your own school and how can this be tackled?

Not in our experience in fact, most learners view the KS2/3 transition as the next step in their exciting journey to being physically literate and opening more doors for lifelong physical activity and learning in, and through, the physical. The key to ensuring that KS2/3 transition is an exciting positive step and not a dip is the transition process built on continuity, progression and engagement in the PE curriculum continuum. Part of the process includes:

- A relevant, engaging and enjoyable PE curriculum continuum KS1 – 5 involving collaboration between all schools
- Establishing and developing relationships with pupils through:
 - Festivals at the school run by our Sports Leaders

- Visits to feeder schools to see the pupils in action and talk with them
- Taster days (Year 6)
- Transition period
- Accurate and relevant assessments of where the pupils are at upon transition so that learning continues to be built upon.

Q5. Do you think there are sufficient opportunities and support for training and Continuing Professional Development for PE teachers?

- PE specialist organisations such as the Association for Physical Education (afPE) offer a very effective range of bespoke and internationally renowned CPD courses that allow sufficient time and support to implement; and apply the 'upskilling' which enhances the PESSPA offers in schools e.g.
 - [Level 5/6 – Professional Vocational Qualifications: Primary School Specialism and Subject Leadership in PE & School Sport](#)
 - [Level 2/3 Qualifications & Diploma in Supporting Learning/Delivery of Physical Education and School Sport](#)
- I believe that there still needs to be more in Primary PE including schools enabling more Primary Pre-Service teachers (PPST) to have as many PE experiences on placement as possible
- Also for Secondary PE Teachers, Sport England are currently in Phase 6 of their Secondary Teacher Training Programme which uses PE Advisers/Consultants from afPE and Youth Sport Trust (YST) to advise and support PE Leaders in schools to 'access **funded** CPD and put pupil's enjoyment at the heart of PE and School Sport':
 - Building confidence in pupils and teachers
 - Increasing enjoyment for learners
 - Raising the profile of PESSPA across the school community
 - Avoiding negative experiences for all involved in PESSPA
- This programme is about investing in the workforce for sustainable professional development resulting in a more engaging, relevant, bespoke and enjoyable PESSPA offer for all.
- <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/secondary-teacher-training-programme>
- The impact in the first phases has been significant:
 - Greater awareness of the benefits of PE, school sport and activity**, with whole staff cohorts leading delivery and recognising the positive impact physical activity has on students' behaviour and academic performance.
 - Increased staff competence and confidence** through whole school continuing professional development (CPD) and upskilling of staff.
 - Changes in practice**, including collaboration within and between schools, and more student-focused approaches.

- ❑ **Better quality PE, school sport and physical activity delivery**, achieved through more variety, greater focus on wellbeing and supporting disengaged students.
- ❑ **A tool for whole-school improvement** by focusing on health, wellbeing, knowledge and life skills.
- ❑ **PE, school sport and physical activity higher up the agenda** through senior leadership team (SLT) engagement and support for curriculum changes.
- ❑ **Enhancing student wellbeing** through improved awareness, staff training and developing role models.

Hot off the press, afPE and Sports Leaders UK have teamed up to create and deliver during the Pandemic the remarkably apposite course:

- NEW [Level 4 Qualification in Supporting Pupils' Wellbeing Through Physical Education](#)
- Ensuring that all schools can afford to access these high quality CPD courses is always a challenge but one that must be achieved.
- "The early career framework (ECF) reforms will create a step change in support for early career teachers, providing a funded entitlement to a structured 2-year package of high-quality professional development. The reforms are part of the government's [teacher recruitment and retention strategy](#), which aims to improve the training and development opportunities available to teachers."
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework-reforms-overview/early-career-framework-reforms-overview>
- This will be significant for the teaching profession but it will need quality assurance gatekeepers to ensure PE CPD is appropriate, relevant, safe, value for money and has real impact.

Q.6 What could Government do to support and improve PE in schools?

- Fully understand and value PESSPA with ONE key action: Elevate PE to being a **core** subject within the NC because...
 "...(PE) is the only subject whose primary focus is on the body and, in this respect, it uniquely addresses the physical development aim of the curriculum and it also makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children..." (Dr Jo Harris, 2018)
<https://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/wp-content/uploads/PE-Core-Subject-Paper-20-3-18.pdf>
- PE already has statutory programmes of study and attainment targets for physical education at key stages 1 to 4. "They are issued by law; you must follow them unless there's a good reason not to."
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-physical-education->

[programmes-of-study](#) Therefore, the leap to core subject status would be a small step!

- "...In addition, (PE) develops an interest in, and patterns of, physical activity which are essential for healthy development and lay the foundations for active lifestyles.
 - This is increasingly important given growing concerns about children's health (e.g. over 75% of children do not meet physical activity for health guidelines; 20% of children experience mental health problems; and 1 in 5 secondary age children are obese)...
 - (The Covid-19 Pandemic has exacerbated this)...
 - ...Making PE a core subject in the NC would stimulate significant health and educational attainment benefits, lead to improved physical, mental and personal well-being of children, develop essential life skills and contribute to whole school improvements.
 - It would also ensure that physical competence is valued as much as reading, writing and arithmetic, and that well qualified specialist teachers are employed to teach physical education in primary and secondary schools.
 - High quality PE in schools can also reduce the health burden of physical inactivity and contribute to the economic prosperity of the country.
 - Elevating PE to core subject status would build on the 2012 legacy in a sustainable way by potentially reaching all children in the country and it would demonstrate a genuine commitment by government to addressing significant, systemic health issues amongst children..." (Dr Jo Harris, 2018)
 - <https://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/wp-content/uploads/PE-Core-Subject-Paper-20-3-18.pdf>
- Consequently, until the current deficit model in schools, and in society, of PE being only a foundation subject, is transformed then the system from Higher education recruitment and training, producing new PE teachers for our schools and beyond, will continue to undersell the true power of PE and its delivery in our communities. The result being that the truly transformative impact of PESSPA will never be fully realised in every school.
 - PE is **Powerful Education** – learning in, and through, the physical is unique.

Some other shorter term solutions that can be done:

- Primary PE and Sport Premium funding and it's spending must be more rigorously scrutinised in schools with the focus on 'Upskilling' QTS teachers to teach their own PE and become specialist PE teachers.
- Continue to fund high quality, kite-marked PE CPD projects like the Sport England Secondary Teacher Training Programme enabling PE practitioners to continually 'upskill' to enable PE programmes to be inclusive, fresh, relevant and enjoyable which fully engage everyone and ensure lifelong application.
- Reduce the overly saturated Primary curriculum to enable more PESSPA to take place in a physically active curriculum
- Physically active learning is a key asset in contributing towards children's health and wellbeing and should be a focus for the whole school community to make it an integral part of the school day.
- In Primary school enabling every child play to have a 15 minute outdoor break to play every hour of the school day (Finland)
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr23/let-children-play-the-educational=message-from-across-europe>
- Enable all primary age children regular, subsidised access to swimming pools - **[The Impact of Coronavirus on School Swimming and Water Safety report](#)** reveals that 1,186,555 pupils are expected to leave primary school between 2021-22 and 2025-26 unable to swim 25 metres unaided. <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/impact-coronavirus-school-swimming-report/#> These are truly shocking statistics and need to be rectified now.
- ITE to provide additional experiences to core movement skills - swimming, gymnastics and dance
- Ensure that the delivery of Primary PE is the domain of a teacher with QTS as specified by the APPG Physical Education (2016) Report
<https://royalpa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/pereportfinal.pdf>

Some thoughts from a passionate Physical Education practitioner for 41 years and counting ...

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