
2006/07 SCHOOL SPORT SURVEY

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Introduction and Background

A joint Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) /Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target has been set, to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5 -16 year olds as follows:

'Enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5 to 16 year olds so that the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality¹ PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum increases from 25% in 2002² to 75% by 2006 and to 85% by 2008, and to at least 75% in each School Sport Partnership by 2008.'

The national PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy brings together eight different strands, one of which is the School Sport Partnership Programme (formerly the School Sport Co-ordinator Programme). The programme is based around 'families' of schools which are brought together to increase both the quality and quantity of sporting opportunities for young people. Partnerships are made up of secondary, primary and special schools which have a Specialist Sports College acting as the hub of the family. At the heart of the programme is the Partnership Development Manager (PDM) who is responsible for managing the partnership, while in every secondary school there is a School Sport Co-ordinator (SSCo), and in every primary or special school a Primary Link Teacher (PLT) or Special School Link Teacher (SSLT) who is responsible for leading the strategy at that particular school. Staff are funded by the programme to allow them to do this.

The partnerships were set up in a number of phases, starting in September 2000, and rolled out during 2000 to 2006. By the end of 2006 all maintained schools (21,917) in England were in School Sport Partnerships, arranged into 449 different partnerships.

Key Findings

Participation in PE and school sport

- Overall 86% of pupils in schools participated in at least two hours of high quality PE and out of hours school sport in a typical week. This means that the 2008 target of 85% participation has been exceeded a year early.
- Most year groups achieved high levels of participation, except pupils in Years 10 and 11, where they were noticeably lower (67% and 63% respectively).
- Participation has increased from just 62% in the first (2003/04) survey, up to 86% in the 2006/07 survey.

¹High quality is defined as 'producing 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 – A guide to the PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy.*

² The 2002 baseline was an estimate of the level of PE and school sport participation in England

- There have been very marked improvements in levels of participation in Years 1 – 6 over the last 4 years and smaller improvements in Years 7 – 9. However, participation levels in Years 10 and 11 have always been recorded at a low level, and while there have been improvements, these have been small.
- Longer established Partnerships have higher participation levels.
- Higher performing schools tend to have a smaller proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, be in more affluent areas and have a lower proportion of children from an ethnic minority heritage than is the case in lower performing schools.
- Participation in 'girls only' schools is lower than in 'boys only' or mixed schools.

Participation in intra and inter-school competitive activities

- Across Years 1 – 11, 35% of pupils were involved in inter-school competition during the academic year. Comparisons with previous data shows a steady annual increase.

Sports provision

- The average number of sports provided by each partnership school during 2006/07 was 17.0 (an increase from 16.0 last year).

Club links

- On average partnership schools have links to 7.0 different clubs, an increase from 6.3 different clubs last year.

Objectives

A joint Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) /Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Public Service Agreement Target (PSA) has been set, to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5 -16 year olds as follows:

'Enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5 to 16 year olds so that the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum increases from 25% in 2002³ to 75% by 2006 and to 85% by 2008, and to at least 75% in each School Sport Partnership by 2008.'

³ The 2002 baseline was an estimate of the level of PE and school sport participation in England

The objective of the research is to measure this PSA target and to look at differences in participation across groups such as year groups or regions.

Methodology

The DCSF commissioned TNS, an independent research company, to conduct this, the fourth survey, among schools in the School Sport Partnership Programme. The survey was conducted among all schools in the programme during May, June and July 2007. 21,745 of the partnership schools submitted data, representing an excellent response rate of 99%.

TNS used a combination of pen and paper and online surveys which are completed by the schools within a partnership. An element of verification ensures that schools report accurately. Further detail is provided in the main report.

Findings

Participation in PE and school sport

- The survey found that overall 86% of pupils in schools within the School Sport Partnership Programme participated in at least two hours of high quality⁴ PE and out of hours school sport in a typical week. This means that although the latest data collection is for 2006/07, the 2008 target of 85% participation has already been exceeded.
- There were clear differences in levels of participation between year groups. Most year groups achieved high levels of participation of over 85%. The exception to this was pupils in Years 10 and 11, where levels of participation were noticeably lower (67% and 63% respectively).
- Across primary schools participation was 91% and in special schools it was 88%. In secondary schools it was lower at 80%.
- Looking back across the four surveys conducted to date, participation in at least two hours of PE and school sport among partnership schools has increased from just 62% in the first (2003/04) survey, up to 86% in the 2006/07 survey. There has also been an increase in participation levels every year, with the latest survey reporting a six percentage point increase over the previous (2005/06) survey.

⁴ High quality is defined as 'producing 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 – A guide to the PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy.*

- There have been very marked improvements in levels of participation in Years 1 – 6 over the course of the four surveys. There have also been smaller improvements in Years 7 – 9. However, participation levels in Years 10 and 11 have always been recorded at a low level, and while there have been improvements, these have been small.
- There is a link between the length of time a partnership has been established and the level of participation in PE and school sport achieved. In the longest established partnerships (set up by 2003/04) participation levels have risen from just 62% in the first survey in 2003/04, up to 87% in the latest 2006/07 survey. The most recently established partnerships achieved participation levels of 79% in 2006/07.
- Participation rates are higher in rural (90%) rather than in urban (85%) areas, although this difference is less apparent than has been the case in previous surveys. There is a small difference between Government regions, with the South West being the highest performing region. The gap between regions has been narrowing over the last three waves of research.
- There are links between the best performing schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who participate in at least two hours of PE and school sport, and a number of social and area characteristics. Specifically, higher performing schools tend to have a smaller proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, be in more affluent areas and have a lower proportion of children from an ethnic minority heritage than is the case in lower performing schools.
- While the number of 'girls only' schools is small, it is clear that participation rates are lower in such schools than in 'boys only' or mixed schools.
- Pupils in partnership schools spent an average of 115 minutes each participating in curriculum PE in a typical week. Analysed by individual year group, pupils in Years 1 – 9 received a minimum average of 115 minutes, but those from Years 10 and 11 received far less.
- Results for all partnerships which were operational at the time of each survey show that there has been an increase in the average time spent per pupil per week on PE and school sport from 103 minutes in 2003/04, to 107 minutes in 2004/05, to 111 minutes in 2005/06, up to the latest figure of 115 minutes in 2006/07.
- Years 1 - 6 have shown consistent improvements over time in terms of the average number of minutes spent on curriculum PE, while this has not been the case for other year groups. In particular the 2006/07 results for Years 10 and 11 have shown no movement on last year, and so remain slightly lower than the 2004/05 figures.
- 70% of pupils in partnership schools participated in at least two hours of curriculum PE, which means that for 16% of pupils there is a 'top up' of extra curricular school sport which enables them to achieve the DCSF's two hour PE/school sport participation target.

Participation in intra and inter-school competitive activities

- Aside from school sports days, 58% of pupils in partnership schools were involved in intra-school sports activities. This peaked at Years 6, 7 and 8, and was therefore higher in secondary (61%) than in primary (55%) schools.
- 98% of schools reported that they held at least one sports day or equivalent event during the 2006/07 academic year.
- Across Years 1 – 11, a total of 35% of pupils were involved in inter-school competition during the academic year. Comparisons with previous data can only be made for Years 4 – 11: this shows an annual increase from 33% in the first survey, up to 35%, then 37% and now up to 40% in the 2006/07 survey.

Sports provision

- The average number of sports provided by each partnership school during 2006/07 was 17.0. This represents an increase from 16.0 in the 2005/06 survey.
- The most widely available sports were football, dance, gymnastics, athletics, cricket and rounders.
- The biggest increases in availability of sports have been for multi-skill clubs⁵, golf, cycling, archery, canoeing, orienteering, outdoors/adventurous activity, tennis, fitness and rowing.

⁵ Clubs set up under the PESSCL strategy that use a variety of approaches and contexts to help children develop physical skills (co-ordination, movement, thinking, body awareness) from a broad and appropriate development vocabulary

Club links

- On average partnership schools have links to 7.0 different clubs. This represents an increase from the 2005/06 survey when schools had links to 6.3 different clubs.
- The largest percentage point increases in club links have been for multi-skill clubs, dance, swimming, golf, cricket, gymnastics, tennis, karate and martial arts.

Community sports, dance and multi-skill clubs

- Across Years 2 – 11 an average of 29% of pupils had participated in one or more sports, dance or multi-skill clubs with links to the school during the academic year. This represents an increase from 27% in 2005/06, and is the latest in a series of year-on-year increases.

Gifted and talented pupils

- An average of 7% of pupils across Years 5 – 11 are currently registered as gifted and talented because of their ability in PE and/or school sport. This equates to about 268,000 young people in partnership schools.
- Over the course of the four surveys, the numbers of pupils registered has increased slowly from an original figure of 3% in 2003/04, up to 5% (2004/05), then 6% (2005/06) and now the current 7%.

Sports volunteering and leadership

- 12% of pupils in Years 1 – 13 have been involved in sports volunteering and leadership during the 2006/07 academic year.
- Comparisons over time on this question are limited to Years 10 – 13, but show a consistent upwards movement each year.

Conclusions

This is the fourth in the series of annual surveys of the School Sport Partnership Programme, and each year we have seen significant progress. This year is no exception and it is pleasing to see that the take-up of at least two hours of PE and school sport has now reached 86%, which means that the 2008 target has already been exceeded. This represents an increase of six percentage points over the 2005/06 figure, which means that even as we reach high levels of participation, progress continues to be made. Not only this, but it is encouraging to observe that in both

primary schools and in special schools very high levels of participation have now been achieved (91% and 88% respectively), while in secondary schools the figure stands at 80%.

The survey does, however, raise a concern about pupils in Years 10 and 11, amongst whom there are relatively low levels of participation in two hours of PE and school sport. It is perhaps even more of a worry that while there have been some improvements, these have been small when compared to those observed among other year groups and this point was also noted in the last report on the 2005/06 study. This relatively low level of participation is reflected in the overall figure for secondary schools, and brings it down to a level much below that observed in primary schools.

The survey reveals that progress is being made among the full range of partnerships – both those established in the earliest days of the programme, and those established very recently.

While there are small differences in terms of region and area type (urban v. rural), all areas have made progress, and it is positive to see that the gaps between areas have been narrowing rather than widening. There is, however, a continuing correlation between the level of performance of the school and social factors such as affluence and the proportion of children with an ethnic minority heritage. These links have been noted in previous studies and continue to exist.

As with overall participation in at least two hours of PE and school sport, the amount of time pupils spend on curriculum PE has increased year-on-year and now stands at an average of 115 minutes. However, there has been no such improvement for Years 10 and 11 and just 38% of pupils in Year 10 and 35% of pupils in Year 11 receive at least two hours of curriculum PE. This means that this group of pupils is currently much more reliant on out of hours school sport to achieve the two hour target for PE and school sport – much more so than any other year group. It is interesting to consider whether the two hour target can be achieved through focusing on out of hours sport alone – or will there need to be significant changes in the amount of curriculum PE available?

The latest study highlights the continuing success in widening the number of sports available to children in schools – primarily through growing the number of schools now offering what might be termed 'less traditional' school sports such as multi-skill clubs, golf, cycling, archery and canoeing. This is also reflected in the fact that there are growing numbers of club links –

and the growth has most particularly been among the less traditional school sports.

Additional Information

The Research Report (DCSF-RW024) can be freely downloaded at www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/

Further information about this research can be obtained from Joseph Lovell, 6D, DCSF, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.