

## **10 Working with the community: a necessary evil or a positive change of direction?**

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### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to raise a number of issues associated with the topical and somewhat uncertain relationship between physical education and the 'community'. This relationship means different things to the diverse range of agents and agencies (all of which are considered to be working collaboratively); however, it is not the purpose of this chapter to provide the reader with the 'way it should be'. Instead, an outline of the context and the nature of the key issues is highlighted. In taking such an approach it is possible to appreciate the principles behind the political and subsequently the practical agenda. By grasping an understanding of the relationship between the political and practical agenda it should be possible to develop practice to address, and so direct, this agenda for physical education teaching and teachers so that it becomes an educative process rather than a political product. The reader should be able to identify the political climate in which physical education is presently being manipulated by a sporting agenda. Having established the broad framework, some of the wider issues and implications associated with this political agenda and policy framework are explored relative to key national initiatives in schools and the community. It is the structure and consequent nature of the impact of these initiatives (independently and together) that are important as it is through them that the agenda is set and the place and role of physical education is determined.

### **The political climate in which physical education now exists**

Warburton (1999) commented on the potentially alarming lack of coherence in vision and policy of different government departments in spite of the fact that central to the Labour government's rhetoric and its manifesto is the development of sport in schools and the determination to enhance the status of sport at both local and national level. Central government, not only the present Labour but also the previous Conservative administration, has recognised the potential for physical education in schools to service its political agenda. Consequently the development of policy has had a political 'games' rationale

rather than an educational rationale (Evans and Penney 1995). This was reinforced by Kay (1998) who highlighted the heavy influence placed by the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) on central government in the interests of the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) in the formulation of *Sport: Raising the Game* (Department for National Heritage (DNH) 1995) and its focus on elite elements of sport and games rather than education. Therefore, *Labour's Sporting Nation* (Labour Party 1996) merely perpetuated the essence of those initiatives presented by the previous administration in its policy paper *Sport: Raising the Game* (DNH 1995). Both of these papers, along with the introduction of National Lottery funding, have meant significant changes for what has been referred to as 'school sport'.

It remains to be seen how the government's recent strategy document *Sporting Future for All* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) 2000) will impact on schools. A five-part plan targetting improved school facilities, 110 specialist sports colleges, 600 sports co-ordinators, out-of-school activities and support for elite athletes aged 14 to 18 years will have its limitations. The sports colleges alone will get to less than 10 per cent of the school population, and a sprinkling of co-ordinators may have little impact on primary schools. The problem for the elite athlete may come at 18 years. The strategy document, itself expounding the value of partnership, hardly acknowledges the existence of further and higher education institutions, and certainly does not give them a role in supporting the ongoing development of the elite athlete. This is evidence once again of a lack of joined-up thinking in the 'school sport' debate.

Most professionals in the field of education would rightly prefer the term 'physical education' to sport, however, the government clearly sees physical education and sport as seamless or as one and the same thing (Smith 1999) and when pushed refers *only* to sport. (See Chapter 8 for further discussion of the physical education/sport debate.) It is this obsession with the promotion of 'sport' that the world of physical education needs to have most concern about. This is a significant element that permeates all of the issues raised throughout this chapter. The nature of policy impacts on the nature of provision of physical education in and between the school and the community setting. Unfortunately, the lack of cohesion over the demands of, and changes to, physical education between key government departments and agencies such as the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) is a further considerable cause for concern.

### **Changes in physical education: a contradiction?**

Recent changes in physical education go much deeper than philosophical arguments over terminology. The Labour Party (1996) stated that central to its intention to reverse the decline of sport in schools is a determination to see that primary school teachers are given the key role of ensuring that all children experience physical activities. It is a general principle that few, if any, would disagree

with, and as such the support of the school setting should be used to continually remind the Government of its agenda and to fight for a broad, balanced curriculum with the teacher at the heart of the delivery. Unfortunately, the compulsory nature and dominance of games throughout the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE) (for example, 50 to 70 per cent of available curriculum time at Key Stage (KS) 3 is spent on games (Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) 1998a; see also Chapter 7)) contradicts the notion of a broad and balanced curriculum. This will not change with the NCPE 2000 (DfEE/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) 1999). Competitive games activities are compulsory throughout KS1, KS2 and KS3 and although pupils have a chance to choose other activities at KS4, the government expects schools to continue to provide competitive team and individual games for pupils who wish to take up this option (DfEE/QCA 1999). However, the TTA (1998) appears to appreciate the centrality and importance of the teacher in the whole process when it established the *National Standards for Subject Leaders*, claiming that it is the quality of teaching which is significant in the development of each child.

However, given the government's apparent commitment to the school setting and what the TTA (1998) has set out in the *National Standards for Subject Leaders*, it is a contradiction that in September 1998 the programmes of study for physical education at KS1 and KS2 were suspended until at least September 2000. Primary schools are still required to teach physical education but may decide what they teach and how often they teach it (DfEE 1998b). OFSTED inspection teams are no longer required to report on the physical education curriculum content, being limited to commenting on lessons seen and extra curricular provision (OFSTED 1998b). This raises the question: what about the monitoring of provision and nature of the links with community if OFSTED is removed? The reasons for the removal of reporting on physical education by OFSTED become clearer when one considers the government's definition of sport and the aims and framework for its development established by organisations such as Sport England.

Significantly, there are myriad interrelated issues associated with the initial teacher education (ITE) of both primary and secondary physical education teachers. Not least of these is the number of hours dedicated to physical education ITE in the primary age range. OFSTED reported averages of 23 hours (range 7.5–60 hours) in primary Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) physical education and 32 hours (range 7.5–90 hours) in three or four year undergraduate courses (OFSTED 1998c). This is further endorsed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) findings that suggested that teaching in physical education is weak in one fifth of all primary schools. In evaluating primary physical education programmes in Wales, HMI indicated that while two-thirds of lessons observed were satisfactory or better, the lessons were often delivered by teachers who had received a specialist course in physical education as part of their ITE course (Morgan 1997). Evidence indicated that primary PGCE and undergraduate students studying physical education at foundation course level

had inadequate subject knowledge, limited understanding of progression and a weak grasp of assessment (OFSTED 1998b).

There appears to be a contradiction here in the intention of policy and the actual means to achieve it. This is further exacerbated by the fact that there has been a significant decline in in-service support through a decline in the number of advisers for physical education. This undermines the call from the physical education profession to increase (especially in the primary sector) the amount of continuing professional development, particularly with regard to new initiatives. Not only do school teachers require information on initiatives, but they also need help to identify where they require further help (Hooper 1998). The diversification into sport and sport science by higher education institutions (HEIs) with a general movement away from ITE has led to a further reduction in the level of support for the student teacher. Two-thirds of a PGCE student teacher's time is school-based. With such an organisation there are implications regarding the potential inconsistency in the nature and range of experiences which the student teacher receives, as well as the quality and differentiated nature of such experience. In addition, there is the issue associated with the undergraduate experience and knowledge base which student teachers have to draw upon during the PGCE year. In their movement towards more sports science undergraduate courses, many HEIs may not have satisfactorily considered whether there is an appropriate route through the degree course to enable students to embark on a career in teaching. This is changing slowly. However, even when this issue is acknowledged and more appropriate routes are developed they tend to focus on coaching and not on teaching. Add to this the ever-increasing demands of the National Curriculum, with its drive for improvements in literacy and numeracy against national performance indices, the inevitable increase in bureaucracy and the requirements of OFSTED, it is hardly surprising that physical education at all Key Stages, curricular and non-curricular, is under pressure and there is a vicious circle of decreasing pedagogical content knowledge. All these factors create many contradictions and a 'no win' situation for the appropriate development of physical education in schools.

### **Moving towards 'real' collaboration and partnership: fabrication through necessity?**

Few people would disagree with Gilbert's (1998) belief that partnership in physical education can be truly successful only if it sits within an overall vision for the development of young people, sport and physical activity. However, as has been alluded to earlier, appreciation of the importance of breadth in the physical education curriculum receives little recognition from those who at present support and drive government policy: the very policy that influences and drives the development of practice in school and the community. It should also be noted that the definition of physical education is one that the physical education profession has itself been debating for many years and continues to debate on a number of levels (Woodhouse 1998). However, there are funda-

mental aspects associated with breadth, balance and the central nature of pedagogy which can be generally agreed by the profession.

Since the introduction of the NCPE the notion of partnership has been an important component highlighted in National Curriculum documentation (Hardacre 1998). It is against this background that the community setting has recently moved into greater focus, becoming increasingly central to the delivery of physical education. The government may advocate the central role of schools in this process, but the reality is somewhat different.

### **The overall, but not necessarily the big picture**

The remainder of this chapter reviews key community initiatives that at present are impacting on physical education programmes in schools and the way in which these relate to wider issues associated with a political agenda and supporting policy framework. The community in this context refers to anyone involved in the promotion of physical education and sport in schools. In considering these initiatives and the partners involved, it is a concern that few people have an understanding of all that is happening. Change is taking place at great pace and the channels of communication may have fallen short of what has been required. Those responsible for the delivery of physical education in schools may lack information because it is not 'education' that is instigating the changes but rather new found 'partners'.

### **Instigating change**

Who are the key partners within this contemporary climate for the promotion of partnerships and strategic alliances within the development of sport in England? They include:

- Sport England
- Youth Sport Trust (YST)
- Departments of: Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS); Health; Education and Employment (DfEE)
- Health Education Authority (HEA) (*Young and Active*)
- NGBs
- local authorities.

Many of the new community initiatives in physical education and sport are innovative, generally well considered and appear, at least in the short-term, to be effective. As has been stated, Sport England has taken centre stage by introducing many of the new developments. Where they are not prime movers, their control of overall funding means that they are able to influence the thinking of NGBs and local authorities in their work with young people. Therefore, the focus for the remainder of this chapter is Sport England (the English Sports Council).

**Sport England: a key player**

*More People* involved in sport; *More Places* to play sport; *More Medals* through higher standards of performance, is the corner stone of the comprehensive sports development process of Sport England. This process is developed through links with the four elements of the sports development continuum; Active Schools, Active Communities, Active Sports and World Class England. Figure 10.1 is the model presented by Sport England (Sport England 1999). It illustrates the way in which Active Schools are expected to underpin Active Communities, Active Sports and World Class England. Such initiatives might be seen on a developing continuum of maintaining and increasing involvement in sport for young people, with a view to enhancing excellence. Participation, learning, performing and excelling in sport are encompassed in all the initiatives, but there are different emphases given to them in different initiatives. This highlights and reinforces the essential interrelationship between the initiatives (and consequently those agents/agencies involved). The notion that everyone has a stake in the development of physical education and sport at all levels and guises is significant and one that continually needs to be emphasised and reinforced.

It is envisaged that real partnership, supported at all stages by Sport England, will deliver the programme. It is useful to consider at this point the previously highlighted political agenda and the contradictory elements within it and their impact on the nature of the school physical education curricula, as well as what and how such a sports development programme will reinforce it. Active Schools underpin all three of the other initiatives and the related products and services. These include:

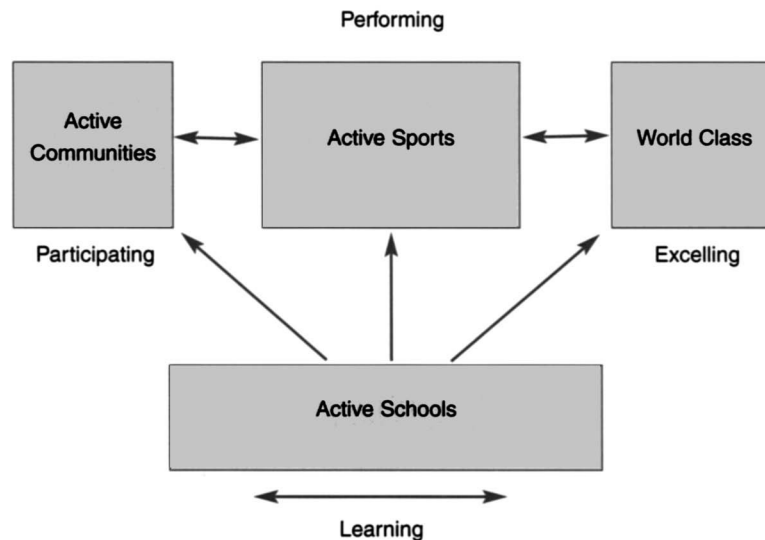


Figure 10.1 Sport England's sport development programme (*The Wider Picture*)  
Source: Sport England 1999: 5

### ***The TOPS Programme***

This is a joint venture between the YST and Sport England. The programme includes initiatives such as TOP Play, BT TOP Sport, TOP Gymnastics, TOP Athletics, TOP Outdoors, BT TOP Swimming, Fit for TOPS, Champion Coaching and TOP Club. While many of these are school-based initiatives, they are also delivered extensively as community packages. Schools themselves are encouraged to set up clubs within the community initiative. The TOPS programmes vary in what is on offer in different places, but all provide teaching cards and training and many supply high quality equipment.

Evaluations have shown that the standard of training is generally high, although it is often not delivered by teachers/advisers and is limited to four hours. Research undertaken by Owen (1999) and Lewis (1999), however, showed that there is a lack of communication between schools and between schools and communities borne out of a lack of time and interest. The evidence would appear to suggest that while schools are prepared to accept resources that are directly beneficial to them, they have less interest when it comes to developing partnerships; the latter being rather too much like hard work in an already overcrowded educational agenda. Hunt's (1998) comment that the emerging national picture is both piecemeal and fragmented in terms of the evaluation of the TOPs programmes identified the need to conduct more immediate and co-ordinated monitoring and evaluation programmes. These need to be conducted on a local level (in addition to a national longitudinal evaluation) so that they can then be used to inform the national picture over and above the superficial level of number of schools, community sites and children which most of the literature to date has focused on, and the difficult situation generated by the demands of the NCPE and OFSTED. However, a contradiction arises, as highlighted earlier, associated with the continuing professional development of teachers. One of Hunt's (1998) recommendations resulting from her evaluation of the TOPs programmes was that more training for teachers is necessary in order to develop teachers' skills of observation, understanding of games principles and knowledge of games play. Additional time is unlikely to be freed up for teachers.

Another important issue is that the TOPs programmes are largely games focused and games are only one element of what might be considered part of a broad and balanced physical education experience for children. Again, the political agenda can be seen to have the potential to undermine the educational agenda given that teachers may be generally ill informed, or may not have the inclination due to other commitments, to check the nature of such initiatives.

Fourteen million pounds has been allocated to the TOPs initiatives. Only half of this is government funded, with the rest having to be found from private funding. This is clearly a significant amount of money but pales into insignificance with the government's announcement in January 1999 that it is to give £120 million to the development of music in schools. Conceivably the physical education profession might need to ask itself, in addition to the nature of the marriage of music's educational agenda and the government's political agenda,

what has the music lobby done in conjunction with the community context to achieve this amount of funding within its subject, and can the physical education profession learn anything?

### ***Coaching for teachers***

This is a joint initiative between Sport England and the National Coaching Foundation (NCF) supported by the Physical Education Association of the United Kingdom (PEAUK) and the British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (BAALPE). This is a programme providing opportunities for teachers to improve their coaching and teaching skills, particularly in the extended curriculum, by attending NGB awards/courses. In reality, given the limited hours offered in ITE many may use the content to support their lesson delivery and much of the material may be new to them.

### ***Sportsmark and Sportsmark Gold***

This comes under the umbrella of Active Schools. It is the third year of the scheme that rewards secondary and middle schools that evidence quality physical education and sports programmes which recognise evidence of community involvement. Its existence is a consequence of the political agenda reinforced by *Sport: Raising the Game* (DNH 1995). Sportsmark was intended to be a relatively easy development in the short-term to evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of government policy. Useful statistics generated as a result of this programme were the nature and extent of: extra-curricular provision for young people; competition opportunities for young people (curricular and extra-curricular); coaching qualifications of teachers and adults other than teachers (AOTTs); and links with local sports clubs. However, the programme underwent a review in its third year in an attempt to make it more 'user friendly' for schools. Spencer outlined elements of the revised scheme:

- includes a statistical survey of provision, but with flexibility for time issues (100 minutes' curriculum time for Sportsmark), expectations of pupil take-up of extra-curricular activities and in breadth and balance
- takes into account the particular context of the school transport issues, lack of staff and facilities, young people with special needs, pressures for pupils not to take part resulting from examinations, and so on. The opportunity is given to explain the context in general and with regard to the specific criteria
- allows middle schools which are deemed secondary schools to apply
- asks for two referees who know the school and can verify and support their application
- gives credit for post-16 programmes, General Certificate of Education (GCSE) and Advanced (A) level provision, Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA) and TOP link and other leadership courses



- provides guidance on such areas as school-club links, teachers' and AOTTs' qualifications, other sport-led initiatives and what kind of 'evidence' a school should be bringing together to present a case to a validator.  
(Spencer 1998: 224)

As part of the Active Schools programme Sportsmark should, in theory, enable more co-ordination of physical education and sport initiatives within and between schools and the community. However, schools still need to remind themselves constantly of why they are making and developing links with clubs and the community, and where other Sport England programmes like Coaching for Teachers fit into an 'educational agenda'. BAALPE, in conjunction with Events of Excellence, validates the Sportsmark award scheme. On the one hand, this may be positive in that physical education can reinforce and apply the educational agenda. Conversely, it might be seen as the physical education profession validating a political agenda which it does not agree with.

#### ***Active Mark and Active Mark Gold***

This is the primary school equivalent of Sportsmark and Sportsmark Gold and as a scheme has yet to be launched. It is different from the secondary school award as its focus is on helping with the long-term planning and delivery of a primary school's physical education curriculum. To achieve the award, schools have to evidence community links offered. The award has a preliminary national target of 1,000 in its first year.

#### ***Challenge Funding***

This is based on a two-year programme which is aimed at developing school-club links. Lessons have been learnt with this scheme, hence its renaming as 'Sportslink' and its priority within the small grants lottery funding programme awards for all. This revised scheme offers funding for coaching qualifications, new start-up equipment and club recruitment.

#### ***Millenium Festival Awards for All***

These were introduced in October 1999, aimed at involving groups and schools. No partnership funding is required. It also remains to be seen how after-school clubs funded through the new opportunities fund (the sixth good cause of the National Lottery) will impact on additional sporting opportunities for the young.

Clearly, the issues highlighted and discussed in this chapter are relevant to all phases of education. Even though initiatives may be principally primary or secondary based it remains essential that physical education teachers are aware of the entire range of initiatives impacting on practice if they are:

- to be a significant part of it
- to be a valued and influential component of the agenda, not only in the delivery but also in the formulation and evolution of future policy and practice, which fundamentally provides each child with a positive, developmentally appropriate, broad and balanced experience establishing lifelong access to physical activity on a number of levels and in a number of roles.

If physical education teachers remain vague, confused or unaware of these politically, financially and pedagogically significant community initiatives which are being driven by a strong and not always educationally supportive political agenda, physical education, as well as the teaching profession, will find itself continually being reactive. A proactive stance which can be used positively to manipulate the political agenda to suit and promote physical education's educational agenda has to be generated.

### Questions for reflection

- 1 The nature and extent of the dissemination of information and associated materials is a significant feature in the development of community initiatives within physical education. Who are the key agents and how are they contributing to a redefinition of physical education and sport within this country?
- 2 Consider the relatively recent movement towards predominantly school-based ITE courses. What are the likely implications of this for the quality of physical education teaching in school and the development of extra-curricular and life-long physical activity? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such an arrangement relative to (a) the primary sector (b) the secondary sector?
- 3 Given the movement towards the community and the many sound initiatives being led by the world of sport impacting on young children, what should be the immediate agenda for the physical education profession if it is to secure quality physical education teaching in schools?
- 4 Why have governing bodies of sport bought into these new partnerships and who stands to gain the most: the child, the community, the school or sport? (Remember that at the centre of any sound physical education programme is the child.)

### Further reading

- English Sports Council (1997) *England the Sporting Nation: A Strategy*, London: English Sports Council.
- Health Education Authority (1998a) *Young and Active: A Policy Framework for Young People and Health-Enhancing Physical Activity*, London: HEA.
- Office for Standards in Education (1998d) *Teaching Physical Education in Primary Schools: The Initial Training of Teachers*. London: Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of

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- (1999b) *Initial Teacher Training Inspected: A Summary Report of Secondary Subject Inspections Physical Education (1996–98)*, London: Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England: OFSTED Publications Centre.
- Physical Education Association of the United Kingdom (1998) 'Mission Statement', *British Journal of Physical Education*, 29 (2): 4–7.
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (1998) *Maintaining Breadth and Balance at Key Stages 1 and 2*, London: QCA.