

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Master of Philosophy

**THE EFFECTS OF THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT 1988 ON THE PROVISION
OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

by Amanda Bryant

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ABSTRACT

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The Education Reform Act 1988 (ERA) has become accepted as the most important and far reaching piece of education policy in England and Wales since the Education Act of 1944 (Maclure, 1989). The introduction of a National Curriculum for all state schools altered the basic power structure of the educational system and increased the power of the Government over the curriculum. Local Management of Schools and Open Enrolment placed limitations on the functions of local education authorities and granted greater financial autonomy to schools and governing bodies. These measures significantly altered the context in which schools and teachers worked.

Theories of policy implementation have developed alongside the introduction of ERA. The traditional view of policy (i.e. legislation) as distinct from practice (i.e. what happens in schools) has contributed little to an understanding of the factors that shape the work of practitioners. Therefore, the conceptualisation of policy as an ongoing process underpins this research. This thesis investigates the effects of the ERA on the provision of Physical Education in the primary school and thus focuses on what happens at the 'final site' of policy implementation. The evidence presented here is based on empirical fieldwork which took place between 1991 and 1993 resulting in a number of descriptive case studies of primary schools. The study examines the specific issues pertaining to the implementation of educational policy in the primary school and investigates the influences and processes that intervene between policy and practice at the school level.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Research The Education Reform Act 1988

Introduction

The most alarming feature of the current situation...is the virtual absence of Physical Education from serious, detailed, informed and open discussion of 'official' status at national level. (Parry, 1987, p.243)

The date of the above quote is significant for Physical Education (PE) as in 1988 the subject became officially recognised and included as part of the package of educational reforms that is represented by the Education Reform Act 1988 (ERA). Until this date, although it may have been widely assumed that PE has always been a compulsory subject in both the primary and secondary school curriculum this status was, in legislative terms, only accorded to Religious Education (DES, 1984). Schools, acknowledging the benefits of exercise for young children, carried out Physical Education lessons, generally following their own guidelines or those provided by their Local Education Authority (LEA), and in accordance with their individual philosophy, expertise and resources. Thus there would have been a great deal of variation between schools which reflected the diverse system of primary schools in England and Wales. Few outside of the LEA expressed an interest in what was taught in schools and, as Parry (1987) claims, the PE professions¹ themselves remained very much in the background having little influence on the interpretation of Physical Education as a curriculum subject. However, it had been recognised that the provision of balanced PE programmes in schools was a cause for concern (Meek, 1986). A study by Murdoch in 1985 revealed:

- An inadequacy of provision
- A lack of awareness of policy-makers
- Variations in initial teacher training
- A need for "coherent statements" in PE at all levels
- A concern for more effective primary/secondary links

In 1986 Murdoch continued to express her fears for PE in schools.

I have felt for some time that now that time is running out for physical education. It has either to declare itself or, with as coherent a voice as possible, that it knows where it is going or it will disappear from the curriculum. (p.87)

In 1988, PE was defined in the National Curriculum as a Foundation subject. Wetten (1994, p.169) commented that this gave “teachers a wonderful and timely opportunity to redress the situation”. An HMI report published in 1991 claimed that primary schools would be well-placed to take advantage of the national guidelines for Physical Education. The future of PE seemed to be secure. However, there were many issues that warranted discussion. Mahoney and Sloan (1994) claimed that primary classroom teachers are resistant to change and that many remain unconvinced of the curricular value of PE. It was envisaged that numerous influences arising from the introduction of ERA would shape provision in schools and a great deal of uncertainty surrounded the subject at both primary and secondary levels.

This thesis examines the effects of the 1988 Education Reform Act on the provision of PE in state primary schools. This chapter has several purposes, the most important of which is that of defining the general context of reform and outlining the main provisions of the ERA. Later sections provide a brief outline of the structure and organisation of the thesis.

Educational Reform

This research was carried out between 1991 and 1993, therefore, the following sections provide an historical perspective to the context of the study. ERA introduced a number of reforms, the principal aims of which according to Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State at the time of its introduction, were:

- To improve the quality of education
- To raise the standards of achievement in schools
- To extend freedom of choice in education

These may be considered sound educational aims. However, a great deal of contention surrounds their development. This research adheres to the view that ERA in general, and PE in particular, must be examined not only in terms of content but attention must also be given to the context that has shaped its development, and the factors which continue to exert an influence on the way in which it is implemented in schools. ERA has implications far beyond the modernisation of education, most significantly it alters the basic structure of an educational system that has been in place since 1944 and redistributes power within this system. In short, it grants central Government substantial control over the curriculum, reversing an established tradition of localised educational policy-making. It thereby takes many powers away from LEAs and gives much of their previous role to the Department for Education (DES)². Further, it increases financial autonomy at the school level through the Local Management of Schools system (LMS). Maclure (1989) suggests that this restructuring has only been made possible by the introduction of a clearly defined National Curriculum, prescribed by the Secretary of State, which forms part of the arrangements set in place for exercising control.

ERA was a key reform of Margaret Thatcher's third term as Prime Minister and an embodiment of many of the principles which have become known as 'Thatcherism'. According to Dale (1989), the decline of faith in the education system, largely as a result of economic conditions in the late sixties and early seventies, allowed Thatcherism to thrive. Teachers and schools were criticised for their role in the decline of educational standards. Whilst the evidence for this is less than substantive (Simon, 1988; Hammersley, 1994), ERA was promoted as a cure for the nation's social and economic problems as well as a response to the perceived 'crisis in education' (David, Holland and Minhas, 1990). The notion of a 'free market' was intrinsic to ERA and fed into the educational debate as it did other public services (for example, the National Health Service). 'Competition' and 'choice' centred on the concept of 'deservingness' and selectivity, and created a situation in which (supposedly) the talented (i.e. the hard

working) would be rewarded and the less talented would have an incentive to improve. Competition in the 'free market' of education can never truly replicate the complexities of market forces. It is important, however, when looking at the impact of any one provision of ERA to bear in mind the underlying agenda to which it subscribes.

How schools reacted to, and were affected by, the policies introduced by ERA with respect to PE is one of the foremost concerns of this research. The National Curriculum and LMS represent two separate and clearly contradictory 'systems'; those of standardisation and Government intervention set against economic autonomy. This research argues that although the two systems may indeed have their own objective agendas, they are both embedded in a much wider ideology and must not be treated in isolation but as conflicting parts of a larger whole. In the following sections, these key policies are discussed in more detail.

The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum was a major policy initiative of ERA, with implications for all subjects. Sections 1-25 of the legislation entreated all participants in the education system, including the Secretary of State, the LEAs, governing bodies and schools, to "exercise their functions...with a view to securing that the curriculum for the school satisfies the requirements of this section". The National Curriculum (section 1-(2)) is seen in terms of a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
- b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The curriculum was expressed in statutory Final Orders defining the subjects to be taught and, to some extent, outlining the content of each individual subject. The structure of the curriculum was defined in terms of 'Core' and 'Foundation' subjects. Section 3 sets out the specific subjects to be covered in each Key Stage³.

Section 3 (1) Core subjects: Maths, English, Science

Section 3 (2) Foundation subjects: History, Geography, Technology, Music , Art, Physical Education

The National Curriculum consultant (DES, 1987, para. 14) made it clear that the majority of teaching time was to be devoted to the core curriculum. Maclure (1988) commented that “The National Curriculum has a timetable for implementation which provides for the Core subjects to be dealt with first, followed by the Foundation subjects” (Times Educational Supplement, 29.7.88) thus indicating the status accorded to PE. Secondary legislation specified the manner in which the subjects were to be implemented.

Section 4 - (2)

The Secretary of State may by order specify in relation to each of the foundation subjects:

- a) such attainment targets;
- b) such programmes of study; and
- c) such assessment arrangements

as he considers appropriate for that subject.

Attainment Targets (section 2-(a)) were defined for each subject which outlined the "knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities are expected to have by the end of each key stage". These were supported by non-statutory levels of attainment to be used by teachers in their planning and assessment. The purpose of Programmes of Study was "to establish the matters, skills and processes which pupils should be taught in order to achieve the Attainment Target". They were, therefore, intended to provide teachers with objectives and a framework for planning.

Assessment was central to the National Curriculum and has been one of the more controversial aspects of ERA. The Working Group set up to report on assessment in the National Curriculum⁴ envisaged a framework of "standard assessment tasks" that

were to be incorporated as part of the teaching programme such that, at primary level, it need not be apparent to the children that they were actually being assessed. The aim was to build upon good classroom practices and link testing to normal assignments. Most subjects, as well as having associated Attainment Targets, also contained 'profile components' and it is these elements of the syllabus that were statutorily assessed. PE was not assigned profile components and is one of the few Foundation subjects that was not aligned to Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). This is an issue that is of some significance in terms of the perceived status of Physical Education. Simon (1898, p.128) identified a concern that teachers would be forced to "teach to the test" and that assessed subjects will accordingly be privileged in the curriculum. He regarded the notion of "bench mark testing" as one of the most damaging aspects of the National Curriculum as adherence to an externally imposed structure could inhibit curriculum innovation outside of this framework.

The National Curriculum thus introduced many new measures and, indeed, terminology to teachers and schools. This may be regarded as a highly technical language which forms a 'discursive frame' (Ball et al, 1992; Penney and Evens, 1991; Penney, 1994) defining how teachers were expected to organise their practice in schools. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 2, which outlines the theoretical background to the research. Despite its inclusion as a Foundation subject, there remained considerable concern about its future in the curriculum. The National Curriculum, and the phased manner in which it was introduced, created a situation in which subject areas could be competing for limited resources and allocation of time. The consequences for a subject which arrived last in a long line of other subjects, and entered a school context in which PE is not always accorded a high status, were unknown in 1988. It was envisaged, therefore, that the future provision of PE would be determined to a great extent by those in control of the allocation of resources. This issue is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Local Management of Schools

Whilst educational debate and media interest has centred predominantly on the National Curriculum, and latterly on the issue of assessment and testing, the financial provisions of ERA are equally important in creating the context and climate in which the curricular objectives were to be achieved. Furthermore, they may have significant consequences for PE which has greater resource implications than other subjects. LMS was one of the 'key reforms' of ERA. Founded on the introduction of "needs based formula funding and the delegation of financial and managerial responsibilities to governing bodies" (DES, 1988), the framework aimed to make schools financially accountable for their operations thus promoting greater efficiency in their use of resources. One of the aims of LMS was to raise the

...quality/relevance of the educational service delivered in schools by delegating decision-making about resource allocations to the heads and governors. (Cambridge Pilot Scheme, Nightingale, 1985, p.1)

In this quest, LMS (sections 33-51 of the legislation) significantly altered the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the education system. For many years schools had relied on their LEA to provide them with the financial means of delivering education. Decision-making on financial matters at school level had been minimal and the LEA retained ultimate control over the budget. LMS effectively devolved financial responsibility from the 'central' control of the LEA to 'local' control at the school level by the head teacher and governing body. Under this system the role of the LEA was significantly restricted. Their tasks were to determine the total budget to be delegated to schools (section 33), to devise the formula by which school budgets were financed (section 38) and to monitor performance through inspection and advisory services. LEAs were given control of an Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) which was determined by central Government. This was subsequently distributed to schools through the General Schools Budget (GSB) via a 'per capita' formula, based on pupil numbers and weighted to take account of factors such as special

educational needs. This has become more generally referred to as “formula funding” (DES, 1988). The financial position of a school, therefore, would be linked directly to the number of pupils enrolled.

Schools under LMS were responsible for a wider range of expenditure. The following areas were delegated to local management (section 38 (4)):

- salary costs including teaching and administrative/support staff
- day to day premises costs such as heat/light, repairs, cleaning
- books, equipment and similar services used by schools

The LEA retained a proportion of the GSB in order to carry out the functions for which it remained responsible, for example, capital expenditure, the services of educational psychologists, welfare officers and peripatetic and advisory teachers. Schools assumed the responsibility for managing their own expenditure and would have the discretion to direct funds according to their own perceived priorities. It was purported that enabling teachers to make informed choices about resources would, in turn, improve the quality of teaching and learning (Davies and Braund, 1989). However, this ‘freedom’ must be located within a number of constraints. Davies et al (1989, p.47) warned that the ability to respond to individual circumstances must be balanced against “greater responsiveness and accountability to the outside community”. Nightingale (1990) pointed out that LMS did not mean more money would be available to schools, merely that schools would be able to choose how they distributed their income. However, once staff costs, an estimated 80% of the total expenditure of most schools, has been accounted for, very little in real financial terms would be left with which to budget.

LMS created a situation where a limited budget was available with which to resource all areas of the curriculum. Subject hierarchy and status would be an important factor in determining the availability of funds for curriculum development. The Core subjects would undoubtedly be allocated the larger share of the delegated budget; how the

remaining funds were distributed would depend very much upon how individual subjects were perceived by those responsible for the distribution of resources. The issue of resources was, therefore, identified as a major factor in determining the future provision of PE in the National Curriculum.

Open Enrolment and Accountability

A further initiative of ERA that had significant implications for the educational opportunities offered in primary schools was Open Enrolment (sections 26-32). According to the beliefs of the New Right (Ball, 1990), the education system had for many years been dominated by its producers (i.e. the LEA and teachers) and parents had remained marginal to the schooling of their children. A logical extension to the analogy of education as a 'free market', however, was that parents should ultimately have responsibility for the selection of the educational 'product'. Open Enrolment, therefore, redefined parents as 'consumers' and allowed them, within certain restrictions, to choose which school their child would attend. Ball (1990, p.11) claimed that Open Enrolment in conjunction with LMS was a clear indication that schools were to be "run and managed like businesses". Previously the LEA would have been responsible for the allocation of pupils to school places throughout the county ensuring a distribution that reflected demographic changes. ERA removed this discretion from the LEA and designated to each school a fixed standard number (as defined by the 1980 Education Act) of pupil places up to which schools must admit. The system rested on the belief that competition between schools as a result of parental choice would act as a quality assurance mechanism and a test of efficiency. Popular schools, it was argued, would attract more pupils whilst there was a danger that schools facing falling enrolments because of environmental factors could become caught in a "downward spiral of decline" (Cave, 1990, p.3) due to reduced financial income.

It was considered likely that differences in the educational system would become most apparent under Open Enrolment (Penney and Evans, 1991, p.39). From the outset some schools would be better off than others in terms of resources and these schools

would be more attractive to parents. Schools known for excellence in particular areas, perhaps music or sport, and those with better facilities, would have an advantage over the more 'average' primary school. Funds were distributed to the school through formula funding based on a per pupil weighting, a system that favoured larger schools. Small, rural and inner city schools appeared most at risk as their catchment areas are invariably fixed by geography or demography. The Secretary of State for Education revealed, in a speech in November 1992⁵, that there were an estimated one and a half million surplus places in Britain's schools and he considered this to be a serious economic failing. He advocated the closure of schools if this were deemed to be necessary. In real terms, what this meant for schools was that they might be forced to actively market and promote their 'services' or achievements. Some schools would be fortunate enough to be able to rely on established reputation or on the promotion of their facilities; others faced a considerable challenge for various reasons.

Other Acts of Parliament (1980 and 1986) had introduced schools to statutory requirements allowing parents increased rights to information about schools and their child's education. ERA continued this trend and ensured that schools depended on parents to provide them with their potential income in the form of pupils. The importance of 'parent power' was manifest not only in the provision of parental choice and Open Enrolment but it formed part of a system of devices employed by the Government to make schools more accountable to their 'clients' or consumers. The publication of 'league tables' of SAT results, for example, was intended to provide parents with a crude yardstick by which to measure performance against other schools both locally and nationally.

The Context of the Primary School

Whilst this research acknowledges that educational reform causes many difficulties for both the primary and secondary sectors, the issues that relate to the primary school are of a unique nature. The secondary sector had changed little since the evolution of the comprehensive system in the 1970s. The primary school in comparison became a

focus for criticism and legislation which undermined the working practices of the teacher. Redefinition of the school as a 'training ground' for work (Proctor, 1990) and the intrusion of economic values in education were inconsistent with the needs of the primary school. The structure and arrangements imposed by ERA sat uncomfortably with many of the traditional features of the primary school. These are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Common Features of Primary and Secondary Schools

Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Class teacher system	Subject teacher system
Integrated curriculum ('inter-related studies'; 'topic work')	Subject-oriented curriculum
Small schools	Large schools
Mixed ability/age grouping	Ability streaming
Developmental emphasis	Assessment-driven curriculum

The organisation of the National Curriculum, for example, clearly favoured a subject-oriented curriculum along secondary lines. Statutory testing favoured a subject-oriented curriculum and ability streaming. The financial provisions of ERA favoured larger schools.

It is widely accepted that whilst primary schools have their own individuality and uniqueness, there is sufficient common ground to be able to discuss the primary school in terms of a particular culture (Alexander, 1992; Nias, 1989; Pollard, 1985). Culture may be defined as a relationship between ideology and structure; an adherence to a common ideology which shapes teacher assumptions, their practice and how they react to the influence of outside agencies. The National Curriculum challenged the basic structure of teaching and learning in the primary sector by defining not only the subjects to be taught but also their individual content and assessment procedures. Very little understanding of the primary school culture was

evident in the framework of the National Curriculum and the form in which it is expressed leaned towards the adoption of teaching methods which were at variance with established primary school practices. ERA, clearly, has changed the context in which teachers work. Alexander (1992), however, asserts that if structure changes, it does not necessarily follow that ideologies will also change and teachers may be able to secure strategies that ensure the continuation of established practices in adapted forms.

Structure and Organisation of the Thesis

In 1990 the Department of Physical Education at the University of Southampton received a Sports Council scholarship to investigate the Education Reform Act 1988 and its implications for the provision of Physical Education and sport in schools. The project was lead by Dr. John Evans and the research grant was awarded to Dawn Penney⁶. Their research focused on the effects of ERA on the provision of PE in the secondary sector. I joined the project in 1991 with a specific remit to focus attention on the primary sector. Chapter 2 outlines some of the theoretical issues which underpin the work of Evans and Penney and, therefore, this research. I discuss their extensive contribution to the theory of policy implementation in relation to ERA generally, and specifically, to the National Curriculum. However, whilst their work centred on the theoretical 'process' of policy implementation, my own research focuses on the more pragmatic issues of PE provision in the primary school. It is proposed that a closer examination of what happens at the school level may provide a further dimension to the examination of the policy process that is based on empirical work.

My research adheres to a qualitative case study methodology. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the practical issues of designing and conducting research. It is widely accepted that ERA poses a challenge to teachers and that educational practitioners are now operating within a different framework (Hammersley, 1992). Researchers also face many difficulties in attempting to investigate the inter-related effects of

policy, context and practice. Policy is by nature complex and constantly changing. Therefore, according to Finch (1986), it is important to look at the end product in all its diverse forms at different sites. Fundamental to the research has been an acknowledgement of the inherent differences between the assumptions upon which policy is founded and the methodological orientation of qualitative researchers (Hammersley, 1992). Bearing in mind the intricacies of the policy implementation process and the influences of context this study has attempted to adopt a methodology which holistically embraces these issues.

Chapter 5 provides an introduction to the case study schools. I outline the selection procedure of the research sample and provide some background information about each school. The case studies chosen for inclusion in this thesis are presented in detail in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. These 'vignettes' are intended to introduce the reader to the issues that are salient to PE at each school and are presented as 'data-rich' descriptions.

The findings of the research are discussed in Chapter 9 in relation to the key concepts and issues discussed in the previous chapters. This aim of this thesis is to examine the effects of the ERA on the provision of PE in primary schools and discuss the factors that intervene between policy and practice. In this chapter, therefore, I return to the central theme of policy implementation in the primary school. Finally, I acknowledge that this research was carried out during the early stages of the implementation of the National Curriculum and several years have passed since media attention focused on PE. In a 'post-script' I refer to significant developments in the National Curriculum for PE that have occurred since 1993, and which may have significance to the findings of this thesis.

Conclusion

Studies in recent years have indicated that physical activity and exercise play an increasingly diminishing part in the lives of many people. Children and young people today are raised in a culture that accepts a sedentary lifestyle as commonplace. In this climate it seems more and more important to ensure that children experience and enjoy a wide range of physical experiences from their early years which may then be built on in later life, and which will enable them to make informed choices and encourage their long-term participation in physical activity. The hope of the PE profession is that the National Curriculum may provide practitioners with a valuable opportunity to address their current provision and ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils is the result of the statutory requirements. PE may indeed, in its unique orientation towards the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, aesthetic and creative elements of development, have the potential to contribute more than any other subject to the total growth of all children (Casbon, 1989). Yet, it has been noted that little is known by 'outsiders' about what goes on inside school contexts. This research acknowledges that

A sound understanding of the issues and influences involved in the present and future provision of PE and sport in schools is regarded as a prerequisite for planning and implementing the proposed research. (Penney and Evans, 1991, p.42)

This thesis, therefore, will provide evidence, based on case study investigations, of the impact of educational reform on PE in primary schools. Whether the ERA represents an opportunity for teachers to improve the quality of PE and extend the physical opportunities available to children is an issue that remains to be resolved.

Notes

1. PE is not represented by a single professional group. There are many different groups which have an interest in PE, each with a varied membership, e.g. the Physical Education Association (PEA), Standing Conference on Physical Education (SCOPE) and the British Association of Advisors and Lecturers in Physical Education (BAALPE). Parry (1987) suggests that there has, in the past, been little interaction between groups and that this may have resulted in the lack of coherent policies for PE prior to 1988.

2. The Department of Education and Science is now known as the Department for Education (DfE).
3. Phases of schooling are defined in the National Curriculum in terms of 4 Key Stages. Key Stage 1 relates to the infant phase (4-7years); Key Stage 2 relates to the junior phase (7-11 years). Key stages 3 and 4 relate to the secondary phase.
4. The Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT) headed by Professor Paul Black was set up to produce a report which was to become the basis of DES policy and formed a guide for the National Curriculum subject Working Groups
5. Education and Choice in Britain and America, Royal Society of Arts, London. Opening Address: John Patten, Secretary of State for Education in 1992.
6. Dawn Penney was awarded a PhD in 1994. ' No Change in the New Era? The Effects of the Education Reform Act (1988) on the Provision of PE and Sport in State Schools', 'University of Southampton, 1994.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background to the Research

Introduction

Whilst this research is not primarily concerned with the development of theory, it is based directly on previous research relating to the implementation of educational policy. This chapter provides a brief background to the theoretical concepts that underpin the research and focuses on the work of Evans and Penney¹, whose conceptualisation and development of 'policy as a process' was a starting point for my own work.

Traditional Policy Research

Much policy research prior to 1988 focused attention on the process of policy-making (Kogan, 1975; Howell and Brown, 1983). The implementation of educational policy in schools and the complexity of this process had not been explored in depth either theoretically or empirically. In simple terms, policy is defined as "a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a Government, party, business or individual etc." (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1989, p.921) with the suggested implication that it applies consistently across all cases (Stenhouse, 1985). Policies, within this definition, merely represent an image of an ideal envisaged by, and expressing the values of, the policy-makers. Thus, policy has often been regarded as 'linear' (Dale, 1989), i.e. that it is generated at a 'high' level by an 'elite' group, generally without consultation with those whom the policy will most affect. According to this definition, therefore, policy-making may be regarded as the "authoritarian allocation of values", and policies as "statements of prescriptive intent" (Kogan, 1975 p.55). Deem and Brehony (1992) reject simple models of policy analysis which see policies translated unproblematically into outcomes (i.e. practice) that are consistent with the policy-makers' intentions. In a social system as varied as education, and with a policy as complex as ERA, such models contribute little to an understanding of the policy process.

Policy as a Process

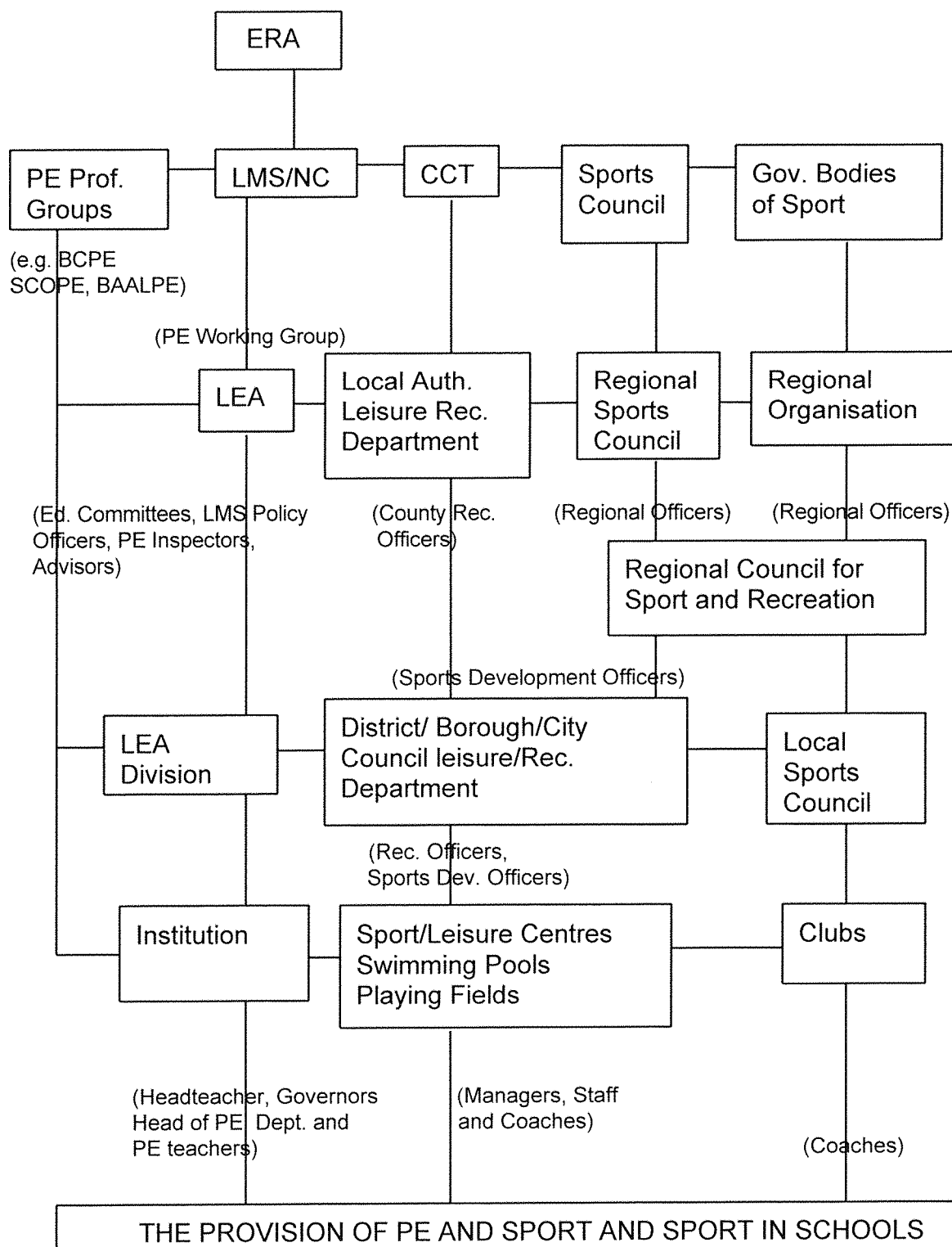
Ball and Bowe (1992) argue that the traditional conceptualisation of policy implementation as linear is a simplification of a complex process. They maintain that to examine policy as divorced from the wider political, economic and social context in which it is inextricably involved would be to deny the influences and interests of many varied groups which will ultimately shape its final implementation. Mayer and Greenwood (1980, p.43) state that "invariably policy is formulated and executed by a subset of the members of that system, rather than by the entire system acting in a consensual manner". Ball and Bowe thus concur that there are multiple sites where policy is interpreted and recontextualised. Policies are, therefore, made and 're-made' into 'new' policies by different groups and at different points of delivery, i.e. "administrators, inspectors, advisors and teachers interpret, amend, supplement and excise the policies" (Shipman, 1985, p.273). Schools, though considered to be marginal to the policy-making process, have ultimate responsibility for interpretation and implementation of policy. Educational practice at school level may, therefore, bear little resemblance to that originally envisaged by the policy-makers as the extent of, or scope for, interpretation will vary according to the particular policy in question as well as many other contextual factors.

Penney and Evans (1991), following through the work of Ball and Bowe (1992), acknowledged that the provision of PE in schools would be a matter of concern for many interested parties post-ERA. Penney concurs with Ball that

In my view many sites would be directly and indirectly involved in the 'implementation' of the NCPE and the statutory orders would be adapted, adopted, contested and contended before being put into practice in schools. (Penney, 1994, p.35)

Penney identifies the various 'sites' assumed to be influential in the policy implementation process. These are outlined in Diagram 1 (overleaf). This model attempts to clarify:

Diagram 1: The ERA – “From Policy to Practice”: The Implementation Process
 (Derived from Penney and Evans 1991, p.42) ²



- (i) the policies within the ERA and other policies and interests at a national level...that were expected to be influential in the future provision of PE and sport in schools;
- (ii) the sites from which these policies arose;
- (iii) the factors within schools that have a fundamental influence on provision and that these policies were expected to affect; and
- (iv) the distinction within the provision of PE and sport in school of in- and extra-curricular provision. (Penney, 1994 p.34)

Penney draws attention to the distinction generally made between the 'macro' level (i.e. national policy) and the 'micro' level (i.e. institutional practice) and criticises theoretical conceptualisations (Salter and Tapper, 1981; Bernstein, 1990) that fail "to provide any insight into how change at national level would 'produce' the anticipated changes in different aspects of resourcing in schools" (Penney, 1994, p.25). Whilst Diagram 1 (overleaf) identifies the potential sites involved in the process "from policy to practice", Penney admits that this model is superficial because it does not adequately explain the various relationships between sites. Ball and Bowe, to some extent, provide an explanation of the influences at work at each site and much of Penney's work is similarly based on their exploration of text and discourse in the policy process.

Policy as Text

It is widely accepted that there will be different forms of policy at each educational site. Bowe and Ball (1992) refer to these differing policies as texts. 'Texts' are expressed through written documents each revealing an agency's capability to assert its values and beliefs and, therefore, to influence policy. Three types of policy text are identified: Official policy, actual policy and policy-in-use.

Official policy is the original form in which a policy is intended to be implemented and the format in which it is generally received at a site. ERA, for example, is rarely read in its official form as a legislative Act but will be received by schools as National Curriculum orders and interpreted into actual policy.

Actual policy is official policy that has been modified into further policy texts which are used by each site as its own official policy. A school, might, for example, produce their own guidelines or policy document for PE which, although not statutory, may be acted upon.

Policy-in-use refers to the “institutional practices and discourses that emerge out of the responses of practitioners to both the intended and actual policies of their arena” (Ball and Bowe, 1991, p.19), i.e. what actually happens in schools.

These conceptualisations are further refined as Ball et al (1992) acknowledge that ‘intention’ is a term that is not clearly defined. Ball addresses the above in terms of contexts of policy implementation:

- Context of influence (the initiation of public policy, i.e. ERA);
- Context of policy text production (the representation of policy and the construction of discourses) and;
- Context of practice (i.e. responses to texts).

Policy texts are inevitably interpreted by the receiver. Policy is, therefore, ‘made’ and ‘remade’ at different sites of educational practice. Texts do not tell the reader what to do; they define the parameters within which an agency must work. ERA, therefore, is not able to create practice but attempts to direct what happens at the site of implementation. Texts will have multiple authors. They will be the product of compromise, negotiation and fortuity such that “no-one is ever without some room to manoeuvre” (Evans et al, 1993). All of this complicates definitions of policy and urges the investigation of the development of policy texts. Whilst it is inevitable that interpretation and, indeed, “interpretations of interpretations” (Ball, 1993 p.11), occur and must be one of the explanations for why policy changes, it is insufficient to contend that this is simply inherent in the policy process. Penney attempted to answer the following questions in her research and these are issues to which I will return in the analysis of empirical data in Chapter 9:

Why does interpretation of policy occur?
Where does it occur?
How?; and to what extent?

Whilst Bowe and Ball's conceptualisation of the policy process through texts may seem somewhat ambiguous, the framework in which they are located is essentially Foucauldian and they adhere to the view that knowledge and power are exerted through discourse.

Policy and Discourse

Foucault identifies a relation between power and language and asserts that it is through language that we obtain a sense of ourselves as distinct subjectivities (Clegg, 1989). Subjectivity is constituted through 'discursive practices' and expressed as talk, text and writing. Ball and Bowe (1992) claim that the form in which texts exist will be determined through internal discourses. The capacity to change policy, therefore, can be determined by the nature of the policy itself and the discourses expressed within it. Discourses, according to Ball, construct possibilities for thought and direct what can be said, who can speak and with what authority. Discourses control us and the way we think and act. Policy texts privilege particular discourses but the extent to which they can dictate practice is a more complicated issue. Ball acknowledges that there are areas of conflict between the 'macro' and 'micro' arenas of decision-making and that policy-making is not straightforward. Educational discourse is derived from a macro knowledge base whilst those regarded as less able to influence decision-making (i.e. teachers) are located at the micro level. The knowledge base supplying the micro level will not necessarily be that of the macro level and this is assumed to be true in the case of ERA. At the micro level actors may work towards 'personalised' versions of the intended policy that are more relevant to their own beliefs and values.

Penney claims that much policy research (Simon, 1988; Davies et al, 1990; Ball, 1990, 1991; Bowe and Ball, 1992) has looked at the production of texts at each site but this has added little to the understanding of the underlying structure and mechanisms carrying these texts. According to Ball's analysis the various 'sites' of educational practice (e.g. DES, NCC, LEA , and so forth) are regarded as 'links' in a

‘chain’ or a continuous ‘cycle’. Penney criticises this conceptualisation for its implication that flow is unidirectional. She suggests that the process is more complex and that there is often a ‘two-way’ flow of text and discourse both within and between sites. She claims that this “concept of flow also readily encompasses the idea of there being variations in the strength of influences in the process” (Penney, 1994, p.56) and that sites might also be the receiver of multiple texts.

Ball and Bowe’s view of policy ‘implementation’ involves the creation and passing on of ‘new’ policies that variously reflect the original policy. ‘Struggle’ is inherent in the making of policy, production of texts and responses to it. Penney is critical that this fails to address the issue of ‘contextual slippage’ which occurs through the process. Ball and Bowe (1992) imply that there is a pre-determined structure to the policy process, i.e. that the process is sequential; that policy originates within the context of influence (i.e. Government), that text is subsequently produced by agents (e.g. DES, LEA), and that schools are the only arena in which practice takes place. Whilst agreeing broadly with the concept of policy as a ‘cycle’, Penney argues that this conceptualisation continues to categorise sites as either policy-makers or implementers and this further reinforces the artificial distinction between policy and practice. Penney adheres to the view that the boundaries between sites are often blurred and that “it is hard to identify a dividing line at which making can be said to be completed and implementation to start” (Hill, 1980, p.44).

Penney’s model suggests that all of the above mechanisms, i.e. the “production, transmission, recontextualisation and reproduction” (Penney, 1994, p.54) of policy texts takes place at each site. For example, an official text such as the Final Orders for the NCPE would be received by the LEA from the DES. The LEA would in turn produce their own ‘actual’ policy (i.e. policy referred to when producing statements and guidelines for schools) and this would then become their policy-in-use. This text would then be passed on and accepted by schools as official policy for them to interpret into their own ‘actual policy’, and so forth. Penney’s model assumes that opportunities

would exist for the expression of human agency at different sites in the course of policy 'implementation'. Thus, the "mechanism of policy interpretation, re-creation and production of practices would be replicated in schools" (Penney, 1994, p.62). In Penney's definition, therefore, practice arises from the interpretation of policy and this is a concept that is important to the development of this thesis which will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter.

Penney's multi-site approach was critical to her understanding of the policy process 'as a whole', However, the vast scope of the research dictated that detailed analysis of any one site would not be possible. It was acknowledged that spending time in schools would have enabled an exploration of the many factors influential in the expression of the NCPE in schools because

One of the most encouraging features of the current educational debate is the general recognition that little is known about what goes on inside school contexts and how much our ignorance matters. In our view it is probably more important than ever that we should look for patient and fundamental enquiry into the work of schools and teachers. (Penney and Evans, 1991 p42)

This research, therefore, investigates the particular case of PE in primary schools. Schools, as the final site of 'intended' policy (i.e. Government legislation) are receivers of numerous policy texts and unwritten discourses, both internally and externally imposed. Interpretations of policy and their manifestation in practice at the primary level are issues that have yet to be explored. Whilst it is undoubtedly important to take into account the complexities of the context in which policy is developed, it is only through empirical research that the meaning and outcomes of the policy process will be fully understood. A focus of this research, therefore, is to examine what happens in the primary school in a manner that will provide a further dimension to the current literature.

Development of a Policy Text

The National Curriculum for PE is an example of official policy text received by schools. The intention of this section is to provide an illustration that policy texts are the result of multiple authors. Within this text certain discourses are privileged and these are discussed below. In 1990 the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for Wales appointed a Working Group to develop the National Curriculum for PE. This Working Group was composed of a number of people considered by the Secretaries as appropriately qualified to advise on “the contribution which physical education (including dance) should make the overall school curriculum” (DES, 1991 p.80). The membership of the Working Group is significant because of its diversity. Members included sports personalities (John Fashanu and Steve Overt), business managers (from IBM and National Westminster Bank) and a number of Higher Education professionals (from the field of Medicine, Geography and PE). The chairman of the Working Group was Ian Beer, head master of Harrow School, a private establishment. Primary PE was represented by a single head teacher³. It was noted that

The Group therefore appeared to be a symbolic representation of what, in the Government’s view, physical education ought to be. (Penney and Evans, 1999)

The low status that had been assigned to the opinion of the practitioner was evident in the make-up of the Working Group. It could be assumed, therefore, that the discourses of sport (i.e. performance) and business (i.e. accountability) privileged in the composition of the Working Group would be reflected in the texts produced. In addition to the selection of the Working Group, certain conditions were imposed on the Working Group by the Secretaries of State, such that they were operating within clearly defined terms of reference.

The Working Group presented an Interim Report to the Secretaries of State in December 1990 with the statement that

Our aim has been to draw up a programme of physical education which is relevant to the abilities and needs of all pupils, and which can be easily understood by parents and teachers. We have welcomed the opportunity to consider the progressive physical education experience of all pupils in maintained schools throughout primary and secondary education. Our recommendations recognise the vital contribution which physical education is able to make to the development of young people and in preparing them for adult life. (Letter from Ian Beer to the Secretaries of State, December, 1990)

The report took, as its starting point, the contribution of Physical Education to the whole curriculum thus proving a clear rationale based on competence, development and artistic and aesthetic understanding. Attention was given to important issues such as safety, health, and equal opportunities in the teaching of PE. Six Areas of Activity were defined (including swimming), which were to be included in all years at all Key Stages. Detailed Programmes of Study accompanied these, and an Attainment Target with three levels was proposed that included:

Planning and composing;
Participating and Performing; and
Appreciating and evaluating

However, in response to the Interim Report (letter from Kenneth Clarke to Ian Beer, 19 Feb. 1991), attention was drawn to the conditions that had been imposed upon the Working Group. The Secretary of State commented that he was “not at all convinced by this structure” and it was recommended that the Programmes of Study and the Attainment Targets should be less prescriptive than those of other Core and Foundation subjects. Specifically, it was stated that the task of the Group was to “advise on a statutory framework which is sufficiently broad and flexible to allow schools wide discretion in relation to the matters to be studied” (DES, 1991 p.80). Thus a single Attainment Target was defined for each Key Stage encompassing the

three elements of planning, participation and evaluation. Some concern was expressed at this lack of prescription which might be perceived as an indication of the status of PE in the curriculum. Riley (1992) claimed that the result might be to “undermine physical education’s true worth and compromise its status and placement on the curriculum”. Murdoch (1992, p.15-25) confirmed that the “document was open to interpretation by teachers” and that they were unlikely to change their practices as a result of the NCPE. This inherent flexibility could have different implications in different schools.

Other issues raised by the Working Group were dismissed. Firm recommendations had been made about the inclusion of swimming in the curriculum. The response from Kenneth Clarke was that this would have serious practical implications for many schools and he stressed that it was not the responsibility of the Group to make recommendations for the resources to be provided for PE. He expected the Group’s decision “to be realistically related to the general level of school funding which can reasonably be expected to be available” (DES, 1991 p.88).

The issue of time was raised by the Working Group and it suggested that a minimum time allocation was recommended. Whilst Clarke expressed concern that pupils should experience a broad and balanced PE programme he felt that this would be covertly achieved through the provision of an Attainment Target and the Programmes of Study. He stressed

I have no power to specify time allocations for any subject: indeed I am specifically proscribed from doing so. Schools are free to decide their own curriculum time allocations for each subject in the light of statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and of their decisions in respect of the rest of the curriculum. I therefore see no need for you to pursue the matter of a time allocation. (DES, 1991 p.88)

The NCPE, therefore, was a curriculum clearly controlled by the Secretary of State who imposed a specific agenda, and the Working Group was able to advise only

within defined parameters. The task of the Working Group was to define the curriculum in terms of content alone and not to concern themselves with the practical issues of implementation.

The framework of the National Curriculum, expressed through Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets, is common to all statutory subjects. The National Curriculum for PE at Key Stages 1⁴ and 2 was further defined in terms of six compulsory Areas of Activity. Each area involves a different kind of learning experience and is seen as important for a balanced and broadly based Physical Education. The Areas are outlined below with a brief rationale for their inclusion in the National Curriculum:

Dance

Our terms of reference made clear that dance was a part of physical education. It is an art form and as such is an essential part of a balanced physical education programme (DES, 1991 p.75)

According to Gibbon (1991) "the Secretary of State did neither dance nor PE a favour by lumping them together". Gibbon claimed that the best teachers of dance, in his experience, are those of an artistic nature. Dance, however, remained in the care of PE with the rationale that it promotes the acquisition of control, co-ordination, flexibility and strength.

Games

Competitive games, both team and individual, are an essential part of any programme of physical education. They are part of our national heritage and offer a range of opportunities. (DES, 1991 p.76)

It was claimed that there are a wide range of games, e.g. invasion games, net/wall games, striking/fielding games, target games, and a careful balance is needed to enable children to experience a variety of activities. In the early Key Stages pupils

need to be taught the common principles of each category and gradually progress towards specific tactics and games.

Gymnastic Activities

Like dance, gymnastic activities focus on the body. They are concerned with acquiring control, co-ordination and versatility in the use of the body in increasingly challenging situations and with developing strength, especially of the upper body, and maintaining flexibility. (DES, 1991 p.76)

At primary level a variety of actions and experiences were advocated. Children will be able to develop basic skills, improve their performance and compose sequences using the floor and apparatus.

Athletic Activities

Athletic activities concern the pursuit of the fulfilment of individual potential. Pupils strive to improve performance against measurement and /or others in maximising their performance in terms of time, height, length or distance. (DES, 1991 p.75),

It was stated that children during the early years would learn to develop control generally in running, throwing and jumping, and will be introduced to specific activities and events at a later stage.

Outdoor and Adventurous Activities

We see outdoor education as a cross-curricular theme and consequently as a whole school responsibility...We have chosen the term 'outdoor and adventurous activities' because there is an essential need for adventure in the education of young people. (DES, 1991 p.77)

It was believed that such activities play an important role in satisfying the need for both mental and physical challenge, and diverting potentially anti-social behaviour. Some of

the activities were considered unsuitable for young children but with modification children at Key Stages 1 and 2 could take part in many of them, e.g. basic orienteering could be carried out in the school playground or grounds. The Working Group, in the Interim Report, had advocated that outdoor and adventurous activities should include a structured residential experience for all children during their school career. This was excluded from the Final Orders.

Swimming

Swimming is a crucial life-saving skill and an essential prerequisite for participation in a whole range of activities in and around water. Swimming is also the consistent activity with the most participation across age groups for both women and men. (DES, 1991 p.77)

Although the Secretary of State agreed that swimming was an essential skill, the National Curriculum did not advocate that it should be taught at Key Stage 1; instead it stated that all children should be able to swim by the time they leave the primary school. This flexibility surrounding the teaching of swimming reveals concern for the financial capability of schools to develop a swimming component in their PE curriculum. To allow for regional differences in resource availability, the timetable for implementation of the swimming component was extended to completion by 1996.

Sport in the PE Curriculum

Whilst not designated a specific Area of Activity, the importance of sport and its place in the Physical Education curriculum was emphasised in the National Curriculum proposals. The document stated

We made it clear in the interim report and reiterate here our view that sport, including competitive games is an essential part of any programme of physical education. We believe that this view is held by the vast majority of schools and teachers. (DES 1991 p.7)

The Secretary of State acknowledged that games and sport have sometimes been "widely misinterpreted by some commentators in recent times, particularly in the national media" (DES, 1991 p.7), but asserted that competitive physical activities provided through sport have an educational role to play in the PE curriculum. This is an issue of some interest for the primary teacher whose educational values might adhere to a more developmental model of education that is based on the notion of equity and participation rather than competition.

Whilst the Working Group, and the framework within which it was expected to work, were structured according to the agenda of the Secretaries of State, the PE curriculum that resulted reflected a much wider recognition of the nature and aims of PE (Penney and Evans, 1999) than might have been feared. Although the NCPE was expressed primarily in terms of specific Areas of Activity, the rationale that was presented in the Final Report (DES, August 1991) clearly identified the role of PE in the education of the whole child. The report stressed the importance of PE in the cognitive, social, mental and emotional development of the child and, whilst the place of sport in the curriculum had been made clear, equal opportunities were to be "a guiding and leading principle for physical education" (DES, 1991, p15). The NCPE, indeed, appeared to resemble the "broad and balanced" curriculum that had been the remit of the Working Group. A wide variety of activities had been outlined and the document was considerably more prescriptive than comparable Foundation subjects such as Music and Art.

Thus, it appeared that the Working Group had succeeded in promoting their own values and concerns for PE within this text. Penney and Evans claimed that this was an indication of the Group's resistance and freedom from the constraint of the policy process. However, the Final Report was did not represent the official policy of the Government. Instead, this document became the focus for consultation and discussion by many interested parties. The National Curriculum Council organised a number of conferences to which delegates from PE Professions and Higher Education were invited to discuss the content of the NCPE. The School Curriculum and Assessment

Authority received over 4,000 responses to the Final Report from teachers (SCAA, 1994) though it was noted (Penney and Evans, 1999) that this formed only a small proportion of the number who would be expected to implement the NCPE. It was acknowledged, however, that teachers, ultimately, did not have any authority in the policy process.

In April 1992, teachers received a folder (DES, 1992) setting out the general requirements of the NCPE and the activities (outlined above) to be included at each Key Stage. Many of the educational and more progressive elements included in the Final Report were relegated to the status of non-statutory guidance (NSG), if they were not removed altogether. Penney states

The NCPE text was reduced and reshaped, pragmatic and ideological concerns were clearly privileged over and above educational interests, and the interests of performance in sport (and particularly games) were given precedence over other areas. (Penney and Evans, 1999, p.70)

It was purported that the Government had achieved the NCPE text that they had required. The document received by schools as official policy was less prescriptive than either the interim or Final Report. The Areas of Activity were expected to be implemented in all primary schools. However, this research argues that the effects of ERA will not be uniform and will depend on many different factors and influences. PE has traditionally been regarded as a low status subject in the curriculum and this continued to be reflected in the National Curriculum implementation process. This was emphasised by Wragg (1989)

Currently the position of physical education within the structure of the National Curriculum could be viewed negatively, in that PE, by coming at the end of the process, may be disadvantaged vis a vis other subjects. (p.5)

Resources are critical in developing educational opportunities in PE and future provision will depend very much upon the way in which schools address this issue.

Statistics reported in a survey by the National Association of Head Teachers and the Central Council of Physical Recreation (1992) revealed that PE had been a subject of neglect prior to 1988. The report stated that 40% of primary schools had no designated PE budget whilst the expenditure of others varied between a per capita sum of 20p and £2. The National Curriculum for PE may provide a much needed incentive to primary schools to look objectively at their current provision.

Schools by virtue of their different sizes, histories and location will vary in their ability to respond to the challenges of the imposition of the 'market' into education. PE in practice, therefore, will vary according to the individual primary school, its available staff expertise and the financial resources that it is prepared to allocate to the subject. In some schools this may mean a complete reappraisal of current practice and the adoption of the National Curriculum for PE as an opportunity to address many relevant issues. In others, because of cost implications, it may be viewed merely in terms of the minimum change necessary to fulfil statutory requirements. Head teachers and governing bodies, under LMS, have significant control over the allocation of resources within the school and the consequences of ERA will depend to a certain extent on the perceptions of these key figures.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to relate some of the theoretical issues more directly to the National Curriculum for PE in primary schools. The inclusion of PE has clearly indicated that the 'making' of state educational policy is a social and political process through which vested interests and values are inevitably expressed. The development of the NCPE reveals the extent of the Government's capability to direct the thinking of educationalists and control the curriculum of schools. McPherson and Raab (1988) argue that it is important to look at the nature of policy-making and identify how beliefs and values may be influential in this process. They also acknowledge that there are issues which may not reach the agenda of decision-makers in defining the parameters of implementation, yet these issues may be a

priority to those implementing policy in schools. An understanding of what goes on in schools must refer to the processes which shape school contexts and thus curriculum provision (Apple, 1986). Any study of educational phenomena must be grounded in concepts that allow us to deal with interpretative activity, human action and on a more pragmatic level, the physical frameworks in which policy exists. The structure in which policy is transmitted has to have the capacity to deal with the content of policy in order for it to be implemented effectively (i.e. in the manner in which the policy-maker intended). Thus, the arrangements for policy implementation have a fundamental impact on the character of the policy (Hill, 1980).

It is envisaged that the content and context (Penney and Evans, 1991; Penney, 1994) of Physical Education in schools will be directly, or indirectly, influenced by LMS and the National Curriculum. However, the effects of ERA may not be those intended by Government. There may be many contextual issues that will influence the implementation of policy in the primary school. This study intends to investigate empirically the factors that intervene between policy and practice and examine the constraints in which schools work.

Notes

1. Evans' and Penney's theoretical framework is well documented elsewhere. See: Penney, D. and Evans, J. (1991); Evans, J. and Penney, D. (1992); Evans, J. and Penney, D. (1995); Evans, Penney and Bryant, A. 1993); Evans, J., Davies, B. and Penney, D. (1993).

2. Diagram 1. Please refer to the following for a more detailed explanation of the relationship between these sites: No change in the new ERA. The effects of the Education Reform Act 1988 on the provision of PE and sport in state schools. Penney, D. (1994), PhD thesis, University of Southampton.

3. In addition to the primary head teacher, only two representatives from the secondary sector were included in the Working Group for NCPE, both deputy head teachers.

4. In 1995 the National Curriculum for PE was simplified at Key Stage 1 to include only three compulsory Areas of Activity: dance, gymnastic activities and games.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the issues surrounding the development of the research design and methodology. Definitions of design, particularly in qualitative studies, differ according to the researcher and the nature of the topic under investigation. The research process remains a very individual experience. Burgess (1985), for example, identifies a 'research procedure', or a representation of the way in which a particular investigation is designed and carried out, as distinct from the general methodology. I would adhere to the view that design and methodology are distinct yet related elements of the same process and I have attempted to deal with them as such throughout this chapter.

Research Considerations

Although researchers may enter the field with a clearly defined research design and a set of carefully devised questions and procedures, it does not necessarily follow that these will be adhered to rigidly or, indeed, that this will be possible. Unpredicted events that occur in the field may cause the researcher to initiate changes at various stages and to redesign the model that originally formed the basis of the investigation. The final research design therefore may bear only a resemblance to the plans that were envisaged at the outset of the research. I regard this need for 'flexibility' not as a weakness but, rather, a strength of the methods employed and an indication that an appropriate path was taken. The research methods employed should reflect the nature of the phenomenon under scrutiny and take into account its natural setting, in this case, the world of education in general and the primary school in particular. A world that I found to be hectic, often frustrating and governed constantly by many varied pressures. In considering the framework of the research design there were a number of concerns that I felt needed to be addressed. These were as follows:

- The appropriateness of the design for the topic under investigation, i.e. that of policy-oriented research.
- The justification for qualitative methods in the light of criticism directed at such approaches towards educational research.
- In relation to this the considerations of reliability, validity and generalisability.

The foremost concern surrounding the development of the research design was that it should be appropriate to the nature of the problem under investigation. As the research is investigating the implementation of policy at school level, I considered this issue in some depth. Much policy research to date has relied on quantitative analysis. Rist (1981) claims that its continued over-use has led to a misunderstanding about the nature of social science research and has promoted the dominance of "artificially created 'clean' data in a complex and messy world". This view has been based on a rationalist model of policy-making where issues are clearly defined and decisions are taken by a specific set of actors in the implementation process. The model of research implied by adherence to this view is one that reflects the conception of policy as linear, that decisions made by the policy-makers filter down through various stages to the final site of implementation. This "under-estimates the importance of value-judgements and partisan considerations in the policy-making process" (Finch, 1986, p.152) and represents a world that simplifies the complex processes and influences that are involved in educational policy implementation.

It has been claimed that "in practice policy-making is neither linear or rational. Objectives are rarely clear and there is always a dearth of evidence on which to plan" (Shipman, 1985, p.273). This reflects the uncertain nature of policy-oriented research and indeed the course of policy implementation itself. If policy is to be regarded as a process (Penney and Evans, 1991; Penney, 1994) it is, therefore, less amenable to quantitative methods than qualitative. Large scale quantitative surveys may indeed reveal a great deal of useful data concerning the trends evident in the implementation

of PE as a National Curriculum subject and provide essential information on more fixed elements of provision such as the distribution of resources, but the concern of this research is to facilitate an understanding of the more 'subjective' relationship between policy and practice that exists at school level. Policy research is concerned with meaning and the underlying assumptions of participants whose task it is to interpret policy in their own social worlds. Although policy is implemented at many levels between Government and schools it was considered important for the above reasons to examine the effects of ERA on the daily lives of primary teachers, and this can only be done by basing the inquiry on the experiences and perceptions of those teachers and by spending time 'in the field'. Fieldwork thus formed the foundation of the research and, in turn, informed the research design.

Following the advice of Burgess (1985), a flexible design was adopted in order that issues and implications might present themselves, rather than being put forward by the pre-determined agenda of the researcher. According to Shaffir and Stebbins (1984), field studies avoid the pre-judgement of the problem and the use of rigid data-gathering methods based on prior beliefs. The research design may be characterised by some degree of uncertainty but this reflects the situation that researchers may meet whilst conducting their field research. I would suggest, therefore, that a research design merely represents a researcher's 'first thoughts' and that it should always be possible to refine and develop the design at any stage of the research. A rigid design may confine researchers to a plan that has been conceived prematurely and without the necessary knowledge that can only be gathered through subsequent fieldwork. Yin (1985, p.28), refers to a research design as simply "an action plan for getting from here to there", a 'blueprint' rather than a detailed plan. The design therefore had to be broad and flexible in order to deal with anything that might occur in what was very much an unfamiliar setting to myself as a researcher.

In common with all research design a starting point is needed and this I saw in terms of the definition of the 'research problem'. Although, in the case of this particular project a

great deal had already been pre-determined, there was a need to develop a focus and decide how to progress the research from this given point. In the quest for a suitable research problem Ary et al (1972) suggest that the following criteria should be fulfilled:

- Ideally the problem should be one whose solution will make a contribution to the body of organised knowledge in education, i.e. filling gaps in present knowledge, expanding on previous research or contributing to theory, practice or both.
- The problem should be one that will lead to new problems and so to further research, i.e. a good study generates more questions than those that are answered.
- The problem must be one that is researchable, i.e. it must be self-evident.
- The problem must be suitable for the particular researcher, i.e. it must be an area in which the researcher has knowledge and experience.

Although I bore in mind the above considerations whilst thinking about the research design there are a number of points that must be made here. First of all, although a research problem is consistently referred to, I did not initially consider the purpose of the investigation to be that of looking at a 'problem' and seeking 'solutions'. Early concerns were to identify what was happening in schools in terms of the effects of the ERA; investigate whether there were any problems according to teacher perceptions; investigate whether the effects of ERA were those that were expected or intended. The 'solution', however, which may best be described as the illumination of the enactment of the policy process through to the local level, certainly is intended to fill gaps in existing knowledge. With regard to the research problem being an area with which the researcher has some knowledge and experience I would assert that, whilst I agree with this to some extent, I feel that it was important for the researcher not to be too familiar with the setting under investigation, at least initially.

Much research carried out in schools is 'action research' conducted by teachers investigating their own classroom practices and, although the problematic task of gaining access to research settings is dealt with, the teacher's over-familiarity with the school and the staff may cause many subsequent difficulties. Stacey (1969) claims that when looking at situations we already know, we may fail to see important social features because they are part of a landscape whose familiarity makes us uncritical. Qualitative research in educational settings is by nature subjective and, whilst this does not make the research any less valid, it is important to attempt to overcome any discrepancies that may be a result of our own interests and biases. Cockburn (1980) for these reasons suggests that some research is best carried out by people who see themselves as distanced from the phenomenon under study and this was the intention at the start of the research. However, it is impossible to retain such objectivity throughout the study as the researcher gradually becomes more and more immersed in the context, consequently gains greater knowledge and consistently has to confront the issue of whether or not 'to take sides'¹.

Research Design

The research was developed around the following typology of three phases; namely design, fieldwork and analysis:

Design

According to Stacey (1969) "the process of design...is one of acquiring increasingly detailed knowledge of what others have already uncovered and refining one's own plan". Following this assumption, the initial formulation of the research design was based on a review of previous studies and current literature concerning policy implementation. The design that ultimately represented the plan followed in this research is based largely on the work of Yin (1985), who defines the research process in terms of theory development, case studies and data collection. This is illustrated in Diagram 2 (overleaf).

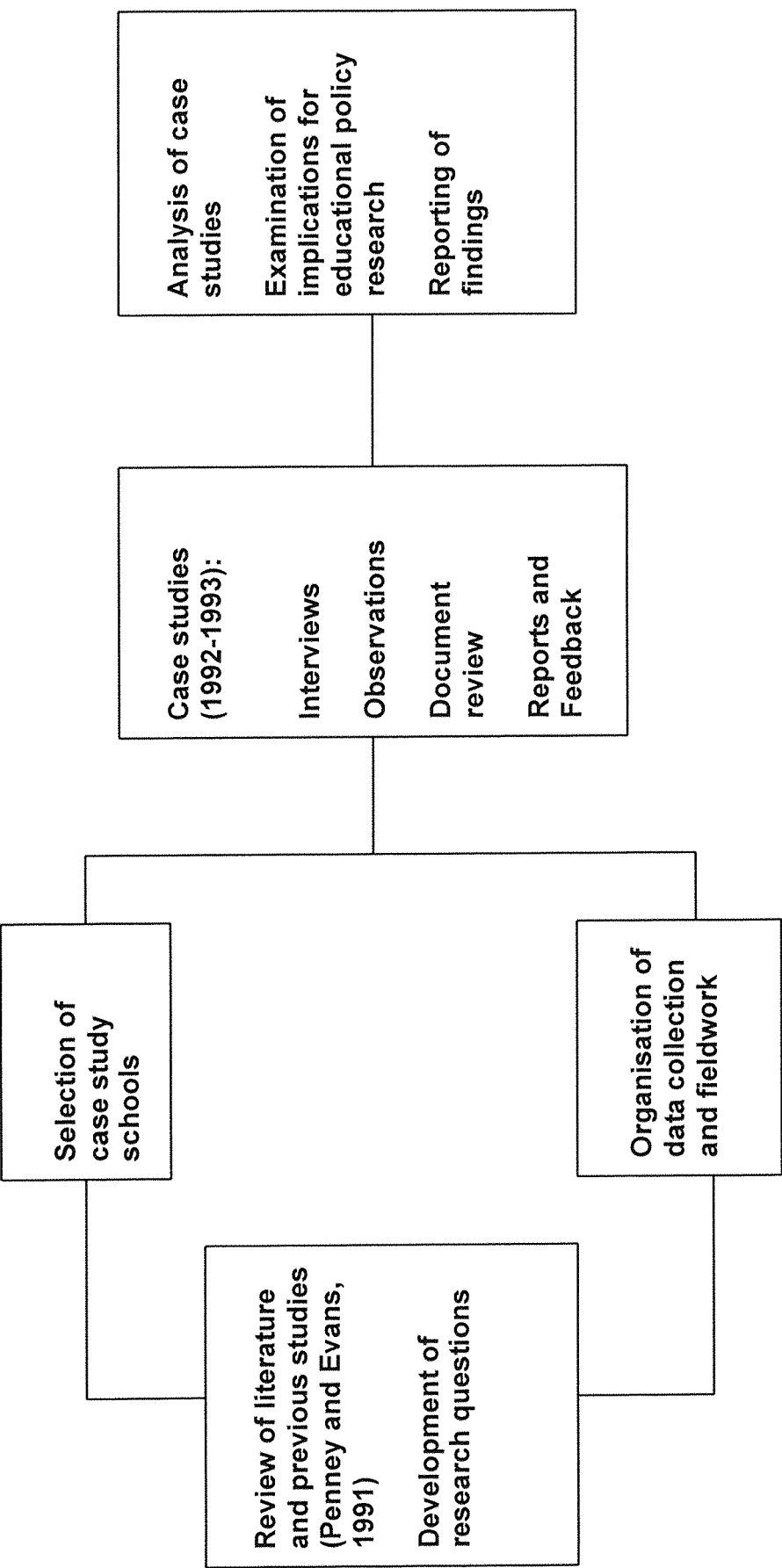


Diagram 2: Research Design

Fieldwork

An exploratory stage of fieldwork was carried out in order to familiarise myself with the situation under investigation. Prominent features of this stage are cited by Mayer (1980) as the study of a new phenomenon, little knowledge about the nature of the research problem and uncertainty as to the data to be collected, which reflect many of the characteristics of this research. This phase is synonymous with case study method and field studies and requires a few purposefully chosen cases which need not necessarily be representative of their population. Various qualitative methods of data collection were employed in the two stages of fieldwork in order to examine the practices of teachers in everyday situations. I agreed with Scruton et al (1992, p.178) that "in order to understand the structures, policies and practices of PE, a variety of research techniques were necessary" and that "it was necessary, also, to look more deeply and qualitatively at the ideas of those who were the decision-makers and at their practices in the everyday situation of PE teaching". Thus, a range of field methods were adopted in order to obtain a picture of PE at each school. These are discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

Analysis

A final, more explanatory, stage completed the study in which explanations and 'causalities' could be found and tentative generalisations made. In addition to the stages mentioned above, and in recognition of the importance of the wider context on the implementation of any policy, an ongoing review of developments in sport and PE was maintained throughout the course of the research.

Whilst the initial phase is referred to as 'exploratory' and indeed many aspects of the research were unfamiliar at the time of investigation, many issues were pre-determined due to the nature of the research project and the fact that I joined an ongoing project. The background to this will be discussed in more detail below but it is prudent to mention here that the project worked within a 'bounded system' (Stake, 1976) whereby some of the issues were indicated and required further attention in order to look at the

underlying assumptions behind these issues whilst others were subsequently discovered. Having referred to a 'bounded system' however it must be emphasised that boundaries can change and change is very much a characteristic of the research. Although presented here in clearly defined steps, research, particularly fieldwork, is in reality a dynamic process with considerable overlap between the various stages. This is emphasised in Chapter 4 which discusses field methods in more detail. It is important, therefore, to anticipate and plan for an expected situation but at the same time retain a degree of flexibility whilst the research design exerts a limited but necessary degree of control over the research process. I agree with Mayer that the concept of research design is somewhat irrational as the true direction of the investigation can only be determined through personal experience.

Hence the research design is, in essence, a statement setting forth these many decisions before the retrospective conditions have been encountered. However, even the most experienced analyst cannot possibly foresee every single contingency likely to arise in the course of a planned investigation. (Mayer, 1980, p.13)

Qualitative Methods

This research is driven by a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methods have been described as a label

...having no precise meaning in any of the social sciences. It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomenon in the social world. (Van Maanen, 1983, p.9)

Indeed, the term 'qualitative methods' can be applied to all manner of investigative activities. Qualitative methodology, though popular, is still a relative newcomer to educational research and there remains some concern about its legitimacy. Although the quantitative versus qualitative debate is well documented elsewhere, I feel that it is important to comment upon my position with regard to qualitative methods. I based my

decision to adopt the methods favoured by contemporary educational researchers on careful consideration of the appropriateness of my chosen design and methodology to the area under investigation. However, I had certain misgivings, stemming from my own ('scientific') background as a psychologist, that a qualitative approach might make the research difficult to control. In terms of the appropriateness of qualitative methods for policy research it might be pertinent here to emphasise, through the work of Finch (1986), that policy-oriented research is amenable to qualitative analysis if treated with consideration to its limitations. Finch believes that the characteristic features of qualitative research as outlined below can contribute to an understanding of policy implementation:

- descriptive data is analysed within the real-life context under investigation and with regard to those who work within them
- the disturbance to the natural setting is minimal, therefore the social world, and the subjective reality of its inhabitants, is able to reveal itself 'as it is' without any intervention or manipulation by the researcher
- the complexity of the setting is reflected and acknowledged
- processes can be studied over time, rather than at a single moment in time, in order to gather a progressive picture of policy implementation

Qualitative research is able to observe real changes in relation to policy. It is therefore possible to compare the 'end product' with the plans of its 'inventor' and to trace where the change has occurred. Policy is often thought of as fixed, but in practice the values, perceptions and assumptions of those responsible for the interpretation and implementation of policy at this level may differ from those of the policy-makers and what is seen in schools may bear little resemblance to the original legislation. It is very difficult at one level to predict what will happen to policy by the time that it filters down to the level of 'effect', and one of the strengths of qualitative methods is their concern for process as well as 'outcome'². Qualitative methods are more than justified in this

respect as, according to Rist (1981), they are able to reveal the unintentional and thereby unpredictable effects of legislation and often they may be those that are contradictory to the aims of the policy.

The use of qualitative methods in policy research overcomes many of the limitations of quantitative survey research. Often, large-scale factual data, favoured by policy makers, is limited in its scope. Finch (1986) states that in policy-oriented research

qualitative methods cannot provide - as quantitative methods can - descriptive documentation of the characteristics of whole populations...On the other hand it should be well-placed to offer the kind of conceptual reorientations which may raise questions of a more fundamental kind about existing practices (p.112).

I share this view that quantitative research is by nature decontextualised and, therefore, limited in its capacity to contribute to the development of understanding. Its lack of flexibility and remoteness from social situations dictates that it would be inappropriate in a study that recognises the importance of subtle and subjective influences to employ such methods. Ethnographers and qualitative researchers are in a position to describe the dimensions of the problem because of their more detailed experience of the setting under study.

Case Studies

A selective case study approach was the most appropriate method by which to follow through the qualitative investigation. There are many definitions of case study and the following examples provide an appropriate description that encompasses many aspects and considerations of this research. Simons (1981) describes case studies as

...descriptive, analytic, particular, small-scale. They will record events in progress, document observations and draw on the judgements and perspectives of participants in the process - teachers, pupils, heads - in coming to understand observations in a specific context.

Yin (1985, p.13) defines case study as an empirical inquiry which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. It is characterised by the investigation of 'how' and 'why' questions in a situation where the investigator has little control over events in the field.

It was considered important to base the research within schools. Decisions made at school level will have been the product of many factors; the way the school is organised, the influence of the head teacher and the governing body, the general philosophy of the school, and so forth. It was important, therefore, to give consideration to the context and look at the school as a whole and the place of PE within it. This was most appropriately done by using the case study method since "the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 1985, p.13). Retaining the 'real-life nature' of each of the research site(s) was therefore one of the most important considerations of the research.

Van Maanen (1983) asserts that researchers can claim to know little about the research topic unless they are able to describe it in context and states that "direct, first-hand and more or less intimate knowledge of a research setting is a most practical assumption that underlies and guides most qualitative study" (p.10). He claims that the qualitative methods employed in this kind of research are very similar to everyday life in that we constantly employ interpretative procedures and act upon any data that we encounter. Beyond this, the researcher's task is to attach meaning to the world that unfolds in front of him or her. Case studies have, however, been criticised for several reasons. Ary et al (1972) summarises them in three points:

- breadth is often sacrificed for depth;
- insight gained by the researcher entering the world of others is open to subjectivity, bias and interpretation;
- case studies, because of their very nature, have only limited generalisability.

Yin (1985) cites the main criticisms of case studies as a lack of rigour and little basis for scientific generalisation, as well as claiming that they are somewhat time-consuming and prone to investigator bias. It appears that research has become a term that is associated with large-scale surveys and universal problems. The scientific paradigm remains very strong. As the quality of a design is often judged by its validity and reliability it is to these concerns that we next turn.

Generalisability

Yin states that generalisability relies on the basis of similarity and that to claim generalisability is to claim also that there are other similar cases which can be identified from the 'exemplar case'. It is not possible in case study research to claim that all conditions within a particular case are generalisable over time and circumstance. This is particularly true when the case in question is a school. To state that generalisability is not possible does not mean that research is not valid, indeed it would be inappropriate to impose such a stringent condition upon the investigation. Although generalisation cannot be made from a single case study it is possible:

- to observe any patterns/similarities across individual cases;
- for the reader (e.g. teachers) to be able to recognise aspects of the case study, and it may be possible to generalise from these;
- to make propositions about potential generalisations.

Yin, despite claiming that generalisability is not possible, affirms the usefulness of case studies by asserting that naturalistic generalisation (after Simons, 1981) is a valid alternative. According to Hamilton (1980), generalisability is a concern of the survey and of the need for quantitative data, it is not an issue for qualitative research or case studies where the objective is analytical generalisation and its relationship to a wider theory. A case study is self explanatory. The essence of such a study is its emphasis

on the unique and particular (Atkinson, et al, 1986). Therefore, a case by its very nature is idiosyncratic and 'empirically distinct' and this is often the very reason for it becoming the subject of research in the first place. One of the aims of this study is an attempt to 'discover' this uniqueness in order to understand the situation under investigation.

Validity and Reliability

Bearing in mind the criticisms of qualitative research, I acknowledged that some kind of organisational structure would be needed with which to monitor the complex progress of fieldwork. Data collection can be a difficult process and the wealth of information that is gathered by the use of multiple sites and methods needs to be recorded and stored in a manner that makes it both flexible and accessible. The research protocol suggested by Yin (1985, p.64) best fitted the nature of the research that I was undertaking and provided a comprehensive and useful framework within which to work. Yin (p.29) systematically sets out the case study procedures that form the protocol and I kept very closely to those concerning data collection (or field procedures). There are, he claims, three principles of data collection:

- using multiple sources of evidence
- creating a case study database
- maintaining a chain of evidence

Multiple sources of evidence allow a researcher to address a wide range of salient issues and to take into account the broader historical, attitudinal and observational influences on policy implementation. This was reflected in the choice of research methods and the way in which the study was conducted. Construct validity is increased as any conclusions can be based on several sources of information and are, arguably, more convincing and accurate. Fieldnotes made whilst in schools were later typed up into 'visit reports', as I realised that to keep them in the rough format in which they were written would cause difficulties later, and as such formed part of the case study

database (a rather sophisticated term meaning that I kept as much information about the schools as possible in printed format). This database includes questionnaire data, correspondence, documentation received, visit reports, bibliography, interview transcriptions, and so forth, all of which formed part of a reference source that could be accessed after the completion of fieldwork. Maintaining this chain of evidence was important and increased the reliability of the research design. If validity is to be regarded as the justification of methods employed in research, and a strategy to promote this is to document methods in detail and to be open to the scrutiny of others, then these conditions have been met in this research by various measures. There is, however, an alternative view to the popular belief that, if methods are thorough and justified, validity can simply be assumed. Brown (1981) claims that "there are no reliability and validity co-efficients for the researcher who is observing and interviewing participants in the natural setting". Whilst Reason and Rowan (1981) claim that validity in interpretivist research

... lies in the skills and sensitivities of the researcher, in how he or she uses herself as knower and as inquirer. Validity is more personal and inter-personal, rather than methodological.

Naturalistic research is carried out in a world where understandings of reality are socially constructed. Researcher interpretation following data collection remains a personal experience and often multi-interpretations are possible with very little criteria for choosing among them (Heron, 1988). I adhere to the view that interviews alone cannot be relied upon to demonstrate validity, particularly in ethnographic studies, as respondents are not passive providers of information immune from wider influences. Therefore, whilst I agree with the claim above that there is a place for subjectivity in qualitative research, I acknowledge that it is important to cross-reference personal accounts with those of others (if possible) and with alternative methods.

Reliability (related to external validity) is a little more difficult to define but may be expressed as the extent to which the study may be amenable to repetition with similar

results and the establishment of the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised. Whilst it may be possible to replicate the specific operations of research this may not yield the same results at a later date because of the nature of policy implementation. The phenomenon under study is not static but an ongoing process and many changes are inherent and expected. To some extent the use of multiple sites promotes reliability between sites and a combination of methodologies, or multiple operationalism such that

...the complete holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit under study...tri-angulation may be used not only to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives but also to enrich our understanding by allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge. (Jick, cited in Van Maanen, 1983, p.135)

Thus researchers are able to validate the accuracy of their subjective judgements by the collection of different kinds of data, all of which have a bearing on the same phenomenon. It is important to remember that whilst generalisation remains a limitation of qualitative research, it is also, according to Yin, a problem for the large-scale survey. Quantitative surveys rely on statistical generalisation but this may say little about the underlying causes behind the data collected. Case studies rely on analytical data and the relationship of the results to a wider theory rather than to a wider population.

The Generation of Theory

Woods (1985) claims that qualitative research has often been pre-occupied with its methodology, and attention in the past has focused on such issues as access, data collection and ethics to such an extent that, whilst methodology and methods have been refined, the generation of theory has been relatively neglected. Theory construction has been based largely on the concept of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) where the relationship between data collection and analysis is regarded as being an emphasis on discovery through research, though it is also acknowledged that analysis is a sequential process which both guides and is guided by the process of

data collection. There are similarities here to this research which, although set within a developing theoretical framework derived from previous study, relies also on an element of conceptual emergence from the fieldwork, the aim being to refine this theory within the specific context of the primary school. Grounded theorising has inherent limitations, but this need not mean that results are any less valid as a consequence. Qualitative research is by its nature descriptive, indeed, this is one of its strengths in educational settings, yet the inevitable immersion in the culture under study causes difficulties for theory generation. Burgess (1985) claims that the researcher must be able to 'stand back' from their data if they are to generate theory, but this is difficult in qualitative case studies where the predominant approach is individualised and interpretative. Woods suggests various strategies for encouraging theoretical sensitisation, one of which is an 'openness' to others, i.e. collaboration with colleagues, and with other theoretical areas and complementary methodologies. It is clear from the above that theory construction is difficult, but not impossible, in qualitative research. The dominant framework in much research, especially in PE, is positivist which argues that to arrive at truth the methodology must be 'scientific' and rely therefore on experimentation, the separation of the researcher from the object (or subject) of research with an emphasis on the neutral and detached. Whilst some social science researchers have reinforced this 'norm of objectivity' (Westcott, 1979) others, particularly feminist researchers, claim that objectivity is an illusion (Scruton, et al, 1992) which ignores important processes in the research. Some researchers³ regard all research as political and value-laden and argue that this must be acknowledged in the research process and analysis rather than neutralised.

Conclusion

In the simplest terms a research design represents a collection or organisation of methods, and the methods chosen must be those that best fit the research requirements, i.e. the research problem, questions and context. Howe, et al (1990) assert that it is easy to become pre-occupied with worries about what is wrong with the research design, methods and techniques and that ultimately a methodology must be

judged by how well it informs research purposes, at least as much as how well it matches a set of conventions. A guide to good research may be described as the extent of the 'fit' between the research questions, data collection and analysis. This chapter has been primarily concerned with the issue of research design, the following chapter discusses in more detail the practicalities and problems of data collection.

Notes

1. Some researchers adopt an 'interested' stance when conducting their interviews and yet retain objectivity in their analysis. This was the intention in my own research. At the outset of the research, my knowledge of PE in the primary school was restricted to my own school experiences. My position as neither teacher nor PE professional enabled me to look at ERA from an objective perspective.
2. The concepts of 'effect' and 'outcome' are problematic. It is difficult to define what (and when) is an 'effect' (Ball, 1993).
3. Whilst I do not claim that what I have done is feminist research, I have acknowledged the influence of feminist perspectives in the research process. Feminist theory displays some key characteristics that can be applied to methodology. It is particularly appropriate in qualitative and ethnographic research where the researcher is dealing with real-life contexts. It is grounded in experience, it is self-reflexive and intends to be accessible to everyone (Stanley, 1990). It acknowledges the structures around which the world is organised and asserts that knowledge and truth, vital to the generation of theory, must be located within their social context in order to gain understanding of social phenomenon.

Chapter 4

Field Methods

Data Collection in the Primary School

Introduction

Methods have been referred to as “a set of techniques that researchers can use in the course of handling specific research problems” (Moser and Kalton, 1971, cited in Burgess, 1984, p.3). This is a simplistic description of what actually happens in the field. Field research in an educational setting is very much a personal experience. Very little is certain and how the researcher reacts and feels whilst in the field is as important as the 'hard data' that are being collected. Burgess (1985) recognises that there is a

...close relationship between what is done and how it is done. Accordingly, the field research process is as much concerned with the hopes, fears, frustrations and assumptions of the researcher as it is with the mere techniques. (p. 3)

Some of my fears and frustrations are described in the following sections and illustrate some of the problems and difficulties that I came across whilst in the field. Following the suggestion of Bell and Newby (1984) I have attempted to write myself, as the researcher, into this account. The aim in this chapter is to write about doing research rather than research method.

Ethnography

The fieldwork was based on a number of qualitative methods common in social science research but centred on interviews. The extent to which each of the methods (discussed below) was employed depended to varying degrees on the individual school under investigation and often the attitude of the head teacher towards the research. It soon became clear once the fieldwork was underway that control over what was done was not always my prerogative as a researcher. It seems that the first rule of fieldwork is that there are few rules, or at least few rules that can be rigidly followed. Like the research design, an element of flexibility has to be built into the

methodology, and research with an ethnographic emphasis has an element of uncertainty that may be daunting to those new to naturalistic enquiry. The following quote sums up the way I often felt whilst 'in the field'.

It is usually inconvenient, to say the least, sometimes physically uncomfortable, frequently embarrassing, and, to a degree always tense. (Shaffir and Stebbins, 1991, p.1)

There are fortunately many advantages that far outweigh the view above, namely the ability to share personal experiences, to gather valuable information that could not be gleaned through other methods (for example a questionnaire) and above all to become a part of the research process itself. This is expressed by Blumer as

...getting closer to the people involved in it, seeing it in a variety of situations they meet, noting their problems and observing how they handle them, being party to their conversations and watching their way of life as it flows along. (cited in Shaffir et al, 1986, p.5)

I did not, from the outset, intend the research to be ethnographic, rather the realisation emerged during the early stages of data collection that this was 'naturally' the approach that directed the development of the research mainly through my writing and style of investigation. It therefore became necessary to familiarise myself with this branch of sociological inquiry. Having located this research within the broad framework of ethnography, it must be stated that this is a term that has been characterised by problems of definition. Considerable attention has been given to ethnography in recent years, particularly in educational research, indeed, according to Howe, et al (1990) in their discussion of standards for qualitative methods, the popularity of ethnography appears to have outweighed many researchers' ability to judge whether or not this is an appropriate approach to adopt in some educational research. They quote Rist's concern that "the growing use of ethnography by educational researchers was becoming a movement of an undisciplined mob" of "blitzkrieg ethnographers" who "did not fully appreciate the emphasis on exploring the cultural framework of the group or

organisation in question". I hope that I did not add to this group of "self-styled and untrained" ethnographers and base my judgement on the fact that ethnography was not intentionally the aim, but rather, a consequence of the research. My realisation that a deeper exploration of the culture of the school would promote greater understanding of the implementation and development of PE in the curriculum preceded any consideration of viewing the research from an ethnographic standpoint. I would assert that because I appreciated the importance of taking into account the cultural framework in which I became immersed that I must, therefore, consider my research to be ethnographic. However, it has been claimed that

...what is to count as ethnography is neither given once and for all nor impervious to challenge. Instead it must be determined by what ethnographers, presumably with good reason and after some debate decide. (Howe and Eisenhart, 1990)

Ethnography is difficult to define emphatically because it has developed in many directions since its adoption as a method of investigation into the culture of participants in the social world. With its origins in the participant observational studies of Whyte (1952) its true foundation lies with anthropologists to whom the term implied "studying a culture by living as a member of the group being studied" (Powney and Watts, 1987, p.22). Initially anthropologists did not regard themselves as working within an ethnographic paradigm. They were merely concerned to observe what was going on around them with little reference to well-defined rigid data collection methods or definitions.

Ethnography might best be identified by the research methods that are employed. Traditionally the method that has been widely accepted as indicative of ethnographic research has been a "long term residence of participant observation" (Reeves Sanday, 1983, p.19) and the immersion into the reality of others, often involving the adoption of a particular social role (for example, Roman, 1989) in order to study covertly the behaviour of those within the social setting. Powney and Watts (1987) take a similar

stance arguing that the aim of participant observation is to study the social world in its natural state, i.e. undisturbed by the researcher. Whilst I agree that it is important to “adopt an approach that respects the nature of the social world, which allows it to reveal its nature to us” (Hammersley et al, 1983, p.11), it must be stated that the researcher always has an effect, albeit unintentionally, on the social group simply by being located within it, whether the research is conducted openly or covertly. In this respect I agree that

All social research takes the form of participant observation: It involves participating in the social world, in whatever role, and reflecting on the products of that participation. Everyone is a participant observer, acquiring knowledge about the course of participation in it. Such participant knowledge is an important resource for the ethnographer. (Hammersley, et al 1983, p.16)

Hammersley advises that researchers ought to be reflexive about their actions in the field and rather than regard this possible source of bias as a weakness in the methodology, accept that reflexivity has positive implications for social research. I would agree that “rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher, we should seek to set about understanding them” (ibid. p.17). The researcher must recognise his or her own actions and acknowledge their possible effects on the research. Reflexivity, therefore, means that the activities of the researcher must be reported fully and honestly as part of the research process. In this way the researcher progresses from being an active participant in the research process to become the research instrument itself. Fetterman (1991) regards the researcher as “a most sensitive and perceptive data gathering tool” (p.92) though it is acknowledged that they can sometimes also be “subjective and misleading”, therefore it is important that the ethnographer enters the field with “an open mind and not an empty head” (p. 91).

In the continuing debate concerning the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative methods, there is a suggestion that ethnography is accorded relatively little status

and, therefore, requires a more vehement justification to counteract this. I would agree with Shipman (1985, p.279) that “ethnographic evidence is not necessarily superior, more reliable or more valid”, it is simply different. He suggests that there are more important considerations than continuing the debate about whether research is ethnographic or, whether it is true or even good ethnography. He contends that the main consideration should be whether the research is worthwhile. Shipman asks “are warranted conclusions obtained about some important educational question(s)?” This is the question that ought to frame the pursuit of standards for any educational research (Howe and Eisenhart, 1990). The view taken in this research is that obtaining such ‘warranted conclusions’ rests on several factors, namely choosing appropriate research methods, recognising that the researcher is a part of the research process itself, and constantly taking into account the powerful influences of context. I accepted that being in a culture would have a significant bearing on the way in which the research would be conducted. In this way the culture of the setting is not being used ostensibly to account for observed behaviour in the nature of traditional participant studies, but to account for the perceptions of participants in this world and their relationship with wider issues. There are then some similarities and many distinctions between the way in which I chose to conduct my investigation and those of other ethnographic researchers. In the following sections I define the elements of my research methods that contributed towards the objective of retaining the holistic characteristics of the cultures that I encountered.

Methods

In terms of my fieldwork, I drew extensively on techniques that become adapted and adopted as ethnographic. Those of the ‘Chicago School’ were most prominent, namely, first-hand data collection, direct observation, profuse note-taking and narrative reporting. The different methods that I adopted are discussed below.

Document Review

This was my starting point for the research and one that I considered logical to adopt at the time. My sample was pre-determined prior to the commencement of my research project and there already existed a certain amount of data from an initial, largely quantitative, questionnaire survey. I was able to study this and form a general picture of each of the schools. This also provided criteria for the selection of the case study schools. Once the case study sample had been selected and access to the schools had been negotiated I felt that I needed to familiarise myself as much as possible with them as individual institutions before I began the fieldwork. At the time, I thought it reasonable to request some documentation before my visits were carried out, as this was something that could be underway whilst finalising research questions. The list of documentation that I requested included, for example, copies of the school brochure, the PE programme and the school development plan. I received no response from any of the schools. My plans to go into schools armed with as much knowledge as possible were thwarted so all I could do was to re-read the questionnaire data. At this point I realised that my request was perhaps a little unreasonable, and that although a number of schools had agreed to be involved in the project they were not as yet familiar with either myself or the research methods. They, therefore, might understandably be hesitant to release what was essentially confidential information to someone they knew only through letters and telephone calls.

I found on my initial visits that the reasons behind the schools' reluctance to part with written information were that some of the documents I had requested did not actually exist, indeed, not all of the schools had a current PE policy or a school development plan. I was able to obtain some of the information whilst in the field, but by no means all. In some schools I was permitted to look at certain documents but not to take a copy away with me, and in these cases my own written notes had to suffice as a record. I can only make assumptions about the reasons for the 'secrecy' that surrounded the release of written information at the schools that I visited. It was purported that staff simply do not have time to devote to seemingly trivial requests

(such as photo-copying), yet time was found to allow my visits, which despite efforts to the contrary were nevertheless disruptive in varying degrees to the daily organisation of the school. Perhaps the very fact that it is written 'evidence' and therefore could be used as such is a concern of head teachers. Bearing in mind the market context in which schools must now be located, any school-generated documentation might be interpreted as a projection of its image. The school brochure, for example, which I generally was able to secure because it is intended for public scrutiny (i.e. parents of prospective pupils), is a clear indication of a school's aims and ethos. Documents, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p.137), are the tools of the teacher and written information is a 'social product' from which it would be possible to make supported assumptions. School-generated documents in particular are indicative of a social world and are important because of this fact. In view of the above, any school-generated documents reproduced in this thesis have been amended to remove any identifying names or features.

Interviews

Interviews are common in case study research and were central to this study both as a means of gathering information and as a valuable source of data that in turn informed the direction of the next visit or interview and indeed the ongoing development of the research issues. Interviews were 'semi-structured'. I followed the ethnographic convention that a researcher enters an interview with a list of issues to be covered by open-ended, non-directive questions based upon these. Initially, a detailed schedule based on an examination of current issues, attendance at PE-related conferences and pilot interviews¹ was devised (see Appendix A). After initial contacts, however, this schedule had been drastically altered in format and was reduced to a list, in the form of an 'aide memoire' (see Appendix B) of general topics or themes to be covered during the course of a conversation rather than by direct questioning. This more compact 'schedule' (see Appendix C) was used in every interview but was accompanied by a separate guide that contained items of specific interest to the individual interviewee or school. The 'type' of interview that was carried out, therefore,

can be described as guided or focused (as defined by Bell, 1991), that is, conducted within the framework of selected topics but with a written guide. It had the advantages of being adaptable and flexible allowing me to take into account the feelings of the informant and making the interview a much more personal and rewarding event. In this way more data and more valid data were gathered than would have been had a rigidly structured approach been taken, as informants were able to talk 'around' the subject as well as 'about' it and issues were revealed that had not always been on my own agenda. Advice given by Bell (1991) was more than useful in this respect. He claimed that the researcher should heed the following when in the field:

- fit in with the interviewees plans
- keep in sight common sense and good manners at all times

This sometimes meant that interviews were conducted at times and in places that were less than convenient. Bearing in mind the pressures in primary schools today it was important to try to keep disruption to a minimum.

- clear any official channels

This had been done in some detail by letters to the head teacher as 'gatekeepers' (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973) of the school and reinforced by an initial visit before any interviews took place.

- always introduce yourself and the project before the start of each interview
- make it clear what you will do with the information

I felt it important to inform interviewees that any data I collected would mainly contribute towards my own academic work as a research student. Shaffir (1991) suggests that you should play down your academic status so that you are not seen as a judgmental expert but I believe that in my case this was more than counteracted by the fact that I was not a teacher. I also stressed that all data would remain anonymous and not be attributable to any particular source without permission. Prior to the start of

the fieldwork one of my fears had been that perhaps teachers would not wish to discuss what went on in their school, particularly if there were any problems. Once in the field, however, people were more co-operative than I had anticipated and few informants seemed to be concerned about what happened to the data after the interview.

All interviewees were offered transcripts of the conversation to enable them to verify what had been said and if necessary to veto any comments that they did not wish to be quoted. This was a decision that was not taken lightly. I realised that giving the informants some control over the data could have an effect on the information that was released and I was pleasantly surprised to find that the majority of informants had no such concerns. All schools were offered a summary report of general findings after the fieldwork had been completed (see Appendix D).

Each interview had a 'snowball effect', that is, new topics and issues were constantly generated that formed the agenda for additional interviews. I experienced little of the 'progressive focusing' mentioned in the literature on qualitative methods. I have, on reflection, accepted that this is the very 'essence' of qualitative research. It is important to note, however, that this cyclical process of discovery can be a time-consuming process. The researcher could return to the site indefinitely with newly-refined questions. A decision has to be made at some stage to 'exit' the field. Towards the end of the data collection phase the knowledge that there were so many stones left unturned became somewhat disconcerting; to know that it would not be possible for practical reasons to return to a particular site yet to have only discovered on my last possible visit some issue that was of interest to the research. I realise now that this feeling of being almost 'victimised' by my chosen methods of investigation is common amongst qualitative researchers, as Stacey (1969, p.1) points out

...there is no limit to human knowledge, that it is most unlikely that anyone ever has the final answer, that it is hard to imagine the day when the frontiers of knowledge have been pushed right back.

With these issues in mind the interviews varied in their style and content, though they were all based around similar central themes. At each site I arranged to interview the head teacher and the PE co-ordinator as they had been identified as key informants influencing the provision of PE in schools. I also attempted where possible to talk to an additional class teacher for a further viewpoint with which to validate the responses of the key figures. In this way views were gathered from authority at three different levels: those that were responsible for the ultimate decision concerning the PE curriculum; those who were responsible for the dissemination of relevant information; and those who were required to demonstrate their knowledge in practice. It was then possible to cross-reference opinions within each site. Interviews, apart from one exception where convenience dictated a 'group' approach, were carried out individually and became 'tailored' to the teacher and the circumstances at the time.

Teachers varied in their responses whilst being interviewed. Some were very keen to talk, perhaps because they were pleased to be given the opportunity to share their concerns. These teachers tended to show an interest in the research project itself, asking about any findings and my involvement in the project. In contrast some teachers would adhere very closely to the questions I asked, often giving brief replies. These interviews were much more difficult to conduct. On the whole the interviews, after initial anxieties, were an enjoyable and rewarding experience and the majority of interviewees were surprisingly responsive. As far as my interview style was concerned I adopted the position of a 'sympathetic ear', always bearing in mind that

interviews for social research have certain characteristics. The most important of these is perhaps the fact that the interviewer is a supplicant dependant on the goodwill of the respondent. (Stacey, 1969, p.71)

I was able to empathise with some of the difficulties faced by primary teachers as I did not have a teaching background and had little prior knowledge of current practices of Physical Education in the primary school. In interviews I was also able to add personal

'anecdotes' in agreement with some of the issues that were discussed, from my experience as a child, or as a researcher visiting other schools. The focus of the interview varied between head teachers and PE co-ordinators because of the roles that they played and their respective positions of power within the school. I also found, when interviewing 'older' teachers, that I had to be cautious in how I phrased my questions so that I did not give the impression that I was in some way undermining their expertise. It seemed that their knowledge could be 'challenged' by what I would have regarded as innocent questions, for example, those concerning the difficulties of non-specialist teachers in the primary school. In all cases I tried as far as was possible to conduct a conversation rather than an interview, prompting where necessary and maintaining an informal approach (Denscombe, 1983).

Acknowledging the importance of gatekeepers (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973), those who exercise control and therefore influence the flow of information, and the need to explain the research requirements 'clearly and concisely' at each case study school I spent an afternoon or a morning with the head teacher or the PE co-ordinator, depending on who had decided to take on responsibility for the school's involvement in the study. The aims of this were several-fold; to familiarise myself with the school, its curriculum, structure, physical organisation and catchment area; to outline the purpose of my study in more detail and; to make the necessary practical arrangements for case study visits. I found these early visits very important in establishing a rapport with the people I was to interview. After each initial visit I sent letters of confirmation of all further arrangements in order to avoid any possible confusion about dates and times. Many of the visits were characterised by what I have terms 'organisational problems'. These manifested themselves in various ways. Head teachers, for example, might be late back from appointments and interviews would have to be re-scheduled, teachers would forget that I had arranged to meet them and might not be in the school, and a rainy lunch-time could completely disrupt the most meticulous plans as staff dealt with various incidents. The best strategy I found was to keep calm and be pleasant to the school secretary who was generally a good source of information as to who was where

and when, and was a reliable go-between when access had to be re-negotiated.

Consequently the interviews were carried out in a variety of places and to various backdrops - over a school dinner, whilst a teacher was 'teaching', in the playground on a sunny day or 'staggered' throughout the day. I found, therefore, that I had to be flexible and accommodating. Teachers would, in some instances, cover lessons for their colleagues and head teachers would clear their work in order to talk to me. Time, however, was an issue that constantly had to be addressed whilst in the field. My interviews generally had to be short (30-40 minutes) or at least shorter than I had envisaged (1-1½ hours). I tried to remain flexible about this, offering to meet people before or after school or during breaks, and so forth but, in some cases, teachers were unwilling to give up what they regarded as their free time. I often felt rushed in interviews as conversations had to be brought to an abrupt end due to other commitments of staff. This sometimes meant in the initial stages that I was not able to cover all that I had intended and some interviews took several attempts to complete.

All interviews, with one exception, were tape recorded. Assurances were given regarding anonymity as it has been noted that

Once people have been assured of confidentiality and where possible anonymity, few refuse to be taped. Tape recordings alone are usually insufficient for most researchers. Interviewers usually take notes of the circumstances in which the interview takes place as well as a condensed account of what is being said. (Powney and Watts, 1987, p.124)

One school refused permission to tape record any conversations held on school premises, and in this case written notes made at the time were typed up in full as soon as possible after the visit. On completion of the visit report for this school the inferiority of hand-written, as opposed to recorded, data, became clear. Simply in terms of volume, far less data were available and a significant amount of detail was lost.

Observations

I did not intend originally to include observations of lessons in my study. However, I felt that although observations were not to be central to the research, they would provide an invaluable insight into the school's culture and ethos. It also provided a further method of triangulation as I could determine whether information received in interviews was reflected in the practical lessons.

The observation 'technique', if it may be called as such, is no doubt one open to criticism for its simplicity. I went into every observation with a blank page and an open mind aiming merely to try and record what I saw before me. I had no agenda other than this and had no intention of adopting systematic methods of observation (i.e. in the style advocated by Bassey, 1978; Armstrong, 1981; Croll, 1981) that would have complicated and potentially restricted the focus of the research. In addition to the observation of specific lessons it can be argued that my visits and case studies in general were encased within a broader framework of observation. I carefully noted, for example, what I saw on entering the school reception, what was on the wall displays, how the children and staff reacted to me, what the head teacher's office was like, and so forth, all of which helped to create a general impression of the school's ethos as an institution or culture. Under usual conditions these observations would warrant little more than a passing interest, however, I noted down all that I saw and felt during my visits. These then formed a "second record" reflecting a "black market" (Stenhouse, 1979, cited in Powney et al, 1987, p.144) of observations, events and interpretations. I also made notes of any informal conversations I had with staff that were not interviewed and found that many situations, aside from interviews, prompted people to give their opinions. As a visitor I often spent time in the staff-room and teachers discovering the purpose of my visit would often put forward personal comments or questions. It was also difficult not to 'eavesdrop' on the conversations of others if the topic was of interest to the research. Thus time spent simply being 'on-site' was an excellent method of gleaning, and checking, information that contributed to revealing the "subtle politics and undercurrents of the school life" (Denscombe, 1983, p.117)

which in an individual school would have some bearing on the way in which their curriculum was organised and the manner in which it was implemented. Initially this concept of a black market of information was a cause of some concern because of its ethical overtones and connotations of deception. Staff in the schools had been informed of the purpose of my visits, i.e. that I was there to interview some of them and to watch some PE lessons. They would not, however, realise that my research began from the moment I entered the school and ended as I left the site. They would not know that I was constantly 'on task'. Hammersley (1983, 147) highlighted this ethical problem and pointed out that an element of deception is inherent in all research. He advised that the researcher should only take notes where it would appear normal to do so, i.e. where it would be "broadly congruent with the context of the setting under scrutiny" .

I believed that watching some PE lessons in each school would add to this picture. The aim was to see 'normal' lessons in a typical school day. Sometimes this was possible but on occasion the very opposite was true as timetables had been rearranged for my benefit. I had no stringent criteria for choosing which lessons I saw, though I considered it useful to see a lesson taught by an interviewee, for example, I observed all PE co-ordinators take their own class. Due to the organisational problems of arranging the interviews I left the arrangements very much to the school. I did, however, try to fulfil one of the two following criteria: I either saw all of the lessons on a day visit (which was often interspersed with interviews); or I asked to see a 'selection' of lessons that would normally occur in the school, for example, some indoor and outdoor lessons, a mixture of year groups, and so forth, hoping in this way to see a representative 'slice' of PE life at each school. There were also some lessons that I specifically asked to see because they were innovative and, therefore, of particular interest, for example, a creative dance lesson, or an 'alternative' sports day. These lessons usually came to my attention during early visits as areas of the curriculum that warranted more specific attention.

Having decided to proceed with observations a number of problems arose, largely related to the inherent problem of organising teachers' time in primary schools. I have already mentioned that interviews can be difficult to arrange despite forward planning and that they may cause a certain amount of disruption to the teachers involved. Observations in contrast do not! Teachers who were reluctant to be interviewed were quite willing to be observed because it required no additional effort on their part and it did not involve having to arrange supply cover for their class or giving up their lunch hour. At times I felt compelled into watching a lesson out of sheer convenience, whilst the school felt that it was still fulfilling their side of the case study agreement by allowing me to be present. I often found myself, therefore, observing lessons when my time might have been more productively spent elsewhere. In most cases I was happy to observe if respondents were not available for interview but I suspect that by being accommodating and in giving the school this option I was leaving myself open to a certain amount of 'manipulation'. I was concerned that the scenario described above would detract from the 'real' business of interviews but I found that observations became an additional source of data that I could use to cross-reference with other verbal and recorded comments. They also provided me with an insight into the 'life' of the school. I also believe that the way in which I was treated in each school reveals a story about the culture or philosophy of the school. For example, in some schools I was directed towards particular lessons ("you'll want to see good practice won't you?" assumed the head teacher, Sycamore School). Whilst in another school I witnessed, in a series of PE lessons, some points that could well be regarded as 'bad practice' (for example, a gymnastics lesson where the children neither assembled nor put away the apparatus) and this contrasted with what I had been told by teachers in interviews.

Generally, whilst observing lessons I took as unobtrusive a position as possible, sitting at the rear of the hall and simply watching. Although I had a notebook with me I took few notes at the time, concerned that it might appear that I was in some way evaluating the teacher. My thoughts then had to be written down as soon as possible after the lesson was over. There were often problems with some of the younger

children who were always curious about visitors. They might be distracted by my presence briefly but generally their attention turned back to their activity after it had been established that I was less interesting than the apparatus. In outdoor lessons where the children were often grouped into mini-games I found myself more of a participant observer on occasions. I tended to walk around and chat to the children and they would ask for help as if I was a referee! Most children behaved very much as though I was a teacher and in the case of junior classes were a little concerned that I might be their new teacher for next year. I felt much more comfortable in these situations as I felt I was less of a distracting factor on the class and therefore I probably saw a more 'natural' lesson. Often at the end of the lesson, or during depending on the nature of the activity, I was able to chat to the teacher briefly and to exchange views on what had taken place.

Conclusion

Miles (1983) refers to data collection as a laborious and demanding task for the lone researcher. This is largely because

Fieldwork, despite the best intentions of the researcher, almost always boils down to a series of endless conversations accompanied by a few major events and a host of less formidable ones. (p. 118)

The problems that I encountered throughout the course of the fieldwork were a cause of much frustration. Strauss (1987) suggests that the image of the perfect researcher is one who is able to minimise some of these effects. It is very much a difficulty for qualitative researchers and a characteristic of qualitative research itself that what is to be acclaimed as good educational research may never be regarded as uniform or constant and the researcher must respond to the individual contexts of the research. This I have attempted to do in my own research, where appropriate and I leave the reader to judge the success of this.

Notes

1. A number of pilot interviews were carried out with local teachers in advance of the case studies. The data from these were summarised in an article that was later published in *The Teaching Student* (1993). Other items relating to the formulation of the interview topics are included in Appendix A1-3.

Chapter 5

Introduction to the Case Study Schools

Introduction

The previous chapters (3 and 4) discussed the issues that I considered to be salient to research in the primary school. The following chapters (6, 7 and 8) outline the findings of the case studies themselves. This chapter provides a link between method and data by introducing the case study schools, their selection and some of the issues that informed the process of data collection.

In 1991 a questionnaire survey was administered by Penney to all schools in a single education authority that had been involved in Phase 1¹ of the County LMS scheme. The sample population consisted of two hundred secondary schools and a smaller group of twenty primary schools. At this time these schools had been managing their own budget since 1990 and would therefore be in a position to comment upon their experiences during this period as well as to predict future trends in provision. The main concerns of the questionnaire survey were to investigate:

WHAT is being provided in terms of PE, for WHOM and HOW?

What are the VARIATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS?

What are the CHANGES over time?

What are the reasons for these VARIATIONS and CHANGES?

WHAT and WHO is determining the provision of PE and sport in schools?

The questionnaire was predominantly quantitative in nature in order to gain a broad picture of what was happening in these schools. There was also an opportunity for respondents to comment upon any of their answers. In this way an important qualitative element was introduced which added to the picture created and helped in turn to inform further research questions in my own extension of the project. Aspects of provision that were addressed in the questionnaire included :

TIME
STAFFING
RESOURCES
FUNDING
FACILITIES
RESOURCES
EXTRA-CURRICULAR PE
COMMUNITY USE and PARTNERSHIPS

In order to assess changes over time and to enable analysis of findings both within and between schools provision was addressed in three consecutive years that coincided with the year preceding the introduction of LMS, and the first and second year of implementation (1989/90, 1990/91 and 1991/92). Throughout this period National Curriculum subjects would be gradually introduced and preparations for NCPE underway for implementation in 1992. The questionnaire was distributed to the two teachers in each school that had been identified as 'key figures' responsible for the implementation of the new orders for PE, namely the head teacher and the PE co-ordinator. The questionnaire results provided valuable information upon which to develop further qualitative investigation and a database from which to select the case study schools.

Selection of Case Study Schools

All types of schools found in England and Wales were reflected in the sample. It would, therefore, be possible to select a representative sample of schools in order to examine how PE provision was affected by ERA and investigate the strategies adopted to meet the challenges of the new curriculum. All the sites were regarded as 'unique' individuals within a system in which "idiosyncratic aspects of the sites can be seen in perspective, and self-delusion about conclusions is less likely" (Miles 1983). As stated above, the possible population from which to select the case studies was limited to the total number of schools that took place in the initial questionnaire survey. Choice was

restricted, therefore, to only twenty primary schools which thus further extended the rationale for employing case study methods. The selection of the research sample was characterised by a certain degree of 'serendipity'. That is to say that although the ideal situation would have been to look at all of the schools in the research population this was not possible.

Whilst selecting the cases certain theoretical interests were also borne in mind which were derived from the review of literature and the questionnaire data. ERA is a policy that is driven by financial interests, therefore, it was assumed that the quality and nature of PE provision in the primary school would be determined, or strongly influenced by, the availability of resources and the factors surrounding this issue. 'Resources', for the purposes of this study, were defined in terms of physical space (indoor and outdoor facilities), access to off-site facilities, provision and maintenance of equipment and apparatus and the level and expertise of staff. 'Quality' of PE, itself a problematic concept, was assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. That is to say, on the one hand it was conceptualised in terms of the nature and variety of activities offered both in the curriculum and in extra-curricular provision; on the other, attention was given to the subjective assessments and comments made by teachers about PE in their school. In order to explore the above questions across cases a case study sample was required that would reflect all possible combinations of the inter-relationship between resource provision and the 'quality' of the PE curriculum, for example:

Table 2: Categorisation of Schools

Resources	Provision
'Poor'	'Poor'
'Poor'	'Good'
'Good'	'Poor'
'Good'	'Good'

Despite my efforts to base the categories on the teacher assessments contained in the questionnaire data, the criteria for assigning schools to one of these categories was somewhat judgmental and a little crude in its terminology. The usefulness of developing some form of assessment became more salient throughout the course of the fieldwork when unexpected anomalies between questionnaire data and ethnographic experience became evident. Working within this framework there remained a certain amount of reliance on natural opportunity, convenience and luck (Fetterman, 1991). Firstly, of the twenty schools who took part in the questionnaire survey, not all chose to participate fully and some schools returned only one or other of the questionnaires. I approached all schools from which two questionnaires had been returned and five gave a positive response to participation in the case study work.

A possible justification for this reluctance to take part in qualitative research was that teachers were simply 'research weary'. As the first schools in the local education authority to take part in the initial phase of LMS they had, perhaps not surprisingly, received a certain amount of attention from various interested parties. Undoubtedly they were closely monitored by the LEA and a great deal of additional work was created for the head teacher in his/her new capacity as a financial manager. At the same time some of the schools reported that they were 'besieged' by researchers looking at different aspects of the National Curriculum and other provisions of ERA. I realised that I was following in the footsteps of surveys by educational psychologists, the Sports Council, LEA curriculum advisors and the survey that prompted this research. Place this against the hectic world of primary schools generally and it is understandable that they would wish to keep any further disruption to a minimum and that might reasonably include refusing to take part in a project that would interrupt the business of teaching. This meant that the possible population of schools that were likely to be co-operative and from which to select case study schools would be limited. These five schools were approached and all 'recruited' to the study. A further school 'volunteered' without my having to contact them. The head teacher had heard

of the project and was keen to participate, fortunately, it was one of the original twenty Phase 1 LMS schools which had not taken part in the initial survey and there had since been a change of head teacher. The final sample of case study schools thus comprised at least one of each ‘type’ of primary school found in the LEA and these are categorised in Table 3 according to the resource/provision relationship outlined above. See Appendix E for more details concerning the selection criteria.

Table 3: Case Study Schools

School Name	Resources	Provision
Brookfield Infant	‘Good’	‘Poor’
Sycamore First	‘Poor’	‘Poor’
Riverside Infant	‘Poor’	‘Good’
Haydn Primary	‘Poor’	‘Good’
Valley Junior	‘Good’	‘Good’
Morrison Junior	‘Good’	‘Good’

Questionnaire Survey Data

There is insufficient scope in this chapter to set out all of the ‘results’ of the initial questionnaire survey, however, reproduced below are some details that relate directly to the case studies and which provide some background details with which to introduce the schools.

Table 4: Pupil Roll

School	Age Range	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92
Brookfield Infant	4-7 KS1	245	228	210
Sycamore First	4-8 KS1/KS2	282	271	265
Riverside Infant	4-7 KS1	N/K	N/K	210
Haydn Primary	5-11 KS1/KS2	N/K	N/K	470
Valley Junior	7-11 KS2	269	245	205
Morrison Junior	7-11 KS2	N/K	N/K	350

Some of the schools were evidently experiencing a fall in pupil roll. No reasons were given by any of the respondents.

Table 5: Distribution of Teaching Staff in 1991/92

	All Teachers	Male	Female	Head Teacher	No. of PE Specialists
Brookfield Infant	6	0	6	Female	1 (PECo)
Sycamore First	9	0	9	Female	0
Riverside Infant	8	0	8	Female	1(PECo)
Haydn Primary	16	4	12	Female	0
Valley Junior	8	3	5	Male	3
Morrison Junior	11	3	8	Male	0

The distribution of teachers in the case study schools reflects that of primary schools generally. See Appendix T for statistical data. The first and infant schools were dominated by women.

Table 6: Teaching Experience of PE Co-ordinators

School	Teaching Experience	Gender
Brookfield Infant	7 years secondary PE; 6 years infant	Female
Sycamore First	8 years	Female
Riverside Infant	20+ years	Female
Haydn Primary	20 years	Male
Valley Junior	6 years	Male
Morrison Junior	5 years	Female

All schools had a PE co-ordinator with special curriculum responsibility for the subject. It became evident from the case studies, however, that there were some discrepancies between questionnaire data and reality with may have arisen from different interpretations of the term ‘PE specialist’. None of the teachers above are PE specialists, i.e. trained specifically to be primary PE teachers. At Brookfield and Riverside Infant Schools, the co-ordinators were older teachers who felt that their general training and their role of PE co-ordinator was sufficient for them to be able to describe themselves as PE specialists. At Valley School, the three PE specialists held various sporting qualifications (e.g. in swimming, football, etc). The co-ordinator at Haydn School was a qualified gymnastics coach but he did not consider himself a PE specialist. All head teachers considered their staffing for PE to be “adequate”.

Table 7: Facilities

School	Gym.	General Purpose Hall	Playing Field	Playground	Outside Facilities Used?
Brookfield Infant		1	1	1	No
Sycamore First		1	1*	1	No
Riverside Infant		1	1*	1	No
Haydn Primary	1	2	1*	2*	Yes
Valley Junior		1	1	1	Yes
Morrison Junior		1	1	2	Yes

None of the case study schools had their own swimming pool. The schools which included swimming in their PE curriculum used local amenities for their lessons. Three of the schools reported that their storage for equipment was poor.

*At these schools, although facilities were available, they were considered to be inadequate with respect to PE use. Sycamore School shared its field with another school, and Haydn’s fields were considered to be too small for the number of pupils using them.

Table 8: Activities Offered in the PE Curriculum

School	Dance	Gymnastic Activities	Games	Athletic Activities	Outdoor Activities	Swim.	Extra-curr.
Brookfield Infant		X	X	X			
Sycamore First	X	X	X				
Riverside Infant	X	X	X				
Haydn Primary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Valley Junior	X	X	X		X	X	X
Morrison Junior	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Differences between infant and junior schools are evident here with the junior sector apparently offering a more comprehensive range of PE activities than the infant schools. Whilst the above provides a suggestion of the variety of activities offered by each school, it gives no indication of the quantity of PE activities, nor the quality.

At infant level it was felt to be inappropriate to provide extra-curricular activities for children for several reasons, the predominant reason being the issue of safety and children travelling in the evenings. Some teachers felt that young children were too tired after a day at school, whilst others felt that children already attended classes outside of school, e.g. ballet, martial arts, etc. that the school could not provide for them to the same level. The only extra-curricular activity that did take place in infant schools on a casual basis was country dancing.

At the junior level the sporting influence was more evident with all schools offering children the opportunity to play team sports such as football, netball and rounders, on a competitive basis with other local schools. Some were also able to offer non-competitive activities or team games that were not played in a school 'league'. These varied enormously from archery to trampolining, depending on the interests of current staff and resources.

Table 9: Time allocated to PE Weekly in 1991/1992

School	KS1	KS2
Brookfield Infant	11/2	-
Sycamore First	21/2	-
Riverside Infant	21/2	-
Haydn Primary	2 hours	2 hours
Valley Junior	-	2 hours
Morrison Junior	-	2 hours

All head teachers and PE co-ordinators felt that the amount of time that the school allocated to PE was “adequate” at KS1. At KS2 the PE co-ordinator for Haydn School felt that the time allocation was “inadequate”. None of the head teachers indicated that there would be any changes to time allocation for PE during the following year. In KS1 schools there was a strong inclination for children to receive some sort of physical activity on a daily basis for at least half an hour a day. In the junior school PE lessons tended to be divided between indoor activities and outdoor games and there was generally a short and long lesson of each respectively.

*At Morrison School it was stressed that children were often involved in physical activities outside of the PE curriculum, e.g. in the form of special events or visits to off-site facilities.

Table 10: Allocation of budget to PE in 1991/1992

School	PE	Maths	Geography
Brookfield Infant	£250	£1250	£150
Sycamore First	£250	£150	£150
Riverside Infant	-	-	-
Haydn Primary	£750	-	-
Valley Junior	£100	-	-
Morrison Junior	£500	-	-

Schools were reluctant to provide budget details for other curriculum areas. Morrison School had allocated £500 from the school budget to PE but funds amounting to over £2000 from other sources had been vired towards PE in 1990/1991. Riverside Infant and Valley Junior claimed that they did not work with pre-determined budgets, insisting that money was available and directed towards the curriculum “as needed”.

Budgets for PE were considered to be “adequate” by three of the PE co-ordinators (two of whom did not know what the budget allocation had been for PE for 1991). The PE co-ordinator at Valley School felt that the allocation was “inadequate” at £100 for the year because, he claimed that “large apparatus coming to the end of its life”.

Workload

The PE co-ordinators were asked about their general teaching workload in 1991 compared to the previous year. Four of the responses revealed that tasks other than teaching had increased and cited the following: DES requirements, SATs, reports to parents, records, NC commitments.

One teacher claimed “the amount of paperwork and meetings has more than doubled” (PECo, Morrison School)

“Success” in PE

Head teachers were asked to define the criteria by which they assessed the success of PE in their school. They provided a range of responses:

“Sport for all children at all ranges of ability” (Brookfield Infant)

“The enjoyment shown by the children, the improvements each year in their PE skills. Continued staff discussions on development of school scheme.” (Sycamore School)

“HMI and local inspectors/advisors (also people such as training college tutors) have always been impressed with our PE!” (Riverside School)

Enjoyment, participation skills. Improvement as children progress through the school.” (Haydn School)

Children working in controlled manner and understanding what is required of the PE programme.” (Valley School)

Aims and Objectives of PE

PE co-ordinators were asked to define the aims and objectives of PE at their school:

“Overall provision is adequate. PE should primarily be ‘enjoyed’ at infant level but in the process children learn capabilities within themselves physically and hopefully improve.” (Sycamore School)

“To provide a rounded experience for all the children on a daily basis in line with the County guidelines and within the bounds of the facilities in this school.” (Riverside School)

“The maximum amount of participation by all pupils in a wide variety of sports. To help pupils understand the need for physical exercise – stay healthy - sport is for life – good life – hobbies and interests – meeting people – social. To develop control of body – safety. ”(Haydn School)

All PE co-ordinators claimed that provision was “adequate” to meet these aims and objectives, except for Haydn School where the teacher felt that this would be the case once a new programme for games was in place.

LMS, National Curriculum, NCPE and Open Enrolment

Head teachers and PE co-ordinators were asked if these elements of ERA would have any impact on PE provision. The responses have been reproduced in full below:

Table 11: Impact of LMS

LMS	Head Teacher	PE Co-ordinator
Brookfield Infant	Some impact	-
Sycamore First	Some impact – the school, development policy allowed money to be set aside.	No impact
Riverside Infant	No impact	No impact
Haydn Primary	No impact	More money for all curriculum areas inc. PE.
Valley Junior	Some impact	Some impact – less funding from LEA.

Responses to LMS varied from positive to negative effects. Some schools felt that more money would be available for PE, others that there would be less funds.

Table 12: Impact of Open Enrolment

Open Enrolment	Head Teacher	PE co-ordinator
Brookfield Infant	No impact	-
Sycamore First	No impact – the school policy was reviewed and refined re. NC.	No impact
Riverside Infant	No impact	No impact
Haydn Primary	Some impact – we have had to change the topic to cater for NC – a lot more paperwork.	No impact
Valley Junior	No impact	No impact

Although most schools claimed that Open Enrolment would have no effect, contradictory evidence was gathered from case study visits. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Table 13: Impact of National Curriculum

National Curriculum	Head Teacher	PE Co-ordinator
Brookfield Infant	Some impact	-
Sycamore First	Some impact	PE seen as less important.
Riverside Infant	No impact	No impact
Haydn Primary	Some impact	Is raising awareness and profile of those subject areas being covered.
Valley Junior	Some impact	Increased workload – year 2 so PE not such a high priority.

Most schools felt that the National Curriculum would have “some” effect but responses to this issue were vague. Evidence gathered from the case studies will illustrate that the National Curriculum has more effect on the PE [provision than might have been supposed prior to its implementation.

Table 14: Impact of National Curriculum PE

National Curriculum for PE	Head Teacher	PE Co-ordinator
Brookfield Infant	Some impact	-
Sycamore First	Some impact	Mixed feelings – will restrict some and encourage others.
Riverside Infant	No impact	None – we feel reassured that we already deliver and have been doing so of many years.
Haydn Primary	No impact	Will raise PE profile greatly.
Valley Junior	Some impact – SATs had some impact on the quality of work achieved in Year 2.	Interest shown by staff but its just another subject churned out on the NC conveyor belt.

Again, responses to the issue of the National Curriculum for PE varied. Some school felt that PE would be less of a priority, others, that the profile of the subject would be raised by its inclusion as a Foundation subject.

Case Study Schools

The data from the questionnaire formed the basis of the research issues to be followed up in the case studies. Whilst this data was useful in answering some of the WHAT questions it was not, however, able to provide information about HOW the PE curriculum was constructed. The questionnaire survey was carried out in 1991, the year before primary schools had received the Final Orders for PE, and it was envisaged that there might be some discrepancies between policy and practice. The case studies were carried out between 1992 and 1993 and thus would allow the investigation of the NCPE during the early stages of its implementation.

In view of the scope of the research and the depth of the case studies that have been conducted I made a decision to include only three of the schools in this thesis. I decided, for different reasons, to exclude the two infant schools and one of the junior schools from the final analysis.

Riverside and Brookfield Infant Schools

The two infant schools were very similar in terms of their provision and, in my opinion, 'unremarkable'. At both schools the PE curriculum consisted largely of educational gymnastics and dance (generally country dancing to pre-recorded tapes). In the summer a variety of games were played outside on the field. All children had a PE lesson daily for half an hour. Both of the PE co-ordinators were mature women, one of whom had been at the school for twenty years and the other had previously trained as a secondary teacher. Both schools had PE programmes that had been devised in the past and used at the school for a number of years. Neither PE co-ordinator intended to introduce any major changes to the PE curriculum but claimed that they would look at the National Curriculum documents and fill in any gaps in their provision. They stated

"First reactions were pleasing because we felt that we'd been undertaking most of the requirements already." (PE Co, Brookfield school)

"I think on the whole we're fine. There's not a lot that we find onerous about the infant age." (PE Co, Riverside School)

Neither the head teacher nor the PE co-ordinator at either of these schools felt that any of the provisions of ERA would have any great effect on their PE provision. In view of the forthcoming simplification of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 (1995) I felt that the case study analysis should concentrate on issues that affected PE provision at Key Stage 2 as this a transitional phase between infant and secondary education.

Valley Junior School

Whilst the decision to exclude the infant schools from the final analysis was justified for pragmatic reasons, the issues concerning Valley Junior School are a little more contentious. Questionnaires were returned by both the head teacher and the PE co-ordinator. Discrepancies were observed in their responses to similar questions (i.e.

re. time allocation for PE, and activities offered by the school) The head teacher gave his consent for the school to participate but became difficult to contact after this initial response. I was able to arrange only three visits; two in 1992 (one of which was a very brief initial introduction) and one in 1993, and whilst I was able to interview the key figures at the school I was not permitted to use a tape recorder. My contact with the school was minimal and I felt very uncomfortable whilst on-site, particularly when with the head teacher. Interviews with him were hurried, often interrupted and (I felt) confrontational. I noted in my diary that

A great deal of time has been devoted to the rest of the curriculum...but PE has been very much put on hold and to a large extent remains in this position because of its status in the school. It is quite worrying that the PE co-ordinator himself has little interest in the subject and may consequently be unable to develop any kind of enthusiasm in the rest of the staff. I wonder about the head's motive for agreeing to be in the study? (Visit Report 13 May 1992)

I was able to observe some lessons which, on different occasions (and one year apart), consisted entirely of rounders. Other lessons that I had arranged to see were cancelled. The PE co-ordinator, although complying with the head teacher's request not to allow our interviews to be taped, was very responsive to my questions. He was a sports enthusiast with strong views on the decline of school sport. He was critical of the National Curriculum and felt that it would not change practice. He openly admitted that he had not volunteered to take curriculum responsibility for PE but had been assigned the post by the head teacher. He regarded his post very much as 'demotion' and commented on the low status that it conferred on his teaching abilities.

Whilst Valley School revealed some interesting data I decided to exclude the school from my analysis for two reasons. Limited time spent in the school and failure to secure permission to tape-record interviews had a significant effect on the quality of data. Similarly, whilst the views of the PE co-ordinator are no less valid, lack of

observational data and poor co-operation in the study by the head teacher could lead to a biased presentation of the research findings. Whilst I found the visits interesting as an exploration of school dynamics I have retained the data for this school in my own records and I do not feel that it would be appropriate to include them in this thesis for ethical reasons.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided some background data to the case study schools, three of which are described in detail in Chapters, 6, 7 and 8. The aims of the following chapters are to present the reader with a 'data rich' description of the PE curriculum at each school and to answer the following questions:

What is PE like in primary schools?

Why and how has this provision arisen?

Who is responsible for the PE provision

The case studies that are included in this thesis are based on visits, interviews, observations and documents as described in Chapters 3 and 4. Much of the text is derived directly from visit reports compiled after each site visit. At all schools the head teacher and the PE co-ordinator were interviewed and data from these conversations² form the main body of the chapters. Direct quotes from interviews are included throughout the chapters where appropriate. In some schools interviews were also carried out, both informally and formally (i.e. taped) with other class teachers. These are not reported here in depth in order to retain consistency between cases. However, whilst an attempt has been made to report each case study in a similar style, different issues were salient in different schools and this is reflected in the organisation of each chapter. All school names, and teacher names, have been changed to ensure anonymity, and no references to specific locations have been made. Any documents reproduced in the appendices similarly have been anonymised.

Notes

1. The first phase of LMS consisted of 200 secondary schools and 20 primary schools. All primary schools with a pupil roll of 200+ were approached by the LEA and invited to volunteer for Phase 1. This was very much a pilot in order to determine the suitability of primary schools for financial self-management.
2. Whilst the tape-recorded interview data form an important record, I have not included full transcriptions in this thesis for ethical reasons, to ensure the anonymity of the interviewee. I have included direct quotes in the main body of the text where relevant.

Chapter 6
Case Study 1
Morrison Junior School

Introduction

I visited Morrison School six times between 1992 and 1993. Interviews were carried out with the head teacher, the PE co-ordinator and, informally, a class teacher. I observed four different lessons and made two visits to school 'events' which were related to PE.

First Impressions

Morrison Junior School is set in what looks like a country park. It certainly doesn't look like the grounds of a school. Large areas of grassland flank the drive and tail off into the distance up the hill whilst the area is surrounded by trees and woodland... The school itself does not look so impressive. It is a strange temporary-looking building made of concrete and glass. (I am told later that it was built in the 1950s and was of architectural interest at the time.) It is very oddly shaped, as if was assembled out of numerous square blocks that never quite fitted together! Inside, the school has obviously had a recent face lift. There is red paint everywhere (the school colour) and there are children milling around wearing red sweatshirts. The school seems to be very lively, you can hear lessons going on in classes but there is a lot of movement... There are photographs of all the staff on the wall. There is also a notice board for the Morrison Association with photographs of the latest event and a list of forthcoming attractions – film shows, BBQs, dances. There is a notice that the money raised this year has been earmarked for new playground markings and a 'ball wall'. (Initial visit report 19/06/92)

School Brochure

Morrison's brochure was a comprehensive document in which the school identity was emphasised. The school had recently undergone a change of name and logo (in 1991) and the reasons behind this were explained in detail. The school curriculum was outlined in subjects though it was also stressed that

Much of our work is studies based or cross-curricular in nature. This means that instead of always teaching subjects under separate headings they can be linked and integrated into the study which a year group is undertaking. This requires careful planning to ensure that children are covering all areas of the National Curriculum. A well-planned structured approach allows

- a) Children to see the inter-relationships of subject areas
- b) Teachers to plan work which is relevant and meaningful to the children
- c) Opportunities for teachers and children to share enthusiasms and interests
- d) Opportunities for parents and children to share in their child's education.

PE was mentioned in a paragraph that provided a brief description of the curriculum that was offered by Morrison Junior School.

All children are expected to take part in indoor PE and outdoor games. A range of floor and apparatus work is presented in PE and the children are introduced to individual and team skills in a range of games during their four years. Broadly speaking, team games become more formalised as the children get older. The school organises representative teams in football, netball, rounders and cross-country as extra-curricular activities.

An extract from the school brochure is included in Appendix F.

Curriculum and Organisation of School

The curriculum at Morrison School was organised into an 'Inter-related Studies Programme' (the head teacher was very hesitant to call this 'topic work' but he admitted in interview that it was the same thing). Different topics were chosen each year and were followed by each year group. In the year of my first fieldwork visit

(1992) the topics included...food, machines, the local area and islands. This approach was very much cross-curricular, as stated in the school brochure, and a great deal of emphasis was placed on educational visits.

Morrison had a roll of approximately 350 pupils. During the year it had decreased slightly and this seemed to be an ongoing trend. It was explained to me that a junior school had opened nearby (in 1991) and that this effectively reduced the catchment area. In 1992 the school admitted a three-form entry of approximately seventy-five pupils and normally a decision would be made as to whether this intake would comprise two classes or three. The head teacher decided instead to split the school into two sections of upper (years 3 and 4) and lower (years 5 and 6), each with five classes of mixed ages so that children would change class twice during their time at the school and not every year as is common. He regarded this partly as a practical response to a problem, and also as appropriate in terms of the continuous progression that the National Curriculum attempted to establish. This action had not been entirely accepted by parents. However, the head teacher explained that he had learned that the best course of action when introducing any innovation, was to present parents with the rationale behind intended change and then to proceed, dealing with any problems as they occur. He did admit, however, that in schools today the future remained uncertain.

Head Teacher

David Smith (DS) had been at the school since 1990, and had spent a large part of his time changing much of what he had inherited from the previous head teacher. This applied particularly to PE and its place in the school curriculum. He was initially faced with many problems, the greatest of which being that PE had been neglected for a number of years and he saw this as an area that needed priority attention. He joined the school at the same time as a number of new staff; five new teachers including three newly qualified teachers (representing half of the total teaching staff), and this provided an ideal opportunity in which to try out new ideas without meeting resistance

from staff whose working methods were well established. He regarded this period very much as a learning process for everyone but, in his words, it enabled him to 'mould' the school to his way of thinking. David was not a PE specialist but he was a relatively young head teacher (i.e. in comparison to 'mature' head teachers interviewed in other case study schools) with a strong interest in the teaching of the subject. His influence on the development of the PE programme offered at Morrison is outlined in more detail in the following sections.

PE Curriculum

In 1991 the school offered a PE curriculum that consisted of dance, outdoor activities, games skills, gymnastics and swimming. The children received one games session per week which was generally held outside. However, if it rained the lesson would generally be cancelled because the main hall was not large enough to accommodate more than one class at a time. There were two further indoor sessions used for dance and gymnastics.

Dance was regarded as important at the school. There was an emphasis on creative movement and strong links with drama. Wherever possible the lessons were linked to current themework, for example, a project on China led to the study of movement in martial arts, and when the children studied India, a dance group (see Appendix G) was invited to organise workshops for the children. One of the teachers had been given responsibility for the development of dance and drama and she had been awarded an 'A Allowance' for creative arts. Whilst at the school I observed this teacher take a lesson with her own class (see Appendix H for observation report).

Outdoor activities were an area that David admitted needed attention but he felt that Morrison, with its extensive grounds, was in an ideal position from which to develop this aspect of the curriculum. Two residential sites were used by the school on an annual basis for outdoor pursuits.

Swimming was offered to years 5 and 6 but only to those who could not swim. There were some organisational problems because the school did not have a pool on-site and local facilities had to be arranged. This was considered both expensive and time-consuming to arrange. David had discussed the possibility of building a pool in the school grounds but referred to them as “real millstones” under LMS, whereas previously they would have been regarded as an asset. He had been head teacher of a smaller school, prior to his appointment at Morrison, which had its own swimming pool. He recalled the running costs as “horrendous”. The pool cost around £4,000 per year to maintain, the bulk of which was originally paid for by the County. Under LMS, however, the County had gradually decreased its contribution (90% in the first year of LMS, 75% in the second, 50% in the third) and eventually the costs would shift entirely to the school.

Time was a problem mentioned by the head teacher when discussing curriculum planning. The school had a clear rationale for PE and sports and regarded physical exercise as a high status activity. However, David acknowledged that time was a precious resource and PE could be time-consuming. He felt that the allocation of time for PE was good, apart from the difficulty mentioned above of bad weather. He admitted, however, that there was a danger due to increased pressure on time to “cut corners” and that this could result in bad practice. He cited an example with regard to gymnastics.

It is very easy for one class in the hall to say we'll put the apparatus out, leave it out, everybody uses it the same way then the last class puts it away at the end of the day. (DS)

I did not observe this practice at Morrison and David emphasised that it did not happen at the school but it did happen at one of the other case study schools (case study 3) where gymnastic lessons were allocated half an hour (including time for the children to change). David felt that time allocation for PE at Morrison would not be eroded because it was a subject that was enjoyed in the school.

Everyone's plea, I think especially with the junior school, is that there is too much to fit in. If you look realistically at all the nine subject areas that we are supposed to do, its a virtually impossible task. Having said that, I think there is still a lot of things that we afford the luxury of doing because we enjoy teaching them. (DS)

David felt that the only way to fit all the statutory subjects into the curriculum was to adopt the inter-related studies approach that Morrison had been following since 1990, but he acknowledged that this was not always easy and some topics were more amenable than others to this approach.

Development of the PE Curriculum

PE at Morrison, since the arrival of David as head teacher, had been a subject of considerable attention and a focus for innovation. The PE curriculum prior to 1990 was poorly resourced with little co-ordination between classes or year groups. There was no coherent policy for PE and teachers tended to teach their own lessons without reference to the wider curriculum. The activities offered were very traditional

At this school a couple of years ago PE activities were basically football and netball as far as games were concerned, rounders in the summer. PE being quite formal... educational gymnastics...and very little in the way of dance. (DS)

David was keen to develop the curriculum with regard to equal opportunities and had gradually introduced a variety of games in which all children could take part. The girls played football as well as the boys and he had purchased a supply of boots for their use, as they were unlikely to have them provided by parents. He did, however, acknowledge that this had not been a great success because of the wide gap in acquired skills that already exists between boys and girls of the same age by the time that they reach junior school. David, therefore, found that it was more appropriate to teach "ball skills" than attempt to organise mixed team games. He intended in future, therefore, to concentrate on "alternative sporting activities" with a

skills-based approach and “gender neutral games” (see Appendix H1 for report on the observation of a games lesson).

We’ve diversified this year, especially with the older children. Quick cricket – we’ve had a local chap who has come in and helped us on that and also new image rugby which we’ve found both boys and girls can participate in. (DS)

This did not mean that the children were denied playing competitive games entirely. There was a comprehensive extra-curricular programme available to all children, and sports teams that catered for the “elitist element” and competed against other local schools.

David felt very much as though he had to “start from scratch” with the PE curriculum and for this reason advice was sought from the LEA PE Advisory Service.

Certainly when I came everybody was concerned about PE throughout the school. We had very little in the way of equipment, we had no policy. They (*other new members of staff*) were concerned because we had no guidelines or anything so when we put together a school development plan as a staff, that was put as a high priority – to look at sport throughout the school. (DS)

An advisor was invited to the school for a day closure that was attended by all teaching staff. David described it as

...an active day where we all participated and he (*County PE advisor*) provided a lot of information for us to glean through to put together a rationale and the guidelines for PE and a lot of the information on small games activities or educational gymnastics comes from the County’s guidelines so that was used as a basis. (DS)

The day was considered to be very successful and many areas that the teachers were concerned with were discussed. Issues such as equal opportunities, the

teaching of skills, the place of team games and the issue of fair-play, the use of different equipment. David commented that there have been many “spin-offs” from this initial consultation such as the Active Partners Project in which the PE Co-ordinator is involved. The role of the co-ordinator and her involvement in this project will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

I discussed the PE policy that was devised as a result of the day closure. The head teacher was very enthusiastic about the final document that was disseminated to all teaching staff and provided extracts to illustrate the comprehensiveness of the policy. The following section contains extracts from an interview transcript relating to a conversation about the PE policy. I have quoted David at length because this is something that was clearly very important to him (however, a copy of the document was not made available for me to include in the appendices). I asked him firstly to define the aims and objectives of the PE curriculum at Morrison School.

I ought to get my policy out and check that – I will! I ought to quote this. Here’s a rationale for our PE policy which we put together, yes, it was the first term I was here, and the whole rationale is that we want to see...”Physical Education as a planned programme of activity contributing to the development of the whole child...to provide a challenging programme of activities which ensures breadth, balance and relevance for all children; to get opportunities to explore and expand in a variety of situations; to give experience of a wide variety of equipment.”

This one I think is very important “...to encourage attitudes which reflect the school’s ethos of equality, co-operation, sportsmanship; to encourage development of skilful body management; to give opportunities for creative and aesthetic activities through movement.” So that is where you are beginning to pick up the dance element, and this is the bit which is really coming on to develop the whole child...”to promote knowledge of health issues and the effect of physical exercise on the body.”

Then the guidelines – which is how we hope to achieve all that – is getting the children “...to work independently and in groups; to provide opportunities for creating, refining, adapting and modifying movement skills within a broad range of physical activities. “

“Skills are developed and there ought to be opportunities to practice in a variety of situations with increasing demands made on the child to build up strength, stamina, suppleness and speed, develop confidence and improve flexibility and also to consider the safety issues of Physical Education... It is expected that both boys and girls will participate in all activities”...at that stage when we produced this just over nineteen months ago, we’ve put together a whole series of general notes on lesson planning.

The policy document created by Morrison School was an impressive read, however, I noted that statements such as those cited above are meaningless unless they have some impact on practice. It would seem that at this particular school the policy has been accepted by the teaching staff, perhaps, in part, because they have been directly involved in the process of curriculum development. Although the impetus behind the reform of the PE curriculum was primarily that of the interest of the head teacher this, ultimately, was not a policy that had been imposed upon the staff. All teachers had been consulted and they had an opportunity to raise issues that were of concern to them. The data suggest that teachers felt a sense of ownership of the policy. Their own values were reflected in the document, and subsequently this was reflected in practice. Some comments made by class teachers (CT) are reproduced below.

The equal opportunities thing I think is very important. I don’t think there’s anybody at this school who would disagree on that. (CT1)

It seemed the time to focus people’s attention...Do we all think the same things? And I think we were pleased to find out that we did! (CT2)

I think we are basically lucky in that everybody has the same philosophy. (CT3)

This common agreement is important in terms of the implementation of policy in the wider sense and I shall return to this issue in the discussion chapter.

Super Schools Scheme

David realised from the outset that modernising the PE curriculum would be expensive and he chose to direct his new head teacher allowance towards this area of the curriculum in an attempt to raise the profile of PE. £1,000 was spent on new equipment soon after his appointment. He felt that the subject had to be “packaged” and presented to the parents in a way that did not alienate them or conflict with their own perceptions of PE and sport. For these reasons, David allowed Morrison to take part in the “Super Schools Scheme”, a high-profile charity initiative that promoted the image of sporting achievement at an individual level. Children were sponsored for taking part in various physical activities such as press-ups, sit-ups, etc. and the money raised was shared between the charity and the school. Kris Akabusi, a popular athlete, attended the school as part of the scheme and gave talks on the importance of health and fitness before launching the fund-raising campaign. The school took part in the scheme for two years (1990 and 1991) and in the second year the invited sports star was Hayley Price, a gymnast, who, though not as well known, was a great success with the children as she gave some demonstration lessons. The aim of Super Schools was to help raise money for talented athletes as well as provide extra funds for the schools. David considered that this combination of aims ensured that the scheme was an appropriate initiative for the school to take part in.

It was good because it was an opportunity for the children to meet a sports star...and to promote what we were trying to do which was an overall awareness of sport and fitness. We raised nearly £2,000 which was spent directly on sporting equipment and, in fact, out of the school budget we spent more than £1,500...A whole variety of different types of balls, we bought a parachute which can be used for all types of games, a lot of bats, tennis bats and nets - because one of the things we found was that a lot of our children here do racquet sport and we were not providing the opportunity for racquet sports at all. (DS)

Super Schools was the start of a gradual awareness-raising process. However, David acknowledged that it would not have been possible without financial commitment from parents and that Morrison being a “large junior school set in an affluent city suburb”¹ was well placed to take advantage of this.

Skills Day

Morrison’s annual sports day was another example of David’s attempt to modernise the PE curriculum. In previous years the school had held a traditional sports day which consisted of a series of running races. David felt that this was inappropriate as it did not cater for the varying physical abilities of children and placed too much emphasis on competition. In 1991 the school held its last traditional sports day, to which parents were invited, and another, alternative sports event, to which they were not. “Skills Day” as it became known proved to be very popular with the children and in summer 1992 I attended the event for the first time.

The aim behind Skills Day was the participation of all children at their own level of achievement and the event involved approximately thirty different events that took place simultaneously. Each activity involved a different skill such as throwing, running, jumping, and so forth. In the morning the upper years of the school organised the activities for the younger children, helping them to organise each activity, set them up and referee during the event. David explained that...

In the afternoon, they change over so everyone will, in fact, be actively involved all day rather than sports day when they run for a couple of races and most of the time sit down, cheer and wait for the orange juice. (DS)

The children chose which activities to take part in and could select as many as they wished within the allotted time, collecting points on their individual score card as they proceeded around the course. This, claimed David, involved them in other important issues outside of the physical activities, such as decision-making, free choice and

fair play. This was my first experience of this type of event but, in common with many parents, not my first visit to a school sports day. David had expected adverse reaction from some parents.

I would say that the reception from some of parents, especially if their children are very good at sprinting, is they're not very happy about that, but a great deal of other parents are very supportive of it...Its very difficult in this sort of catchment area where parents see competition as high priority. We're not against competition. We run football and a netball teams but its done out of school so its the children that want to participate and they know its going to be a competitive situation. The opportunity is there but it is something that the children have a choice about. (DS)

In an attempt to appease those parents, and children, who might feel that an element of competition is important, two races were introduced to Skills Day; a mini-marathon and an obstacle course. However, it remained the choice of each child whether they took part or continued to move around the activity course. At the end of the day score cards were tallied and all children received a certificate with their individual score. There was no indication of position and no prizes were awarded. A similar philosophy lay behind the system of merit cards that were awarded to children for good work, behaviour and individual achievement during their time at the school.

As an 'outsider' I found the event to be both enjoyable and interesting, particularly as my only experience of 'sports days' had been the traditional running races of my own childhood. I felt that this illustration of equal opportunities in action was an example that other schools might like to share and I submitted an article outlining the organisation of Skills Day to the British Journal of PE. This was published in 1993 (see Appendix I).

PE Co-ordinator

The PE co-ordinator, Susan Scott (SS), was a young teacher, in her late twenties. Like all the teaching staff at the school and in primary education in general she was generalist-trained. She also held curriculum responsibility for science in the school and had been awarded an 'A Allowance' for both roles. Susan had held the role of co-ordinator prior to the appointment of the current head teacher and claimed that she was given the role because she was the youngest teacher in the school at the time. She joked "I probably had the best trainers and the best tracksuit!" and claimed

I was doing it anyway and then some allowances came up and the head virtually gave it to me as a reward because I did the netball club and I do a lunchtime cross-country club and things like that...so, youngest teacher and I expressed an interest. That's how I came to this lofty role in life! (SS)

Although Susan did not have any formal qualifications in PE or sport, she had built up her own experience and expertise in the subject and had helped to develop the PE curriculum in consultation with the head teacher. She agreed very strongly with the philosophy behind the PE policy. She felt, however, that the status of PE was often not high in other schools, that "not being an academic subject its the one that parents will often care least about". She also drew attention to the lack of training that student teachers received compared to other subjects. She felt that often teachers

lack confidence teaching PE, quite often it happens even with people with very many years experience, happy in the classroom but can't transfer the teaching skills into a large area, or as soon as children are out...not behind a table, they can't cope. (SS)

Susan felt that teachers as well as children were often bored by PE lessons and that it was important to provide activities that are stimulating and challenging to engage the interest of the children. She claimed that a great deal of her knowledge had been acquired as a result of her involvement with 'Active Partners' and through in-service

training (INSET). Active Partners was an initiative developed via the LEA PE Advisory Service with the Southern regional Sports Council (see Appendix J for documentation relating to the scheme). It aimed to draw together clusters of schools locally so that they could share their experiences and expertise and thus promote participation and quality in sport (rather than PE specifically). The scheme allowed participating teachers to attend meetings and events by subsidising the cost of their supply cover. Susan's involvement had been restricted due to other commitments but she maintained contact with an informal 'Primary PE Network'. In many instances this had resulted in the group of teachers organising their own in-service sessions, inviting outside agencies (for example, sports coaches) to give demonstration lessons and running after-school clubs.

About twelve of us meet together from all different age groups and different schools in the area... We've pulled the National Curriculum apart, looked at the final documents and we've started looking at the games. (SS)

Susan felt that her principal task as PE co-ordinator was to disseminate her expertise to the rest of the teachers in the school, particularly with reference to the National Curriculum. She felt that progression was important and her job was to

...make it as easy as possible for them really, to see that progression...and present them with...lesson plans...provide any equipment they think is necessary, and any back-up material that they might need. (SS)

The lesson plans that Susan had devised had proved invaluable to the staff, as is illustrated by the following comment from a class teacher.

This term I've been doing the gymnastics that Susan gave me on a photocopied sheet...Year 5 Gymnastics – Supporting Body Weight. That's in six week blocks and I can see exactly what I'm supposed to be covering in each lesson...and that way I feel that there's some continuity in the school because otherwise...if you do something off the top of your head or whatever...somebody might have done it. (CT2)

Susan felt that she had become an advisor, an “in-school resource” but emphasised that it was important not to tell colleagues how to teach as she did not regard herself as a senior member of staff. She acknowledged that it was difficult to ensure that the school policy was actually being followed through by all teachers.

You are always assuming that people do what you give them...The problem that we have is that we've all got class responsibilities too so I can only say 'This is how you should be doing it' but there isn't anybody to go and actually check that they are doing it. Its not until you inherit a class that you realise somebody else hasn't obviously followed the programme and you realise that...that problems arise...that is still a difficulty. (SS)

In response to this problem, she had developed curriculum groups in the school so that a number of teachers with children of the same age met regularly to discuss their PE lessons. Thus, Susan felt that she had created her role in such a way that staff would be likely to consult her if they were having difficulties with any aspect of the PE curriculum. The head teacher claimed that her organisation of her role had been invaluable in creating relationships between staff.

Certainly I would say that the greatest achievement has been with year 6 where she works in a team of three teachers but they meet together regularly as an upper school – six teachers working together so a lot of information is disseminated in that way. Its just finding the time for her to liase and work with them. But she's done a good job...The only way you can go forward...is by using your subject specialist to talk either to your year groups or to a member of staff who is uncertain, to give ideas, to try and free them to work with that particular year group or sporting activity. (DS)

David consistently spoke very highly of Susan and the work that she had done for PE. He explained that one of his priorities was to ensure that she had the resources available so that she was able to do her job well. He had awarded her a specific PE

budget (in 1992 this was £500), aside from the money that is routinely spent on equipment, to enable her to develop INSET and arrange classroom cover whilst she worked with other colleagues in the school. Susan agreed with David that financial commitment to PE provision was crucial and she acknowledged the important role that the head teacher played in the distribution of resources. Financial planning at the school was based around a common prioritisation of needs and all staff took part in this process, regardless of their curriculum responsibility.

What do you need in the classroom? What do you need as a year? and then we will write down what we would like and he will go through and he tried to give everybody something. He asks for your opinion. (SS)

The issue of finance and resources is crucial to the provision of PE and this is discussed in more detail below.

Finance and Resources (LMS)

Susan commented that

...to really get the children excited you just buy a whole new load of equipment, if the head is prepared to do that, and automatically the standard of the PE will go up! You get the situation where a teacher is trying to teach football with just one ball between thirty children! Well, that's enough to turn anyone off, even the person who is most excited about PE so you do need the resources and as long as you've got a Head who is prepared to put the money and the value into PE as much as any other subject in the curriculum. (SS)

Other teachers also recognised that David was a significant influence in the funding of PE. The following exchange was noted between Susan and another class teacher during one of my visits.

SS If it (*money*) is there, he believes in spending it on the children, and not kept or stored away. Some heads are very worried about it and get paranoid that they are going to run out of money.

CT3 I'm sure he's probably tearing his hair out in the office but we don't get to see that!

SS We don't notice that. What we do is just buy things!

CT3 Really, we are extremely lucky. If we need anything, if we go on visits, if we need any resources for the children.

SS In the last couple of years he seems to have been very generous...we've bought a lot of things.

It is widely accepted that PE is an expensive subject to resource well. In this respect LMS provided a positive impetus to innovation because it ensured that finance could be made available for the purchase of new resources.

The decision to enter LMS at the pilot stage was made by the previous head teacher, therefore, it was not possible to discuss the rationale behind this. David admitted, however, that it had certainly affected his decision to apply for the post of head teacher at Morrison School.

Of course, with LMS we were able to vire money to resource PE because we had very little...by way of apparatus in the hall, or PE equipment in the playground – basically footballs and netballs and that was it, a few old tatty beanbags. So, even if you wanted to be creative in the activities you were doing, there was not the equipment or the storage to allow the teachers access to further activities. (DS)

He cited freedom to vire money and the ability to prioritise and respond quickly to change as advantages that the school had experienced as manager of its own budget. However, whilst David enjoyed the financial 'freedom' that LMS represented for the school, he acknowledged that funds did not come from a renewable source. Money spent on PE meant that expenditure on another area had to be reduced but LMS enabled him to direct funds to the area that he felt was in most need. Prior to LMS David had described a very different situation.

In the past, if I wanted extra PE equipment then I would have ended up writing to the PE advisor saying 'Look, sport is a high priority in our school, we've got very little money, can you fund me some?' You would be put on a waiting list and if your face fitted, or you were lucky, then you got it. If not you'd be waiting, you could wait for a long time and the school's *SGA (Schools General Allowance)* that we had at that time would only go to consumable stock items and very few large items especially for PE. (DS)

Under LMS, David had been able to direct the school budget according to his own priorities and he was proud of the changes that he had made at the school. However, he felt that his achievements would not have been possible without the support of the board of governors. Soon after his appointment as head teacher David discussed, firstly with the teaching staff, the areas that he felt needed attention, then he presented this to the governors with a proposed budget.

We basically brainstormed staff, looking at key areas of the school and what we needed to develop...looking at curriculum areas...looking at staffing, in-service training...That first year we did it, we knew that we wanted to spend quite a lot of money on PE and once we knew what money was left then it was a case of prioritising and then of course, you need to take that to consultation with your governors, and once its approved, get out and spend! (DS)

David had been able to demonstrate to the governors the importance he felt PE should be accorded in the curriculum. This was evident in the many initiatives that have already been mentioned above, Skills Day, for example, Active Partners and the development of the PE policy document. He had shown his commitment to PE by viring his New Head teacher Allowance towards the purchase of equipment. Super Schools raised considerable funds, which did not have to be vired from the school budget. All of these factors helped to promote the status of PE in the school and may have been instrumental in the governors' decisions. David commented that they were generally very supportive.

Now, with the Education Reform Act you've obviously got the increasing profile, high profile, of the governors and you've got to ensure that they are behind the decisions that you make... They've got to go along with you and it's important to come back to the development plan that you've got in place... They're a good set of governors... taking my advice as to priority areas that need an input of money. I think they all agreed – quite a few have got children at the school – that sporting activities need to be promoted. (DS)

An issue that arose from visiting other case study schools was that of 'teething problems' of LMS in the early stages. Some head teachers found it difficult to adjust to the different role that financial management imposed and, indeed, in one of the case study schools (Valley Junior School) this had resulted in the early retirement of the previous head. David had been a head teacher at his previous school but LMS was new to him at Morrison. He felt that his job had changed and he had become much more of a manager but he regarded his dual roles of accountant and teacher as integrated.

It's much more to do with finance, but that finance is, at the end of the day, to provide better educational opportunities for the children... That's not to say that I don't believe I'm still in control of the curriculum but what you are able to do is provide more opportunities and quicker opportunities for curriculum development. A classic example of that is PE. (DS)

David regretted that financial considerations forced him to spend a great deal more of his time in the office rather than being 'around' the school but he accepted that the practical application of educational initiatives was the responsibility of the teaching staff and he regarded his role as being one of "providing the wherewithal for all staff for them to be able to succeed".

Parent Power

Parents have been mentioned briefly above with regards to Skills Day but I feel that their potential influence in curriculum provision needs further comment here. David

felt that parents, after ERA, were much more aware of their rights and their role in the education of their children. He claimed that they could be

...very very demanding. I think the average parent wants to know, in this sort of catchment area which I call the 'Three A's' (*Academic Anxiety Area*), how well their children are achieving, how well they are going to do in National Curriculum subjects, but beyond that they are looking for that value added extra which in our case is focused mainly on sport...so there are extra opportunities available to them. (DS)

This issue was very important to the school. It was mentioned earlier that Morrison was suffering from a steadily decreasing pupil roll, which appeared to be the result of external factors. David, however, had to ensure that his school continued to be attractive to parents who were becoming more discerning in their choice of school. He claimed that Open Enrolment and formula funding affected every aspect of the school

...especially as the formula now is 80% pupil driven, so 80% of your money comes from the number of children that you've got in the school. So, obviously if your numbers drop you've got less money to spend and less staff...Open Enrolment - you are down to the fact of PR and marketing and the exercise of promoting a higher sporting profile for the school – there's no doubt about it, part of that was PR and marketing. (DS)

This was an issue that I pursued in discussions with other teachers in the school. David was obviously keenly aware that his school must retain its popularity and, therefore, it must remain attractive in a geographical area where parents were very aware of educational issues and where there are alternative schools. Whilst parents and children may have a keen interest in sports, it was possible that the PE policy, based on a principle of equal opportunities, that had been adopted at Morrison could have conflicted with these views. A class teacher commented that "I wouldn't like to be cynical but I don't think (*equal opportunities*) is the sort of thing that parents are

looking for". An exchange between two class teachers illustrates that the policy, although it generally appeared to have been accepted at the school, did not exist in isolation from wider environmental influences.

CT2 Children enjoy it (*PE*) but with the parents its not top priority. They wouldn't come and say 'My child can't read or write but you're giving them a damn good PE lesson!'

CT1 (*Laughs*) So it is a problem, especially in an area like this where...they like the children to be sporty and to be good, in the team.

CT2 ...and you get a lot of that from the children as well, don't you? They are always wanting to play the real game all the time. Skills practice, even when you do really good small-sided games, its never quite enough is it? Its 'When can we play a game?'

CT1 Football is the hardest but then they haven't got too many bigoted ideas on other games yet.

CT2 Cricket! Cricket is becoming like that!

CT1 ...and in the rugby. When we did the rugby last year – I think, perhaps, they've seen it on the telly, and they've seen how...

CT ...it really is played, yes!

It would appear that the head teacher at Morrison school has introduced a PE policy that could have been rejected by parents and children for various reasons yet the data suggest that it is popular with both parents and children. The data suggest that success (defined in terms of its acceptance by parents, children and teachers) of the PE programme was due to a number of factors. PE had been developed with coherence to the curriculum as a whole. It was not regarded as an additional subject, treated separately from others. Equal opportunities was a philosophy common throughout the school, though it was in PE that its value in redefining stereotypes of gender, age and ability were the most visible. PE at Morrison had structure and

meaning and had become an educational experience. PE had been accorded a high status in the curriculum. Sport had not been entirely neglected but the development of a variety of skills had taken precedence over competitive games. David had been careful to keep everyone informed of his decisions and the rationale behind them and had consulted staff and governors prior to the introduction any innovation. LMS had enabled flexibility in the school expenditure so that funding for PE could become a priority. However, David had also utilised alternative financial sources in addition to the school budget.

National Curriculum

David admitted that his knowledge of the National Curriculum was limited and that he relied on the PE Co-ordinator to disseminate the documents to the rest of the teaching staff.

I think, probably like a lot of schools, we haven't worried too much about PE in line with the National Curriculum...Most schools have taken subjects on board as they've come along and the ones that you target first of all are Maths, English and Science...I think there's a certain degree of cynicism just because they change so much, and I think also that workload's got a lot to do with it...that's even at a school like this where we are able to...have an A allowance for a member of staff...So she in fact had the document and disseminated some of the information but I wouldn't say it was a high priority. (DS)

Susan, the PE co-ordinator, agreed that the effects of the National Curriculum would be positive, that it would introduce an element of continuity and progression that had been lacking in the planning of some teachers. She felt that it had been very easy for teachers to do their own "PE thing", their own "baby lessons that they would do all the time" without any reference to what was happening in the rest of the school. The NCPE imposed a structure that she felt would "guarantee some progression if, as she hoped, it was followed through properly".

Both David and Susan were aware that there were some gaps and that it will be important to link the school programme more closely to the Final Orders but generally he stated

I think we think it is quite a user-friendly document especially if you compare it to the earlier ones. Its not as if you have to wade through page after page of text and I think it does promote, to use National Curriculum terms, a broad balanced PE programme. (DS)

Gymnastics, he cited as an example, needed attention as the school had tended to follow the County document as their own guidelines. Assessment was also a concern as it was an area that had been dealt with quite informally in the past but David acknowledged that it might need to be regarded more seriously in the future. Generally, David felt that the National Curriculum provided a framework that would have a positive effect on the provision of PE for children in all schools.

I think it gives a greater vehicle for an equitable PE programme that all children have an opportunity to succeed in...that you've got to produce activities which are meeting all childrens' requirements. (DS)

David felt that the school's own policy document for PE produced in 1990 would form a sound basis from which to start when planning for the National Curriculum.

What we've got to do...is to evaluate our current practice and link that in with the PE document...but I don't think that we'll have any particular difficulty in implementing it. A cut and paste job. Yes, I think there are gaps, certainly I think continuity and progression throughout the school we're going to have to look at in more depth. (DS)

However, it must be noted that Morrison provided a PE curriculum that allowed children to experience a variety of both in- and extra-curricular activities. Whilst the National Curriculum for PE was not 'in place' during the early case study work, the PE curriculum already included all of the Areas of Activity required by the Final

Orders distributed to schools in April 1992.

Conclusion

Morrison Junior School differed from many schools in its approach to PE and the status that it was given in the curriculum.

We're certain the children have a lot more opportunities now for a wide variety of activities to take place but unless you've got the equipment, unless you've got the storage and unless you've had some in-service training for your staff, you're not going to achieve that. I think the big problem is, yes, this was raised as a issue in our school but in a lot of schools I think they'll be...bogged down with other curriculum areas and PE is put on the back burner. (DS)

PE was regarded as integral to the whole curriculum and it contributed significantly to the ethos of the school. It had been a focus for the equal opportunities approach that permeated throughout the school. Influences on the curriculum at this school were various though the head teacher had been most influential in introducing innovation in the short time that he had been at the school. However, schools are complex organisations facing many pressures and it would not be possible to implement such policies without common agreement throughout the staff and others involved in the school, such as parents and governors. The head teacher admitted that Open Enrolment and the necessary promotion of the school were of extreme importance. 'Sport' was a high profile activity partly because of this, but he had also introduced measures in the PE curriculum that succeeded in filtering down any emphasis on competition. It was also significant that Morrison had considerable financial advantages in terms of the affluence of its catchment area and these had been utilised with regard to PE provision. Other primary schools, claimed David, would not be in the same position.

Historical context is important. There had been little change in the curriculum prior to David's appointment and his joining the school at the same time as a number of

other situational factors (such as the appointment of new teachers) and externally imposed initiatives (such as LMS, NCPE) was regarded as a positive opportunity. However, other head teachers might not have reacted in the same way and the power of the individual as an agent of control remains variable.

Notes

1. The head teacher's reference to the school being located in "an affluent city suburb" can be qualified to some extent by statistical data. Data collated from the 1991 census for all three case study schools (by area postcode) is reproduced in Appendix K.

Chapter 7

Case Study 2

Haydn Primary School

Introduction

I made four visits to Haydn school in 1992. I made a specific return visit later in 1993 because of a change in staff that I felt would be relevant to the provision of PE. I was able to interview both the head teacher and the PE co-ordinator. I observed two indoor and two outdoor lessons at this school and observations are included in the appendices where relevant to the text. I had also planned to attend Haydn's annual sports day but this event was cancelled due to bad weather.

First Impressions

An old school, the brick buildings look Victorian and from the outside it appears to be rather smaller than I had expected (400 pupils). From the road I can see a small playground to one side of the school and a larger one to the rear with a small area of grass next to it. There may be more grounds at the rear that I cannot see? In the entrance hall there is a small display of a residential camp – photographs and children's writing. There is also a copy of the 'Haydn Gazette' that the children write themselves – both infant and junior. There is a library just inside the entrance – books lined against the wall - and numerous children milling around, all wearing school uniform. The secretary gives me directions to Colin White's classroom and I am left to explore the corridors to find it. I notice that all the classroom doors are open and that many of the rooms have interlocking doors, also open. The corridors are bright (displays on walls) and full of cupboards, shelves, toys, etc. There are children in and out of classrooms fetching and putting things away. I eventually find Colin (*PE Co-ordinator*) sitting on the floor in the corner of his classroom 'covered' in children giving a reading lesson. (Initial visit report 11/05/92)

School Brochure

Haydn Junior School's brochure (see Appendix L) was a concise document which outlined the school's view of National Curriculum subjects. It mentioned PE briefly.



Physical education includes gymnastics, games and dance. Children are encouraged to develop their own individual skills within a variety of activities. Team spirit, competition, fair play and enjoyment underpin the physical education programme.

Attention was paid to extra-curricular activities, though not all of these would have related to PE. The brochure stated that “staff voluntarily run many clubs during the lunch break and after school. These vary from term to term”. It is also mentioned, in a section on school uniform, that all children change for PE.

Organisation of the school

Haydn was, by primary standards, a large primary school of four hundred pupils. It was located in a quiet suburb of a small town. Much of the housing in the vicinity of the school was terraced and the area had the atmosphere of a village community. The catchment area was difficult to assess, as it appeared to be neither affluent nor an area of high unemployment (see Appendix K for statistical evidence). As a primary school, Haydn catered for children of both Key Stage 1 and 2 and it was generally the case that children remained at the school for the entire primary period. The head teacher regarded the school as a single entity and did not organise staff in terms of infant and junior departments. All teachers took responsibility for a class for two years and then rotated with another so that all staff had experience of working with all age groups. This school policy also applied to areas of curriculum responsibility and this will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter with respect to PE. The school adhered to a philosophy of learning through practical experience and many lessons might be described as ‘hands-on’, i.e. children were rarely seen sitting at desks working quietly. The school had a very open, informal atmosphere. Resources and books were kept in cupboards along the walls of the corridors and children were constantly seen retrieving and returning items. Classroom doors were generally left open and many were separated from each other by folding screens so that classes could be combined if required.

Head Teacher

Mary Downey (MD) was a mature woman nearing retirement. She had been a teacher all her working life and head teacher at Haydn Primary school for fifteen years. Whilst my first impression of Mary was that she was rather stern I soon discovered that she was an extremely popular figure with both the children and staff. Mary taught different classes of children each week for various activities and these were regarded by the children as 'special events'. She felt that, whilst she was no longer able to take responsibility for a class of her own, it was important to maintain close contact with children. Some of our conversations were carried out during these 'special' lessons, often outside where the children spent time gardening or painting.

Mary admitted that she had found the events since the introduction of the first National Curriculum subject difficult. She had been a qualified teacher for more than thirty years and felt that her own philosophy was threatened by its imposition. She felt that the skills and knowledge she had accumulated through years of practical experience had not been acknowledged. She assumed that newly qualified teachers would not experience such problems because they would be accustomed to the "new ways of education". She became quite emotional when describing the impact of reform on her own work.

Those of us who have been around a long time, although we welcome the structure and the focus of it, we are also resentful of the turning of the whole thing on its head in order to gain a little ground... All we discovered was that we *were* doing it anyway really apart from one or two little things. Now that is fairly frustrating for someone like myself who worked hard to get that vision... Its someone else's vision and it isn't very visionary and my vision had to go for it and I resent that because my vision came from thirty years work and spending time with children and theirs hasn't come from that. (MD)

Although Mary might sound quite disillusioned from the comments above, she had not let this affect the morale of the school teaching staff. She commented that staff at

the school had told her that they felt “pressures here in terms of morale and everything else are not as intense as in some schools” because all teachers were aware of her general philosophy that “what we do we do well, and we only do what we can do”. This had been the pragmatic starting point for curriculum development at Haydn School and the National Curriculum had been of secondary concern.

Facilities

Facilities are described here in some detail because, in 1992, they became an issue of some concern to both the head teacher and the PE co-ordinator. The school building took the form of a large square with an open centre, within which the school halls and a gymnasium had been built. The remaining space created two courtyards which had been adopted as the childrens’ gardens and an environmental area. The gymnasium, I noted, was constructed out of corrugated metal and resembled a ‘Nissen hut’, but it was well equipped with the usual bars and apparatus. It was used for PE lessons and assemblies but it did not serve as a dining room. The PE Co-ordinator was insistent, that for hygiene and timetabling reasons, it was not to be used for eating. This ensured that PE and games lessons rarely needed to be cancelled due to the weather and the gymnasium was considered to be an important asset.

The school had a small area of slightly sloping land which was referred to as the playing field. The ground was rough due to the removal of buildings that once stood on the land. The field did not meet the County’s minimum requirements and the school was engaged in discussions that would upgrade its outdoor facilities. These discussions were “still in progress” when I left the school yet the matter was considered urgent as it had hindered the implementation of a games programme which the PE co-ordinator had been developing. The field was unsuitable for many games and outdoor PE activities often took place on the playgrounds (see Appendix M3 for a report on the observation of an outdoor games lesson). The two small playgrounds were also used by the younger children for their “freeplay”. This was a timetabled, daily ten minute session where children were allowed to “let off steam”.

The main storage for PE was an old shed in poor repair which stood in the corner of the playground. It contained a great variety of games equipment including balls, hockey equipment, short tennis, netball posts, basketball posts, mini road signs and traffic lights (for cycling proficiency). Other equipment was kept in the PE Co-ordinator's room and in cupboards around the school because of the risk of damp. The school had agreed to spend £4000 on building a new shed with an access door so that large apparatus could be stored safely but this had been delayed due to planning problems. The shed was to be brick for security reasons and, therefore, had been classified as a garage which entailed obtaining planning permission and relocating the building to the car park where, unfortunately, it would not be conveniently placed for PE lessons.

PE Curriculum

The children had an indoor PE lesson and an outdoor games lesson each week which amounted to at least two and a half-hours of activity. In addition the younger, infant, children had "freeplay" sessions. During this time the children were allowed to play with equipment of their choice, and although supervised by the teacher, were not formally taught. Some of the teachers referred to the equipment as "big toys" and these included bicycles, carts, scooters as well as skittles and skipping ropes, but this session was not regarded as the childrens' break.

Indoor lessons were generally reserved for dance, gymnastic activities or a combination of both. Often large equipment and apparatus was used and the school was well resourced in this respect. There was more of an emphasis on gymnastics skills for the younger year groups and the PE Co-ordinator, Colin White (CW), had a great deal of influence in the way in which the activity was taught. In contrast to the informal atmosphere of the school, there was an emphasis in these lessons on discipline and behaviour. Lessons in the gymnasium were conducted (in my opinion) seriously and in silence (see Appendix M for observations of two gymnastic lessons, one taken by Colin and the other by a class teacher). He commented that all year

groups participated in gymnastics and few concessions were made for the younger children

Four and five year olds are capable of moving all but the heaviest equipment themselves so they need to learn how to get the stuff out safely and that's the big crunch word in gymnastics – safety – so it is establishing rules for living within the gymnasium. For example, what is apparatus, what is not apparatus; what you go on, what you don't go on; what stop means, what silence means; how to work safely, co-operatively with others. (CW)

Games were held outside once a week. Generally smaller versions of competitive games were taught but to a skills-based approach or using adapted equipment suitable for children. Children at infant level would be introduced to core skills that underpin most sports such as running, jumping, catching and throwing. They would experience a variety of equipment and were encouraged to practice in pairs and then in increasingly larger groups until they were able to play a more competitive game in the junior years. Colin referred to this “drills and skills”. He also felt that social skills were important when teaching competitive games and hoped that by introducing the issues of competition in a progressive way, children would learn to lose gracefully as well as win. He stated that

Certain core skills must be learned and then the rest of it is getting a good grounding such that in later years...they are introduced to more formal sport. In juniors they then get into the mini versions of the sport. As they go through the school they should be learning the rules of the games, refereeing or umpiring themselves. (CW)

The only sport that was played at Haydn as a full size game was netball (a game for only seven players). Colin felt very strongly that football (he referred to it as soccer) was a sport that should not be played to eleven-a-side in primary schools and it was not part of the PE curriculum at Haydn. The school did, however, provide an extra-

curricular programme of activities which included team sports and competitions were arranged with other primary schools in the local area. Haydn also used a local sports centre specifically for competitive games sessions but this was not considered to be part of in-curricular PE.

All children had a course of swimming lessons at a local pool at some point during the year but the timing of this varied each year due to the financial and organisational difficulties of taking children off-site. Although swimming was not compulsory at Key Stage 1 in the National Curriculum, the head teacher had decided that it was an important aspect of the education of the child and it was, therefore, included in the curriculum at both Key Stages. On a practical note, the comment was made that some children who were not able to swim needed more time to learn and starting at the infant level ensured that all children were able to acquire this important skill.

Development of the PE Curriculum

Development of the curriculum had been ongoing for a number of years. Successive PE Co-ordinators and, particularly, Colin had been looking at PE and gradually introducing changes that were felt to be of benefit to the children. Much recent attention had been focused on the issues of resourcing and providing variety in activities. The school did not have an official policy for PE, at least not one that was written down, but from my observations of lessons it was clear that teachers had adopted a similar style and response to the curriculum that was possibly due to the influence of the PE co-ordinator.

The games programme at the school was one that Colin had brought with him from his last school and he admitted that it was ten years old, though it had been adapted more recently to fit in with current practice (see Appendix N). It was in place for the autumn and spring terms but he had not yet had time to examine the summer activities as he felt that the teachers needed some time to become accustomed to the changes that he

had already introduced into the PE curriculum. He felt that change should be gradual and that there were other areas that needed to be addressed first. It was quite an ambitious programme, considering the size and condition of the outdoor facilities. The programme was, at the time, available to the junior children (Key Stage 2), progressive through Years 3 to 6, and based on the acquisition of ball skills and development of small group games. Much of the programme was based on a book called “Mini Sport” by Mike Sleaf which gave a basic guide to each game and demonstrated how games could be adapted to allow younger children to participate (e.g. bean bag shot putt, rounders-style relay races) The school had purchased several copies of the book as a staff resource.

Gymnastic lessons were based partly on a document “7 – 11 Gymnastics” by Carroll and Garner, an edition dating from 1984, but this was an area in which Colin, as a gymnastics specialist, was able to share his expertise and he had become regarded as a resource himself. The role of the PE co-ordinator will be discussed in more detail later.

The Head teacher commented that the school's attitude towards PE had changed somewhat in recent years due to outside influences and childrens' awareness of physical activity. She claimed that some children were very aware of physical fitness and participated in various activities outside of school.

The whole profile of leisure and its value to life and quality of life...I'm sure that fitness comes into it, one ought to look at the aspects that are to do with that and those that are to do with health and leisure...I think often there's a bit of differentiation here...some children have a lot of PE in their leisure pursuits anyway. (Head teacher)

Mary explained that the school was aware that children come from different backgrounds and they were concerned as a school to ensure that all children received a rounded education. This was part of the philosophy behind PE as much

as any other aspect of the curriculum. She talked about the issue of differentiation in PE lessons.

I think in planning and watching children you've certainly got to know an awful lot about what they do, at home and here, which is why we profile them. Our profile books contain work, information about what they do at home as well as school. Its crazy starting at the beginning on an activity when you find that they've got a gold for it at home! That sort of scenario wouldn't happen here. I hope we've tuned into where they are and I hope we look into the various aspects of PE and modify them according to the children. (MD)

Mary clearly regarded physical activities as important in the education of the whole child and this was reflected in the PE provision at Haydn.

National Curriculum for PE

In contrast to the imposition of the National Curriculum generally, the Head teacher's reaction to the NCPE was positive. She felt that it was very supportive and could be reconciled with the provision already in place at the school. She felt that it helped to provide a focus but that in general terms little change would be needed.

I wouldn't say vast changes but what one always needs is to keep reminding, to keep discussing and to keep listening to children and watching them...the children are very keen and I would say that the staff are keen too...put that together and I think that we have got the makings of it going well...the interest is there. (MD)

Mary emphasised that quality as well as quantity in PE provision was an important issue and she believed that the National Curriculum, partly because of the manner in which it had been implemented and the demands it made on different subject areas, had helped teachers to value their PE time more. She felt that the children and teachers appreciated the opportunity to take part in physical activities during the school day.

I'm not suggesting that, before National Curriculum, classes wasted time but sometimes the activities could've been a bit 'low key' whereas now there's always a quality thing to fit into it ...so I would say, in a sense, that its sharpened our thinking. Its why teachers are so worn out I think! They were tired before but this is really exhausting! (MD)

The PE Co-ordinator's initial reaction to the National Curriculum was that "the Programmes of Study, the general content...are good". He expressed doubt about the feasibility of swimming in some schools because of the financial commitment and felt that the responsibility might be "side-stepped" at infant level and passed on to the junior schools. In terms of the Areas of Activity he felt that

...the general thrust I actually agree with because I feel that the educational gymnastics is, by and large, not done badly in schools. There are plenty of schemes around that can be followed by a basic classroom teacher with some sort of consultant in the school. There are better materials for working out games schemes, but I think games generally is not done well in schools and although the National Curriculum talks about development, it doesn't actually give a great deal in the way of practical support for classroom teachers who are coping with a thousand and one other documents. (CW)

Colin felt that there would not be any problems at Haydn as the current provision reflected much of the aims and objectives of the NCPE. He did acknowledge, however, that dance was an area not generally taught well in the primary school. He commented

The dance element I am very pleased to see. I feel that perhaps a greater link between music/drama would help. I'm pleased that it stresses free dance and exploratory dance in the context of movement to music rather than just doing country dancing. (CW)

The games programme at Haydn, although developed before the Final Orders were received, would be in place by 1993, though this was partly dependent on the

proposed upgrading of outdoor facilities.

The Role of the PE Co-ordinator - 1992

During my early visits to the school the PE Co-ordinator was Colin White. Colin was an energetic and enthusiastic man. Tall and thin with unruly ginger hair, he reminded me of a cartoon character in his mannerisms and informal, joking style with the children in his class. He taught a class of four and five year olds and he clearly had an affectionate rapport with them. Colin was a highly qualified teacher in his forties. He had a degree in Physical Education and Sports Science and had trained to teach at secondary school level. His degree had also included an additional year in which he studied Curriculum Development. In 1991 he spent the year as acting Head teacher in the absence of the Head teacher. He was, therefore, familiar with curriculum and management issues such as LMS. He commented that, although he enjoyed the responsibility during this time, he was pleased to be back in his “real” job as class teacher. Colin was also specialist-trained in gymnastics and had been involved in coaching to national level with children, aged from three years old to adults.

Colin regarded his role as one of transference of knowledge and skills and of knowing the strengths and limitations of his staff. He often organised practical training sessions after school where teachers could have “hands-on” experience in issues that were of concern to them. He summarised his role as

...basically being aware of what the skills within the school are and then where the staff identify there being a problem, or where I have identified there being a problem, of using the knowledge and the skills within the school. (CW)

He also arranged for staff to be free from lessons to work alongside other teachers in their PE lessons to help share ideas. Colin had developed his own library and the school had added additional copies of books that he felt were particularly relevant. They were kept in a filing cabinet in his classroom and staff were free borrow them

for use in their lessons.

Although specialist-trained, Colin did not feel that this was important in the primary school. He felt that an interest in sport and physical activity was more significant in defining the opportunities available to children than a formal academic qualification. Many of the staff at Haydn had demonstrated their interest by studying for various awards in their own time. The school had a staff of sixteen teachers and of these, fourteen held coaching qualifications in sporting activities such as football and swimming. Colin did acknowledge, however, that “somebody who is a good player is not necessarily a good coach or a good teacher, very often the opposite is true” but he felt that a combination of general primary training and outside sporting interests had been successful.

Colin admitted that he had not looked at the National Curriculum in any great depth and it was not something that worried him.

I trust to my own experience and expertise in Physical Education and hope what we're doing isn't too radically wrong and if it is, at the moment, tough! (CW)

Towards the end of my fieldwork visits in 1992 I asked Colin if he would like to comment on the future of PE at Haydn School. I wondered what changes might occur over the next year as National Curriculum for PE had since come 'on-line'. He felt that there would be little change (“in a year's time? Nothing!”) and that teachers would be more concerned with the areas of the curriculum that were statutorily assessed. He said of PE that...

All these other areas take a back seat whatever the Government says about that... You can only get so much done within a certain period of time. If English, maths and science – the Core subjects - are being tested by SATs at certain levels, until they are sorted the other areas aren't going to get a look in. (CW)

Colin had a similar philosophy to Mary. He was extremely critical of the way that educational reform had been imposed and doubted its value at the primary level. Beyond this view, however, he was quietly confident of his own philosophy and acknowledged the limitations within which teachers worked. He might be considered to have been a little 'laid back' in his attitude but this was not reflected in his commitment to the school and the children. I wondered if this confidence was a product of experience (both Colin and Mary were mature teachers), or an indication of his specialist training. Similar comments, however, were made by another (younger) teacher who stated that "I think you have to be philosophical and say 'this is the time I've got, I've just got to do as much as I can'". I came to the conclusion that it was the 'school philosophy' to react calmly to reform. During my later visits I had cause to re-think the comment made above.

The Role of the PE co-ordinator - 1993

Haydn had an unusual system of teacher rotation and in 1993 Colin passed on the role of PE Co-ordinator to another member of staff. Whilst Colin appeared to be quite blasé about his approach to the PE curriculum and confident that he had developed a curriculum that was educationally sound without any great reference to the National Curriculum, this contrasted somewhat to comments made by his successor, Ben Hardy (BH). Ben was considerably younger than Colin, having qualified four years previously. As a non-specialist, he lacked the knowledge and skills of his colleague and he welcomed the National Curriculum documentation as a useful set of guidelines. Ben discussed the reasoning behind teacher rotation at Haydn and explained that this year there had been a minor change.

Previously we've swapped every year so that we've had a different aspect to look at each time. We've actually capped our posts this year because things are ongoing. (BH)

The philosophy behind the system of transferring roles each year was to maintain a highly skilled staff, anyone of whom could take responsibility of different curriculum

areas if necessary. This might be important in the primary school where staff levels are generally low, and in smaller schools where there could be fewer teachers than subject areas. Ben, however, welcomed the opportunity to stay in his post for more than the designated year as he felt that “it is important for continuity, whichever area of the curriculum you happen to be working in”.

Now most of us in our roles as co-ordinator, for whatever subject, have actually picked up on things that need to be done, particularly for OFSTED. We haven't been OFSTEDed yet but no doubt we will, so where people have actually started a job, they've now got the opportunity to follow it through. (BH)

Ben expressed a concern that had not been raised the previous year at this school, or in any of the other case studies schools. PE, as with other Foundation subjects, had not been aligned to statutory testing in the form of SATs. The National Curriculum recommended that pupils' achievement should be assessed in terms of the End of Key Stage Statements (DES, 1991, p.41). Any assessment of the subject was carried out informally by class teachers and often consisted of a brief comment on a yearly report to parents. Whilst the decision to allow teachers to remain in post for longer than a year was undoubtedly prompted by inspection of other curriculum areas, PE, however, was not exempt from the auspices of inspection post-ERA. In 1992 OFSTED¹ (the Office for Standards in Education) introduced plans to inspect all schools in England and Wales on a regular basis, i.e. every four years. As an outsider it appeared that the perceived 'laissez faire' atmosphere of the school had been overshadowed somewhat by the threat of inspection. This change in atmosphere had not affected the PE curriculum per se, the provision in 1993 was much the same as it had been in 1992, but the prospect of inspection created a climate in which teachers felt that their working practices were under greater scrutiny.

Unlike, Colin, Ben was not trained in PE and claimed to have “no qualifications at all”. He felt that this was common in many areas and stated that

I think if you spoke to other members of staff who are actually appointed to various posts you will find that they haven't got any specific qualifications either. (BH)

I asked Ben what he had inherited from Colin and how he had been able to develop his role since assuming responsibility. His responses were quite personal. He felt that the PE curriculum over the last two years had been given more direction and purpose but that in reality the changes had been more theoretical than practical in terms of how lessons were actually taught. He implied that real change had been minimal. He felt that the provision before the National Curriculum documents were received in the school had been good, therefore, dramatic changes were unlikely. Ben admitted, however, that in his opinion there had previously been an emphasis on particular aspects of physical activity, i.e. gymnastics. He commented that

...although Colin has got PE qualifications and he certainly knew what he was talking about as far as PE was concerned, particularly gym because that really is his thing...as far as he was concerned there was nothing in the school...there wasn't a scheme that the whole school followed. (BH)

Ben explained that some progress had been made in this direction and a more coherent scheme for games had been developed during the year.

Colin did try to lay some foundations for that. He actually produced an overview of the school and for each term he highlighted the sort of sports that that he thought that year groups should be highlighting. So, maybe Year 3 autumn term you might have a half term of football skills, a half term of basketball skills – most of it would be skills-based, not actually going into a game but skills towards playing the game. (BH)

In terms of his own contribution to the role of co-ordinator, Ben had met with the local PE Advisor several times, borrowed books from him and planned an additional games scheme for the Summer term which had yet to be introduced to the children (I

met with Ben in the autumn term). The aim of the scheme was that all teachers in the school would teach the same activities. Ben stated that

...we will hopefully follow that through so that the whole school is actually using the scheme and progressing towards the same targets. (BH)

Ben was quite concerned about the issue of progression and felt that it would be one of his tasks to monitor the implementation of the new PE scheme throughout the school. He felt that

...if we decide that “yes, we are going to use that”, then I’ve got to go and make sure that it is being carried out and that there is commitment to it, because if there’s not then obviously this is one of the things that inspectors – if they come to the school - that’s the first thing that they are going to look at. “is the progression there? Are people actually following the same scheme as everybody else?” (BH)

Ben felt that in this respect the NCPE was a positive initiative and that it was something that was developing alongside his own teaching experience. He did not feel, as Colin and Mary did about the National Curriculum in general terms, that the imposition of reform threatened his educational values and stated that the

National Curriculum really has been in line since I became PE Co-ordinator. So, I think as far as looking for a scheme of work, or looking for guidelines, then obviously not being a PE expert, it is great to look in the folder and see what exactly is being expected rather than just trying to make it up as I go along. I think before we were probably diving in willy nilly so maybe the children were getting some good experiences but they may not have been getting all the experiences that they could? (BH)

Other teachers also welcomed the National Curriculum for PE and the structure that it gave to the subject . The following comments, made by different class teachers,

also revealed that some teachers felt that it could also be quite supportive of their own teaching practices.

I feel quite happy about it...When you actually look at them (*Programmes of Study*), you feel you are doing the right thing, it does become a confidence builder in the end, because you look at it and think "oh yes, If I'm doing that then I'm actually fulfilling that target" (CT4)

I felt that when I started it was all very well having ideas for specific lessons...you could think of things in their own vacuum, but to think of something which you could then progress to from that particular skill? (CT5)

Its not the knowledge, its the skill that you are actually teaching the children and how to build on those skills, which are probably the hardest things to do and I think that's why the National Curriculum helps in that way because you can actually see the progression. (CT6)

One of these teachers raised an important issue. She commented that the Non Statutory Guidance (NSG) provided with the National Curriculum Orders was a significant help in the practical process of implementing the Programmes of Study. In her opinion, the NSG was more important than the statutory elements. She felt that, at primary level, issues such as progression, planning, assessment and cross-curricular matters should be the starting point for the PE curriculum and that, for her, the specified Areas of Activity merely outlined the prescribed content of lessons. This 'individual' interpretation of the National curriculum for PE is an important issue which will be discussed in more detail in the analysis chapter.

Status of PE

All teachers changed their clothing for PE and on my visits I would often see staff in tracksuits and exercise clothing as they walked about the school and sat in the staff room. Children also changed for PE and again, this was often unusual, particularly at the infant level where children would generally participate in their underwear. I noted

this as an indication that the health and hygiene aspects of physical activity were taken seriously by the school. The generous time allocated to PE is another indication of its place in the curriculum. Mary, the head teacher, felt that PE had always been a high status subject in the school and this had not been something that she herself had to promote. She claimed that PE had never been “something that they just did. They did think about it, though it wasn’t anything like it is now. Its grown a lot”.

It was also important that PE should be “fun” and “enjoyable” and that exercise should be regarded as a part of the daily lives of young children. This was the philosophy behind the “freeplay” sessions mentioned earlier. Ben, however, had commented that this was something that he was concerned might become more of a luxury as timetabling problems increased, particularly as the County PE Advisor had commented on the lack of educational value. He mused

Maybe once a week you could use the time like that for the children because they love it, they obviously get a lot out of it and there’s a lot of imagination that comes into that as well, so its not something that’s completely defunct. The PE inspector was aghast when I told him we had time! (BH)

Whilst Mary believed that PE made an important contribution to the curriculum, she felt that parents often had other priorities. She expressed concern that PE could become neglected by parents as the NCPE had been introduced alongside so many other measures. She stated

If you ask what children come to school for they will mostly say their maths, their English – literacy, numeracy, that sort of thing – I suppose, rightly so but I think we actually believe here that none of that really goes well if the children are not satisfied physically. You get a lot more out of them in the classroom if you’ve built up a good relationship through that...then you get their spirit back. (MD)

The head teacher regarded PE as part of an holistic approach to the education of the whole child, an inherent understanding that young children need to develop skills in many different aspects of their lives and this includes physical awareness as much as mental ability.

Certainly, one of our beliefs – a thing I often say to staff – is don't forget that every child must be allowed to "walk its few steps of genius" because even your lowest ability child can walk somewhere...and if you are honest about it, for a lot of children this age its the PE. (MD)

Physical activity was regarded as very important at the school for educational reasons and Mary's philosophy reflects her concern for the needs of children. She feels that children have a basic entitlement to skills and knowledge and that this applies to PE as much as any other subject.

Parent Power

Haydn school did not have a problem with Open Enrolment. Applications from outside of its catchment area, as well as transfers from other schools, had increased during the years that I visited the school. Mary commented that it was becoming a problem to accommodate all the new pupils and she would have to consider forming classes of more than thirty pupils and utilising more non-teaching assistants. Classrooms in the school had been planned with moveable partitions so additional space for classrooms could be created if necessary. I discussed the issue of marketing the school. Mary stated

My last deputy always said I underdid this. It was one of his criticisms...If I had to, if I was desperate, I would go down with my sandwich board. I think you do market but you do it through getting a good deal for the children...parents notice that and you don't have to write it in a newspaper. (MD)

She did concede, however, that changes had been made to the school brochure and that the tone had changed. PE had a higher profile than in previous years.

I suppose that's partly due to National Curriculum but its also the little bit of marketing that you do want to tell parents that it is a broad and balanced curriculum, that its not just for the "academic" children, there are lots of nice things going on.
(MD)

Mary felt that many parents were more aware of educational issues post-ERA. She commented that to some extent they had been trained by the media. They often came to the school with a checklist² and they all asked similar questions, "they ask about competition and whether teachers do after-school clubs because that means they're keen teachers, that sort of thing". None of this, however, had affected the PE provision at the school.

Finance and LMS

The Head teacher claimed that she had not volunteered to be one of the 'Phase 1' schools in the early stages of LMS. She had been "invited" to participate LMS and accepted "without hesitation" because she felt that if such a system was inevitable it would be "better to go in first, I'm sure". She felt that the pilot schools were given much more help and guidance in the early stages, partly because there were so few of them, and she envisaged that it would have been more difficult for the other schools who entered the scheme later.

There's a lot of good things about Phase 1 (LMS) if you're brave enough to do it. You stand to fall on your face if it goes wrong. If it had been a choice of "do you want to do it?" then I think I would have thought long and hard, but it was a case of "you are going to do it, do you think you could do it first as a pilot?" I mean, I'll have a go, anytime! (MD)

The school benefited immediately by being given a computer system and an on-line link to COUNTYNET³, a direct ordering service to the LEA, which helped to save time

and reduce paperwork. She claimed that she had not been aware of the possible impact that financial management would have on the school when she joined the scheme but she believed that it would help to “highlight the anomalies in the whole primary education system with regard to resources”. She felt that LMS had been advantageous and that “we’re reaping the benefits of that in primary”. She did regret, however, that whilst LMS had enabled her to resource better, it had also forced her to look at the management structure of the school and reassess her own philosophy.

I had to develop towards a collegiate management of resources...I’m not basically that kind of person...One led into that where people were having a say to where money went and what their priorities were and where the gaps were. (MD)

In response to LMS, the school began to meet as a whole staff to discuss their resource needs. Teachers raised bids for financial support and all staff discussed and agreed on their priorities. For Haydn, LMS had not brought financial wealth but formula funding meant that being a larger primary school was an advantage. However, Mary stressed that the existing fabric of the school was a disadvantage. The school was old and some of the facilities were in need of attention, particularly the buildings and outdoor provision. The catchment area of the school was such that parents might not be able to provide additional finance for school projects. These factors dictated that funds had to be distributed carefully and Mary commented that

Sometimes then it means that we’re telling someone they can’t have something, or it goes on to our “wish list”...we present that to governors too so if they can find any way of coming up with the cash? It’d be things that we would like if all things were equal and we had some more money, but staff have to make very difficult decisions. (MD)

In terms of financial provision for PE, the school’s physical structures might be described as poor. However, Mary had a great deal of respect for the work that Colin had done during his time as PE co-ordinator. She stated “I think its his persuasive

powers as much as anything. He's done a very good deal for PE, but I suppose that also I figure in that myself in that I firmly believe in, as he does, looking after things". She felt that the staff were very supportive of PE and that it was well-resourced.

She added

Also I think the staff would go crazy at the thought of not buying something each year for PE, both to keep up the standard of resources but also to inspire children...because you need a new slant don't you? They are in the school a long time and if they're never seeing anything new around then we are going to lose them. (MD)

Resources therefore were regarded as important in the continuing development of PE provision at Haydn.

Conclusion

The head teacher and the PE co-ordinator at Haydn have a very pragmatic approach to the approach to the National Curriculum. Both Mary and Colin are calm, experienced practitioners and they work well together. They seem to share a similar educational philosophy and attitude towards change. They are well aware of their capabilities and realistic about what they can achieve within their resources. There is a great deal of liaison between staff throughout the school and an atmosphere of openness that extends to the children as well as the teachers. Colin's quiet yet confident influence on the PE provision is evident in the manner in which teachers conduct their lessons. Yet, he does not consider himself to be in 'control' of the curriculum. Haydn's system of rotating teachers' curriculum responsibilities ensures that all members of staff become involved in all areas of the curriculum and, although unusual, it appears to have been successful.

PE is a high status subject regarded as contributing to the whole child. The PE curriculum was in the process of re-development during my visits but this had not been in direct response to the National Curriculum. Previously there had been an

emphasis on gymnastics but this was gradually being addressed with the introduction of a new games programme. This was being introduced gradually with support from the whole staff. There were no 'gimmicks' and no rapid innovation. Change was an evolving response to the needs of the children and the school.

The teachers, and children, that I met whilst collecting data contributed to the very pleasant atmosphere that I felt pervaded throughout the school. The children attending Haydn were part of a stimulating learning environment. The younger children, although only four or five years old, were treated with a 'respect' that I have not seen at other primary schools and this was evident in the PE lessons.

Notes

1. The Schools Act (1992) abolished Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) which had previously been responsible for school inspections and established the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).
2. For example, *How to get the best from Britain's schools*, Sunday Times Magazine, February 9, 1992.
3. The name of this service has been changed in order to retain the anonymity of the LEA in this study.

Chapter 8
Case Study 3
Sycamore First School

Introduction

I made six visits to Sycamore First School¹ between 1992 and 1993. I interviewed the head teacher (though her involvement in this study was minimal) and spent a great deal of time with the PE co-ordinator, often helping in her in the classroom whilst data gathering. I observed PE lessons taken by all teachers at the school and I attended the school's annual sports day in 1993.

First Impressions

Sycamore School, as its name suggests, is found in an area which was once woodland until developed into a housing estate approximately fifteen years ago. The area has a mixture of housing types – council houses, 'starter' homes, as well as larger houses for young families etc. There is still a little evidence of the wooded area, the school grounds, for example, have been landscaped around the existing trees which form its boundary. It looks very attractive from the outside. The school itself is a low modern building of red brick with brown tinted windows. I can see extensive playgrounds all around the outside of the buildings. Behind the school is an additional raised tarmac area that looks a little too rough to be a playground (*I find out later that it was once used for several portacabins that were used as classrooms*). I discover the playing field by walking along the footpath that borders the school at the rear. It is a fairly large grassed area surrounded by trees and at the moment it is marked out with a running track. On passing through the entrance gate there is a notice reading "Section 28 of the Education Reform Act 1988 – application for reduction in standard number". (Initial visit report 10/06/92)

School Brochure

Three 'brochures' were given to parents of new pupils. One was for the children to fill in their own details and return to the teacher, another was intended for the parents and children to read together (Appendix O). The 'main' brochure, however, was a

comprehensive document, which set out the school's general aims, its educational aims and an outline of the curriculum. The teaching of PE was not mentioned specifically in the document, but the following was noted

In a first school, class and timetable structures do not lend themselves to 'subject teaching' as thought of at later stages in a child's education. Possibly the only subject which can be regarded in isolation is Physical Education. The remainder are usually inter-linked and generally taught within a topic decided by teachers in a year group.

The Core subjects and Foundation subjects were listed accompanied by the comment that

...the Core subjects must be given priority time and they, and the Foundation subjects are linked to Attainment Targets published by the Government. In addition, aspects of the curriculum are served by Policy statements which are drawn up in joint and ongoing consultation and are used by the teachers to provide coherence and continuity of education throughout the school.

I noted, prior to my initial visit, that this was a rather formal description of a curriculum that suggested perhaps that PE was not regarded as a high status subject in the school.

Organisation of the School

Sycamore First School was built in 1978 and was attended by children aged four to eight years, thus covering the reception years (outside of the National Curriculum), Key Stage 1 and the first year of Key Stage 2. Children generally transferred later to Sycamore Middle School, which was adjacent to the site, though some attended another middle school a little farther away. The school was located in a 'green' suburb of a large urban area and had been built specifically to serve the residents of a large housing development. The building was designed to be 'open plan' and was

divided into four sections, each a separate wing with a code name representing different year groups and containing three classroom areas, each grouped around a central 'activity area'. In 1992 the school had a roll of 265 pupils. This was the same as that of 1991 but the roll had been steadily decreasing over previous years. The school, however, remained one of the larger first schools in the area. The head teacher presumed that the falling roll was simply a natural consequence of the housing estate which formed the school's catchment area. Many families had moved to the estate at the same time that the school opened and now those children had grown up and left. In addition there was another first school in the area which children could attend. The head teacher commented that, when the school was at its largest, it had been difficult to accommodate all the children comfortably, particularly as the open-plan design could cause problems that would not occur in a conventional school. At one time there had been a number of portakabin which formed temporary classrooms but these had been removed and the playground restored. Partly because of this, she had decided to apply for a reduction in standard number as soon as the roll showed a significant decrease so that she would not have to admit to the maximum capacity in the future.

Head Teacher

The head teacher, Mrs. Catherine Sealey (CS), was not available to give me a great deal of attention whilst I was at the school. I was able to tape record a short interview on one occasion but other meetings with her were coincidental, e.g. during breaks in the staff room. She gave me the impression that she did not welcome my presence in the school and some of her responses seemed a little offhand and lacking in detail. Initially I formed the opinion that her interest in PE was minimal but subsequent observations, and meetings with the PE Co-ordinator, revealed that this was not the case. However, Mrs. Sealey directed me towards the PE Co-ordinator whenever I asked any specific questions about PE and claimed that she would know more about the subject. I asked her how she viewed her role as head teacher with regard to PE and she responded

Mine personally? I don't! I've got a very good consultant and I expect her to do it. I am very much a delegator. The staff like it here because they like the responsibility and they like that I give it to them and then I leave them to it. All I do is make sure first that they are capable and they are fit to have it and then once they've got it they wouldn't like me to tell them how to do it! I don't have anything to do with the teaching of PE – I know what happens, because I must, but I don't do anything untoward. (CS)

I asked Mrs. Sealey if she ever took time to watch the teachers taking their PE lessons. She admitted that she would not deliberately make time, unless there were Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) at the school, or students on teaching practice. She claimed, however, that she generally saw what was going on during the course of a normal working day.

I'm very seldom in this room. I'm always about the school and you see a lot just walking about. I go through all the people's PE lessons because I walk through the hall and I might stop and watch this or watch that. (CS)

Mrs. Sealey had been head teacher since the opening of Sycamore School. She had witnessed many staff changes, some of which had affected the PE provision directly. Originally the school had two specialist teachers qualified in PE and they were regarded as a great asset. The school had once been used by the County PE advisors as an exemplar school for the teaching of PE and training videos had been filmed using these specialist teachers and other staff. However, both had since gained promotion and left the school staff. A 'consultant' had been employed after their departure but, as the school became smaller, she too was lost. Mrs. Sealey expressed her 'frustration' at this gradual erosion of expertise.

Sycamore received a number of students on teaching practice placements each year and Mrs. Sealey was quite critical of the training that students received as part of their PGCE course. She mentioned that tutors at the teacher training institution²,

from which most of the students came, could be considered very knowledgeable in their own particular area, but they tended to concentrate on the older years within the primary sector. She felt that students working at the school in the past had tended to lack adequate gymnastic skills. She also claimed that a NQT currently teaching in the school lacked confidence generally in her PE lessons.

We see that they are less and less skilled in actually teaching PE, I would say...I still think those of us who trained before the mid-sixties, I think we still have probably better practical training for the job we do. I have had some absolutely fantastic students...their intellectual levels are very high, some of them, and their planning and their organisation are excellent. I can't fault that, I just think that in some areas they are less well trained than we were and I think PE is one of them. (CS)

Lessons were held daily at Sycamore and Mrs. Sealey felt that it was important with young children to keep their interest in physical activity. She felt that they could be very "street-wise" and leisure-orientated and that this could not always be accommodated in the PE lessons. Sometimes, for pupils who attend outside clubs, she felt that the PE lessons could be "too basic" but she felt that the emphasis in PE at infant age should be educational and lessons should cater for all abilities. Mrs. Sealey felt that children got "lots of messages from the PE lesson" and she mentioned discipline as an important aspect intrinsic to physical activities, particularly in gymnastics where issues of safety were always a concern.

I mean disciplinary wise, that sort of thing we are very strict on – but they know why, they know its because its a potentially dangerous situation. They know they can't talk during PE. We don't think children today get nearly enough...structured exercise. (CS)

Mrs. Sealey also commented that daily PE lessons enabled the teachers to watch the children closely, commenting that "we see them every day stripped and that's very important". She felt that this enabled teachers to covertly observe any changes in a child's general health that might reflect problems in their home life.

Mrs. Sealey's comments on the National Curriculum for PE were brief. She stated that

I just think its just a fair enough document. Its what we do here really. There was nothing in it that surprised me or horrified me or upset me. (CS)

She was confident that the current provision at the school adequately covered the statutory requirements of the NCPE.

PE, we haven't had to change in any way because we did it every day before and some of the lessons – I mean we do plan our PE very carefully and very seriously – some of the lessons, as you know are floorwork, some of the lessons are apparatus...use large fixed apparatus, some are floor work, some are outside games, things like that and some are dancing. Its all covered. (CS)

She felt that the document itself was very user-friendly but did, however, comment that the situation might be different in a school where there were a lot of younger staff who might feel less confident about teaching PE. Mrs. Sealey felt that, in terms of the implementation of the National Curriculum to date, there had not been many difficulties.

We don't have a problem here because we do the integrated day and everything is covered but nobody tries to do the ten subjects all the time. They might have an intensive period of History or Geography according to the topic they are covering at the time, then that probably suffices for the term – the children have done what's legally required of them. We could never do all of it every day, or even every week. (CS)

PE, however, is regarded by the head teacher as a separate subject to the rest of the curriculum and is not part of the integrated approach mentioned above. This issue is discussed in more detail in a later section.

Facilities

The school, although a modern design, had only a small hall which was used for assemblies, school lunches and PE lessons. It contained wall bars and apparatus similar to those that I now expected to see in primary schools, and there were benches and mats piled up in one corner of the hall. This generally meant that outdoor PE lessons had to be cancelled in poor weather as the hall was in constant use. There were extensive playgrounds around the school which had been freshly marked out with circles, mini-pitches and instructions for the children to follow via a trail of paws painted with instructions - 'stop', 'run', and so forth. The head teacher felt that it was important for the children to have an attractive playground as they spent a lot of time outside. The school generally had attempted to encourage an environment that teachers referred to as 'outdooriness' and which reflected the landscape in which it was located. For example, there were outside, as well as inside, toilets so that children did not have to leave the playground during their breaks, and there was scope for orienteering and nature walks around the school grounds.

The grassed playing area that I had observed at the rear of the school on my initial visit was the responsibility of the middle school and though Sycamore was allowed to use it, they had to negotiate for timetable space. Generally in winter, when it was marked out with football pitches, there were fewer difficulties and the schools could use different parts of the field but in summer, when used for athletics, it was considered too dangerous for the schools to have PE lessons at the same time.

PE Curriculum

The children at Sycamore had daily PE lessons lasting half an hour. This generally consisted of two sessions in the hall using large apparatus, two sessions in the hall designated as "floorwork" and one session of "music and movement" or country dancing. Outdoor "games" lessons (see Appendix Q1) tended to be held on the playground or field only in the summer, and the children might have two sessions per

week depending on the weather (see Appendix O1 for copy of PE timetable).

Swimming was not part of the PE curriculum at Sycamore. This was left to the middle school which included it in their intensive 'two week programme' in which all non-swimmers received intensive lessons. When the first school was designed there had been provision for a small outdoor pool but it was decided that the expense of maintenance outweighed the convenience of having a pool on-site.

PE Co-ordinator

In 1992, the PE co-ordinator was Lorna (LC), a woman in her late forties who taught reception class and year 1. I noted in my diary that 'Mrs. Connor is a large lady, the last person that I would expect to be in charge of PE'. First impressions in this case, however, were a little misleading as she gradually revealed a firm commitment to the value of PE in the education of young children. She had been a teacher at the school since its opening but had left to look after her own children in 1986. She returned after a break of four years and at this time she was given the role of PE co-ordinator. In her absence, the staff had changed and many of the newer teachers regarded her as a newcomer rather than an experienced teacher. This had led to problems in her work which will be discussed in more detail below. Lorna had trained as a generalist class teacher but the head teacher felt that her confidence and enthusiasm was sufficient for her to be able to take on the role of co-ordinator. She had been teaching at the school at the same time as the two PE specialists mentioned above and had, therefore, been handed down the policy that they had developed.

The school brochure stated that the Curriculum generally took a cross-curricular approach but that PE was a subject that could be regarded in isolation. This is something that Lorna strongly disagreed with and she attempted to carry through topics into her PE lessons if this was appropriate. She felt that other teachers at the school did not make the same effort as she herself did, and tended to concentrate solely on the acquisition of skills and educational gymnastics. In dance, teachers

generally played BBC tapes, but Lorna had a more creative approach, linking her lessons to themes and current topics wherever possible. On occasions where she had taken another teacher's class she often found that the children had difficulty in answering more "open" tasks because they had not been encouraged to be creative in their PE lessons. Although no longer a keen participant in physical activity herself, Lorna felt that it was important for young children to develop a healthy lifestyle. She constantly monitored her class and changed her approach or lesson content if she felt this to be necessary. She kept her own diary and recorded what she did with her children after each lesson to ensure that there would be continuity.

School PE Policy

In their day-to-day teaching of PE, teachers at Sycamore tended to use the school PE policy which was developed several years previously in conjunction with the County PE advisor. The school policy (see Appendix O2 for extract) was extremely detailed and divided into sections covering issues such as safety, dress, aims, progression and planning. It was a practical document which provided a number of sample lessons for teachers to follow but the emphasis was firmly on gymnastics and 'movement' in preference to other Areas of Activity. Lorna intended to take this document and examine it together with the National Curriculum, filling any gaps as necessary. However, she regarded the school policy as rather dated (indeed, the copy I was allowed to keep was yellowed as if by age!) and tended very much to teach to her own lesson plans. Lorna explained her approach to PE.

In gymnastic lessons she tended to look at different pieces of equipment and explore ways of travelling around, over or off them, and so forth. She considered that this helped children to develop their spatial and body awareness. Safety was an important element that children learned before they were gradually introduced to larger and more difficult apparatus. Wall bars, for example, and ropes, were not used by the youngest children. In her own lessons she tended not to use group work as she found it inappropriate to the age and ability of her class, but she acknowledged

that with the older children, and with larger classes, this was often the only way that lessons could be organised due to constraints of space and time. This suggested that sometimes PE lessons held in the hall could be rather ‘regimented’ in their organisation.

Lorna taught her lessons “as a whole”. The children helped to get the apparatus out together and then she set them a “task”, usually based on a theme that they were currently working on. When the children were looking at “bears” (see Appendix P), for example, the wall bars became trees and boxes formed dens, while the children became climbing pandas. Another topic that Lorna recalled the children enjoying was “pirates” where the apparatus was formed into two ships and they had to cross the “sea” using their body in different ways.

Turning a lesson into a game, and giving it meaning for the children by creating a story, was something that Lorna felt was suitable for younger children and for all physical abilities. She was aware that there could be significant differences between some children, even in the four years that the children were at the school, and that this had to be catered for in the PE lesson. She felt that the cross-curricular approach she used in her lessons helped to hold the children’s interest and attention and needed only a little imagination on the part of the teacher. Lorna summarised her own aims and objectives for PE

I think keeping children fit and healthy training them to use their bodies wisely and safely and the cross-curricular part with health education and healthy eating and lifestyle generally – and also preparation for leisure time. But I think generally its just developing the whole child. (LC)

During one of my visits I spent a day observing all PE lessons that took place in the hall (Appendix Q). The morning consisted of gymnastics and the first group to use the hall set up the apparatus, leaving it for the following group to use. It was then used by several other classes and finally disassembled and put away by the last group. In

Lorna's opinion, this presented children with lessons that were not complete, i.e. they had not been involved with all activities generally accepted as part of a gymnastics lesson. I had visited a number of schools by this time, and interviewed teachers who considered this to be 'poor practice'. There were practical reasons for this arrangement. Large apparatus could only be used in the mornings because the hall needed to be cleared of apparatus and equipment before lunchtime, and then could not be used afterwards because the floor would not be cleaned until the evening. Afternoon lessons, therefore, consisted mainly of dance. I saw a succession of lessons, 'back-to-back', which were all very similar in their style and content, as per the school PE policy, and by the end of the day I felt rather as though I had sat watching a conveyor belt! As a non-specialist I am not qualified to comment on the issues of teaching methods or good practice³ in PE, however, in my opinion the lessons that I saw were conducted safely and the children enjoyed their classes. Some of the teachers asked the children to question what their bodies were doing and this added an educational element to the physical activity. Yet, on a different occasion I observed Lorna take a gymnastics-based lesson where the children 'became' animals and the creativity of the lesson was in sharp contrast to the formal approach taken above.

Lorna did not openly criticise the methods of other teachers. She simply felt that her approach was also appropriate for young children. Concerns had been raised by the head teacher about the variable confidence of primary teachers in PE lessons and, perhaps for this reason, many teachers chose to adhere strictly to the guidelines given to them. Lorna discussed the methods of other members of staff.

One of our teachers does a lot of marching. She's got some lovely marching records and if they're just getting a little over the top, like this afternoon, she'll take them out and she'll play the record and they'll march! Its good co-ordination; its good activity! They make patterns. (LC)

Generally the teachers used the BBC radio programme tapes or the children were

taught country dancing. Lorna felt this was something that the children enjoyed but again, in her own lessons she chose a different approach and played the piano or Vivaldi and asked the children to listen to the music. She claimed that the older teachers would rather “do that sort of formalised country dancing than (*adopting a silly voice and laughing*) pretend to be flowers!” However, whilst Lorna felt that the lessons taught by other teachers at Sycamore were perfectly adequate, she hoped that the National Curriculum might help to widen the scope of creative dance at the infant level.

National Curriculum

I wondered if the National Curriculum might have any effect on teaching methods in the school. Lorna felt that the National Curriculum document provided a clear framework and she welcomed its lack of prescription. She had noted that there were less Attainment Targets than for other Foundation subjects. She felt that the school was in an advantageous position in terms of its physical resources, but acknowledged that “people are going to need to...widen the scope of what Physical Education is”. Other members of staff had welcomed the National Curriculum folder (distributed to schools in April 1992) with some relief and Lorna commented that teachers had found it to be one of the “clearest documents they’d seen as far as any of the subjects were concerned because everything was on one page and was easy to work through” (CT 7). Lorna claimed that she was able to read through the documents and mentally tick the areas that she had covered with her own class, and in this respect she referred to the National Curriculum for PE as “workable”, particularly if followed in conjunction with the “cut and dried” plan that was already in place at the school. She was quite critical that swimming had not been made compulsory at Key Stage 1 because she felt that it was more important to teach children at an early age, but she also acknowledged that the school did not have the facilities or the finances to develop a swimming programme.

Lorna felt that there were issues that some teachers would have to address “like it or not”. The teaching staff clearly differed in their attitude towards NCPE and although

they all had the school PE policy document to follow, the interpretation of this was left very much to each individual teacher. The staff were a mixture of experienced and younger teachers, including a recent NQT, and were all female. Lorna felt that physical activity was not one of their priorities at school or in their lives generally. She felt that the teachers would have to become more adventurous in the activities they taught, and that there would have to be more “specifics” particularly with regard to the acquisition of skills. Lorna had identified that there would need to be changes and that the school had to start working together. This apparent lack of communication between Lorna and the other teachers in the school was a significant obstacle in her role as PE co-ordinator and a constraint to curriculum development.

I discussed Lorna’s role as PE co-ordinator in relation to the National Curriculum. In 1992 she had written a “don’t panic document” (consisting of a single sheet) as a starting point, partly to indicate to staff that much of the National Curriculum was in line with what they were doing in school already. She felt that staff needed some reassurance that “you’re already doing this, this, this and this...they think they are not doing it” before they even looked at the document. Lorna mentioned that with the NCPE all teachers had received the guidelines. This had not been the case with other Foundation subjects which had only been distributed to staff with specific curriculum responsibility.

An issue that was identified as problematic, however, was that of time. The school policy that children should have a scheduled PE lesson every day meant that hall time had to be very strictly monitored and lessons were restricted to half an hour. Much time was also taken up with changing and the logistics of getting children into and out of the hall safely and quietly. Children did not always get a full half-hour in the hall. Lorna had ideas about rescheduling PE lessons into longer ‘blocks’ within each year group so that children might sometimes have an hour for a lesson (“that’s my idea. You could put that to the head?!”) However, there were no plans to change the time allocation in the future as the head teacher firmly believed that young

children should receive exercise daily.

Lorna intended to organise some INSET for PE but admitted that she had hesitated until the final documents had been produced because with other subjects they had held in-school training sessions and then there had been changes in the content of the curriculum. Her main task, she believed, would become one of ensuring that the National Curriculum documents were adhered to by the other teachers. She felt that her role in this respect would be to translate the document into a shorter text

...because I can guarantee that at least five members of staff won't get the book out! And therefore, I've got to pick out and produce some written information that's highlighting the things we are going to tackle first. (LC)

Lorna felt that she would need to go through the document herself and produce her own guidelines. The staff would be more likely to read something that had already been summarised for them, and which directed them to specific points of interest. She claimed that "none of us sits and reads the whole document do we?" She did not, however, advocate that she should re-write the current school PE policy. She intended to study the document herself, fill any gaps in the school's provision and beyond that, be available for advice should any teachers need it. She did not regard it as part of her role to observe the rest of the staff and ensure that they "complied".

Lorna stressed that my early visits to the school had taken place soon after she had received the NCPE documents and that few changes could be expected in this time. Fortunately, arrangements with Sycamore enabled me to 'stagger' my visits to the school throughout two academic years, from June 1992 to December 1993. Later in this chapter I discuss the PE curriculum 'one year on'.

Status of PE

It was clear from spending time with Lorna and talking to her that she felt PE was an important subject. However, she did not feel that this was the case for other teachers

in the school

I do like it because I think it gives all of them a chance to succeed. Even my little non-readers are good at PE - its a great leveller. I think it is vital for them to have it - but that's me. I've always been interested in the PE side of it...but at the moment staff are just sort of bogged down with everything else they've had to do, with so much paperwork. (LC)

My relationship with Lorna was such that I felt I could approach the subject of the head teacher's apparent lack of interest in the PE curriculum. I ventured that she regarded PE as a low status subject, however, Lorna disagreed with me. She revealed that Mrs. Sealey, closely (and, she felt, covertly) monitored the physical activities that took place at Sycamore.

She keeps a timetable separated, highlighted out from the main one on her wall and – not always, but she is quite aware – she will have certain times when I've noticed she's checking up, when she comes out to make sure that what you're timetabled for is happening...She's always very keen on PE and she's very aware of what we are doing. (LC)

On a day-to-day basis, however, the head teacher did not directly interfere with the teaching of PE. Lorna agreed that Mrs. Sealey had been influential in the development of the school PE policy and that she was very keen on "outer agencies" coming in to the school to see them at work. The pressures of implementing the National Curriculum had meant that this emphasis had lessened in recent years but Lorna claimed that the head teacher was "very friendly" with the County PE advisor, and that he often visited the school to meet with the head teacher. Lorna, however, was not included in these "little chats".

She tends to deal personally with *(him)*. In fact I haven't met him, apart from courses, I haven't actually spoken to him since I've been co-ordinator! (LC)

I concluded, therefore, that the head teacher, despite her claim to be a delegator, assumed ultimate responsibility for the PE curriculum.

In June 1993, during a conversation in the staffroom (on a day when the head teacher was absent), Lorna informed me that the PE advisor was expected to attend the school the following day to observe all teachers taking a lesson. This had been the cause of great concern among the teaching staff though Lorna remained calm. The visit had been cancelled three times already and she doubted that it would happen at all. Mrs. Sealey, at short notice, had informed one of the teachers who generally used "Music and Movement" tapes, that she must teach her lesson using instruments instead. I noted the following in my diary

Whatever the purpose of *(his)* visit, the teachers do not feel that he should be there to see a show but to see what the school normally does 'warts and all'. Mrs. Sealey, perhaps thinking about the school's reputation in the past, seems to believe that the school must cover up its reliance on taped materials. Personally, and other teachers in the staffroom agreed with me, I don't think that *(he)* will worry too much about what he sees. The tape that I heard in the hall had sounded fine to me and a great improvement on country dancing. Lorna pointed out that as long as the tapes were used to stimulate ideas and facilitate other work in the classroom then that was OK. She tells the teacher to carry on and use it whether *(he)* is there or not!

It was not possible to explore the dynamics of internal relations at the school but it was evident that there were communication problems between the head teacher, the PE co-ordinator and the rest of the teaching staff. To some extent Lorna was responsible for this situation as she was not prepared to invest her time in attempting to overcome these hurdles. She had retreated into her own philosophy and teaching methods and generally left other teachers to follow the established guidelines, and this action was clearly sanctioned by the head teacher. It was evident that teachers did not consider Lorna to be the arbiter of the PE curriculum. However, this was not an issue that Lorna seemed to be concerned about, despite her role as PE co-

ordinator. She accepted that teachers at the school had other priorities in terms of their own curriculum responsibilities and their workload generally. She also acknowledged that many teachers had dual roles as mothers of their own children. Lorna herself admitted that her personal situation was such that she could not devote her own time outside of school hours to attend INSET or redevelop the PE curriculum.

Finance and Resources

The head teacher had welcomed the opportunity to enter the LMS scheme as a pilot school. She felt that, in view of the falling role and her planned retirement in the near future, it might be advantageous for the school to enter the scheme early so that it would be “up and running” before she left. She had no reservations about managing the school budget but was concerned initially about learning to use the hardware that the Phase 1 schools had been provided with. She acknowledged later, that she had learned a lot from her experience and was more than competent at dealing with things she had never expected to have to do as a head teacher.

I love it! I think its absolutely wonderful! I wish I had it years ago! I was worried because I thought I would have to change my role. I thought ‘I will never be a teacher again’ and I’m not! But having gone through the pain barrier - and I did have a year when it was all happening when I thought ‘I don’t know if I can cope with this’ - but I did and having come through the other side, its wonderful! (CS)

The head teacher was in ultimate control of the budget for PE (and indeed, all subjects) and there was little liaison between members of staff ‘as a whole school’. Teachers with curriculum responsibility for particular subjects were given a yearly allowance, determined by the head teacher, and a catalogue from which to select the resources that they considered to be needed during the year. In a conversation with the PE Co-ordinator I asked if LMS had brought any changes to the resourcing of PE. Her response was “well, before, we didn’t even see the catalogues!” Lorna admitted

that she enjoyed having her own funds to spend as she wished but felt that the head teacher tended to remain in charge

She likes - I feel - to control the PE budget but she'll discuss it with me. 'We want new mats. What do we want?' I'll tell her, she'll order it, and then they ring up when she's not here and say they haven't got it, so I order something different (*laughs*)...but because its big items she has control over the expenditure. I don't mind! (LC)

As National Curriculum subjects had been introduced each one had been addressed in terms of resources. Lorna did not know how much money would be available for PE during 1992/1993 but felt that the school was already quite well resourced in terms of apparatus and equipment. She acknowledged that PE equipment was generally expensive but she commented that

At least I feel with PE apparatus, every child in the school gets to use it. Its used daily and all the time, so my argument is that money spent on PE stuff is money well spent. (CS)

The latest expenditure for PE had been the building of a storage shed for equipment. Previously it had been stored in boxes in a small alcove in the main hall. There were no plans to purchase any large items of equipment in the future. Lorna felt that maintenance of the current inventory would be sufficient, in the short-term, to cover the needs of the National Curriculum.

Parent Power

Sycamore, in having applied for a reduction in roll, was clearly not intending to market itself in order to attract more pupils. I discussed this issue with the PE Co-ordinator and I commented that, due to formula funding the school would receive a lower income with fewer pupils. Lorna agreed that funding would indeed decrease and she referred to Sycamore as "a loser school" although she admitted that she was not familiar with

the “technical details”. The school tended to have a fluctuating roll throughout the year because of the way that first entry was staggered: Some children attended the reception class from three years of age, year 1 children started in September and others joined the school at Easter. In one academic year Lorna found herself with a class that numbered between sixteen and forty-two pupils depending on the term. She felt that lowering the standard number might at least keep the classes smaller at the busiest time of year. She pointed out that it was not possible to teach an apparatus lesson safely with a class of more than thirty children at the same time.

Lorna felt that parents were more aware of their rights as consumers but she did not feel that it affected teaching in the lower years of the school. She commented that parents were “always amazed at how much they’ve done, and how much they’ve learned, and how much they’ve read and what they are capable of doing”. Lorna, however, identified a problem of Open Enrolment. She claimed that, in some cases, prospective parents would visit the school and register their child for a place to start the following year. She stated

We get parents who have put their name down for several schools. We go through all the paperwork of preparing a child for this school, labelling the drawers, labelling books - and then that’s the last time we see them because they go off up there!
(LC)

Lorna referred to another state first school in the area with a higher reputation than that of Sycamore. She commented that parents preferred “closed classrooms”, although many infant schools in the area were also constructed in a similar ‘open plan’ structure. She felt that there was an element of “snob value” because children who attended the other first (and then middle) school were considered more likely to be awarded scholarships to a local, private secondary school. Lorna felt that Sycamore’s natural catchment area (see Appendix K) put the school at a disadvantage but that nothing could be done about this as the rival school was situated in a middle class area. She described the estate in which Sycamore was located as

...mainly private now, most people have bought their council houses. It was half-and-half when it opened, but now its mostly owner-occupied. We've had families in the school ever since it opened and its always been a happy school. (LC)

Lorna clearly felt that the reputation of Sycamore School was undeserved. However, the head teacher, rather than marketing the school, had decided to accept its falling roll as a fait accompli. In 1993, as part of the rationalisation of the school system which took into account the defined Key Stages of the National Curriculum, Sycamore first school would become an infant school, thus losing a whole year group. The implications of this might be crucial to the future funding of the school.

One Year Later

As an outsider I had concluded that teachers at Sycamore considered the head teacher to be in control of the curriculum, in which case Lorna's role as co-ordinator was clearly undefined. I wondered if the situation would be the same one year later, as Lorna had suggested that in 1992 it was very much 'early days' for the NCPE. I returned to the school the following summer to see if there had been any changes. I was able to interview the PE co-ordinator again and, on another occasion, attend Sycamore's annual sports day. Sports day was an area in which Lorna had been able to exert an influence. In 1992 the occasion of the Olympics had presented an ideal opportunity for various topic work throughout the curriculum. Lorna had carried this theme through to sports day which had been held as a "mini-Olympics". The event had been popular with the children and, in 1993, Lorna had been able to organise another sports day that departed from the traditional running races of the primary school. I attended this event as a 'helper' (see Appendix Q2 for report) and spent the day in charge of a small team of children.

In terms of curriculum development, Lorna had plans to develop a trail through the school grounds that drew on elements from several subjects and might help to extend

the childrens' outdoor activities. She felt that this would best be done in conjunction within the middle school but commented that "I'm full of ideas! I'm with it all! I've done my homework but its getting the support".

Lorna had attended courses concerning the implementation of the National Curriculum generally but had found it difficult to make time for some of the INSET that was held at external venues. She also felt that some of the courses were sometimes too theoretical. She recalled training courses she had attended in the past, some of which had been held at the school

In my slimmer days I used to wear a leotard and tights and do it with them and several of the staff would change, we're talking about ten/twelve years ago – but none of them do now. I think I'm the only one that does it in bare feet! (LC)

Lorna had planned a staff meeting in September 1992 to discuss the National Curriculum but more than a year later this meeting had not yet formally taken place. Lorna felt that teachers were under a great deal of stress due to the National Curriculum in general but she commented that it had been to PE's advantage that it had been introduced last. She felt that teachers would not have reacted well if it had been received, for example, before technology or maths. However, there were problems

I think people are finding it more of a pressure to have to do so much of it now. Initially it was fine and it fitted in and it was relaxing but the curriculum and everything else got so overpowering. I haven't had a staff meeting to do PE. (LC)

All the teachers had been given Lorna's summary version of the National Curriculum documents and were aware of the Areas of Activity that they were expected to cover. She stated that

I think people are following what they've got to do but they are finding it very hard to give it the time allocated because everything else needs so much time. So, although eighty percent of the time its still on the timetable, there have been times when people just can't, almost, spare the time. (LC)

Lorna commented that whilst there was no time stipulation for PE, there were more specific timetable allocations for other subjects and these had to take priority. The problem was that the National Curriculum did not translate easily into the existing curriculum of Sycamore School. Lorna felt that, despite this, teachers in the school were "staying more on task of what they were meant to be doing" but she admitted that she personally was finding it difficult to cope with her class of younger pupils. Often allocated time did not get used because of the weather, she commented that

On a good week, when its dry outside and everybody gets their full allocation, you've covered yourself for weeks, but if the playground is wet and the apparatus gets ruined we don't do it very much (LC)

She found that she would sometimes have to give "impromptu" lessons which lacked in progression and continuity, but that it was necessary in order to ensure that children still received their allocated PE time.

Lorna claimed that she had not heard many complaints from teachers concerning the National Curriculum though she mentioned that she had yet to introduce the teachers to the assessment sheet that had been devised for PE. She described it as "only a school record" with sections for specific tasks such as balance, throwing, forward rolls, etc (see Appendix P1). This was to be handed on to the next class teacher when the child moved up in the school so that

...all their PE work for three years is on one sheet of paper and it goes with the child. The same with science and everything else. You can either do it as a tick sheet or write your own things and say 'I think they have coped with this activity to the best of a five year old's ability' or whatever. (LC)

This assessment sheet system was to extend to all areas of the curriculum. Lorna felt that it would make teachers a little more aware of looking at different children and actually assessing their ability and progression, rather than simply commenting that a child was “quiet” or “enthusiastic” in lessons, which is the sort of comment that tended to be written on annual reports. She hoped that it might lead to teachers creating lessons where specific skills could be tested. However, although the decision to introduce assessment sheets across the curriculum had been agreed at a staff meeting, it had yet to be implemented. Lorna admitted that

I feel guilty that I haven't got round to doing the assessment sheets yet but we've had so much else on. Now they've brought in new language guidelines and everyone's up the wall! But its (PE) still being covered, everything's being covered. (LC)

I wondered if the National Curriculum, one year later, had made any difference to the teaching of PE, or if there had been any problems. Lorna responded

I don't think so. People have been taking their own lessons...Everybody has a six week plan in National Curriculum subjects which they are meant to be doing but there again, most of these sheets now are on trust. Nobody actually checks up on them – apart from seeing them in the hall. (LC)

However, Lorna felt that some small progress had been made since the previous year. She found herself without a class in September due to the reorganisation of the school and she was able to take year 3 (i.e. Key Stage 2) classes for their apparatus lessons whilst their own teachers could observe. She commented that, although teachers might not choose to adopt her preferred methods, they were at least able to see how the children reacted to an alternative approach. She also introduced a PE diary for the older children to keep, in which they recorded

what they've done and how they've done it, and whether they think they can improve. They sit down when they've dressed and they write up their notebooks. 'How can I improve?' 'I must balance better.' (LC)

This is an initiative that Lorna claimed the children enjoyed and she felt that it gave their PE lessons more meaning if they were working towards improvement.

Generally, changes to PE at the school had been minimal but all teachers were now aware of the NCPE and some subtle differences were apparent. PE, however, was taught in much the same manner and style as I had observed the previous year. Teachers continued follow the PE guidelines and Lorna continued to adapt them to her own methods of teaching.

Conclusion

My visits to Sycamore highlighted the inherent problems of first and infant schools. Whilst it was recognised that regular physical activities were important to the education of young children, there were organisational difficulties that often hindered the teaching of PE. Curriculum overload at this level was evident and teachers were finding it difficult to concentrate on their primary tasks of teaching children to read and write, and acquire social skills. PE at Sycamore differed from the provision at case study schools 1 and 2, in its concentration on indoor work. Lessons were dominated by issues of safety and control, and although important for young children, this could account to some extent for the lack of individualism of some of the teachers.

The school had a very able and knowledgeable PE co-ordinator who, for various personal and organisational reasons, was not able to work to her full potential. She had a great deal of imagination and attempted to maintain cross-curricular links in her own lessons if this was appropriate. Lorna's enthusiasm for PE, however, was not shared by the rest of the staff, who were perceived as either apprehensive about teaching the subject, or simply not enthusiastic. This made Lorna's role difficult and

ensured that her influence in practice would be minimal. There appeared to be a general lack of communication throughout the school. However, having spoken to both the head teacher and the PE co-ordinator, as well as chatting to other teachers and observing a number of lessons, I felt that there were misjudgements on both sides. It was clear that the head teacher cared about PE but her primary concern was the practical organisation of provision whilst she allowed Lorna to develop her own role.

Historical factors were very important at the school. The PE curriculum had been determined by the head teacher under the approval of the County and adherence to this relationship remained strong more than a decade later. It is unlikely, therefore, in this atmosphere that the National Curriculum would have any great effect on provision. Finally, it must be noted that Sycamore, despite the problems mentioned above offered a PE curriculum that by National Curriculum standards would be regarded as adequate. It offered a range of activities including games, dance and gymnastics in a programme that differed throughout the year depending on circumstances. Innovation in the PE curriculum, however, was not a characteristic of this school.

Notes

1. First schools accept children from 5-8 years old; middle schools, 9-12 (thus overlapping two Key Stages). In the county in which this study is based, plans were underway to rationalise this system. In 1991 there were a total of 577 primary schools including 107 first schools and 20 combined first/middle schools.
2. Prior to the case studies I interviewed ITT PE tutors at two local colleges. One of these was mentioned by Mrs. Sealey. See Appendix R for details.
3. The concept of 'good practice' in the teaching of lessons is difficult to define. OFSTED, the organisation charged with the responsibility of assessing the teaching of PE in schools, defines good practice in vague terms of "high quality teaching; high expectations and levels of achievement" (1995, p.3). BAALPE (1993, p.5) defines the characteristics of good practice in terms of pupils' activity and attitudes.

Chapter 9

Discussion of the Case Study Data

Introduction

In order to make sense of the case studies and the data described in the previous chapters, it would be useful here to return to the assumptions that were made at the outset of this thesis, and those which guided the research questions. PE, after many years of neglect by those outside of primary education, found itself included as one of the Foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. The subject thus became the focus of much debate about the content and place of PE in the curriculum. The National Curriculum outlined PE in terms of clearly defined Areas of Activity and Programmes of Study that were to be taught at Key Stages 1 and 2. Issues of progression and continuity were inherent and the curriculum was based upon the premise of a broad and balanced provision available to all children. The National Curriculum thus provided a definition of the role of PE in primary schools for the first time in educational history.

However, this research was carried out with an assumption that policy would not translate neatly into the complex world of the primary school and that there would be many intervening factors between policy and practice. Lack of intervention in the subject prior to 1988 reflected a concomitant lack of understanding by policy-makers of the context in which the National Curriculum would ultimately be implemented. The research centred around two prominent issues: the ability of primary schools to deliver the curriculum (in terms of facilities and resources); and the ability of teachers to teach the curriculum. The foremost concern of this research was to investigate the effects of the Education Reform Act 1998 on the provision of PE in primary schools. ERA was defined in terms of three principle initiatives, namely: the National Curriculum, Local Management of Schools and Open Enrolment. The effects of these different policies will be discussed below. Later in the chapter I examine in more depth the factors that intervene between policy and practice at the level of the

primary school.

The Effects of ERA: PE Curriculum

The case study schools, although different in many respects, had a number of aspects in common. In all schools the National Curriculum had been received as a positive development that would help to address any shortcomings in PE provision. All schools felt that their current provision was adequate but acknowledged that there were 'gaps to fill' and that the National Curriculum would help teachers when considering issues such as planning and progression. The NCPE documents were welcomed for their lack of prescription and regarded by many teachers as confirmation of their current working practices. However, there was concern at Key Stage 1 for the insufficient training and lack of confidence in teaching PE of newly qualified teachers.

All schools taught some of the Areas of Activity, though there was a concentration on gymnastics at both Key Stages 1 and 2, and organised games were more evident in the junior years. Athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities did not take place in any of the schools as part of a structured PE curriculum (though sports days and residential courses were organised at some schools), and dance was a neglected area at Key Stage 1. The nature of provision in schools depended largely upon the availability of staff 'expertise' and interest, existing resources and facilities and the status accorded to PE in the whole curriculum. Therefore, sometimes 'what' (i.e. what can we provide) and 'how' (what resources do we have) considerations took priority over 'why' (a sound rationale for PE) in determining the content of the curriculum. Swimming, for example, was not taught at Key Stage 1 despite the recognition that it was an essential life skill.

In terms of PE provision these general findings were replicated in a survey carried out in 1993 by Penney and Evans with Henninck and Bryant¹ of primary schools in the same LEA in which the case study schools were located. Shaughnessy and Price

(1995), in their attempt to review the early effects of the implementation of the National Curriculum for PE, reported similar findings in a review of primary practice carried out in more than three hundred schools. The study revealed that there was a broad continuum of interpretation of the Statutory Orders and responses were varied. Traditional games and gymnastics dominated the PE curriculum, though the latter was not necessarily well co-ordinated throughout the school. Swimming remained in the timetable at some schools but there were constant problems of time and finance, and dance tended to be taught more at infant level. There was little reference to outdoor and adventurous activities and athletic activities tended to be subsumed into games.

All schools 'followed' their own PE policies, though anecdotal evidence suggests that the extent to which teachers adhered to them varied between, and sometimes within schools. The historical contexts of the three schools were very different and this had affected the development of 'in-school' texts. Morrison School's policy was a recently created document that had been initiated by the head teacher on his appointment to the school. The document, which was the result of consultation with 'experts' and discussion between teaching staff and governors, formed part of a whole school policy based on a philosophy of 'equal opportunity'. Haydn School's 'policy' for PE was less structured and formal. Teachers at the school had clearly adopted the teaching practices of the PE co-ordinator in their lessons, although this was not embodied in a written text. Specific texts (i.e. books, guides) had been used for several years with reference to specific activities but a coherent document had not been developed by the school. The PE co-ordinator was aware of the need to address this issue but he believed that it was more important to ensure that the children had adequate PE provision, than to develop an 'official' written document. Sycamore First School followed a PE policy that had been developed more than a decade previously by the head teacher and the LEA PE advisor. This written text had not changed since the advent of the National Curriculum and, with few exceptions, was followed closely by all teachers at the school. It is of note that none of the school

PE policies in place at any of the case study schools had been developed as a result of the National Curriculum for PE.

Early on in this research the curriculum leader was identified as a key individual in the development of primary PE. In 1991 Gibbon outlined some of the areas in which the PE co-ordinator might have a role to play:

- Ensuring continuity of experience
- Preparation of documentation
- Resources
- Ensuring a range of experience for pupils
- Facilitating cross-curricular activity
- Personal and colleague staff development

All of the case study schools had assigned specific responsibility for PE to a member of staff prior to the advent of the National Curriculum. Each PE co-ordinator was very much an individual and all held a different interpretation of their role. These teachers, however, shared the opinion that it was not their responsibility to judge the teaching methods of colleagues. In 1994 Webb reported that a great deal of variation existed between schools in the role of co-ordinator. He stated that “the amount and nature of the work fulfilled by co-ordinators varied enormously from school to school, and often between co-ordinators in the same school” (para. 5.9). This is understandable as throughout this research, the uniqueness of schools in the primary sector has been emphasised. The role and responsibilities of the PE co-ordinator will, therefore, be determined by the needs and priorities of the individual school. Gibbon (1991, p.8) acknowledged that

The curriculum leader in Physical Education, or in any other subject, can only be effective if s/he is operating in a context in which a shared vision has been calculated by the head teacher and shared with the whole staff. In such a context, the head teacher is the strategist and the Curriculum Leader the tactician.

This relationship between staff, therefore, is of importance. The head teacher is in ultimate control of the curriculum, and the PE co-ordinator is charged with ensuring that this shared vision for PE is carried throughout the school. The vision for PE in the case study schools, however, was not necessarily that of the National Curriculum.

Shaughnessy and Price (1994) acknowledged in their reviews of primary PE that some schools required “major surgery” in order to fulfil the requirements; others would merely need to “engage in fine tuning” of their current practice. They noted, however, that “even in schools where practice appeared to be ‘good’, a review of provision would still represent potential benefit for pupils and teachers alike”. The survey revealed that in 1992/1993 there was a poor response to formulating whole school curriculum policy to address the teaching of Physical Education. Schools were slow to address and update documentation. The data suggested that co-ordination of PE was often left to individual teachers. The case study data highlights the significant role that individual teachers play in the implementation of the PE curriculum and this is an issue to which I return in a later section of this chapter. Other issues such a lack of time, demands for additional resourcing and the general quality of teaching and learning were also raised suggesting that PE in many schools was in need of a “general overhaul”. A further review in 1993/1994 revealed a gradual continuation of the process embarked upon in the previous year though it was noted that

Schools which were quick to respond to the Statutory Orders and had moved along in their thinking and approaches through the process of review further developed their programmes of work and devised alternative methods of practice. (Shaughnessy et al, 1995, p.37)

Shaughnessy et al (1995) claim that some schools were slow to address PE curriculum issues for the following reasons:

- lack of effective co-ordination
- time-honoured and out-dated practices continued to be out of step with NC requirements
- a lack of clarity and understanding of why and how PE is taught in schools
- PE remaining 'on the fringes' of education as opposed to being an integral part of the process.

These factors were evident to some extent in Sycamore School, which was characterised by poor staff communication and adherence to an historical PE policy. However, the factors that direct curriculum development are more complex than is suggested here and these issues will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

The Effects of ERA: Local Management of Schools

Whilst the effects of the National Curriculum were minimal in terms of promoting change, the case studies revealed the situational constraints within which schools operated. Local Management of Schools ensured that any curriculum development would have financial implications. The facilities of the three case study schools varied in terms of quality and quantity but all had problems of some description. A survey carried out by the NAHT and CCPR in 1992 revealed similar findings: 56% of primary schools felt that their resources were insufficient to allow them to deliver the NCPE; 64% of those that possessed a playing field claimed that it failed to meet Government standards in terms of maintenance; 25% of primary schools reported that they did not have access to safe, off-site swimming pools.

Many of the decisions taken in the primary school are a result of what is possible rather than what is desirable. Primary schools have finite resources based on pupil roll and schools tend to be small. The curriculum may, therefore, reflect the availability of resources (time, facilities, staff expertise etc.) and other factors such as class size as well as the ethos and curriculum policy of the school. At the outset of the research

there were two concerns: Would LMS provide opportunities or constraints to development?; Would the resources available at each school influence PE provision or, conversely would the PE provision influence the funding of PE? It was acknowledged by this research that the financial constraints introduced by ERA would change the context in which teachers work. Fullan (1989) suggests that if teachers are not able to influence reform then they must compromise by taking advantage of financial and other resources that are provided by external agencies. This was evident to some extent in the case study schools. All case study schools had experience of managing their own budget for two years before the research was conducted, therefore, the effects of LMS on the provision of PE would be evident in 1992. All head teachers claimed that LMS had, indeed, significantly altered the nature of the role that they played in the school. Administration and management issues took priority over teaching and systems were developed whereby resources were distributed between subject areas. Head teachers differed in their management 'style' and in their specific approaches to the resourcing of PE. At Morrison the head teacher had awarded the PE co-ordinator a specific budget to allow her to develop INSET for PE. In addition, as a whole school, the staff and governors had agreed to vire significant funds towards major redevelopment of the PE curriculum. At Haydn School, specific budgets were not delegated to subject co-ordinators. Funds were allocated according to perceived resource needs which were discussed and prioritised by the staff at regular meetings. At Sycamore School, the PE co-ordinator was given a small budget with which to purchase equipment but larger items had to be approved by the head teacher. All three head teachers, in the manner in which they distributed funds were addressing the perceived needs of their own school.

All head teachers and PE co-ordinators at the case study schools, despite the wide variation in funding for PE, felt that their resources were adequate. All head teachers welcomed the flexibility of financial management but acknowledged that LMS did not represent more funds for the schools and priorities had to be made. Morrison School defined PE as a priority and LMS enabled the head teacher to address the resource

needs of the subject. Therefore, the status that is accorded to PE in the curriculum is crucial in the allocation of resources.

The Effects of ERA – Open Enrolment

The effects of Open Enrolment were often subtle and did not directly impinge upon the provision of PE. However, a falling pupil roll would represent reduced funds which might reduce the funding directed toward PE. Schools were more aware of the need to promote their school but generally this was done covertly through the day-to-day organisation and achievements of the school. The head teacher of Morrison School, however, perceived Open Enrolment to be a direct threat to the school. The school became the focus for a number of high-profile marketing strategies in the head teacher's determination to create a "successful" school. Weaknesses were identified and a "total quality management" approach was taken in which the opinions of all members of the school were valued. The result was a redefinition of the school development plan in which PE was identified as a priority. The situation in which Morrison School found itself is perhaps unique, however, Open Enrolment is an initiative that covertly introduces the notion of accountability into the working lives of schools and teachers.

In summary, the overwhelming 'effect' of the National Curriculum for PE in the case study schools was that of 'no change'. This replicates the findings of Penney's (1994) study of the effects of ERA in the secondary school. It cannot be denied that 'no change' is as significant an 'effect' as particularly as the aim of policy-makers is to change practice. This is an important issue and in the following section I explore the issue of educational change in more depth.

Education Policy and Educational Change

There are many similarities between the debates surrounding educational change and those of policy implementation. Fullan (1989, p.185) asserts that educational change often fails due to the incompatible assumption of planners who often regard

their role as entirely separate from the task of implementation such that

One of the basic reasons why planning fails is that planners or decision-makers of change are often unaware of the situational constraints.

They attempt to introduce policy “without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any changes”. In terms of the National Curriculum, the planners, i.e. the Government, and more directly the Working Group who devised the Final Orders for PE failed to adequately locate the policy within the context in which it was to be implemented. The secretary of State demonstrated awareness of some of the “situational” factors inherent in the primary school system and dictated that some of the provisions of the NCPE reflected the discrepancies in terms of resources between schools. These decisions, however, were guided by considerations of finance rather than educational value. The ultimate result of attempting to introduce a highly specialised PE curriculum into a school context in which resources were limited led to the creation of a policy that lacked prescription and was open to interrelation by many different parties.

Wise (1977, 1979) agrees that often the assumptions of policy-makers can be defined as “hyperrational”, that they simply devise educational change without giving adequate consideration to the process of implementation or, therefore, human, social and situational factors. In summary

Policy-makers behave as though their desires concerning what a school system should accomplish, will, in fact, be accomplished if the policy-makers simply decree it. (Wise, 1977, p.45)

Statements of educational goals often ignore the basic question of whether they can be attained and policy-makers assume that the solutions they have devised are unquestionably right. If policy represents a solution, it is implicit in the discourse that the policy-makers believe a problem exists. This may conflict with the opinions of

those upon whom the policy is imposed.

The initial premise of this research was thus to study the effects of the Education Reform Act 1988 on the provision of PE in the primary school. In order to study the effects of policy, it was assumed that change would take place, however, an overwhelming finding in all of the case study schools was that whilst there had been some changes in the PE provision of the schools, and in one school in particular, these had not been due primarily to the National Curriculum. Other aspects of the Education Reform Act such as LMS had been significant in the development of the PE curriculum in one of the schools but this had not necessarily been the impetus for change. The focus of the analysis has, therefore, turned from the implementation of policy, to an investigation of how the PE curriculum in each of the schools had developed, and why the National Curriculum appeared to have had little effect in practice. The data suggests that curriculum decisions taken at school level are the result of many different internal and external factors. Cocklin (1993) identifies an increasing awareness of the need to document the “actual” rather than the “ideal”, i.e. what happens in schools rather than what policy dictates. The context of the school is often simplified in policy analysis and Sparkes comments that

Phenomenologically distinct from the educational context is the ‘classroom context’ which Keddie (1971) claims involves the world of what *is* rather than what *ought*, a pragmatic world focused upon deeds not words, practice not theory. (Sparkes, 1985, p.167)

Ball (1987, p.39) also notes the “complexities and messy realities of classroom life” (p.39) and the “everyday discourse of pragmatism” which is often incompatible with the ideals of policy-makers. Schools are social organisations and they are not able to operate totally rationally. Primary teachers find that a normal working day can be disrupted by any number of minor crises that cannot be foreseen. Policy-makers, therefore, often misunderstand the importance of the culture of primary schools (Sarason, 1971; Lortie, 1975). Fullan (1989) identifies some of the factors affecting

educational change at a general level, namely:

- the characteristics of the change in terms of need, clarity, complexity
- school system characteristics, i.e. its history, administrative support, resources
- school traits and characteristics, i.e. teacher relations
- extra-local characteristics such as external relations and assistance.

The following sections in this chapter draw on the empirical data of the research and look at the various influences on the PE curriculum post-ERA. Cocklin (1993) recognises the influence of both internal (contextual) and external (outside) factors but also perceives that many are inter-related (intersectional). Some conditions can be manipulated and influenced but external and environmental factors are often more difficult to control than those that are internal. Many of the factors discussed below are inextricably inter-related which makes the task of developing a coherent model of policy implementation in the primary school problematic. In Penney's (1994) analysis of policy as a process, the school is regarded as the final site of implementation. However, schools have more issues to consider on a daily basis than policy alone and ERA merely represents one of the factors in the development of the PE curriculum.

Influences on the PE Curriculum

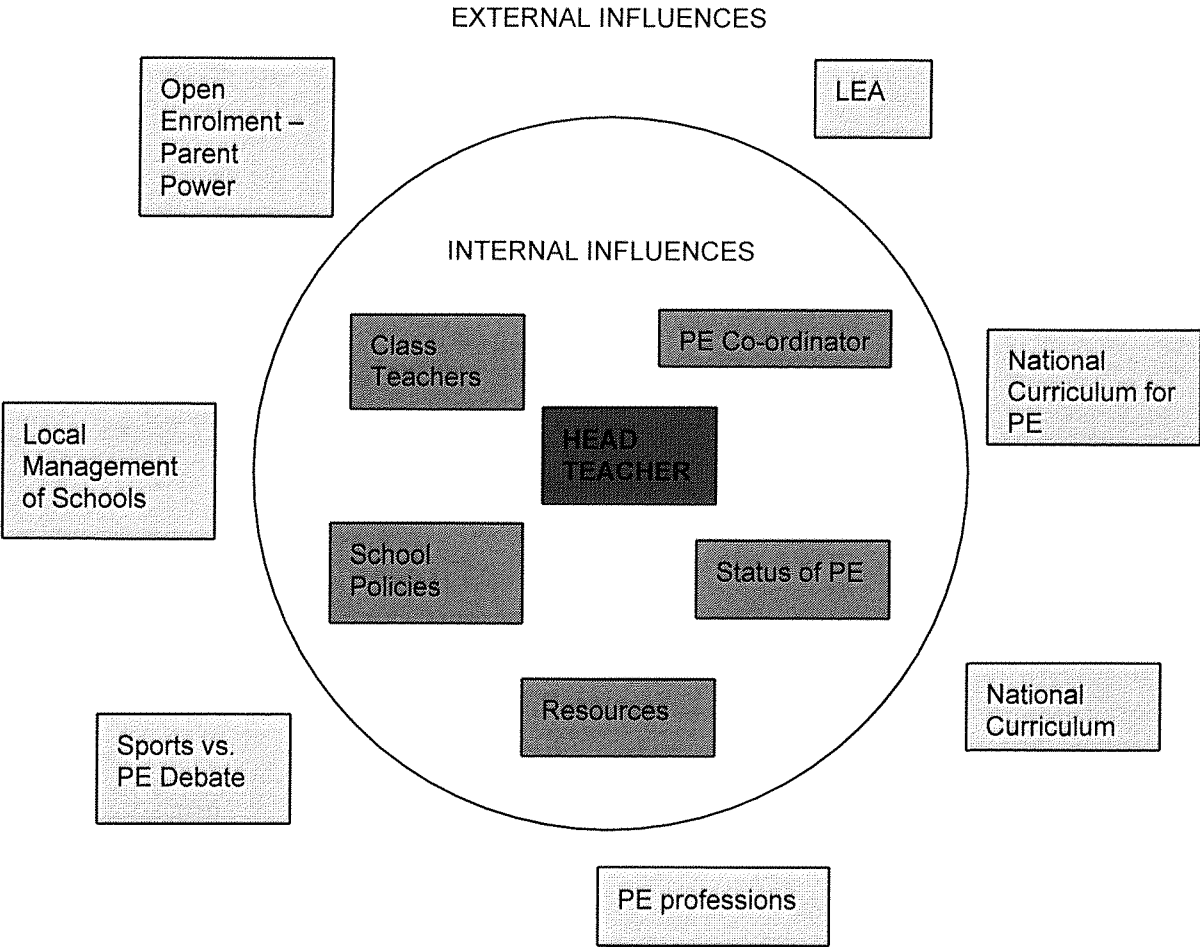
Ball asserts that schools are complex organisations in which there are many institutional influences on practice.

The teachers' own school experiences, their teacher training...their political affiliations outside school all contribute to this goal diversity. On the other hand, schools are confounded with a whole set of often contradictory demands and expectations from outside audiences and agencies. (Ball, 1987, p.13)

I would argue that this is true to some extent but that there is also a great deal of evidence for a particular primary 'culture' (Deal, 1985; Stenhouse, 1983; Alexander,1992) and whilst there were many differences between schools some themes are evident throughout the data. Schools are sites where internal and external factors exist alongside each other and it is difficult to define precisely how, when and by whom policy is made. Teachers are responsible for the implementation of policy in their own classroom but the formation is more complex. An attempt is made below to delineate the factors that were salient to the development of PE policy in the case study schools.

According to the conceptualisation of implementation of policy as a process which is illustrated in Diagram 2 (page 18) primary schools are the final site of policy implementation and are, therefore, the receivers and adopters of multiple texts developed by the various 'sites'. Agents at each of these sites, therefore, have the potential to influence the development of PE in the primary school. All schools received the NCPE documents, however, they would also have received 'official' policies from the LEA and other interested parties. Whilst outside agencies such as the Sports Council and national governing bodies of sport would have developed their own policies for implementation schools, the extent to which these were acted upon varied between schools and depended on their 'invitation' into the school. Ultimately all schools adhered to their own policies-in-use that had been developed pre-National Curriculum or in response to other issues of concern to the individual school. All schools, however, made some reference to the influence of the LEA. Morrison in particular developed their PE curriculum after consultation and discussion with the LEA PE advisor, however, this input was at the specific request of the school. The implementation of external policy, therefore, is dependent on the internal policies and practices of the school. Diagram 3 (overleaf) outlines the various external and internal influences on the PE curriculum.

Diagram 3: Influences on the Provision of PE in the Primary School



This diagram is necessarily crude. Whilst the various internal and external influences that were pertinent to the case study schools have been identified there is no indication of the relationships between each influence. It is for the individual school to determine where to draw the links according to their own circumstances. Even the distinction between external and internal is superficial as some influences impinge directly upon others, and different factors will be important in different schools. The head teacher, however, has been placed at the centre of the web as his/her perception of PE is key to the management of the various influences that affect provision. It is difficult to conceptualise these factors and in this thesis I have merely attempted to identify them. Nias (1989) describes the organisation of the primary schools as a “mobile” and this metaphor is one that is appropriate to primary education. She describes the school as being made up of

eye-catching shapes to be individually attached to the spars, which are then strung together and hung up as a whole. Once suspended the air currents move the individual elements, making them rotate and catch the light. Ambitious mobiles can involve many elements, each linked to a spar which is connected to others. (Nias, 1989, p.175)

Each shape can be a different size, some may clash depending on the strength and direction of the currents affecting the mobile. This defines schools three-dimensionally in terms of “shape, space and movement” and allows each school to be depicted according to the individual characteristics that directly affect its organisation patterns, relationships, and, therefore, its culture. All schools are different, however, they are composed of a number of individuals whom may be regarded as ‘agents of change’.

Individuals as Agents of Change

The social reality of the school fragments and disperses into a myriad of evanescent interpersonal encounters and relationships. The nearest analogy is that of a theatre, an unscripted play whose significance is known best by actors. (Tyler, 1988, p.105)

Ball refers to the “micro-politics” of the school. Micro-politics are characterised by issues of power, goal diversity, ideological disputation, conflict, political activity and control. Schools are thus depicted as arenas of hidden conflict, where control is sometimes in the hands of the head teacher and, at other times, the teachers, who are able to retain some authority over their working practices. He suggests that

Understanding the orientation and working practices of the main actors in schools and school systems is a prerequisite for planning and coping with educational change effectively...a pragmatic and critical organisational analysis of schools must begin by being rooted in and developed upon the experiences, views and interoperations of the individual actors who constitute ‘the organisation’ and their real and practical concerns and interests. (Ball, 1987, p.16)

There are many actors within the school and here I will concentrate on the key figures in the implementation of PE policy; the head teacher, the PE Co-ordinator and classroom teachers. An understanding of the head teacher is critical to understanding the micro-politics of the school as

to a large extent, responsible for devising and maintaining his school as a formal organisation and so, in a most revealing way, his school becomes the expressing of his authority. (King, 1968, p.88)

However, primary schools tend to be small communities in which teachers are able to meet regularly both informally in the staff room and formally in curriculum meetings, therefore the head teacher will not be a figure who is physically remote from the rest of the staff as might be the case in a secondary school. In the last forty years, and particularly since ERA, there have been many changes in the primary school and, although the head teacher remains ultimately responsible for the school environment, “many factors restrict, condition or otherwise affect the head’s role fulfilment” (Ball, 1987, p.80). The head teacher’s relationship with the teaching staff is important and the style that s/he adopts can play a role in ensuring teacher

support in the evolution of school policy and reaction to reform.

Most leadership styles require a greater or lesser degree of mutual alignment between leader and lead and, as the process of joint action proceeds, mutual adjustment, compromise and negotiation all play a part in the career of the social relationship. (Ball, 1987, p.84)

Evidence from the case studies reveals that the head teacher can play a significant role in the development of the curriculum as much by his/her non-action as action. At Morrison School, for example, the head teacher had succeeded in completely redeveloping the PE curriculum and this was achieved in agreement with the whole school staff. At Sycamore, however, the head teacher appeared to show a minimal interest in the PE curriculum and the subject continued to be taught in the same manner as it had been for a number of years.

Purposeful leadership has been noted as a factor that can make a significant contribution towards school effectiveness (OFSTED, 1995; Mortimore et al 1995). A head teacher, for example, is principally responsible for school policy decisions although they may have been discussed as a whole staff. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of teachers to implement both National and local school policy and it is here that conflict may arise in practice. Thus the predominant issue may not simply be one of interpretation as is suggested by Ball (1992) and Penney (1994) in their analyses of policy implementation in the school context but one of the inter-relationship between the head teacher and other staff. However, the role of the head teacher in the post-ERA school has changed significantly (Craig, 1989; Nias 1989; Webb, 1996) and many responsibilities take him/her away from the "shop floor" and necessitate the delegation of curriculum tasks. "Better Schools" proposed that "each new primary teacher should be equipped to take on a particular responsibility for one aspect of the curriculum" and by 1989 all initial teacher training courses in England and Wales had to prepare students for this role. The head teacher's relationship with the PE co-ordinator, and the clear definition of their roles, therefore, is crucial to the future

development of PE in the primary school.

Teachers in the past have been regarded as background figures (Tipton, 1988), acknowledged by their presence but their power and influence have rarely been described. This was evident in the lack of consultation with teachers in the development of the National Curriculum. It is now accepted, however, in the literature on educational change, that they have a key role to play in the success or failure of any innovation or initiative. It is in the classroom that policy and practice are defined through the process of implementation. The actions of class teachers are crucial in determining the success and failure of any innovation. A teacher is arguably “potentially an agent of social transformation through the educational process” (George et al, 1985, p.145). Teachers are the most abundant actors in the educational system and may be regarded as the heart of the primary education system (Harrison and Theaker, 1989; Wragg, 1993; McNamara, 1994).

It is in the ‘classroom’ that the decisions made elsewhere must be accommodated. The simple arguments of the debate are invariably overwhelmed by the complexities of classroom life. The language employed here is the everyday discourse of pragmatism. (Ball, 1987, p.39). When considering the “complexities of classroom life” implementation might, for example, provide an opportunity for teachers to maintain established teaching patterns despite the advent of innovation. Schools are characterised by a degree of ‘looseness’ resulting from the autonomy of the classroom teacher (Bidwell, 1965) and this has remained true despite the introduction of the National Curriculum for PE. Whilst PE may be taught in terms of Areas of Activity, the National Curriculum does not offer any guidance on teaching style or methods and this is left to the interpretation of the individual teacher. Ball asserts that this looseness has arisen from the isolation of class teachers who work within a “closed door world”. Lortie (1964) refers to the primary school as “composed of separate classrooms, coordinated by an invisible administrative apparatus”. Tyler (1988) claims that “the self-contained classroom, however artificial, minimises interaction among and teaching and

supervisory staff". However, the issue of autonomy may derive less from physical separation than a teachers' respect for other teachers' professionalism as "primary teachers became strongly imbued with a sense of their professional competence" (Nias, 1989). This was evident in the case studies where head teachers delegated curriculum responsibilities, and PE co-ordinators did not see it as part of their remit to directly monitor or assess their colleagues' teaching. Therefore, it remains possible for teachers in the classroom to make individual interpretations of the curriculum through their teaching practices. This suggests an autonomy that is set within constraints (e.g. National Curriculum, LMS, resources, head teachers' leadership style and school policy) yet it is still possible for teachers to make individual interpretations of the curriculum. In some respects, teachers' sense of control or autonomy may stem, in part, from their experience of the claims which diverse interested parties make on them in their working lives. Teachers must be an arbiter to many people yet, at the same time, adhere to their own ideology that directs them to what is considered educational for the children that they teach.

Teachers are individuals and their backgrounds will differ in terms of their training, experience, age and sex. This might affect the quality of opportunities available to children in their PE lessons. The primary sector is dominated by women, as is illustrated by the figures in Appendix T and the infant school, in particular, remains the domain of female teachers. This was clearly reflected in the research population where very few of the teachers in the case study schools were men. Younger teachers, and those who have more recently qualified, will have received a very different teacher training experience to older colleagues. Ball asserts that

Junior staff have, obviously the most recent training, they are likely to have been exposed to up-to-date research on processes of schooling, they may be familiar with the latest curriculum innovation, they will have had opportunities to experiment with unorthodox teaching approaches. (Ball, 1987, p.61)

The make up of a school staff will have a bearing on the general school ethos so that we must assume that women are able to assert powerful influences over teaching methods, the curriculum and, in particular, PE. I do not suggest that there is an overt attempt to manipulate teaching practices but that there may be a subtle adherence to what teachers feel to be appropriate for children and that, in the primary school, this may reflect a feminine opinion.

Conclusion

This research was conducted on a small scale. Six schools were studied but only three are reported in detail here for the reasons explained in pages 81 to 84. This does not provide a basis from which firm generalisations can be made. However, the data provides possibilities for inferences and insights which might be evident in other schools. I have attempted to illustrate the influences on the PE curricula of these schools and outline some of the issues that were pertinent to each case. Subsequent studies have replicated some of the findings of this research (Shaughnessy et al, 1994; Evans, 1996) and further simplification of the NCPE at primary level in 1995 would undoubtedly have reinforced the trend of 'no change' in PE.

There is no doubt that the primary school in general is gradually changing (Pollard, 1994; Alexander 1992; Lofthouse et al, 1993). It has been acknowledged That ERA was not an isolated piece of legislation but an initiative that must be understood within its historical context. There were direct effects on curriculum provision and assessment procedures, but there were also indirect effects on staffing, organisation, teaching methods and management. Whilst there was little evidence of change in primary PE that could be attributed to the National Curriculum, other aspects of ERA were exerting an influence on curriculum provision.

Fears that the National Curriculum could lead to a "deskilling" of teachers from their professional status to that of a classroom technician, however, were unfounded and teachers continued to "hold strong personal value commitments and felt morally

accountable to their pupils and colleagues” (Pollard, 1995,p. 228). Whilst their role changed teachers were able to exert an influence over their teaching through a number of strategies which included compliance, incorporation, mediation and resistance to reform. In the case of PE, the organisation of the curriculum and the way in which it was taught remained an issue for the individual school and the teachers within. Pollard et al, in their study of changing primary schools commented that

At the whole school level, our understanding of the changing requirements under the ERA led us to anticipate that the analytic themes of values, understanding and power would find expression in the different ways in which schools responded to externally imposed change and the nature of the resistance, if any, imposed by such impositions. (Pollard et al, 1994, p.236)

The particular circumstances surrounding the development of the National Curriculum for PE and the wider context in which it is located have ensured that the implementation of the subject has been a process in many schools, that can be described as neither “reform or revolution” (Alexander, 1992). Whilst ERA created the structure in which schools must operate, teachers were able to deal with pragmatic concerns within a dominant ideology of primary education.

Notes

1. The results of this survey were reported in the following publications:

Penney, D., Evans, J. with Henninck, M. and Bryant, A. (1994) *The Implementation of the National Curriculum for Physical Education: Report of Findings of a Questionnaire Survey of State Primary Schools*, Loughborough University.

Evans, J., Penney, D. Bryant A. and Henninck, M. (1996) All things bright and beautiful? PE in primary schools post the 1988 Education Reform Act, *Educational Review*, **48** (1).

Post-Script – Post ERA

The fieldwork for this research was carried out between 1991 and 1993. These were early days for the National Curriculum for PE and discussion about the content and context of PE continued throughout this time. This final post-script addresses some of the issues that have become relevant to the provision of PE in the primary school in later years.

Simplification of the National Curriculum for PE

In response to the concern about curriculum overload at primary level, a discussion paper was produced by the DES in 1992. The report advocated a review of “available evidence about the delivery of education in primary schools” in order to “make recommendations about curriculum organisation, teaching methods and classroom practice appropriate for the successful implementation of the National Curriculum particularly at Key Stage 2” (DES, 1992, p.1). The report acknowledged that the task of the primary teacher had changed dramatically in recent years, particularly since the advent of the National Curriculum, and concern was expressed for the adequacy of teaching in the “key skills”.

It is evident that primary schools have undergone a period of considerable disturbance over the last three years. Much of this disturbance had impacted on Key Stage 1 classes, as teachers have had to undertake training and preparation, for example, for the new assessment arrangements. How far such interruptions to the pattern of work have affected standards of literacy and numeracy is difficult to say. (p.11)

The report made reference to the continuing resistance of the primary sector to organise the curriculum in terms of specific subjects, claiming that “the subject is a necessary feature of the modern primary curriculum” (p.1). It was stated that “there is clear evidence to show that much topic work has lead to fragmentary and superficial teaching and learning” (p.2), however, it also acknowledged that the extent of subject

knowledge required in order to teach all areas of the National Curriculum was more than could reasonably be expected of many class teachers. The problem of shortage of subject expertise was recognised and it was stated that every primary school, should, in principle have direct access to specialist expertise in all nine National Curriculum subjects (and religious education). Specialist and semi-specialist teachers were recommended to strengthen the existing roles of class teacher and this was recognised as an issue to be addressed at the level of initial teacher training.

The changing role of the head teacher in the post-ERA school was recognised. However, in response to the claim that head teachers under LMS would become administrators rather than teachers, the report stated that “we reject this view absolutely” claiming that

The task of implementing the National Curriculum and its assessment arrangements requires head teachers, more than ever, to retain and develop the role of educational leader...Head teachers are uniquely placed to look across the whole school for the purpose of judging its strengths and weaknesses, spotting incipient problems, drawing attention to works of distinction and to aspects of work which call for improvement. (p.46)

The report, compiled within a short timetable and based on a review of “available evidence” rather than empirical study, was criticised by teachers. Once again the primary school teacher had been denigrated and many of the recommendations were considered unworkable. The result, however, was to open up an ensuing debate about the management of the National Curriculum in the primary school.

Between April and July 1993, Sir Ron Dearing, on behalf of the SCAA carried out consultations concerning a number of key issues which lead to a review of all ten National Curriculum subjects. His remit for the review of primary education was to determine:

- the scope for slimming down the curriculum
- the future of the ten level scale
- how to simplify the testing arrangements
- how to improve the administration of the National Curriculum and the tests

The ultimate aim of which was to:

- simplify the programmes of study
- reduce the volume of material to be taught
- reduce the prescription so as to give more scope for professional judgement
- ensure that the orders are written in a way which offers maximum support to the classroom teacher

At Key Stages 1 and 2 it was acknowledged that:

- the review should slim down the National Curriculum, make the order less prescriptive, and free some 20% of teaching time for use at schools' discretion, by determining an essential core to be taught in each subject
- discretionary time should be used to support work in the basics of literacy, oracy and numeracy, and then to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding in the other NC subjects. Schools should be accountable to the governing bodies to demonstrate that the time released is well used.
- the review should define the essentials which must be taught at each Key Stage, should reduce the number of Attainment Targets and statements of attainment, but should not change the basic content of the Programmes of Study except where there is a clear need to do so.
- each National Curriculum subject should be taught in the first three key stages, but the review of the curriculum should recognise the prime importance of mastery of the basics of learning, including literacy, oracy, numeracy and a basic competence in the use of information technology.
- no further change should be made to the National Curriculum for five years.

The Final Report recognised that assessment arrangements in the primary school had been too complex and time-consuming. In 1994 recommendations were made to simplify them. At Key Stage 1 statutory tests were held in English, maths and science only, and at Key Stage 2 the tests were to be treated as a voluntary national pilot.

In the slimming down of the National Curriculum, PE remained a Foundation subject and was simplified in January 1995. New Statutory Orders were distributed to schools to be implemented in September 1995. The Programmes of Study at Key Stage 1 were defined in terms of three Areas of Activity, namely:

- Games
- Gymnastic Activities
- Dance

This reflected the provision of many infant schools in England and Wales, and certainly resembled that which had been witnessed in the case study schools. At Key Stage 2 there was very little change. In addition to the above, the following Areas of Activity were also compulsory:

- Athletic Activities
- Outdoor and Adventurous Activities
- Swimming

The single Attainment Target for all Key Stages was retained. Thus, PE, already less prescriptive than other Foundation subjects became further simplified at Key Stage 1 and, therefore, more amenable to interpretation.

The Physical Education Association of England and Wales welcomed the simplification of the NCPE at primary level, particularly as it continued to confirm the

place of PE as a compulsory subject. The following statement was made

It also supports the attempts by the SCAA to make the Physical Education Curriculum more manageable, accessible and use-friendly for the non-specialist Primary School teacher. (1995)

The reduction in activities at Key Stage 1 was welcomed and the balance regarded as an appropriate package to establish “movement literacy” at this level. It was recognised in the text that there would be no role for formal team games at this age, but also that no reference was made to “fun and enjoyment”, which had been included in previous orders. There remained some concern at Key Stage 2 as to whether all six Areas of Activity could be achieved. Again, it would be the jurisdiction of individual schools to devise a curriculum that met their own needs as well as those of the National Curriculum within their given resources. No time recommendation was stated, however, the PEA advocated a minimum allocation of two hours per week.

Rose commented that there had been little real change in the Orders except at the infant level and that this was because

Physical Education was one of the last subjects to come on line, the original orders were much more realistic than those introduced earlier. This has meant that the subject has needed less reduction than those introduced earlier and fewer changes in the recent revision. (1995, p.19)

Rose described the revised Orders as “realistic and workable framework for primary teachers and a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils”. He stressed, however, that the reduced Programmes of Study outlined the minimum provision and emphasised that the “national associations recommend that a minimum of two hours a week be allocated to the subject”.

Bell (1994), however, claimed that the revised National Curriculum for PE did little to advance the cause of the subject. Whilst he acknowledged that the ultimate result of the Dearing Report was the fundamental decision to hand the responsibility for the content and delivery of the primary curriculum back to teachers, he asserted that Bakers' original philosophy of a broad and balanced provision for all children had been compromised. He referred to this statement, which had once been considered the principle aim behind the National Curriculum, as rhetoric that had "outgrown its manageable usefulness" (p.3). Bell claimed that Dearing had succeeded in creating a curriculum that emphasised Maths and English and left the teacher and the school to "design and deliver the other subjects in the myriad of flexible approaches that can be adapted". The challenge to schools, therefore, would be to

Design a whole school curriculum model balanced and suited to the particular children in a school; addressing all of their needs; conscious of how to overcome deficiencies in resources and challenge the traditional staff prejudices. (Bell, 1994, p.3)

Whether this challenge will be met by schools is a matter that remains to be investigated. However, in the light of evidence from the case studies and other research carried out between 1991 and 1993, it is more likely that the teaching of PE will have continued little changed during the five years following the Dearing Report.

Raising the Profile of PE in the Primary School

One of the indirect effects of the inclusion of PE as a Foundation subject has been the raised profile of PE. Many different interested parties have claimed the right to a place in the debate about the nature and content of physical activities in the primary school. Individuals and organisations have produced guides for the implementation of the PE curriculum, each one intending, often in a subtle way, to influence practice and promote their own agendas. A few of many examples are listed in this section. The Arts Council produced a guide for teachers "to improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts" expressed through dance (1993, p.i). National governing

bodies of sport, recognising the lack of trained PE teachers at primary level developed 'mini' versions of sports and produced adapted equipment, award schemes and curriculum projects aimed at the primary school, for example, the Rugby Football Union devised a "cross-curricular project for primary schools". Commercial organisations as diverse as Lucozade and Tampax sponsored leaflets and brochures promoting participation in different sports and health-related activities. The Sports Council directed numerous campaigns aimed at increasing the participation of young people in sport (Sport for All; Action Sport; What's Your Sport? Why Physical Education). PE since ERA, it would seem, had become the target of both commercial and professional interest.

There was very little evidence in any of the case study schools that the texts such as those mentioned above had been accepted or adopted into the context of the primary school. In one of the schools (Morrison) the PE curriculum was open to outside agencies but the head teacher had been careful to select those that were in agreement with the general ethos of the school and the particular philosophy of the PE curriculum. A study by Jones in 1993 similarly found that teachers in primary schools remained remote from attempts to influence the PE curriculum. Jones revealed a "serious gap" in the communication between the PE professions and practitioners and noted that few teachers were familiar with innovations in PE that had taken place over the last decade. Few respondents in the study, for example, knew of initiatives such as the Happy Heart Project, the British Heart Foundation Project on skipping or Games for Understanding. None had heard of publications such as the British Journal of Physical Education, or the supplement Primary PE Focus. This suggests that teachers continue to adhere to their own methods and ideologies in their teaching of PE. Whilst the PE professions were lamenting the neglect of PE prior to ERA (Murdoch, 1985, 1986; Meek, 1986; Parry 1987) teachers were simply continuing the task of teaching that they had been charged with. However, an effect of the National Curriculum for PE and the ensuing interest by 'outsiders' was the creation of a wealth of information about the subject to which teachers could have access if they chose to seek it.

Few books aimed specifically at teaching PE in schools had been available prior to 1988. Post-ERA the situation had changed dramatically. In the following table I have compared three documents concerned with primary PE that were produced after the introduction of the National Curriculum. I have taken, as an example, the teaching of games as this an activity that is at the centre of many debates about sport, competition, and so forth. The references have been selected at random from a number of books and guides available from libraries and do not indicate my personal reflection on the quality of the texts. I feel, however, that they are representative of the publications that are available. The three texts are:

Teaching Physical Education at Key Stages one and two
produced by the Physical Education Association of Great
Britain (1994);

Find a Space! A Primary Teacher's Guide to Physical
Education and Health-Related Exercise by Pain, Price,
Forest-Jones and Longhurst (1997).

Primary Physical Education. Implementing the National
Curriculum by Bunker, Handy, Smith and Almond (1994).

In the following table (overleaf) I compare some of the aims and objectives that are outlined in sample lesson plans. All three texts emphasised a similar skills-based approach. Whilst PE has changed little despite the National Curriculum, it is my view that there are (or will be) effects on the PE provision in primary schools that are more indirect. The discussion surrounding the inclusion of PE as a Foundation subject and the subsequent debate about the content of the curriculum has ensured that PE, neglected for a number of years (or at least excluded from debate) has been assured a place in primary education. Whilst teachers were specifically excluded from the NC debate, they do have access to a number of practical texts – if they wish. The debate has provided interest in the subject, a focus for attention and discussion. It has introduced issues such as planning and progression that are now documented.

Table 15: Comparison of Three Teaching Texts re. PE

	1994	Pain et al 1997	Bunker et al 1994
KS1	Lesson Objectives: To teach pupils how to use space safely. To encourage pupils to handle a range of equipment, practice skills of their own choice and explore possibilities in play.	Aims of lesson (focus): To develop hand-eye co-ordination. To experience using different types and sizes of ball in different situations. To involve the children in running, dodging, stretching and bending movements.	Children in the first two years of their primary schooling are far from ready for the hustle and bustle of the traditional games which continue to be play(eds.) With this in mind, it is recommended that 'tag' games, which require youngsters to dodge, avoid others and develop an awareness of space, are introduced for five to seven year olds.
KS2	Lesson Objectives: To improve footwork and general mobility in a game situation. To develop simple tactical understanding.	Aims of lesson (focus). To develop skills of throwing, catching and travelling. To introduce the concept of space, momentum and team work. To involve children in running, dodging, passing and receiving a ball.	A 'games' education is fundamental to the approach taken in the material presented in the National Curriculum: so, while it is important to allocate time for the practice and performance of skills, it is as well to remember that the skills should, whenever possible, be embedded into a game of some sort.

There is a possibility that there might be more uniformity in provision in future if these texts are followed, i.e. by teachers who might previously have not accorded PE a high status in the curriculum. Specific Areas of Activity not previously taught might be adopted by some teachers. The National Curriculum, therefore, has prompted teachers to address their provision, even if only for them to conclude that what they are doing is adequate. Responsibility, and therefore, control, remains with the teacher and their interpretation of the Statutory Orders.

Inspection and Good Practice

A further effect of ERA that has not been dealt with in detail in the case studies is that of inspection. PE, while not formally assessed is included in OFSTED inspections of primary schools. This introduces the complex issue of good practice in PE. The National Curriculum does not deal with the issue of teaching methods in PE, nor does it attempt to define 'good practice'. OFSTED (1995) describes good practice in terms of the following characteristics:

- high quality teaching;
- high expectations and high levels of achievement;
- effective curriculum organisation and planning;
- effective systems of assessment, recording and reporting;
- well-qualified staff and planned development; and
- sufficient and appropriate equipment and accommodation.

Once again, it remains the responsibility of the individual school to create a PE curriculum around these parameters. In 1995, OFSTED produced a survey of good practice and stated that effective co-ordination of the subject was best achieved when

the headteacher was enthusiastic about physical education and provided support for the subject co-ordinator. Good subject co-ordinators were confident and knowledgeable about the subject. All the successful schools had a clear policy for physical education and established routines for dress, behaviour and apparatus handling. (p.3)

Findings by OFSTED during the early days of school inspection (1993/1994) continued to reveal the variable provision of PE in the primary school. Standards of achievement were considered to be good in about half of schools at Key Stages 1 and 2, and weak in about one in ten schools. The teaching of PE was considered to be "good" in more than two-fifths of primary schools and weak in about one in five. It was stated that "many teachers in primary schools teach with confidence, although

the pattern in individual schools is variable” (p.53). The best teaching was characterised by clearly delivered instructions and a focus on skills learning and improvement though it was noted that

not all teachers reach this high standard and schools need to seek greater consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school...The best teachers provide fine role models for pupils by setting good standards and in their dress and attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle. (p.53)

In general the balance of activities at Key Stage 1 was considered to be good. At Key Stage 2, however, there was frequently inadequate provision for outdoor and adventurous activities and athletics activities. The development of the PE curriculum was in the hands of a subject co-ordinator. Clay (1995) commented that in many cases this role had been given to a newly appointed teacher or, in some schools, a NQT, thus, indirectly indicating its perceived status. Whilst most schools had a PE co-ordinator, a high proportion did not have a job description. Their roles varied but in the best examples, they provided effective leadership in the subject, working alongside colleagues to improve practice. Assessment and recording were not well developed in PE. In some cases a system for assessment and recording was in place but not adhered to in practice. The picture nationally was very mixed with some positive examples of recording practices relating to the Programmes of Study. In the vast majority of schools no formal recording system existed.

Comment

The issues discussed above were all outside the scope of this study, however, their influence on the provision of PE in the primary school has been acknowledged.

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Appendices

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Rationale for Interview Questions

There are many issues that need to be addressed in order to assess the ability of the primary sector to implement the National Curriculum for Physical Education. The National Curriculum Council (1992) regards primary PE as one of its priorities and identifies the following issues as areas of concern:

- Resources
- Safety
- Familiarity with orders
- School policy
- Priorities
- Role of the PE Co-ordinator
- INSET support
- Planning
- Balance

This is echoed in the findings of a survey by the National Union of Head Teachers (1991) who see the potential problem areas as:

- Staff
- Training
- Facilities
- Resources
- Delivery of the programme
- Swimming

These issues are discussed further in a paper given by Thomson (1991) re. primary PE (SCOPE Conference 'Beyond the National Curriculum'). He claims that the introduction of the National Curriculum for PE is set against a background of "stress, turbulence and change" in which primary teachers have been criticised for their teaching methods and standards in education. The following initiatives represent a devaluation of teachers as professionals:

- Documentation for all subjects
- Records of achievement
- Nationally prescribed assessment tests
- LMS - "Less Means for Survival"
- Appraisal
- Teachers' salary negotiation rights suspended

The implications for primary PE in this context are varied. PE is an area in which many teachers lack confidence yet it has received the least attention in the National Curriculum. In-service training will be important but there are financial implications

post-LMS. The role of the PE co-ordinator has been identified as of crucial importance. The stress, at primary level on the core skills of the “three Rs” (reading, writing and arithmetic) further reduces the status of PE. He cites the following as issues that need to be addressed re. PE provision.

- Time
- Finance
- Facilities
- LMS
- Continued use of jargon
- Little expertise in some areas, e.g. dance
- Planning – the National Curriculum document (DES, 1991) does not help

He concludes with a reflection that teaching is based on attitudes and knowledge and not activities. He feels that the NCPE presents an opportunity for a more balanced programme for PE, however, there remain more questions than answers.

Issues for Primary PE:

Resources

There is some concern that the Education Reform Act will have considerable implications on resources and that many primary schools will experience some difficulties. Historically underfunded in comparison to the secondary sector this issue will need to be addressed. Small and rural schools will face the greatest problems, as formula funding will, indirectly, mean that they cannot raise additional funds with which to supplement their income. 'Resources' is a term that needs clarification:

- Equipment
- Facilities
- Staff

The school system in England and Wales has resulted in a network of schools of various size and type each with different needs and resources. Not all schools will be starting from the same 'base'.

Equipment

There is much concern that PE as a low status subject may lose out in the competition between departments and subjects for funds. The picture however may not be as bleak as it is painted, at least as far as equipment is concerned. In most of the Areas of Activity for example, it is often the case that very little equipment is needed. Dance requires only a tape recorder and music, gymnastics need not use expensive, fixed equipment and often smaller, more versatile equipment such as beanbags, hoops and ribbons may be more appropriate in the early years. Therefore, there may not be a great problem with equipment in the primary school, unless there is a lack of even the very basic apparatus. Larger fixed apparatus (e.g. wall bars) that many schools have

'inherited' is generally inappropriate for teaching young children but those schools that do own such apparatus will need to ensure that there are funds to cover the cost of maintenance.

Facilities

Facilities are a greater concern. Again there will be considerable variation between schools concerning availability of and access to facilities. Larger schools may have extensive grounds and access to a swimming pool whilst smaller schools may have little more than a playground and a school hall where PE lessons have to fit around assemblies and lunchtimes. The NAHT (1992) report claimed that the majority of schools have an 'indoor space', though the nature of this space is not defined. It states that most teachers regarded this space as "large enough to cope". Outdoor facilities are more of a problem area. Most schools have a playground of some kind and access to a playing field. However, the cost of maintaining outdoor facilities can be expensive and there is evidence that many playing areas may not meet Government requirements re. drainage and maintenance. Few schools have their own swimming pool, or one that is adequate (many primary school pools that do exist are outdoor and consequently not in use for much of the year). If schools are to teach swimming then many will have to rely on off-site facilities. Community facilities may be expensive to hire and there are additional problems of time and transportation. Few teachers will be qualified to teach swimming and will have to rely on staff employed by the pool. An additional concern is that under the ERA school facilities could become a valuable fund-generating asset. Extra-curricular activities could be affected if outside agencies pay to hire facilities that might normally be used for sports clubs. In extreme cases there is a possibility that land could be sold in order to solve the problem of high maintenance costs or to generate funds.

Staff

The greatest resource in any activity is the teacher. Often there is no substitute for the imagination and interest of a well-trained teacher. However, the lack of confidence of many non-specialists in teaching PE, and over-riding concerns for safety and class control, have in the past inhibited innovation and restricted childrens' opportunities for participation in a variety of activities. The NCPE expects generalist-trained class teachers to teach six different Areas of Activity without any specialism in the subject. In the primary school teachers tend to be generalists teaching their own class across all subject areas, few will possess any specialist qualifications in PE. There is concern that as the PE teaching component in Initial Teacher Training courses diminishes, the quality of teaching in PE will deteriorate. In 1984 the PEA Standing Study Group on Primary Physical Education stated that

The answer to a deteriorating standard in the teaching of PE in primary schools...rests with the teacher training institutions and those that validate their courses (p.29) ¹.

In 1991 SCOPE reported that the PE component in initial teacher training courses varied from 15-75 hours, average 40. Their recommendation is 100 hours². There will

be increasing problems of lack of confidence amongst newly qualified teachers, though experienced teachers too may lack confidence and expertise in some areas of PE, e.g. gymnastics. Concern for safety and class control often guide the PE lessons in primary schools. Many teachers bring with them a bad school experience of PE (at secondary level) that is not overcome by ITT. In schools, often role models are poor. INSET for non-specialists is vital if teachers are to be able to interpret and teach the National Curriculum.

Time

ERA provides no recommendations concerning the amount of time to allow for the National Curriculum for PE in primary schools, other than that 'reasonable time' should be allowed in which to complete the Programmes of Study for each Area of Activity. Neither is there any indication of the amount of time that should be given to each individual activity or when they should be introduced within each Key Stage. Although balance, a recurring theme of the National Curriculum, is important both across the general school curriculum and within each subject, teachers have been given no guidance on time management for PE. As there are six activities to be covered at Key Stage 1 and 2 (although there is some flexibility as to when swimming is taught) many difficulties could arise in simply trying to fit them all into the existing timetables. PE is the last subject to come on-line and the time allotted to it may already have been restricted to that which remains after the core and other foundation subjects have been covered. Warburton and Gibbon (1991) claim that realistically schools could provide three sessions of PE per week, although daily would be ideal. They do not, however, recommend how long these sessions could be. The problem of 'curriculum overload' is difficult to solve at this late stage and it may be necessary to employ some 'creative' curriculum design strategies in order to be able to cover all of the elements of the National Curriculum. It has been suggested that some of the areas could be combined, or covered in activities carried out every day in the school, e.g. using climbing frames at playtime could be termed outdoor education! This would hardly represent a broad and balanced curriculum, or help to portray PE as educational.

The PE Co-ordinator

Some form of specialism may need to develop in the primary school. The role played by the PE co-ordinator (or curriculum leader) will be vital for the future and quality of PE. The PE co-ordinator is likely to be a class teacher as well as a PE specialist, or they may simply be a class teacher who has an interest in the subject. Enthusiasm may be more important than qualifications. The co-ordinator will be a central person with whom teachers can consult and confide, someone with responsibility for the interpretation of the National Curriculum and dissemination of this information. A leader who can organise INSET (whether school-based or external), an allocator of resources and a strong voice for PE on the school governing board. The tasks of a PE co-ordinator is summed up by Gibbon.

- Ensuring continuity of experience
- Preparation of documentation
- Exploitation of resources
- Ensuring a range of experience
- Facilitating cross-curricular activity
- Staff development

Williams (1990) sees the role as disseminating information to ensure the principles of:

- Entitlement
- Accessibility
- Integration
- Integrity

In essence the PE co-ordinator will need to be a resource him/herself representing a valuable asset for the school.

Financial Concerns

One of the most radical elements of ERA is the delegation of the management of the budget to the schools. There is continuing debate concerning the benefits and disadvantages of this system. The benefits of flexibility of finance, the ability to match resources to the individual needs of the school and the potential of securing savings must be weighed against the disbenefits; increased administration responsibilities of the head and staff, the possibility of competition between subjects for funds and resources and the limitations of a pre-set budget (the flexibility of the budget is an issue of contention, how much for example is left after essential expenses such as salaries are accounted for?) Cost-efficiency and value for money will become important to the organisation of the school. There is concern that it might overshadow the real business education, that of teaching and learning. This potential competition for resources may be echoed in the policy of Open Enrolment and formula-based funding. A higher pupil roll will mean more money, but where will these funds be directed?

The Role of the Head Teacher

The financial implications of the Education Reform Act necessitate changes in the role of the head teacher. Ultimately responsible for decisions made within the school, it is important that the teachers share his/her educational philosophy. Consultation and discussion are vital between the head and teachers if goals are to be set and needs met. The head teacher will now be responsible for a great deal more administration and managerial tasks largely imposed by LMS but educational concerns must not be neglected. The school must function as a unit. The governing body must be representative of the various subject interests within the school and not merely a vehicle for information exchange whilst decisions continue to be made by the head teacher. The function of the governing body must not be the "juggling of meagre resources between competing demands or fund-raising through poaching children from other schools" (Hild Kean, 1991).

Notes

1 In 1996, after this research project was completed, a survey was carried out by Carney and Armstrong concerning primary ITT. The responses revealed wide variations between training institutions. The time allocation ranged from 4 to 60 hours with marked differences between undergraduate courses and PGCE: Average undergraduate provision – 33 hours; average PGCE provision – 21 hours.

2. As part of my preparations for data collection and to gain some insight into the issues surrounding teacher training and the implementation of the NCPE, I interviewed two ITT tutors at different institutions in the county in which the study is set. The findings of these interviews are reported in Appendix R and S.

Conferences Attended 1991/1992

16/11/91 – 17/11/91	SCOPE Annual Conference , Manchester. 'Beyond the National Curriculum' NC implications for PE Teacher Education INSET
12/02/92	Education Reform Act Research Network Seminar , Warwick University. Impact of LMS Organisational Structure
21/02/92	National Curriculum Council Conference , Loughborough University. NSG SEN Implementation INSET
09/03/92	National Curriculum Council Conference , Exeter. NSG Cross-curricular Matters
19/05/95	Policy Implementation Day , Kings College. NC and Assessment Institutional Change Policy and Practice
02/07/92	ESRC Research Seminar , Warwick University. Methodological Issues RE. ERA

Pilot Interview

Informal meeting with 'Eric', Head Teacher of ----- school (an LMS school, though not Phase 1).

4th Feb 1992

Topics to discuss:

Personal experience of **ERA88**

LMS & formula funding

More/less? Money available for PE – effects of LMS

Predictions for the future?

“Competition” from other subjects for funds?

National Curriculum – changes needed?

Problems/difficulties – Time
 Teacher training
 INSET
 Resources
 Budget

Opinion of **NCPE** e.g. PoS, EoKSS

Equal opportunities/CCM/SEN?

PE Policy – aims behind the PE programme

Overall **ability to deliver** PE under the ERA88

LMS – Differences Between Schools

There will be financial differences between small and large schools.

Premises consideration. Schools vary a great deal in their facilities and scope for improvement. “Site interference” – size, age Etc. Under LMS you are always having to look at the cost-effectiveness of any venture to improve or expand.

Individual circumstances differ. Eric quotes an example of two large (500+ pupils) schools in ----- that were planning to build a swimming pool between them for their own use and also to let to other schools/groups. They calculated that this would be financially viable and would save money in the long term,. These schools, however, were different to Eric’s in size and catchment area and such a venture would not be possible for ----- School.

LMS, therefore, can channel initiative depending on the school’s individual circumstances.

Another example of differences in circumstances was ----- School (now GM). Originally 12-16, changed to 11-16. The money that used to go to the primary school now goes to the secondary school. They had hoped to build a sports hall with it but now this may not be possible.

INSET

Although soon to come into the National Curriculum, PE was not at the present an INSET priority. “INSET is less effective than initial training and less interesting” says Eric. Motivation is more important and this is something that you have no control over as a head, this was down to individual teachers.

INSET is expensive and low in both quality and quantity. He thought it would be better, if possible, to second one teachers from a school to be trained properly.

PE over the last few years has, in Eric’s opinion, increased but not in quality. Direct teaching has always been neglected. Often the game situation is introduced too early to young children and this creates a “veneer” of “good games”. Most children enjoy playing team games, parents feel their child is receiving a good PE programme.

He saw a tension between games for all and games re. NGBs. Many children have outside opportunities to participate in clubs such as gymnastics or dance, judo Etc. Is this a reason to compete continually and to allow those who cannot afford outside “coaching” an opportunity or is it a reason to concentrate on educational games instead (good point!)

Will the National Curriculum promote elitism further?

He sees INSET as improving gradually – in answer to the “market”. Courses are expensive when you have supply cover to consider and there is the need to feel that you have received value for money. At his own school there are enough people who are capable but they need help to bridge their large gap of knowledge.

An ideal would be a PE curriculum leader trained in the subject and with this as their only responsibility for all children in the school. This a luxury the school cannot afford, though Eric did mention that he thought Dorset has a similar system.

Eric is a great advocate of qualifications as long as they are useful. All his staff attended a water safety course regardless of whether they teach swimming.

He is critical of combining MAEd and INSET courses – each group has different needs and expectations which may not be compatible. Surprisingly though he did not advocate that courses were more practical – he believed that there was too much emphasis on the part of the student and not enough exchange of experience.

Better training in college is essential – though this is at a time when the PE component on ITT is being dramatically reduced.

Governors

Influence remains within the sphere of the head teacher. The governing body has changed little in its decision-making process. New (and established) governors have attended LEA organised courses but these have been criticised – “generally inappropriate, badly organised and poorly prepared”.

He admits that in a small school (150 pupils) the head may have more influence over the governing body than in a larger school. He does not see it as the board of governors in charge and his decision is generally agreed upon re. day-to-day matters.

National Curriculum

The proposals are weak – “not enough teeth”, but they are a promising start. Much still depends upon the strength of individuals and their motivation and interest.

Most important are the following.....

Statutory status
Awareness of PE
Resources

In order to enable the implementation of NCPE to an adequate standard.

PE faces a serious status problem – mainly historical. The subject must be statutory to be taken seriously. Parents, for example, often admire achievements in PE – school teams, competitions, displays Etc. that give the school a chance to “show off” but their interest stops here. In choosing a school for their child parents still tend to send them to the nearest – PE achievement is not their priority criteria. Class size is more important, convenience and, possibly, test results.

Raising awareness of PE and its importance is vital. This applies to teachers, parents and pupils. “The education of the educators”.

As far as resources are concerned, the most important resource is the staff. Eric sees few problems re. LMS/NCPE in this area. He does not believe that you need expensive equipment to teach and for children to enjoy many activities.

Facilities must be considered under resources – field, pools Etc. If schools do not have these on-site then access (and £s) must be arranged for it.

Outdoor/adventurous activities and swimming – neglected by NCPE – are important for children as they promote an awareness of issues such as safety, initiative, variety, independence, that cannot be taught in the classroom.

Conclusion

Eric is optimistic about PE and ERA88, he does, however, realise that being a small school with a restricted working class catchment area, he may face some financial difficulties. He does not predict that these will affect PE but it too early to tell. The only significant PE expense is swimming but he believes that he will be able to juggle his budget to ensure that his pupils continue to learn to swim.

He believes strongly in the value of PE and does not see it as a secondary subject recognising its cross-curricular and developmental contribution to the whole education of the child.

Don't panic over PE

PHYSICAL education is a subject that is often a cause of concern to primary teachers, particularly those that are newly qualified. It is difficult to give a non-specialist teacher the depth of understanding necessary to teach PE.

And younger teachers often lack confidence in teaching PE, which makes the subject even more difficult to teach. Confidence is something that is not taught, but develops gradually.

In initial teacher training today, however, the time allocated to teach students PE is slowly being eroded. A recent SCOPE (Standing Conference on Physical Education) report revealed that although the recommended teaching time for the PE component is 100 hours, courses ranged from 15 to 75 hours, with an average of 40 hours, the problem being particularly acute for intensive PGCE courses.

Valuable time is being lost in which students can be helped to overcome their difficulties and to develop self-confidence in their own teaching.

PE is different from other subjects in that many students bring with them negative 'models' of their own school experience. Although this generally relates to their secondary school experience rather than primary, preconceived ideas and poor role models are firm barriers against a change of attitude and are not removed easily.

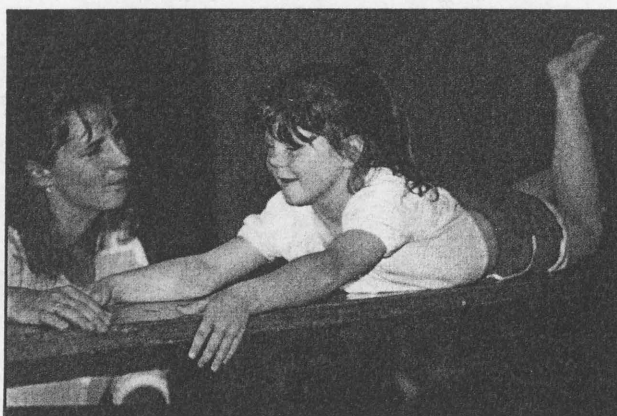
Anne, the youngest teacher interviewed and the most recently qualified, agrees: "A lot of people are very unsure when it comes to PE. It's something that we've all got to do but you carry with you all those horrible feelings of PE when you were a child and it's difficult to shake those things off. It's the secondary experience that makes everybody stand back – a bit like maths I suppose."

Teacher trainers, therefore, have what may seem an impossible task on their hands. Tony, a teacher educator involved in PGCE teaching says that PE is one of the "worst courses to teach, perhaps because of its practical base...students tend to back off from it and if they choose to miss a lesson, it is invariably PE."

He believes, however, that the national curriculum helps to provide a much needed incentive for the subject. Students now have a comprehensive, official document – something to work with that sets out a clear rationale for PE.

This sentiment is echoed by many

As part of a research project, Amanda Bryant has been looking at how teachers are dealing with the tricky subject of physical education and the national curriculum in the primary school. Her article is based on interviews with primary school teachers and headteachers with no specific training in PE



High flyer: many non-specialist PE teachers are understandably wary of exercises like this

teachers. David, a headteacher of a junior school, refers to the national curriculum PE orders as "a very user-friendly document. It gives a greater vehicle for an equitable PE programme in that you've got to produce activities which are meeting all children's requirements."

Charles, a teacher with special responsibility for PE in a large primary school, agrees: "I feel that, from what I've read of it, the programmes of study and the general content within the programmes are good. The general thrust I agree with and the ideas behind it I am happy with."

Many teachers found that compared to other subjects the PE documents were far clearer and easier to 'translate' by non-specialists.

Jean is an experienced teacher who feels a certain amount of frustration at this experience apparently being questioned by the national curriculum. She refers to some of the information for other subjects as "verbose...They're assuming that we're not at the chalk face everyday and we are of course, and we know far more about it than most people writing these documents."

As far as PE is concerned, however, she feels that the final result is a help rather than a hindrance and though teachers may be, understandably, a little weary of all the written material that has been directed at them over the last few years it is important that it is not seen as "just another document that they need to sit and read and plough through to work everything out – that it acts as a progression for them."

As Lucy, a PE co-ordinator at an infant school says: "When we went through it, no-one looked up in horror."

The national curriculum gives teachers, for the first time, a framework for PE. Previously, PE has been very much an individual matter for schools to deal with, devising their own programmes according to their individual philosophy and resources.

The interim report is an excellent document. It sets out a clear rationale for PE and provides a great deal of useful background information. The final orders are less detailed (and popular among over-worked teachers because of this) but helpful with lesson planning and form an 'at a glance' guide.

The non-statutory guidance issued

Dance to the right tune

THE NATIONAL curriculum specifies six activities in physical education at key stages 1/2, some of which present greater difficulties than others. Of the six – athletics, games, gymnastics, outdoor education, swimming and dance – it is the latter two that seem to be the most problematic, but dance, at least, now has some extra resources.

Of all the topics in the national curriculum, dance tends to terrify primary school teachers who have never been trained in the subject. Now the Arts Council has come to the aid of all schools seeking to deliver quality dance education.

A working group set up by the council comprised views from the Sports Council, the national curriculum council, school inspectors and dance companies. The result, *Dance in Schools*, aims to assist schools develop a dance curriculum by setting the framework for dance in schools and suggesting styles of approach.

The book, available free of charge to teachers, lists many useful addresses for gathering further information. We can particularly recommend finding out how dance in schools has been developed in Lancashire where a range of initiatives over the last five years has resulted in some exceptional work – including a corps of nine year old football players, plus two hulking games teachers, that performs a brilliant dance to Swan Lake music.

Arranging for a dance company to visit a school is also an highly effective way of involving children in dance.

Details from *Dance Department*, Arts Council, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ. Tel: 071 973 6458.

(seemingly) as an afterthought, however, must not be neglected in our haste to implement the national curriculum for this is where much of the flesh is put on the bones of the final orders.

Anne sees this section as "actually telling people how to implement all the things they are asking you to do. The programmes of study do that to some extent, but non-statutory guidance takes it one step further."

Haste, caused by lack of time, has become a feature of the national curriculum generally. Lucy makes a familiar comment: "All of the national curriculum has come out with a minimum amount of preparation time and I think we all accept it as a *fait accompli*."

The difficulties have been exacerbated because PE is one of the last in a long line of subjects on the national curriculum conveyor belt and has always been seen as a poor relation in comparison to those subjects that are considered more academic.

Charles adds: "We need time to get to grips with the core subjects without worrying about another document coming down which may change" – as indeed many of them have.

While the rightful place of PE in the primary school has been secured by its inclusion in the national curriculum, teachers have to remain realistic. As one teacher says: "I think there's so much being asked of infant teachers at the moment that PE has not become a priority. As long as the children get it, they get it regularly, they enjoy it and we know what we are achieving – I don't think it'll cause any problems."

PE is still seen as important in primary schools despite its relatively low standing in the subject hierarchy and its recreational image. Claire, an experienced headteacher of an infant school insists: "It's not a low status subject at all – the social and self-discipline that comes into the role of a child in that hall is paramount."

And Denise, a headteacher of a large junior school, adds: "I do think that it doesn't get enough priority because other subjects such as local management of schools, testing of seven year olds and so on pushes it into the background and yet in a way we need it more because they need the time to run around with all this pressure on them."

She believes, however, that identifying PE as a priority does not necessarily mean that more time should be devoted to it. "It is not time that is the issue but 'quality time' and one thing that the national curriculum has done is to make



Baton charge: the majority of schools have a PE curriculum leader to help teachers set up more complex exercises

people value time very much."

Safety remains a concern that is constantly to the fore with PE and young children. Lucy is probably one of the most experienced teachers interviewed and she feels that many teachers still approach the subject with caution. "I do find that people are very wary of PE – they don't like to think the children are on the move, they feel they lose control. It's something that people don't like doing and the children soon learn if you are not that confident."

With the national curriculum there is concern that teachers are now being expected to cover activities that they simply have not been trained to teach. Swimming, for example, is an activity that Anne takes with her class but she has no qualification to do so. And creative dance is an area that is often neglected at junior level.

Anne says that with PE as in many other areas: "It is a case of learning things as they happen to you and I'm by no means an expert. I think that because in primary schools we have to do absolutely everything, somehow you are seen to be an expert in every field and of course you never really are."

One of the problems with newly qualified teachers is that, in the absence of

any immediate feedback while teaching their lessons, they are often very unsure that what they are doing is 'correct'.

Anne feels that most teachers are perfectly capable and they need simply to reassure themselves: "It's all very well, the national curriculum's aims, but I think it's really up to us as teachers to get over certain things and to become more confident that what we are doing is the right thing – and hopefully the national curriculum document will do that."

Newly qualified teachers may indeed be in an advantageous position to take on the national curriculum for PE while it is in its infancy. Those training within the last four years or so have been brought up on the national curriculum and have not had to go through the process of relearning that many experienced teachers have criticised.

Denise, for example, believes that a national curriculum is a sound educational idea, but at the same time it is very similar to what was happening in her school anyway.

She adds: "Although we welcome the structure and the focus of it, we are also resentful of the turning around of the whole thing on its head to gain a little ground. I'm sure that newly qualified teachers adjust to it a little better."

There is no need, therefore, to panic about the implementation of the national curriculum for PE, and indeed few experienced teachers seem to do so. The majority of schools have a PE co-ordinator or curriculum leader who is more than capable of dealing with initial fears and nervousness of other staff members.

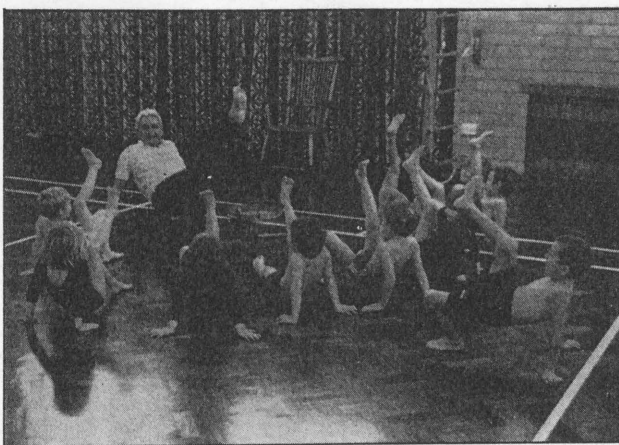
They should be regarded as an asset and used as a human resource, an accessible source of advice and information. Those teachers that I have interviewed clearly demonstrate the wealth of knowledge that Denise refers to and these are people who, perhaps surprisingly, have no specialist qualifications in PE.

Penny is a non-specialist PE co-ordinator who has become accustomed to the 'ways' of the national curriculum and it's intrusion into the primary school: "I'm just taking it on. I mean I don't ever panic about things. Basically I'm just accepting what comes and trying to achieve the best I can. I see it as a challenge – like everything else."

The national curriculum for PE then, should be seen in terms of what it represents – good news for physical education and a positive initiative for primary teachers to take on board. ■

Amanda Bryant is a research student at Southampton University.

Dance class: this creative activity is often neglected at junior level



Interview Topics

National Curriculum:

“Design” of the National Curriculum

Feasibility

Translating the orders

The gap between “policy and practice”

Time:

“Curriculum overload”

Guidance

Resources:

Equipment

Facilities

Staff

Finance and budget

Staff:

Expertise

Confidence – non-specialists

Training and INSET

Initial Teacher Training

Local Management of Schools:

Finance

Decision-making

Time

Role of the Governing Body

The effects of **Open Enrolment** and **Formula Funding**

The role of the **PE Co-ordinator**

The role of the **Head Teacher:**

Changes

Management

School “philosophy”

NB. Many of the above issues are inter-related

General themes:

Flexibility – National Curriculum

Compatibility – NC and LMS

Status – PE in the primary school

Interview Schedule: Head Teacher

Background

Years teaching experience: At this school
 Previous experience
 Teacher training
 PE qualifications

Any other relevant details – sporting interests outside of school/children of own?

Do you still have teaching responsibilities?

PE Curriculum

How would you describe your current PE programme (not in terms of National Curriculum)?

What is the philosophy behind it? (Does it reflect general school philosophy?)

Who is responsible for the content of the curriculum?

How is it organised? (Negotiation with teachers, co-ordinators Etc.)

What is the role of the PE co-ordinator?

National Curriculum

<u>Areas of Activity</u>	Are they taught?
	Difficulties/problems
	Solutions

General on Areas of Activity

What are your preparations for the National Curriculum?

If implementation is in 1993 how will this affect your plans?

How do you intend to facilitate implementation?

How have you disseminated the information that you have received re. National Curriculum to your staff?

e.g. Documentation (school generated/official)
Staff meetings
INSET

I.e. Do your staff know what is expected of them re. NCPE?

Any comments on the Areas of Activity in general or particular?

e.g. Time
Resources
Expertise

Programmes of Study

Comment on - Clarity (e.g. Do they help planning schemes of work)
 - Level of prescriptions
 - Feasibility

Attainment Target

Comment on - Rationale for a single target
 - Assessment issues

Do you foresee any difficulties for teachers?

PE programme

How is your PE curriculum organised? (Weekly, termly Etc.)

Who designs the curriculum? Decisions re:

- Time
- Activities

How are you kept informed about the content of lessons?

How much freedom do you allow the teachers (or PE Co-ordinator) to introduce new initiatives and games?

What is the procedure for innovation?

Are there any changes you would intend to make in the PE curriculum?

How are any of the following elements dealt with:

- Health issues
- Cross-curricular topics

How do you ensure that PE lessons allow for childrens individual differences (NCC, CCM) e.g.

- Sex
- Ability
- SEN
- Race

How do you judge the success of the curriculum?

Why do you have/not have an extra-curricular programme for PE?

Will this provision change in future? (Sports day, open dyad Etc.)

Training and INSET

How would you describe your ITT training for PE?

Current training i.e. level of expertise of new teachers entering the school?

Have you experienced any problems with teachers who feel unable to teach some areas of the curriculum? How would you deal with this?

Have you encouraged staff to attend any INSET courses? Which ones?

What do you perceive to be the most important INSET needs re. PE?

What are your future plans re. INSET?

LMS and Finance

What financial changes have occurred recently in the school:

- LMS
- Budget changes
- Governing body

Have these changes affected your role as head teacher?

- Increase in administration
- Changes in the structure of the governing body
- Decision-making process

(How) will these financial changes affect PE?

Prompts e.g. Resources
 Swimming

If new equipment is needed, what is the procedure for securing it? (Chain of communication between department/class teacher/head)

How would you describe the budget for PE?

How are the interests of PE represented on the school governing body?

What are the implications of a change in the school roll?

- **Open enrolment**
- **Formula funding**

NB. Most of the schools have a falling roll.

Discussion at end of interview:

Changes
Problems/Solutions
Questions
Comments

Etc. Anything that the interviewee particularly wants to discuss.

Interview Schedule: PE Co-ordinator

Background

Years teaching experience: At this school
 Previous experience
 Teacher training
 PE qualifications

Do you teach a class of your own?

How do you manage the increase in workload that must be associated with the post?

How has your workload changes re. class teacher and as a result of your role as co-ordinator?

Reason for taking post?

- Promotion
- Interest
- Suitability

Membership of any organisations/sports clubs/ societies outside of school?

Any other relevant details.

Co-ordinator's Role

How would you describe your role as co-ordinator? ('Job description'?)

What are your responsibilities:

- Curriculum design
- Timetabling
- INSET co-ordination
- Resource management

What are your priorities and main concerns?

What are the aims of your PE programme?
(Compare to Head Teacher)

How do you ensure that they are achieved?

National Curriculum

<u>Areas of Activity</u>	Are they taught?
	Difficulties/problems
	Solutions

General on Areas of Activity

What are your preparations for the National Curriculum?

If implementation is in 1993 how will this affect your plans?

What help have you had in interpreting the orders?

- Documentation (school generated/official)
- Staff meetings
- INSET

Any comments on the Areas of Activity in general or particular?

e.g. Time
Resources

Programmes of Study

Comment on	- Clarity (e.g. Do they help planning schemes of work)
	- Level of prescription
	- Feasibility

Attainment Target

Comment on	- Rationale for a single target
	- Assessment issues

Resources

How would you describe your resources for PE?

How well equipped do you consider the school to be? How do you measure this?

What equipment do you use/not use? Why?

Any other difficulties/shortcomings etc.

Suggestions for improvement? Future Needs?

Facilities

What facilities does the school have?

What facilities does the school have access to?

How would you describe those facilities with reference to current and future use:

- Condition
- Size etc.

How are these facilities used? I.e. by individual classes/combined classes?

How often are they used?

PE Programme

With reference to your current PE programme:

How is your PE curriculum organised? (Weekly, termly etc.)

Who designs the curriculum? Decisions re:

- Time
- Activities

What games and activities do you include in your programme?

How much freedom do you have to introduce new initiatives and games?

What is the procedure if you wish to introduce something new to the programme?

Are there any changes you would like to make? Are there any barriers to this?

Do you include any of the following elements in your teaching or PE? How?

- Health issues
- Cross-curricular topics

How do you ensure that PE lessons allow for childrens individual differences (NCC, CCM) e.g.

- Sex
- Ability
- SEN
- Race

How do you judge the success of the curriculum?

Training and INSET

How would you describe your ITT training for PE?

What have you learned whilst teaching?

Have you attended any INSET courses in connection with your post?

What are your/your colleagues INSET needs?

How would you go about organising this?

How helpful are the County advisors re. PE? How much contact?

LMS and Finance

What financial changes have occurred recently in the school:

- LMS
- Budget changes
- Governing body

(How) will these financial changes affect PE?

Prompts e.g. Resources
 Swimming

If new equipment is needed, what is the procedure for securing it? (Chain of

communication between department/class teacher/head)

How would you describe the budget for PE? (The PE co-ordinator ought to know the finance that is available for PE.)

What are the implications of a change in the school roll for PE?

- **Open enrolment**
- **Formula funding**

Extra-curricular Activities

Why does the school offer/not offer an extra-curricular programme for PE?

What are your future plans in this area?

Is there an extra-curricular programme in other subjects e.g. music, art?

Discussion at end of interview:

Changes
Problems/Solutions
Questions
Comments

Etc. Anything that the interviewee particularly wants to discuss.

Personal opinions/experiences re. NC, LMS, ERA88 etc.

The Effects of the Education Reform Act 1988 on the Provision of Sport and physical Education in State Primary Schools

Summary Report – General Findings

National Curriculum

Teachers had a great deal to say about the National Curriculum generally and were critical of the way in which it had been implemented (in a piecemeal manner, too rapidly and without adequate consultation) and of the mountain of often (unnecessary and verbose) documentation and paperwork that accompanied it. The main criticism was that, although many agreed with the principle of some form of a National Curriculum, many felt that the philosophy behind the current system was questionable and was at variance with their own teaching values – a system imposed from above by people who knew little about the reality of life in the primary school.

The National Curriculum for PE (NCPE), however, was met with more enthusiasm, mainly because of its format which was described as very “user-friendly” compared to other subjects. Teachers generally welcomed the framework for PE and were pleased that it is not too prescriptive, although there was some concern at the wide range of activities that they are expected to deliver, some of which they are unfamiliar with. One criticism was the need for more practical guidance, particularly in terms of the time to be given to the different areas of Activity – they may be reassured by the Non-statutory Guidance (NSG) issued by the DES, though this had not been received at the time of the survey (further evidence of piecemeal implementation!) All felt that current provision would have to be addressed by the school but few problems were foreseen – it would be necessary in most instances to “fill the gaps” between current provision and NFPE in order to come in line with the requirements.

Current Curriculum

The nature of current provision depended largely upon the availability of ‘staff expertise’ and interest, existing resources and facilities and the status accorded to PE. Although there is a great deal of variation between schools and their PE programmes, at the infant level the PE curriculum tends to consist mainly of gymnastics, country dancing and small games, whilst in the junior schools there is more of a games emphasis with children being introduced to adventurous activities through residential courses. PE in some schools has traditionally been seen as a separate entity with little integration into the rest of the curriculum. This is something that is beginning to be addressed (through gymnastics and dance as ‘expressive arts’ and topic themes such as ‘health’), in part, due to the National Curriculum and schools are gradually recognising the potential of PE’s cross-curricular contribution to many areas.

Often 'what' (i.e. what does the NCPE demand?) and 'how' (what resources do we have available?) considerations took priority over 'why' (a sound rationale for PE) in determining the content of the curriculum. Swimming is regarded as a problem area in terms of provision according to the staff, facilities, finance and time available. Given the 'flexibility' of swimming in the NCPE, some infant schools may leave it to the junior school to deliver. Equally middle schools may leave dance or outdoor activities for secondary schools to deal with given the Key Stage 3 overlap. This raises many issues for schools in terms of the mixture of experiences that they have to accommodate with pupils coming from feeder schools offering different PE programmes. The National Curriculum may overcome some of the differences in provision though it does not take into account the inherent individual circumstances of primary schools and how this affects their capacity to deliver.

Time

The problem of "curriculum overload" due to the demands of the National Curriculum is evident in all schools. It is hoped that PE will not intentionally be a casualty of this and none of the schools predicted that time would be reduced because of pressures from other subjects. Teachers appreciate the value of regular PE and many feel that it is more important now, because of the pressures the National Curriculum places on the children, that they have access to a physical release. It may, unfortunately, be the case that other educational "extras" have to be sacrificed, for example, school trips, because of the demands of the National Curriculum timetable. In some schools with a declining roll there may be more time available for PE as the pressures on facilities such as school halls will be reduced – though a falling roll may have other, more detrimental, effects on the school. Daily PE was popular in infant schools, though half hour lessons were often shortened due to changing time. Some schools were considering less frequent sessions for longer periods (i.e. three times a week for forty minutes) which is more in line with the organisation in junior schools.

Facilities

Playing fields vary from small to extensive but are all (with one exception) reasonably adequate for current primary use. As with resources the National Curriculum may demand a review of facilities with respect to outdoor activities and athletics. Most of the schools had convenient access to nearby woodland or other 'open ground' that could be made use of (outdoor education/cross-curricular links with conservation/geography/science etc.) Few schools are fortunate to have access to a separate gymnasium and the school hall, therefore, is in constant use with competition between PE, music, assemblies, dinners and so on. This often causes enormous timetabling difficulties for head teachers to deal with and may mean that the time available for dance/gymnastics, for example, is reduced because of this.

The use of off-site facilities is a contentious issue under the effects of ERA. The National Curriculum has produced a situation where timetables in the primary sector are 'tight' and it may no longer be feasible in the time available to use off-site

facilities due to the travel and changing time involved. None of the schools, however, have an on-site swimming pool (and the general opinion is that they are a financial “millstone” under the existing LMS system), therefore, community facilities have to be hired and arrangements made for a swimming programme that causes as little disruption as possible.

Resources

There is a need in many schools to conduct a review of current provision in the light of the NCPE. All schools have “adequate” resources but PE is expensive to resource well (and to maintain acceptable standards of equipment) and this can sometimes hinder the development of curriculum innovation. Some schools, because of LMS, have been able to identify PE as a priority area and this is very encouraging for PE.

Storage may seem a minor problem but it is a common one in the primary school and is an important consideration when purchasing new equipment. Few schools have adequate storage space as they were not designed with this in mind and though teachers recognise the need to maintain children’s interest by constantly providing them with new stimuli, equipment has to be cared for adequately. Many schools simply have to stack equipment around the outer walls of the hall which is not ideal with regard to safety, whilst others have vired money from their budget to provide additional storage space at often considerable expense.

Finance

Local Management of Schools has, despite initial misgivings, been welcomed by all schools in the survey. Many head teachers commented on problems of familiarisation during the early implementation stages and felt that it took a great deal of personal effort to overcome problems, e.g. the installation of a computer system. All agreed that the ability to allocate their own budget and the flexibility that this allowed the school was a great advantage and they were able to identify their own curriculum priority areas (in some cases PE). Administrative workload, however, had increased significantly because of LMS (as well as other ERA related duties) and some head teachers regretted the subsequent loss of contact with the children – none were now teaching heads.

Staff expertise

All teachers in the survey are generalist trained. Experienced teachers foresee few problems re. NCPE but those who are more recently qualified remain uneasy about certain aspects of the subject, particularly safety. The problem here is seen in terms of inadequate initial training (i.e. insufficient time to cover the subject in any depth) rather than the demands of the National Curriculum. Most would welcome appropriate in-service training in PE but, under LMS, there are considerations of time and finance available for additional training and supply cover. Many teachers were critical of some of the INSET courses that they had attended in the past (few

had attended recent NCPE courses due to cost or because of their past experiences) though it is clear that there are very varied opinions as to what people want from a course.

Many teachers prefer school-based INSET and are, therefore, unsupportive of expensive outside courses that they often feel are too “theoretical” or not aimed directly at their particular age group or addressing their specific needs. In many cases the PE co-ordinator provides his/her own in-service training for the school or cluster and this is preferable because they know their own programme and staff and, therefore, understand their individual needs. School-based INSET may enable schools to do what they are already doing better but there is a danger that this model of INSET can represent an obstacle to change with fixed ideas on provision being disseminated. Schools must consider their situation carefully and decide what is most appropriate for their needs.

All schools had a **PE co-ordinator** responsible for the development of the PE curriculum and subsequently the NCPE. Most, but by no means all, were secondary trained in PE or held coaching qualifications from a National Governing Body (such as BAGA) but all agreed that qualifications were not essential for their role and far more important was an interest in PE and its contribution to the education of children. PE co-ordinators are granted a great deal of autonomy (i.e. to order equipment etc.) for their subject and were confident that implementation of the NCPE would present few problems for the staff. How co-ordinators regarded their ‘job description’ depended on the individual but they generally saw their role as one of being a ‘human resource’, a point of reference and information/advice on all aspects of PE in the school – ensuring that the school is able to fulfil the requirements of the NCPE is a more recent concern. They did not see it as their task to tell other teachers ‘what’ or ‘how’ they should be teaching, though they might attend INSET courses on their behalf and subsequently organise in-school training.

Assessment

A great deal of uncertainty remained with regard to assessment, largely because of a lack of information and guidance on the requirements at primary level. It is accepted that this will be a difficult area and it is hoped by teachers that assessment will not be too prescriptive as it could detract from the enjoyment of lessons and interrupt teaching.

Primary - Secondary Liaison

Liaison concerning other subjects, and transfer generally, seems to be detailed and well structured but PE is to a certain extent neglected. The obvious reason for this is, once again, time – or the lack of it – and the additional burden of responsibility that it would place on teachers (meetings, reports etc.) The National Curriculum is intended to be progressive throughout the 5 – 16 age range and this will not be possible if individual schools do not discuss their PE curriculum with those who will receive the

children at the next level. Ways forward may include joint primary-secondary activities, perhaps with older children acting as 'coaches' and a general exchange of ideas.

Extra-curricular Activities and Team Games

This is an area that is mainly reserved for the junior sector where various clubs and activities are available. Infant schools tend not to organise out-of-school activities for their children for a number of reasons. There are concerns, for example, about young children having to be met by parents and often it is considered inappropriate for the very young who are tired after a day at school. With the older children, schools teams remain popular in the traditional sports (netball, football etc.) but other activities are offered according to the teacher interest and expertise that is available at the time (e.g. badminton, cross-country). Participation in award schemes such as AAA, milk awards and Super schools is popular and allows all pupils to participate at their own level.

There is a growing awareness of the inappropriateness of full-sided team games in the primary school PE curriculum, though it is also accepted that to ignore traditional games altogether might equally be considered unfair to the children. Some schools are gradually introducing more 'gender neutral' games into PE lessons (e.g. quick cricket, new-image rugby – rounders has always been popular!) whilst saving more competitive team games for after-school clubs. It is encouraging to see schools thinking about important issues such as equal opportunities and basing their approach on skills acquisition rather than 'the game' as the object and subject of PE. **Sports day** too is a school tradition that, in some schools, is undergoing a change of emphasis, from competitive sprint races to a more equitable activities-based event where children participate rather than compete.

Community Use

Community use has been hailed as a money-making opportunity for schools, however, this seemed not to be the case in the survey schools. There are many considerations when letting out school premises to the public that in most cases it simply is not financially viable under LMS. The school must contribute towards overhead costs and there are additional fears of vandalism, wear and tear and a concern that the school is, first and foremost, for the children. Most schools, however, would increase their community lettings if this were possible taking into account the above considerations and if there were sufficient demand.

Partnerships/Outside Agencies

One of the intentions of the ERA is that education should become more 'open' to the community in general. The involvement of 'outsiders' is more common at the secondary level though not widespread with regard to PE. In some schools opportunities have been taken to actively encourage associations between schools

through schemes such as Champion Coaching, Active Partners and events such as Super Schools, all of which provide rewarding sporting experiences for children that may not be available throughout the curriculum. A great deal of literature is available from the Sports Council for those who wish to address this aspect of PE.

Schools, particularly at infant level, are keen to recruit parent helpers in the classroom and are generally very open to 'visitors' – pupils on work experience, students on teaching practice, trainee nursery nurses and researchers! This helps to create a lively learning environment for the children.

Open Enrolment

One of the more subtle influences of the ERA is the effect of open enrolment. The infant schools in the survey all had relatively fixed catchment areas because of their geographical location and, therefore, the effects of open enrolment were minimal. Some had a slightly decreasing roll but this was not seen as an area of great concern and teachers in these schools welcomed the prospect of smaller classes and more physical space in the school. At junior level the consequences are a little more pronounced and though all of the junior schools in the survey are popular and have an increasing roll, they remain very aware of the possible consequences of parental choice and are keen to ensure that they maintain a high profile. Schools, for example, might now pay attention to details such as ensuring that any (sporting) achievements are reported in the local paper and that fetes and events are well-advertised. Pupils, through formula funding are a direct form of income but they also bring a certain amount of indirect income with them via their parents. Parental support is increasingly important in schools and particularly for PE where they may be asked for voluntary contributions for swimming or residential courses. Therefore, pupil roll and parental support are important in terms of the opportunities that schools are able to provide.

Comment

The National Curriculum for PE is undoubtedly good news for the subject. By identifying PE as a Foundation subject it will help to raise its profile and status in the curriculum and encourage schools and teachers to address their provision to ensure that all children have an opportunity to experience a variety of games, activities and challenges. It remains, however, very much up to the individual school to interpret the orders and adopt/adapt their curriculum as they feel appropriate. Schools are well aware of their various capabilities and limitations and will work within these to provide a curriculum that adheres to National Curriculum requirements but the NCPE will not represent uniform implementation in primary schools.

Selection of Case Study Schools

From the questionnaire responses I have tried to identify 'types' of school in relation to their 'preparedness' for NC in terms of resources and provision respectively. For want of a better term I have simply named them 'poor' vs. 'good'.

Brookfield School

Very low time allocation for PE (1 ½ hours) but this is seen as adequate. The school has a PE specialist who deals with school-based INSET. HT claims that PE inspector has given all staff confidence. Budget allocation low - £150.

'poor' - 'poor'

Sycamore First

The school does not have a PE specialist amongst the staff. The may explain why success of PE is judged by their "control" of children. This is often a concern of non-specialists. The head teacher seems to be the sole determinant of the curriculum – but again, this may be because of the lack of a PE specialist.

No aims or objective for PE are stated.

The teacher regards NCPE as just another subject on the NC conveyor belt! This seems to paint a grim picture, however, the school does realise that the budget is inadequate and that teachers confidence is low, training poor. Realisation is a start but it needs to be followed up.

'poor' – 'good'

Riverside Infant

This school has a PE specialist who was "specifically trained" and works closely with each new member of staff. Some informal assessment takes place at KS1.

Co-ordinator claims that all staff are confident and competent. S/he has not noticed an increase in (non-teaching) workload since 1989/90. Is this because s/he is not a class teacher?

Budget allocation seen as "adequate" – but not known!

Success/objectives of PE is based on whether it conforms to County guidelines. HT does not believe that ERA will have any effect because the school has already been delivering the NC for many years.

This school has potential but its resources appear not to be used to their full extent?

'good' – 'poor'

Haydn Primary

The school does not have a PE specialist. In spite of this the PE programme and attitude behind it seem to be sound. The school has its own gymnasium, so does not have to rely on the school hall. A local pool, is used for swimming lessons and increased use is intended. Extra-curricular activities are offered.

The budget allocation is high, partly because the school is developing a new games

programme. HT realises that there are shortfalls in the programme but is doing something about them. In terms of ERA it is hoped that LMS could mean more £s for PE and NC could help to raise its profile.

‘good’ – ‘good’ (e.g. of ‘good’ without a specialist)

Varley Junior

As part of a campus school, facilities are excellent inc. a pool. There are three PE specialists. The school has a programme of community use with the regional Sports Council. Plans to extend use (youth club) and increase extra-curricular activities.

3 1/2 hours of PE per week is a generous provision.

Emphasis in the PE programme appears to be sport – my only criticism.

‘good’ – ‘good’

Comments

A range of responses. No school offers all the proposed Areas of Activity but some have more resources than others. I assumed that having a PE specialist might be the most significant factor in provision but this does not seem to be the case from the questionnaire responses. Where there is a specialist the resources seem to be under-used and one school in particular is doing well without one. The key factor will probably be the PE co-ordinator (whether or not they are a specialist) and their relationship with the head teacher.

It seems that all schools are able to provide an “adequate” (in their own definition) PE programme according to their own facilities and resources. The NC (and ERA generally) does not take into account these individual differences.

Documentation Relating to Morrison Junior School
Appendices F - J

CURRICULUM

It is very difficult in a booklet of this kind to do justice to the whole curriculum of the school, but it is possible and important to point out our attitude and thoughts on major areas that children experience.

It is the aim of Merdon County Junior School to provide a broad balanced curriculum for the children in accordance with the Government and Local Education Authority policy. The Governors are fully and regularly consulted on school policy matters and new curriculum initiatives.

The school aims to provide the opportunity for each child to develop to his or her full potential and acquire the skills, concepts, and attitudes necessary to cope with the variety of different situations and challenges that they meet in their every day life and our fast changing society.

If you wish to discuss an aspect of your child's curriculum with the teacher who co-ordinates the work for that particular year, an appointment can be made through the school office. The school office will inform you of the appropriate member of staff.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Every maintained school is now obliged by law to provide within its whole school curriculum a Basic Curriculum consisting of the National Curriculum and Religious Education.

The National Curriculum consists of the

Core Subjects: English, Mathematics and Science.

Foundation Subjects: Geography, History, Technology, Art, Music and Physical Education.

Each subject has a number of ATTAINMENT TARGETS. An attainment target is a broad description of what a child is expected to know, understand or be able to do.

For each attainment target there are 10 levels of attainment called STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT. There are specific descriptions of what a child is expected to know, understand and be able to do at a particular level. PROGRAMMES OF STUDY describe what must be taught to enable children to achieve the targets.

At present these have been published for the core subjects and the following Foundation Subjects - Technology, History and Geography.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM RELATED TO MERDON COUNTY JUNIOR SCHOOL

The National Curriculum is not a straight jacket. It provides us with a greater clarity and precision about what should be taught while enabling us to retain the flexibility of how we organise our teaching.

Much of our work is STUDIES BASED or CROSS CURRICULAR in nature. This means that instead of always teaching subjects under separate headings they can be linked and integrated into the study which a year group is undertaking. This requires careful planning to ensure that children are covering all areas of the National Curriculum. A well planned and structured approach allows

- a) Children to see the inter-relationships of subject areas.
- b) Teachers to plan work which is relevant and meaningful to the children.
- c) Opportunities for teachers and children to share enthusiasms and interests
- d) Opportunities for parents to share in their child's education.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All children are expected to take part in indoor P.E. and outdoor games. A range of floor and apparatus work is presented in P.E. and the children are introduced to individual and team skills in a range of games during their four years. Broadly speaking, team games become more formalised as the children get older. The school organises representative teams in football, netball, rounders and cross country as extra curricular activities.

Swimming tuition takes place each Summer term in school time. We allot places for eight half hour weekly sessions at a local swimming pool. The school gives priority to Year 5 and 6 children who can swim less than 50 yards.

Once a child takes a place it is expected that he/she will attend all sessions. Transport and instruction are free.

COMPUTERS

At present each class has a computer, with the lower school using BBC Master's and the upper school Archimedes A3000's.

The work with computers focuses on three main fields.

- 1) The use of simple data bases
- 2) The use of logo
- 3) The use of simple word processing facilities

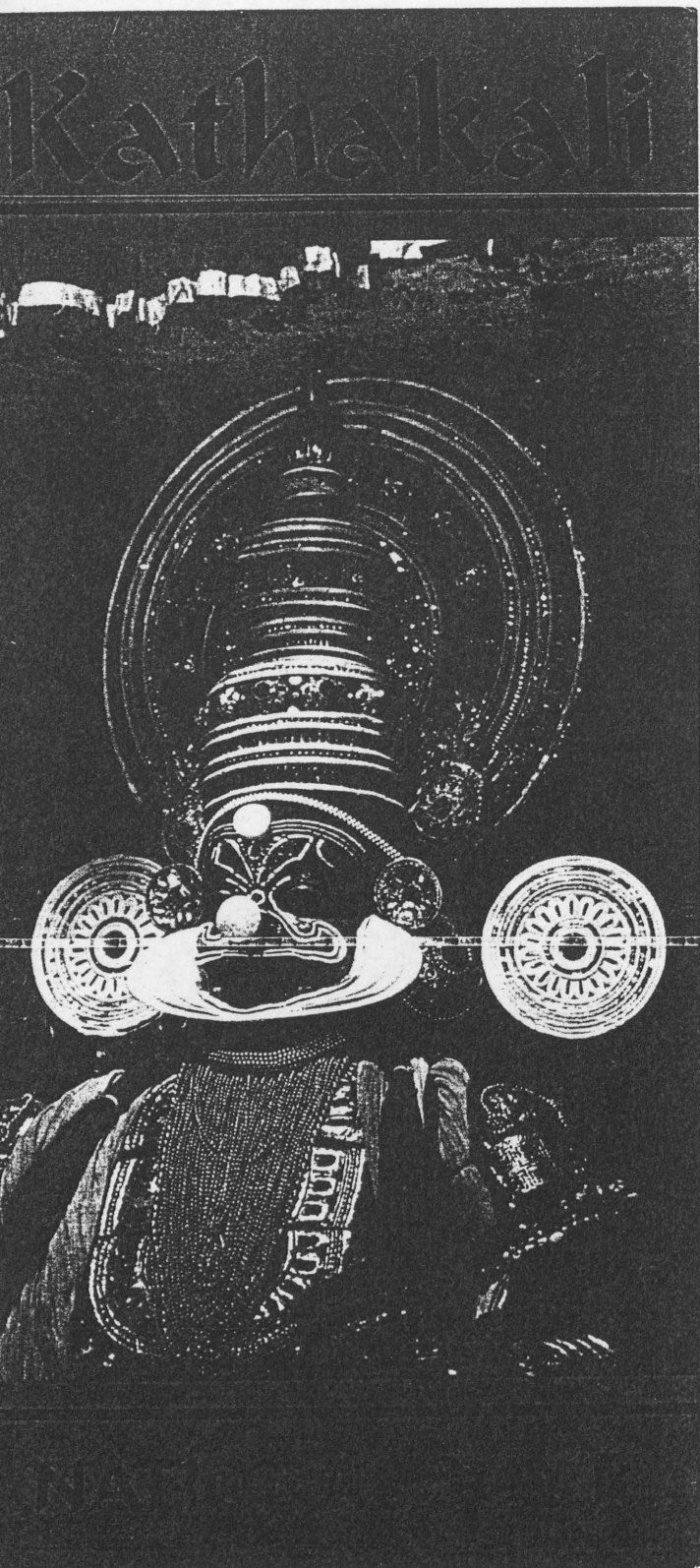
Each of these types of programme can be used across the curriculum. This gives the work on the computer a purpose rather than being an end in itself.

We also have some specific programmes for remedial mathematics and language work. These are used with specific children at appropriate times.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As in all County schools, assembly and religious education follow the agreed syllabus and is non-denominational in character.

If you want your child to be excused from Religious Education and Assembly please let us know in writing.



Performer Kalamandalam Vijayakumar

KATHAKALI STORIES

The stories presented throughout the tour will be either:

- a **traditional** story from the Hindu epics or
- an **adaptation** of a Western story featuring vanity and obsession called 'Oppression of the Innocent.'

These dates are correct at time of going to print, however, it is advisable to check with the venue for story to be presented, times and full details, before travelling.

Visit Report (edited)

Morrison Junior school

3rd July 1992

Observation of a dance lesson taken by teacher "Olive Peters"

David shows me to Olive's room where the children are getting changed. Usual scene of children in various states of undress trying to change without actually taking their clothes off! Usual comments from teacher telling them not to be so silly and to stop giggling etc. There are few dress rules for dance it seems, many of the girls are wearing leggings, a few in leotards, the boys are in shorts. Olive herself doesn't change for dance but is wearing loose fitting trousers with, I assume, dance in mind.

In the hall Olive and the children warm up to music. They jump and stretch, shake and bounce around the room. Olive encourages them shouting "come on" (in her shrill voice that by the end of the lesson I begin to find a little irritating!) urging them to jump higher, faster, exaggerating their movements and trying to introduce some rhythm. There is a great deal of laughter from the children as Olive joins in!

At the end of the warm-up the children gather in front of Olive and sit down while she talks to them. She reminds them what they have been doing over the last few weeks. One of the topics this term is 'machines', I have seen plenty of evidence around the school of this - the children's working models produced in science classes, drawings of large machinery, the 'body as a machine' project. This theme has been carried through the whole curriculum and into the dance lessons. The children have also been on a number of study visits (very common at Morrison) that again have provided a focus for the lessons.

The school visited had recently visited an exhibition of 'automata' where a variety of small hand-made machinery was seen. In their dance lessons accompanied by Scott Joplin's 'Maple Leaf Rag' they each assumed the guise of one of the exhibits making lots of fast, small movements. She asks them to remember what they were doing then, what machine they were pretending to be last time and whether they can move the same way but slowly this time. No music is used yet, the children move around the room keeping their movements slow. Olive watches and tries to guess what they are simulating.

The children sit down again to hear what they will be doing this week. They have recently been on a study visit to an industrial museum (traction and static engines, trams and transport etc.) and she asks them to think about what they saw there and how different it was to the small machinery, they are to move like one of the large machines; slow and heavy.

Olive turns the tape on and tells them just to listen carefully and to think about what they might do how they might move to the music. The music is 'variations' by Alistair Lloyd Webber and fits perfectly to the theme. Olive interprets the music while it is playing. There is a slow introduction where she says the machines are being born, they are heavy and lethargic; the music gradually gets faster and the machinery begins to loosen up, then there is a section where the tape sounds like total chaos and the machines are going haywire! She doesn't tell them this yet but after this point on the tape, when the actual tune starts she wants the children to become "human machines" still mechanical yet with more human movements. She tells them to find a space and to listen through the tune once more as they think and start to decide how they are going to move. She tells them to be aware of their space and not to move out of it yet. They are not to dance but simply to feel the music and to move to it.

As the tape is played again Olive talks them through as she struts around in time to the music often joining in and mimicking some of the children's movements. She is clearly enjoying herself as well as her class. The children start off slowly and gradually get faster as the music begins to speed up, they get to the "haywire" bit and start to move around the room as if they are robots that have short-circuited! They are changing into something that is human. "A re-birth", "metamorphosis" Olive shouts. The children twist and flex their limbs as they move around the room in time to the music.

Nearly the end of the lesson and Olive asks the children if they can take what they have done further, from movement and more into the realm of dance. She asks them to choose a part of their body and to lead with it while they are making their mechanical movements, she shows them what she means using her feet and arms. She then asks them to use another more unusual part of the body -thigh, or back or "for those of you who have a big bottom"! She plays the tape through once more so they can practice and walks around the room looking out for the more imaginative moves – some are leading with their shoulder or head. The children will work on this next week when Olive says that they will be developing their movements "at different levels".

At the end she thanks the children and tells them that they have "done very well, worked very hard". As we leave the hall Olive shouts over to me and asks if I found the lesson useful. I reply that I am impressed, the lesson certainly made a change from BBC tapes and the 'Music and Movement' that I have seen so far. She says that she is lucky - she has a class that are "super to teach" and the children hear this.

Back in her classroom I am able to have a quick chat with Olive before my interview with David. She is amazed that so many schools rely on resource tapes that often are not of very good quality. Those that are making-do with the standard country dancing really are missing out on a great deal. She doesn't see dance as a problem nor should there be any reason for it to be. She says that it has to be treated like any other area of the curriculum and not something that is outside, something just added on once a week or term. She sees it as part of creative arts - dance/drama, art and music - the very subjects that primary teachers neglect because they are worried about how they should approach them. Like any other subject it must start with basics that will be built

upon gradually - like reading and writing. You wouldn't tell a child to read without first having taught them, in the same way that you wouldn't throw them straight into a dance routine without an introduction.

Olive says that she is the sort of person who constantly walks around with tunes in her head, always looking out for new music to use that the children would enjoy. She hopes to build up a music library for any member of staff in the school to use. At present only year 6 classes have dance (Susan Smith's class and her male peer). They use Olive as a resource, adopting her ideas and chatting informally to one another about what they have done and what works in their lessons. Olive hopes to encourage the rest of the school to follow her example as she insists that it really is nothing to be afraid of and the enjoyment that the children get more than outweighs any effort on the teachers part. Olive has had no dance training though her interests are the creative arts in general, however, she is equipped with a great imagination and love of her subject.

Comments - Observation

I find it very difficult retrospectively to describe what I saw when I observed Olive's dance lesson though I have made my best attempt (a video would have helped ?) to express how I felt whilst watching it. I know that I will be unable to convey adequately how much I enjoyed what the children were doing so much so that I almost (almost!) wished that I were joining in! It really was an inspiring sight, I found myself swaying to the music and watching intently, forgetting to take notes and just taking everything in.

The children had no inhibitions about what they were doing (even the boys to whom no concessions were made) and were able to use their imagination to it's fullest extent though the lesson still retained meaning. Olive said that she had a "super" class to teach but she herself must take credit for her own part in the lesson. Her enthusiasm and interest in the children simply shone through! I can't describe the lesson in any other way than uplifting and I can see why the children enjoy their lessons so much. I find it quite sad that so many schools waste the time that they allocate to dance/drama out of simple ignorance or lack of confidence. They really are missing out on so much for so little effort.

Visit Report (edited)

Morrison Junior School

15th July 1992

Observation of an outdoor games lesson taken by PE co-ordinator

I arrive at 2.30PM to see Susan and have arranged to meet her at her classroom. The children are out for their afternoon break so we go to the staffroom for a coffee before her games lesson starts in ten minutes or so. In the staffroom talk is very much about the end of term – teachers saying how tired they are and how the children all seem to be sluggish too. Everyone needs a break (including me)! Term actually ends next week but the last two days have been set aside for INSET. I see that there will be little opportunity to interview anyone today and that it would be unfair to wish myself upon staff at this time. This evening there is an end of year party for year 6 as they are leaving the school and going to secondary school next term. They are having a disco and karaoke provided by the teachers so they are all very excited!

I chat to Olive Peters (whose dance lesson I saw previously). She asks if I have seen any “fine examples of creative dance” and I have to admit that I am fed up of hearing the plummy voice on BBC tapes! She is amazed and a little disappointed that this is an area that she loves deeply and feels is so simple to teach yet is grossly neglected in most schools. Olive remarks that she has a games lesson this afternoon but she doesn’t want to tire her children out too much before the evening. Susan still has some ‘Pass the Parcel’ prizes to wrap up, a job that she volunteered for but now wishes that she hadn’t as she has little time left to do it. She also has a meeting straight after school. As a joke Olive says she will wrap the parcels and Susan can take her class for PE as well as her own. Susan agrees! It is the end of term and games will very much be a free choice so she sees no problem with this. I note that I will not see a ‘normal’ lesson today!

Games Lesson

We leave the staffroom and stroll back to Susan’s classroom. She explains that there is no real hurry as the children are very independent and they know what they are doing in the lesson and will simply get on with it. She says that they will already have changed, coming in from their break early. “They love PE and enjoy sports”.

As we arrive I see that the children are, indeed, mostly changed and some are on their way to the shed to get out the equipment. The shed is something that I did not see on my last visit. It is very rickety and unstable but it is full of equipment of all kinds. There are plans to build a more solid structure but Susan doesn’t know how

these are progressing and she doesn't hold out much hope of anything happening in the near future.

Susan explains that throughout the year the children have been working in blocks on a variety of games – rounders, short tennis and 'quick cricket'. They can now be left to supervise their own small-sided games with little intervention from the teacher. There are about four short tennis nets and these are set up on the playground for those who want to play proper games. There is also plenty of space for those who want just to practice hitting the ball to each other. Most of the children want to play rounders and have to be sorted into groups to keep the numbers even and ensuring that there aren't too many groups using the same space (remember, Susan also has Olive's class!)

While the children have been getting the equipment out another teacher encroaches upon the field. Susan is a little annoyed at this. She moans that everything gets planned and then someone comes along and messes it up. The other teacher isn't scheduled for a lesson at this time and is obviously giving his class an extra session of rounders as a treat. The space on the field has now been reduced considerably as rounders is a game that needs a fair amount of space to be played safely.

I wander around with Susan and look in on some of the games. I notice that the short tennis is very competitive, even with sponge balls! The boys are using the lightweight 'quick cricket' sets which were actually intended for the girls to benefit to encourage them to take more of an interest in the game. It also means that there is less standing around than with traditional cricket. The rounders games are going pretty smoothly though the children have to be reminded not to hit the ball too hard. The children need little refereeing from the teacher. Susan does point out though that this is an extremely bright year. She is not looking forward to next year's intake! She has just met them!

Susan is a young teacher and is not a PE specialist but she has a keen interest in PE and has great many ideas. She seems an ideal person through which to carry out David's ambitious plans for the PE curriculum (and the curriculum generally) She sees PE as an important break for children but whole-heartedly agrees that the emphasis must be educational even though the children might not always realise this directly. She sees that PE often brings out qualities in children that are hidden in the classroom. She points out one girl who is generally quite shy and yet in a rounders games she becomes extrovert and outgoing. Susan finds it quite amusing to see her "tearing around the field shouting!"

At the end of the lesson the children clear up and put the equipment away very quickly (they are keen to get home and prepare for the party). Back in the classroom they change and Susan hands out pieces of work that were recently on display for parents evening. I try to arrange a time for an interview but the clock is ticking and she has a meeting to get to. She asks if I could write the questions down and send them to her. I feel that Susan is too important a contact to simply hand her a

questionnaire. We agree that I will phone her at the start of the following term and arrange a convenient time to meet again.

Comments

I realise that the lesson was not a 'normal' lesson due to it being the end of term but nothing had been changed for my benefit. The children clearly enjoy a variety of different games and have been taught the various skills throughout the years at the school so that by this stage they are able to make informed decisions about which game they wish to participate in. The children were very independent and needed no coaching from the teacher. Although only small-sided games are taught within the PE curriculum, I feel sure that the skills the children have learned, and the philosophy of equal opportunity that permeates throughout the school will serve them well when they reach the secondary school.

PRIMARY PE FOCUS

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SUMMER
1993

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THE JOURNAL FOR ALL TEACHERS
IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

Cover photo by
Alan Edwards

SKILLS DAY

Amanda Bryant

An earlier feature in BJPE (Julie Scotney, Primary PE, Summer 1992) prompted me to write this article. I thought it might like to hear of other alternatives to the traditional sports day – something to think about before the Summer once again upon us. As part of a case study research into the traditional curriculum and PE in Hampshire primary schools I was invited to a local junior school to spend an afternoon at their "Skills Day".

Skills day is a natural extension of the PE curriculum which encompasses the general philosophy of the school, a philosophy that is driven by the principles of equal opportunities and individual achievement thus promoting the participation of all children at their own level of ability. Such issues should be at the forefront of primary school planning with the implementation of the national curriculum now underway with its claim of "a broad and balanced curriculum" for all pupils and equal opportunities being defined as "a guiding and guiding principle" of the curriculum.

Skills day the emphasis is on a variety of individual skills rather than the traditional competitive events that tend to favour the more physically gifted children. All pupils in the school participate and they themselves play an important role in the design of the different activities and the organisation and administration on the day. In this way there is continuity from the PE lessons to the event and the day takes on a greater relevance for the children.

Organisation

The day is divided into two sessions each lasting an hour and half. In the morning the lower school (8/9 Yrs.) participate in the various activities while the older children administer each activity acting as timekeepers, scorers and "referees". In the afternoon the roles are reversed. In this way children are actively involved throughout the day with their assigned responsibilities and there is no danger of boredom setting in. It also means that adult intervention need be minimal as the children prove themselves capable of supervising their own activities.

Activities

There are approximately thirty activities set out in an oval shaped

"arena". Each one carefully devised so that the children have an opportunity to experience different skills with a variety of equipment – they are also fun! They are too numerous to mention here but include the following:

- Throwing* – for distance and accuracy
- Running* – long distance, sprinting
- Ball skills* – use of bat and ball, catching, dribbling (eg. hockey sticks)
- Hand and eye co-ordination* – egg & spoon, small equipment, obstacle races, balancing (beams)
- Jumping* – from a standing position, skipping
- General fitness* – bunny jumps, bench work

The activities take place simultaneously and the children choose which events they take part in, attempting as many as they can and returning to any if they wish, perhaps in order to try and better their previous score. There are also two mini-marathons during each session, one for each year group, that take place around the school grounds – this is the only concession made to competition throughout the day and the children are free to choose whether they enter these events or carry on with the field activities.

Individual Achievement

Each child has their own score card which they carry with them to each activity and which becomes a record of their individual performance. Each event is scored on a pre-determined scale of 1-5 points. The aim is to get as many points as possible in the time allowed, each child participating in any event that they feel is appropriate to his/her own ability. At the end of the day the scores are accumulated and each child receives a certificate of merit according to his/her individual score – there are no other prizes and therefore no winners or losers.

Parents

Once the afternoon whistle had blown the scene became one of constant, lively activity and the event was well received by the majority of parents that attended. Encouraged to walk around the arena and support their children in their chosen activities, those that made the effort found it rewarding – being able to talk to their

children and look at their score cards together made the event much more personal for both parent and pupil. The organisation of the day was also convenient for working parents as they were free to drop in when they were able at some stage in the day rather than having to arrive and leave at a pre-arranged time in order to ensure that they do not miss their child's race.

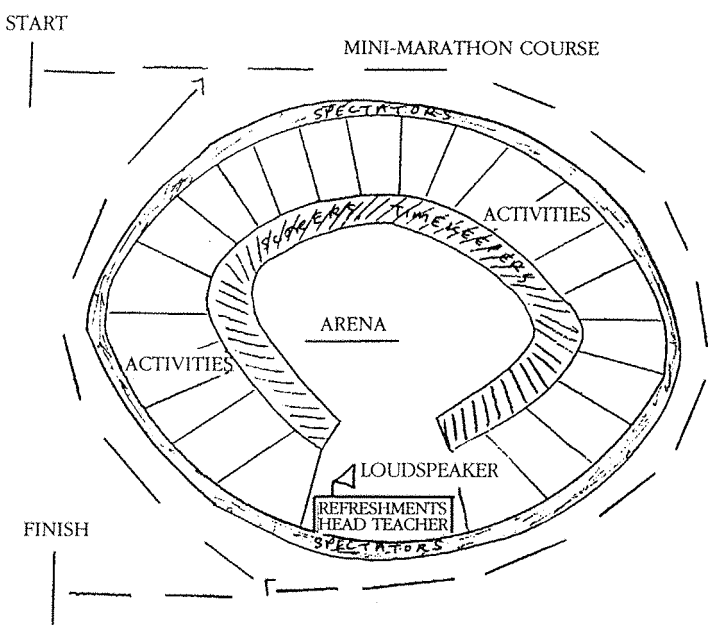
There were however, a minority of parents that found it quite a chore to be expected to walk around rather than sit down all afternoon chatting to other parents and watching the odd race. The few that had come armed with video cameras were very disappointed at being denied their winning shots! The absence of competition was far outweighed by the obvious enjoyment of the children in the arena but was not completely eliminated from the day. The mini-marathons were very popular and gave parents a chance to cheer loudly as the children ran twice around the arena rather than encouraging quietly from the sidelines!

Parents at this school are familiar with innovation and are always kept informed about any new curriculum development and the educational reasons behind it. Skills day is no exception and a letter was circulated before the event which explained simply what to expect on the day.

Schools that wish to examine the relevance of their own sports day could easily adopt or adapt this design according to their own resources and imagination. As with any innovation, already overworked primary teachers may be discouraged by the burden of organisation, but it need not entail a vast amount of extra work. Sports day need not, and perhaps should not, be an "add-on" event but an integral part of the school curriculum. The cross curricular links, for example with subjects such as maths, are obvious and through the permeating theme of equal opportunities social skills such as fairness and co-operation can be learned first hand. Let the children design the activities as part of a whole school project, let them think about what activities are appropriate and why, let them devise their own rules and a fair scoring system. Sports day, whatever you choose to name it, can be an educational as well as an enjoyable event.

I would like to express my thanks to Merdon Junior School, Southampton for the help that the staff have given me in the preparation of this article.

Amanda Bryant, Research Student, Dept. PE, Southampton University.



SKILLS DAY ARENA

6 June 1992

Dear Parents

SPORTS SKILLS DAY - MONDAY 6 JULY

As you know, this year we are offering an open invitation to you to attend our Sports Skills Day. Although this is the fourth year that we have run a day like this, it is the first time that parents have been invited, therefore it may need some explanation.

Organisation

The day is divided into two sessions, one morning and one afternoon, each lasting one and half hours.

In the morning session the Year 3 and Year 4 children will be involved in the sporting activities while the majority of the Upper School children administer the events. In the afternoon the situation is reversed with the Years 5 and 6 involved in the activities and the majority of the Lower School taking care of the administration. In this way most of the whole school is actively involved throughout the day.

Sporting Activities

The children can participate in up to 30 activities which give opportunities for the following skills to be practised in a variety of situations.

- Archery - for distance and accuracy
- Running - long distance, sprinting
- Ball Skills - use of bat & ball, catching, dribbling
- Hand/Eye Co-ordination - egg & spoon/ small equipment obstacle races
- Hopping - from a standing position, skipping
- General Fitness - bunny jumps etc.

Recording of each child's achievements

Each event carries a maximum of 5 points and a minimum of 1 point and there is a re-determined scoring rate which has been carefully calculated. Within the time allowed (1hr.30 mins.) the children may attempt as many events as they can and each child decides which activities to select. All children have a score card which they carry with them to record their results.

The morning session will commence at 10.00 a.m. and the afternoon session at 2.45 p.m. During each session a 'marathon' will be held for all children who wish to take part.

You are free to come at any time during the sessions to see the children taking part in the events.

Whilst we at — have been operating in this manner for several years, it is most encouraging to see that the Physical Education Inspectorate wholly endorse our approach and that this format positively encourages the further development and enhancement of the skills promoted within the framework of the National Curriculum for Physical Education.

In the event of inclement weather the event will be held the following day, 7 July.

Yours sincerely

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION— 'ACTIVE PARTNERS PROJECT'THE BACKGROUND

The 'partnership' debate has ranged for some time, but — Schools and Colleges, via the PE Inspectorate, have recently announced a joint project, 'THE ACTIVE PARTNERS PROJECT' with the Southern Region Sports Council. This is a planned and co-ordinated attempt to put partners that are trusted and valued (hence 'active') together. From theory into action, an idea has become a major development central to support and development for Physical Education and sport in the County.

THE THEORY

Reading the literature, looking at good practice, discussion with teacher colleagues, led us to value many suggestions when developing and supporting physical education and sporting opportunities:

- * there is a clear need for a support infrastructure known and understood by all those concerned.
- * developments are most positive when based on a local geographical response, involving those agencies 'active' in the area.
- * the local PE Curriculum Support Groups and local school sports associations are essential ingredients.

NOTE: — support strategies were already based on this principle, with Primary Network Teams and Secondary and Special Curriculum Support Groups in known geographical areas. Sporting links have traditionally been planned by natural clustering of schools into associations.

- * If developments and support procedures are to utilise all those 'active partners' available to them, then the potential role of schools, parents, clubs, local authorities, governing body development officers and others all have to be valued.
- * good communication systems need to be established if collaboration is to follow.
- * the only way forward will be through a common philosophy and approach.
- * common INSET, courses and opportunities should follow.
- * the opportunities planned for pupils and students must stress the importance of a good early experience.
- * agreements need to be established therefore on a common foundation of skills and understanding.
- * pupils and students must learn to participate with understanding.
- * leadership opportunities will become increasingly important.

ACTIVE PARTNERS PROJECT

DIVISIONAL PROJECT CO-ORDINATORS

FACILITATING DEVELOPMENTS

- * Talking with primary or secondary staff who have got ideas/practice worth sharing with others. How can we help develop and record what is going on? How can we use them or their developments to inform other schools at curriculum support meeting or specially arranged INSET?
- * Informing any local group of schools that by joining together in a project they can develop their own ideas eg. an activity development:
 - a starter INSET meeting relating to the activity - at least one representative from each school to attend.
 - a loan pack of good equipment to be established and a rota worked out if lack of equipment is a problem.
 - support from 'elsewhere' established eg. development officer involvement.
 - a date set for a rally or mini-tournament as appropriate.
 - liaison and involvement primary and their secondary schools.
 - liaison with a sports club or leisure centre if practical for further opportunities that can follow.
- * Supporting a local project that provides a 'development centre' for other schools to feed to in extra curricular time. School clubs eg. gym club, basketball clinic, or primary activity clubs (where secondary schools open their facilities).
- * Visiting, discussing or actually developing contacts with the junior sections of clubs, 'bridging gaps'. Meeting Leisure Centre Managers.
- * Discussing with schools the idea of 'community developments' for their own pupils, seeing their own pupils as clients.

In particular, moving older pupils towards pupil-run clubs or opportunities where they have to take some form of lead or responsibility.

ACTIVE PARTNERS PROJECT

DIVISIONAL PROJECT CO-ORDINATORS

COLLECTING INFORMATION

Copies of the Survey Sheet to go out to schools will be sent as soon as it is ready.

Please remember that the collation of local information and comments on successful - good practice are of the utmost importance. Can I use comments to illustrate the type and range of comments on practice we would like:

- i) — was unsure whether to mention the fact that he publicises the availability of facilities beyond his own schools needs to all local primaries. This is exactly the type of idea we want to put into peoples minds.

Both what they do and the practical problems and successes that it involves.

- ii) That unlike some others his local sports council are very positive. There is much information here:

- the principal of contacting your local sports council
- comment on successful ideas, ventures they have been involved in etc.

What are the other schools doing?

The intention is to give schools and others lots of ideas from which they can choose from, as most suits their situation.

Contacts: apart from the sports directory — gave you, remember you can telephone — for information any time.

Make sure you get the list of prominent colleagues, primary network team members etc from your own PE Inspector. Discuss with your PE Inspector primary and special schools that might be worth a visit for good curriculum practice.

Exactly what school sports associations and activities exist is important information.

ACTIVE PARTNERS PROJECT

DIVISIONAL PROJECT CO-ORDINATORS

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SECONDMENT

Up to 10 days supply or their equivalent have been identified for your use.

2 days - 12th March 1991
- 17th July 1991

have been identified as whole county team days

Up to 8 more days can be used as most suits the Co-ordinator and their school.

Note: 8 days should be considered a guide, less may be actually needed. If more are required then you must consult your PE Inspector. Do not rush these to 'get them in' they can carry over if that suits you best.

The expenditure code is 9924A Secondary
9943A Primary

The school can use this for any supply cover required.

'Day' is a guide only you may wish to use the time more flexibly:

- half days
- 3 x twilight eg £25 per session. This would be paid to you direct (a diary format is attached) as your developments unfold.

Travel for the project:

The code given is an expenditure code, not just for supply. Please ask your school to reimburse you in the normal way and reclaim the costs via the code. (Normal rates and condition for teacher INSET travel).

Please keep a separate 'diary' for yourself and record supply days and travel information.

The project expenditure will be checked regularly and audited on occasions and details will need to be made available.

Statistical Data Relating to Catchment Area of the Case Study Schools

The following tables are presented as crude indicators of ‘affluence’ of catchment area for the case study schools. All figures are based on OPCS census data for the postcode area in which the school is located.

Table 16: Level of Owner Occupancy/Car Ownership

Case Study School	% Owner Occupied	% Buying Own Home	% Households with no car
Sycamore First	10.4%	58.2%	23.0%
Haydn Primary	36.0%	55.3%	18.8%
Morrison Junior	33.9%	62.5%	9.0%

Source: OPCS Postcode Sector Monitor 1991

Table 17: Unemployment Rate (based on adult male population)

Case Study School	Total Male Population (no.)	Economically Active (no.)	Registered Unemployed (no.)	Unemployment Rate (%)
Sycamore School	4651	3882	368	9.48%
Haydn School	2671	1985	108	5.44%
Morrison School	3748	2762	102	3.69%

Source: OPCS Data 1991

Documents Relating to Haydn Junior School

Appendices L - N

We aim to equip children with skills, knowledge and attitudes for the present and the future.

In setting out our aims, we have taken account of the fact that children vary in their capabilities and attitudes. Responding to these differences is part of the professional task of the teaching staff and we do all we can to provide an interesting and secure environment in which children will develop their abilities and aptitudes. We are aiming to help children towards a good self image, which will enable them to interact with other people within a large or small group situation, and to understand something about responsibility, duty, privilege and tolerance.

CURRICULAR AIMS

To ensure that children:

- a Enjoy learning, and approach it with confidence.
- b Listen carefully, observe carefully, and be able to order and record observations in appropriate ways.
- c Formulate opinions, and listen to, and evaluate those of others.
- d Write legibly for different purposes and situations, paying attention to such details as structure, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary.
- e Read effectively for pleasure and information.
- f Use computational skills with accuracy, appreciating the practical application of such skills, and similarly be familiar with a range of mathematical ideas and apparatus and their application.
- g Observe closely their environment, order and record their observations, apply themselves to problems, use a range of skills in seeking solutions, and have the opportunity to consider options and make decisions.
- h Use a wide range of media to develop skills, and work creatively in writing, drama, music, art, craft and poetry.
- i Enjoy physical activities, using a range of skills in movement, games, gymnastics, dance and drama.
- j Are sensitive to the needs of others, and aware of the significance of religious and moral values in their daily lives.
- k Organise their work and leisure pursuits.
- l Have the opportunity to meet challenges, to compete with others, invent, question, test, draw conclusions, and demonstrate and support their theories /arguments verbally and practically.
- m Conduct themselves in a way that is socially acceptable.

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The *National Curriculum* is gradually being introduced into schools and is made up of Core Subjects – Mathematics
English
Science

and Foundation Subjects – Design Technology
History
Geography
Physical Education
Art
Music.

Religious Education has a special place in the *National Curriculum*.

In addition to the requirements of the *National Curriculum* our curriculum will also include *Sex Education, Media Education, Personal and Social Education* and *Links with Industry*.

In each of the areas of the *National Curriculum* the Government lays down what the children should know, understand and be able to do. These are called *Attainment Targets*. Each target is built up in a series of levels of increasing difficulty. Programmes of Study decided by the Government describe what children should study in order to achieve these levels.

In addition, there are assessment procedures to help determine the progress the children have made. These will take the form of continuous assessment by the teacher and tests provided by the Government at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16. You will receive individual results for your child and a comparison with others in the year group.

Copies of the *National Curriculum* are available for you to borrow.

Mathematics

We expect children to do arithmetic, including mental arithmetic, accurately, and to this end **we encourage a sound knowledge of number bonds and multiplication tables.**

Much of our work is done through practical work and discussion, particularly in the early years. As your children's understanding grows, and knowledge deepens, so the formal recording of their mathematical experience becomes increasingly important. Children will use their knowledge to investigate problems.

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English

The English curriculum includes *Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking*.

Reading

We use a **combination of phonics**, beginning with *Letterland*, and look and say to teach children the basic reading skills.

To develop their reading we have a mixture of reading schemes and other books in order to provide a wide range of reading material to cater for different interests. The books are graded and a wide choice is available at each level. Children are encouraged to bring their books home and **it would be of great benefit if you hear your child read every day**.

In addition to reading stories and poetry, your children will be required to read to find information.

Spelling

We teach children to learn spellings using the *LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK* method. They look carefully at the word, cover it over, and try to write the word. Finally they check their attempt against the correct spelling.

Children will bring home their spelling books and we hope **you will encourage them to practise**.

Writing

We provide a range of writing experiences seeking opportunities to extend the range and depth of their writing. We encourage independent writing.

Handwriting is an integral part of the curriculum, and **you can help by ensuring that letters are correctly formed**. Children will be encouraged to use joined handwriting as soon as possible.

Listening & Speaking

We use Drama to develop listening, speaking, inter-personal skills and the ability to accept and share ideas, and solve problems. This largely occurs through role play situations and can be particularly useful in helping children to understand historical events.

Science

We help children to develop **intellectual** and **practical** skills which will enable them to explore the world of science and understand scientific phenomena. The scientific activities they undertake will encourage them to plan, hypothesise, predict, carry out investigations, interpret results and findings, and draw inferences.

The children will study past and present life forms, and the ways in which human activities affect the earth. They will also study forces, electricity and magnetism and scientific aspects of technology. Much of their work will be of a practical nature.

Design Technology

Design technology enables the children to be **inventive** in designing practical solutions to problems and so bring about change and improvement to existing situations. They will be encouraged to develop their ideas into a realistic design, which can be tried, tested and modified when necessary. Managing and using appropriate resources, knowledge and processes all form part of this area of the curriculum.

This work, by definition is cross curricular. It has very close links with art, home economics, mathematics and science. The design process is an essential part of our work.

History

History encompasses **knowledge** and **understanding** about sequence, cause and change, and **analysis** of historical situations. Children will learn to understand interpretations of history and to acquire evidence from historical sources. They will be encouraged to form judgements about the value and reliability of the evidence they discover.

Geography

In Geography we aim to give the children a wide range of geographical skills, and activities in which they can apply those skills. They will gain **knowledge** and **understanding** of places in local, regional, national, international and global contexts, and study physical geography.

The themes they study will often cross curricular boundaries and include elements of human and environmental geography. Enquiry will form part of the pupils' work and they will be encouraged to question.

Physical Education

Physical Education includes gymnastics, games and dance. Children are encouraged to develop their own individual skills within a variety of activities.

Team spirit, competition, fair play and enjoyment underpin the physical education programme.

Art & Music

Much of this work will be related to the current topic theme. Children will be encouraged to work from close observation as well as from their own imagination. They will have opportunities to **paint, draw, model** in clay and other materials, to **sing, listen to music** and **create and play music**.

We have a school band and a choir. Many of our musical events are undertaken with neighbouring primary and secondary schools.

Specialist teachers visit the school to teach piano, woodwind, brass, and violin. Further information on visiting music teachers can be obtained from the School Office.

Religious Education

Collective worship must, according to the law, take place every day and shall, in the main, reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief in ways appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of the pupils involved, but shall not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

The basic curriculum includes provision for religious education for all registered pupils at the school, though parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education and or worship.

Sex Education

Sex Education is a small part of our broad Health Education Programme and is mainly concerned with developing feelings, attitudes and commitment. More specifically we deal with personal hygiene, physical development, relationships, and sex equality. Such topics as menstruation and puberty are considered by older pupils, usually in Year 6.

Staff always deal with this area of the curriculum with sensitivity,

according to the child's age and maturity. Information will be given in such a manner as to encourage the regard for moral consideration and the value of family life.

Whenever films/videos etc. are used, you will be invited to view, either before or with your child, depending on the needs of the children.

Governors review this policy annually.

We are happy to talk with you regarding any concerns you may have about the school curriculum and related matters. Please do not hesitate to contact us and make an appointment to see the class teacher or Headteacher. If you are still not happy you can ask the Headteacher to show you a copy of Hampshire's procedure for dealing with such matters.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

We make every effort to help children with special educational needs, both those who have learning difficulties and those who are strong in particular areas. Much is achieved through individual tasks in the classroom.

We also have a Special Needs Teacher and Special Needs Assistants who work with individuals or small groups of children when appropriate.

HOMEWORK

Children will, from time to time, be asked to read, learn items, research or do written work at home. **We hope you will encourage them to do this** and to form a good work habit which will prepare them for the next phase of education.

It would be helpful if you would:

- find them a quiet pace to work at home
- take an active interest in the work they are doing.

Should difficulties arise as you support your child in this way do not hesitate to contact us.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Staff voluntarily run many clubs during the lunch break and after school. These vary from term to term. We hope **you will encourage your children to attend their selected clubs regularly.**

Please let your child know what to do in the event of an after school club being cancelled at short notice. It is important they know from you whether they should walk home or wait at school until collected.

Visit Report (edited)

Haydn Primary School

2nd June 1992

Observation of class teacher taking gymnastics lesson

On arriving at Haydn Primary School I report to Colin White, the PE co-ordinator, with whom I have discussed the case study arrangements. Immediately there appears to be some slight confusion, as Colin seems to have forgotten that I have arranged to interview Anne Jones before I watch her lesson. I don't understand how the confusion arose as the main purpose of the initial visit was to finalise arrangements for the case study and I not only discussed it but wrote it down for him as well! I guess in his busy schedule my visit is of fairly limited importance! Colin, by chance, has a supply teacher with him for the afternoon so there is no real problem as he says that he will take over Anne's class while I talk to her and the supply will cover his own class. As Colin is a senior member of staff and I gather someone of some importance in the school (though he is not a deputy head - he has acted as the head in her absence re. illness) he has supply cover fairly regularly to allow him non-contact time.

Anne is a little surprised that I should want to talk to her or observe her teaching. Wouldn't I rather talk to Colin, the PE expert? Anne is fairly young (about 27) and this is her only post since leaving training college. She began as a reception teacher and has worked her way through different age groups. She now teaches a year 5 class (9 and 10 years old). I believe that she sees this very much as a career progression.

Whilst Anne changes for her lesson I join Colin for a coffee in the staffroom. He explains that with regards to the National Curriculum he wasn't capable of performing miracles in twelve months or even three years though he feels that this is what is being expected of him - he would simply do his best (as usual). Ideally his way is to work in three year planned cycles where new subjects and ideas are introduced gradually not "en masse" - he doesn't intend to be at Haydn then (Colin seems very ambitious - I assume he will be looking towards a headship of his own elsewhere?) He is very critical of the National Curriculum and of the advisors/inspectors whose job it is to see that it is implemented. I get the feeling that he believes he knows more than they do and I quite believe it! He would like one of the PE advisors to visit the school and to "try and do what we do" so they could see just how difficult a task the primary school has - a chance to say "I told you so!" His games programme for example is very ambitious but the facilities with which to carry it out in practice are poor in terms of size and quality.

Observation PE lesson

I find Anne in her classroom where the children are getting changed into a varied assortment of attire - no rules re. dress for PE it seems! The majority of the boys are wearing mini football strips (!) and the girls are in various coloured leotards, leggings and shorts. Anne is dressed in T-shirt and leggings and is wearing trainers. All teachers change for exercise of any kind at Haydn, a recommendation of Colin's I believe). She tries to get the children to remember to bring in trainers for indoor PE (but without a great deal of success it seems!) as they often have a aerobic warm-up at the start of each session. An extremely skinny girl comes up to me grabbing my arm to ask if I'm going to watch her do aerobics. Victoria I gather is one of Haydn's SEN children and has mild learning difficulties. She enjoys PE and is keen for me to watch her.

Anne's hour long lesson is divided into three parts:

- aerobic warm-up
- traffic lights game (details below!)
- gymnastic sequences

Aerobic warm-up:

At the start of the lesson there is a minor problem with one of the boys who insists (with the help of his "mates") that he has cut his foot and says that he can't take his socks off. He has no trainers and cannot do aerobics in his socks as the floor is too slippery. Anne is very firm with him - "wearing your socks won't make any difference" - and I gather that he often tries to get out of this activity because he regards it as 'girly' (he likens it to dance perhaps?). He is quite tall for his age (he must be about 10) and looks more grown up than the other boys there, I suspect that he has simply reached "that difficult age" before the rest of them! Throughout the warm-up he joins in but is very 'silly' exaggerating all his movements and kicking his friends at every opportunity - all of which are deliberately ignored by Anne.

The rest of the children seem to enjoy aerobics, the girls especially (combination of pop music and being able to do a 'grown up' activity?) and Victoria throws her uncoordinated self into it at the back of the hall! At this age the children come in assorted shapes and sizes! Most of the girls are larger than the boys, apart from the stropky boy mentioned above, and they differ in their co-ordination and timing. There are some individuals who follow Anne very well but the overall picture is one of complete chaos with arms and legs every where. I manage to conceal my mirth! Anne is not a trained instructor but has put together a very good routine with a gradual start and finish and some interesting steps in the middle sequence using all parts of the body (railway train, ski-ing etc.) She asks the children if they can feel their muscles working and asks them which ones they are using as the movements change. It seems a very good way to treat the warm-up part of the PE lesson and to give it some meaning for the children.

Traffic Lights:

This is a game that the children play fairly regularly and there are many variations on the main theme. Basically they run around until Anne gives one of the following instructions -

"Red"	- stop
"Green"	- go
"Amber"	- "flash"!

"Amber" seems to involve the children laying on their backs and wriggling violently -like a flashing light!? They look like huge beetles that couldn't manage to get back on their feet! (This is turning out to be a very entertaining afternoon!) The children run round like mad things for a while, Anne as well, being careful not to bump into each other in the process. She asks them why they play this game and what they learn from it. Various suggestions are offered - listening, safety (being aware of others), following instructions. This week she gives them the theme of spacemen and tells them to try and move as slowly as possible (amber is hilarious!) which seems to be more difficult than they thought. Again she tells them to be aware of how their muscles are working and how their bodies are working differently from the aerobics. The 'stropky boy' doesn't appear to regard this as an unworthy activity so I suspect that there is a element of sex stereo-typing coming through in the aerobics?

Gymnastic sequences:

For this part of the lesson Anne divides the children into two groups, largely because of the limitations of space - the hall is well-equipped but quite small. Half of the children get out benches and the soft equipment that Colin has recently purchased (and seems very popular with the children) to make an obstacle course. The others, in pairs (which I notice are all same-sex!) get mats out to work on their "sequences". The children are quite boisterous by this stage, I assume because they have just had two "fun" activities and have been running around a great deal - they now need to calm down while they get the equipment out. Anne has to be quite strict about talking and behaviour because of safety, the children need to be reminded to keep the noise down while equipment is being moved. Ironically there is a great crash as a metal beam that has been stacked behind the benches falls to the floor, narrowly missing Anne! "That shows why you have to be quiet" she says "so you can hear if an accident happens!"

The children getting out the soft equipment are told to memorise where they got it from so they can replace it "exactly where you find it, or Mr White will want a word with you!" Setting up the equipment takes longer than putting the mats out so she sets those who are working on sequences off on their task. They are to make up a short sequence that must include two rolls and two balances. They are told to think about their own plan and to be aware of their space and where others are. She then turns back to supervise the emerging obstacle course to make sure that it is safe and sensible.

From where I am sitting in the room I can see clearly the sequences, some of which are very good, the children working well together. I notice that Victoria has paired up

with a rather large girl in contrast to herself. I suspect that they are both 'mis-fits' to a certain extent and have become friends because of this. They concentrate hard on their own routine and receive no special attention from either teacher or children. Most pairs keep their sequences simple - a forward roll, a backward roll, cartwheels etc. There are a couple of girls there that obviously belong to a gym club, dressed in matching leotards they raise their hands at the end of every move like Olympic gymnasts regardless of how good the move is!

At the end of the session Anne asks for volunteers to show everybody what they have done. Almost every hand shoots up! She is careful to choose a male and a female pair. The boys sequence was very good - simple movements but they had worked hard to get their timing right. The girls pair - the two budding Olympic gymnasts mentioned above - were not quite as impressive. One kept forgetting what came next in the routine and they both dissolved into fits of giggles in the middle! Both pairs however received equal praise and a round of applause from the rest of the children. Anne asked them how the routines of the two pairs were different and what they could do to try and improve for next time.

On the way back to the classroom - a little later than planned (already past home time) as the children took so long to change before the lesson and Anne hadn't wanted them to lose out on their PE time - I ask her if the lesson is always split into three sections. Apparently it is generally divided into two parts and then again there may be further division in the gymnastic section. This is necessary to be able to "fit things in" as the other two lessons are reserved for outdoor games and the large apparatus. The aerobic warm-up then provides an additional activity as well as serving its intended purpose. This lesson, although I had asked to see whatever she would be teaching had I not been there, had been split into three activities so that I could see some of the things that might normally happen. Anne seemed quite confident in her lesson, but had mentioned safety as a concern in the interview I had with her earlier. She said that she felt her task was difficult but that she had now managed to get over the anxieties about safety that she had when she joined the school.

Comments - Observation

Anne produced what I perceived to be a well-balanced and thoughtful lesson. The children enjoyed themselves and worked hard, concentrating on their tasks. Anne kept up the 'educational element' by constantly asking them to think about and question what they and their bodies were doing.

On leaving the school I meet Colin and Mrs. Downey. I apologise for being disruptive and presume that the beginning of a new term, or half term must be a very busy time. She assures me that it is always like this these days! It is not unusual, for example, for her to have to arrange 8 AM meetings at various sites in the County in order to fit things in. Colin asks me what I thought of the PE lesson I have just seen. I mention that I particularly enjoyed the aerobics. Colin says that I should see him teach the 4 and 5 year olds if I wanted to get a real picture of unco-ordination! Mrs. Downey disagrees and says that I should see her teach one of her lessons for that (and I think

that she was referring to herself rather than the children!) I feel that the afternoon was well spent at Haydn. The observation was very interesting and useful to me personally - I don't really feel that I could justify carrying out a case study in PE without actually having seen any! It is also a useful way of cross-referencing what I may have been told in an interview situation with what happens in practice. I don't feel that there would be a large policy/practice re. the National Curriculum at a school like Haydn. In the same way that my initial visits yielded more data than I expected I feel that I should carry on with the ethnographic approach as far as is possible. Spending time in the school generally will make for a more realistic study than if I were simply to carry out one-off interviews.

Visit Report (edited)

Haydn Primary School

June 5th 1992

Observation of Gymnastics lesson taken by PE co-ordinator.

I arrive at Haydn for my third and final visit this year on a wet and rainy Friday afternoon and go to Colin's room to wait for him. It is still the lunch-hour and the children have had to stay inside because of the weather. They are being 'managed' by the dinner ladies but are very noisy and boisterous - this is not helped by my arrival as by now they have seen me several times and know my name and I am consequently engulfed by children of assorted sizes - "Are you going to watch us do PE?" "We're doing gymnastics today!"

Mr. White arrives shortly explaining that he has to dash off again for a few minutes before he takes his lesson. The head and the deputy are both away and Colin is acting for them in their absence. He tells the children to sit quietly while they wait for him to come back, and leaves one of the older girls (i.e. 6 years old!) in charge of taking the register while the dinner ladies try and clear up (without a great deal of success). The noise doesn't get any better and a teacher from the adjoining room comes in to shout at them, telling them to change quietly for PE and then sit down in a line (so they can't fidget!) with a reading book until Mr White comes back. Colin returns and praises his class for being so sensible and well behaved - the children don't argue with him!

Observation - Gymnastics Lesson

After changing the children are told to file into the hall, Colin is distracted again and tells me to go ahead without him. He explains "the first thing I ought to tell you is that I don't believe in making any concessions for them because of their age" (4 - 6 years old). "It will be interesting to see what they do if you're there" he says and tells me not to do anything but just watch them - by which I wonder if he means that they will be well behaved as they are obviously well-trained pupils of his?! Unfortunately the exact opposite proved to be true!

The children are still very full of energy, having been contained in their classroom for the entire day so far and start running around the gymnasium. One little boy comes up to me and asks "What shall I do?" I ask him what the class would normally do if Mr. White was there? "Warm-up" one child says. So they all tear around the room like mad things until Colin appears to tell them off for running around when they know that they should be sitting quietly at the side of the hall! The boy mentioned above doesn't see him come in and is still running around after the others have stopped. He gets singled

out for the 'official Mr White telling-off treatment'. The poor thing takes this humiliation with head hung low and sideways glances aimed at me whom he obviously blames for his fate! I make a note to confess and apologise at the end of the lesson.

The proper warm up then...Colin dressed in tracksuit and trainers joins in with the activities. The children are kept constantly on the move pretending to be different animals - bouncy kangaroos, slithering snakes, Balou the Bear - they run, jump and stretch, move fast and slow, and get thoroughly worn out in ten minutes or so. The warm up is made fun for them (and Colin too it seems!) by the characters that Colin introduces. My favourite is "shopping trolleys" where the children have to run around with their invisible trolleys and not bump into each other!

After the warm up the children are told to line up along the side of the hall. They are allocated different tasks to do in pairs and groups but no-one is allowed to move until all the jobs have been given out. Each group is then set off one at a time so that there are no clashes and the children can see what everyone else is doing. Before the children start Colin explains that any one who is wearing trainers will not be allowed on the apparatus because the wood had only recently been replaced at the cost of £300 (Anne mentioned only two days ago that the apparatus was broken) and it was still too delicate to use. He points out the piece that has been mended. There is only one child who is wearing trainers because of a verruca and Colin apologises to him, he will be allowed to choose which activity he does twice as the others move around.

The hall is divided into three sections. At the far end the large apparatus - wall bars, ropes, ladders - is set up, in the centre a grid of mats is formed to provide soft flooring and at the other side the soft equipment makes another appearance. The children are split into three groups and choose their own pairs within them. One group is allocated the large apparatus and told given the simple instructions "safely use it", those given the soft equipment (newly purchased at significant expense) are told "make something interesting" and the mats are for the last group to practice "rolls of any kind". Once the children are under way Colin is able to come over to where I am sitting and have few words. He explains that at this age gymnastics is largely about learning the rules of the gym and exploration. He is not particularly worried about technique as this is something that will come later with practice.

The hall looks very busy - lots of activity. There is a certain amount of noise but this is controlled by Colin who raises his hand to get attention and the children immediately stop what they are doing, get off the equipment and listen to him. He never shouts or needs a whistle. He notices that some of the children are having difficulty with their backward rolls - their legs are too "gangly" and get in the way! He gives them the "cheese" (a wedge shaped piece of soft equipment) to help them and they find that they are able to do it more easily. Colin seems to have eyes everywhere! Hannah is the youngest child in his class (a January intake this year - she is barely four). She is also very cheeky! When the children move round to the next piece of apparatus he sees her trying to stay on the same activity. She is told very firmly to "behave". When on the activity nearest to where I am sitting she constantly tries to get my attention. I do

my best to ignore her without seeming rude! Half way through the lesson she has to taken to the toilet by one of the older children.

The soft equipment is very popular but has to be carefully supervised. Some of the arrangements that the children come up with are somewhat ambitious or unstable. Each group starts from scratch and makes up their own mini climbing course in whatever way they feel. Colin has to take away one of the pieces - the "sausage" - as it tends to roll around and knock into the rest of the equipment. He tells them why the arrangement wouldn't work and how it could be dangerous if it slipped when one of them was on it.

Getting the equipment out and putting it away are both very long processes, made longer by the way Colin organises it. The children, in their pairs, put back each piece one at a time. This is deliberate and the time element doesn't bother him as he sees it all as an integral of the lesson. He explains that the children are still very young and they will improve - it is more important at this stage for them to know what they are doing and why, than for them to get it done as quickly as possible. Hannah causes disruptions by not being where she should be and generally getting in the way, but is firmly put in her place with a few words.

The children leave the gymnasium absolutely exhausted and return to the classroom puffing and panting. They look as though they enjoyed themselves. On the way back to the classroom Colin says that he has no time for those who say that four year olds are too young to take responsibility for getting out equipment and using it safely. He has trained his children to be safe by using "strategies". Early on they are taught various rules that must not be broken - you always carry a mat in this particular way, you always line up along the tramlines, you always stop immediately when the teachers hand is raised (during the lesson he never once had to raise his voice). He knows that once these rules have been learned that the children will be safe in what they do and need minimal supervision.

Comments

Colin is very confident in his lessons and this filters down to the children, it is obvious that he has had more than the average primary teachers training from the way that he interacts with the children. He acts/talks how I would imagine a gymnastic coach to be but is less 'pushy' and demanding. He has confidence in the children (after all he has trained them himself), leaving them to explore the gymnasium on their own without any more interference from him than is absolutely necessary. He clearly is full of imagination and ideas which is probably as important as his training. He is keen that the children experience a variety of different activities and that their interest is maintained from an early age and his lessons are FUN!

The last hour of the school day (and week) and back in Colin's classroom the children are told that they are allowed "free choice". They have to either finish off work that they have already started, read a book or play a quiet game. After their lesson I thought that they might be too tired to make a great deal of noise - wrong!

I carry out an interview with Colin seated on a tiny chair at tiny table with tiny (well, some of them!) children constantly coming up to Colin to ask or show him something and he is constantly glaring at them and waving them away whilst in mid-conversation. I have a headache before I start and feel decidedly worse by the end of the afternoon! Colin realises that the background noise might be a little difficult and says that if I find that the tape is unintelligible I am welcome to come back and re-record the interview (not on a rainy Friday afternoon though!) I am a little disappointed with this one, less of a conversation than the others I have carried out at Haydn, more of a battle! I am also aware that I was not concentrating as well as I might as I was keen to finish and get away from the din!

<When I later play the tape back it is very difficult to hear in many places what is being said because of the constant background chatter, the thundering of Lego being rattled around in buckets and cries of "Mr White....." !>

The interview was fairly short - little more than half an hour. I have met Colin several times by now and many areas that I want to look at have already been covered. I expected Colin to be easy to interview as on my initial visit he had had a great deal to say and I had made copious notes. This afternoon however he was very difficult to talk to, perhaps because of the interview situation? Many of the topics that I brought up he simply would not talk about because it was something that he had not addressed yet - I refuse to believe that he didn't have an opinion! Assessment for example was something that he would look later, when he had to - end of sentence! I get the impression that although the National Curriculum is a fact and will have to be implemented soon, that he wants to create an image of being able to choose to do it in his own time and in his own way and that he isn't going to be told what to do. He feels that the PE curriculum at Haydn is more than adequate (and I certainly couldn't fault anything that I saw) and he should be telling the NCC what to do rather than the other way round!

Visit Report (edited)

Haydn Primary School

18th October 1992

Observation of an outdoor lesson – Year 2 class.

I meet Mrs. Cole in her classroom where she is calling the register of her year 2 class while they sit on the carpet in front of her desk - all looking very neat in their perfect uniform (blue check gingham dresses and navy cardies). She tells me to sit down while she carries on "trying to do twenty things at once here!" I notice that there is another person in the room who I assume to be her student. The children are told that they will be having an outdoor PE lesson next (small cheers from the children! They haven't had outdoor PE for some time due to the weather I gather) and she asks how many of them have still got their kit in school. Not many raise their hands and most of them say that they haven't got it because they didn't realise that they would be having PE today. Mrs. Cole says not to mind and those who have their kit are sent into the cloakroom to get it while she checks on their footwear, putting on trainers herself. Those who are wearing sandals are told that they will have to watch and one boy is not wearing anything on his feet which she explains aside is his punishment because he has been kicking other children. He will be staying in to work. The children get changed, quite quickly, and soon line up by the inner door where they are told to be quiet as they have to go past other classrooms where children are still working. Several of the children are sent to fetch bags of small apparatus and to take them on to the playground.

I spend most of the next half hour or so noting a few points about the lesson but also taking the opportunity to talk to the student, whose name I didn't catch, about PE. She is in the first year of her BA at a local college and this is her first period of teaching practice.

The lesson:

A short warm-up. The children jump up and down on the spot and they they do some stretching. They are then sent off to weave in and out of each other around the playground, as fast as they can, and Mrs. Cole doesn't want to see anyone bumping into anyone else. This seems to puff them out. Finally she tells them to listen to her instructions and to walk in a straight line forwards and then to make a quarter turn left and to walk again then turn and so forth so that they should all eventually end up facing the same direction that they started in.

The lesson is about various skills and the children are told to do the following activities in their pre-set groups (kittens, puppies, foals etc.)

- 1) Roll the ball up to the cone to try and hit it
- 2) Balance a bean bag on various parts of the body
- 3) Lay the skipping rope on the ground and jump over it
- 4) Dribble the ball without losing it

Some of the children need to be reminded what dribbling is (girls!) and Mrs. Cole says that it means keeping the ball close to the body stressing the word "control". Mrs. Cole shows the children what she wants them to do at each activity and nearly knocks little Tristram out while demonstrating the rope jumps!

The children then set off in their groups to their allocated tasks and have a short turn on each activity before moving on to practice the next one. The lesson is stopped a couple of times at the changeovers for a child to show her dribble or her jump and so forth. After what seems a very short time (I don't have my watch with me) Mrs. Cole tells them to stop what they are doing and to come back to her bringing all their apparatus with them and to put away in the bag. I assume the lesson is over and start to make a note in my book when I realise that it hasn't. The children do some more stretching and skipping before being told to each get a ball back out of the bag. They then practice throwing a ball in the air and catching it - a simple task I think even for six/seven year olds, however, it is clear that this is not the case! Some of them throw the ball too high and miss on the way down, others just miss it I remark to the student that some of them seem to find it difficult and she says that people often overestimate their ball skills because they never look at them in isolation. It is apparently the same with things like skipping, every one expects children to be good at it, but it isn't always the case.

Comments

This lesson was short because it began to rain and the children returned to their class. Mrs. Cole explains that had she known it would rain then she would have taken the class in the gym from the start but she feels now that the children have been disrupted and ought to get back to the classroom.

The lesson demonstrated the wide range of abilities that exist between children of similar ages. Teaching various 'skills' helps to overcome this problem of differentiation in PE. The games programme that is being developed at Haydn will build on this approach by gradually introducing children to activities in which these skills will be utilised. These children, however, are very young and have not yet been introduced to competitive situations.

Documents Relating to Sycamore First School

Appendices O - Q

AIMS OF THE SCHOOLGeneral Aims

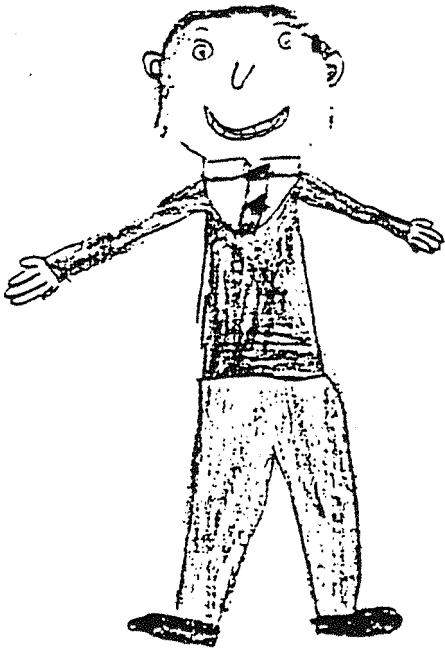
1. To help the children develop lively, enquiring minds.
2. To help them understand the world in which they live and the inter-dependence of individuals and groups.
3. To begin to acquire a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs.
4. To develop a sense of self-respect.
5. To instil respect for religious and moral values and tolerance in a multi-ethnic society.
6. To prepare for eventual adulthood and to be adaptable in a fast-changing world.
7. To begin to appreciate the arts and the many aspects of human achievement.
8. To develop habits of self-discipline and acceptable behaviour.

Educational Aims

As far as possible, within the framework of the school as a community, to treat each child as an individual and therefore to enable each one to:-

1. reach satisfactory levels of attainment, taking into account his/her mental and physical capabilities.
2. acquire knowledge, skills and practical abilities and the will to use them.
3. be able to communicate verbally and in writing.
4. listen attentively, with understanding and purpose.
5. read fluently and accurately.
6. develop a legible style of handwriting and satisfactory standards of spelling, syntax and punctuation.
7. have an understanding of mathematical processes and ideas and their applications in everyday life.

8. master basic scientific ideas.
9. observe living and inanimate things and recognise characteristics such as pattern and order.
10. develop physical co-ordination and agility and appreciate rules for healthy living.
11. begin to be aware of historical, geographical, ecological and social aspects of the local environment.
12. be able to reason and solve problems.
13. be able to use music, drama and other forms of arts and crafts as means of expression.
14. become conversant with the correct use of equipment and tools and have practical experience with audio-visual resources to equip them for the demands of modern technology.



Day	Time	9.15	9.45	10.05	10.30 10.45	10.45	11.15	12.00 1.15	1.15	1.45	2.15		2.45 - 3.15
Monday		1	8	7		4	6		2	3	5		Hall is free from P.E. - use weekly list to book time if required.
		Gymnastics			Gymnastics		Gymnastics		Gymnastics		Games - football in 1st wet.		
		6	1. 4			8	7		5	2	3		
Tuesday		Music & Movement							Music & Movement		Games		
		9.45	10.00	10.15					1.15	1.40	2.05		
		1	4	8		7	6		3	5	2		
Wednesday		Floor Work							Gymnastics		Games		
									1.15	1.40	2.05		
		7	6	1		4	8		2	5	3		
Thursday		Gymnastics							Country Dance / Floor work		Games		
		7	8	6		1	4		5	2	3		
Friday		Gymnastics							Gymnastics				

Records - Hyman / Records

PLAY

LUNCH

TIME

TIME

TIME

Guidelines for P.E. in the Infant/First SchoolWhat is P.E.?

Learning by means of a series of themes or topics about the ways we can shift our bodies around.

How do we do this?

We need to establish certain basic routines -

- (A) For the class and the teacher
- (B) For the teacher
- (C) For the lesson

A. The class and the teacher

1. Changing - no jewellery, long trousers, tights or plimsolls.
2. Behaviour - restrained both en route to and in the hall or playground.
3. Safety rules - special regard to accident routine and checking apparatus before use.
4. Response to instruction - instant.
5. Handling of apparatus - time is well spent here on movement of apparatus by the children (1, 2, 3, Lift!!).
6. Vocabulary - the children should learn the names of the apparatus, parts of the body and language of space and direction.

B. The Teacher

1. Every lesson should have a point - however small. It is a waste of time putting out apparatus and allowing a "free for all" (even in the best sense of the phrase!). Some aim and positive direction should be given.
2. Language - many young children are not aware of the names of all body parts. Some preparation (in the classroom maybe) is needed if the whole body is to be used.
3. Where to stand - it is very important to stand where the whole class and its activity can be seen at a glance.
4. What to wear - make sure that your footwear is suitable for rescue work!

C. The Lesson

1. It should have 3 parts - (1) Floor work, (2) Block teaching and (3) Apparatus work.
2. Quality. The lesson should be conducted in an unhurried and patient manner. The teacher moving round and talking to individuals throughout. Choose individuals to illustrate points. Develop the sensitivity of the child by encouraging gentle slow movement. Care when approaching and leaving the apparatus.
3. The theme. A theme or range of experience should last about 6 weeks. The children will thus learn by repetition and can develop the theme over such a period to achieve (2).

(over)

CONTENT FOR THEME HEADINGS

1. Travelling on the feet
Walking, running, hopping, skipping, bouncing, springing. Learning to do these actions quietly and gently.
Moving on the spot.
Changing from one type to another.
Follow-my-leader.
Use of toes; the heel of the foot; sides of the feet.
2. Travelling using the whole body
Pushing the body along; pulling the body, Spinning - on stomach; on backside.
Sliding.
Use different parts of body - fronts, backs, sides, knees and hands, shoulders.
3. Travelling on hands and feet
Both hands with both feet together.
Animal-like walking.
Stomach up; stomach down.
One hand/two feet; one foot/two hands.
4. Travelling and stopping
Any of the actions as above, but probably starting with travelling on feet. There does not need to be a sudden stop, although this is good fun to begin with.
5. Learning to land well
This theme combines with the theme on jumping but can also be used for children to practice coming off apparatus at very low heights.
It is important that children learn to land with toes leading, the knees bending to absorb impact and the arms and the rest of the body helping the balance.
6. Jumping
Remember the importance of landings.
Jumping from the floor into the air and landing correctly on the floor. Position of the body in the air. Leaping for height.
Jumping forwards, backwards, sideways.
Jump on the spot. Jump from a run. Make different shapes with each jump; large, stretched, twisted.
7. Using the space in the hall
Use different travelling techniques to travel to various parts of the hall to touch the walls. Travel from side to side of the hall. Travel all round the hall. Make zig-zag pathways down the hall. Use the diagonals. Boys stand still, girls travel around the boys and then girls stand still while the boys travel.
8. Using the space with apparatus
(Place low items of apparatus at strategic points) Go around the hall in and out of the apparatus. Travel to every part of the hall crossing the apparatus as you come to it. Arrive on the apparatus and come off at the other end.
Going to the top of the apparatus; on the apparatus but staying as low as you can.
(with large apparatus too)

cont'd

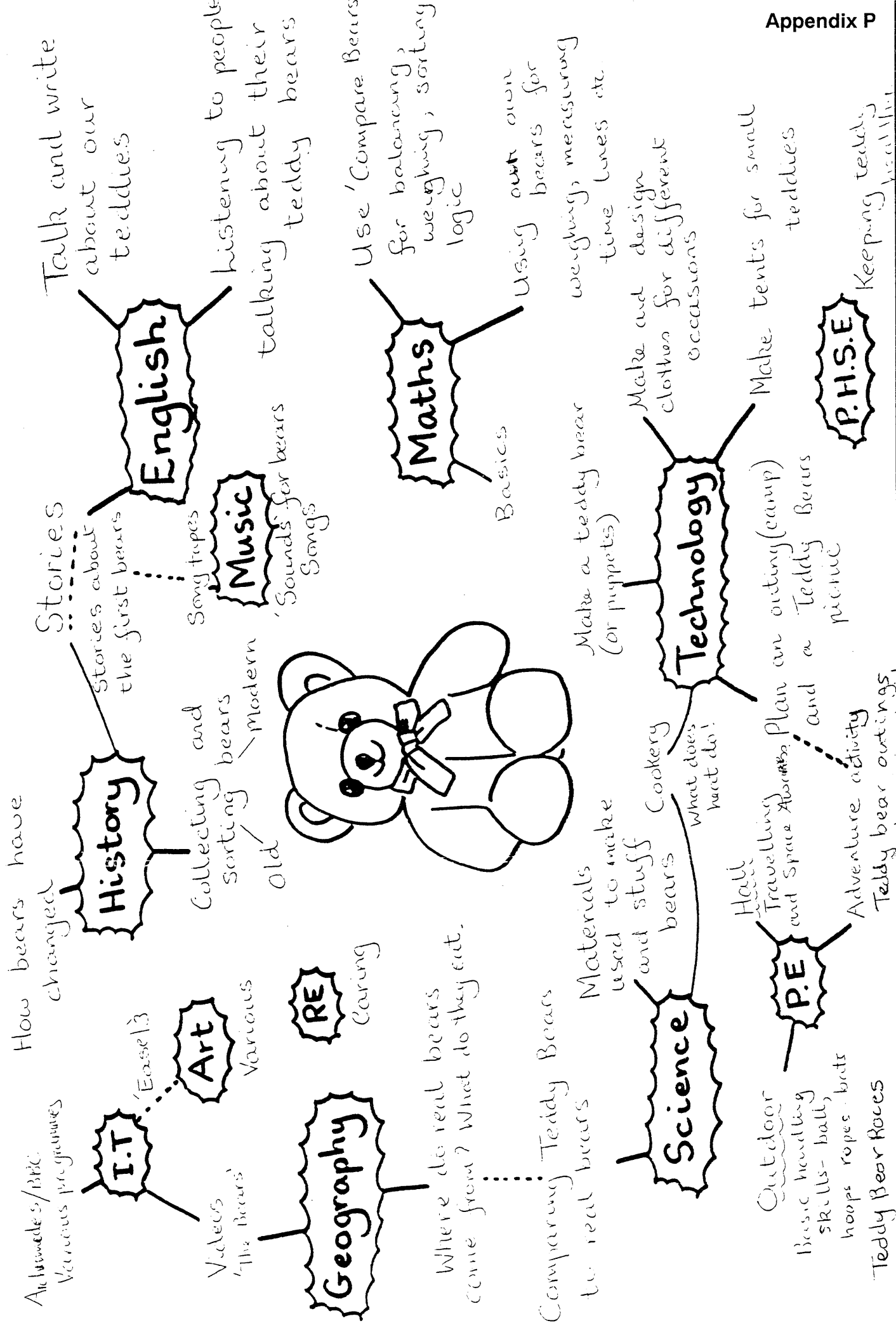
9. Using the hands and arms to support the body
(This theme should be used sparingly)
- Crouch jumps; crouch jumps with the legs going side to side; moving the feet around the hands; handstands; cartwheels. Use inclined planks, box top, benches ladders. Take feet from side of apparatus while hands/arms support the body onto the apparatus and off the other side.
10. Shaping the body
- The body can be made small, wide, tall, large, round, twisted while it is moving; while it is still. Move using a rounded shape. Shape the body in the air. Move changing your shape. Make a different body shape while you are balanced on various parts of the body. Repeat a contrast of shapes; large, small, large small.....
11. Shaping the body: bridges
- What is a bridge shape? Make different bridge shapes e.g. knees and hands; one foot, two hands. An upside-down bridge, a sloping bridge, a small bridge. A bridge which walks! Can you make a bridge on the apparatus? Change from one bridge shape to another. How do you join them up?
12. Rolling and rocking
- Rocking tucked movement on backside to show that rocking is going to and fro, to and fro, on the same body parts. Try to find different body parts to use for rocking. Rocking, becoming larger and larger in the swing.
Rolling - long, sideways rolls; forward rolls, backward roll.
13. Arriving on and coming off apparatus
- Approach the apparatus from different directions. How can you get onto the apparatus? Jump? Crawl? Climb? Feet first? Hands first? Other parts of the body? Quickly? Slowly? Which parts of the body can lead off the apparatus - feet? hands? jump off? climb off? slide off?
14. Apparatus skills
- Swinging, climbing, hanging, turning round a bar, balancing on a beam, being upside down, making shapes on the apparatus.

P.E. - SOME SUGGESTED THEME HEADINGS FOR CHILDREN IN INFANT SCHOOLS

1. Travelling on the feet.
2. Travelling using the whole body.
3. Travelling on hands and feet.
4. Travelling and stopping.
5. Learning to land well.
6. Jumping.
7. Using the space in the hall.
8. Using the space with apparatus.
9. Using the hands and arms to support the body.
10. Shaping the body: small, wide, tall, large round.
11. Shaping the body: bridges.
12. Rolling and rocking.
13. Arriving on and coming off apparatus.
14. Apparatus skills.

Teddy Bears

Yellow Base '92
Summer



Visit Report (edited)

Sycamore First School

18th June 1992

Observation of all PE lessons held at school on one day.

I arrive at the school about 9.15. I had hoped to arrive for the start of the day (9AM) but due to a nightmare train-bus-train-taxi journey which started at 5.30 AM (!!) I am pleased to be here at all and consider it a remarkable achievement! I am, needless to say, already rather tired!

I am told by the secretary that the school are all in assembly - I can hear this! The teacher who usually plays the piano is away and the children are singing unaccompanied - it really is quite painful! I am shown into the staff room where I can wait and where I meet a part-time teacher who comes in to give slow readers extra lessons. She usually has a child to see whilst assembly is going on but I gather that her pupil is absent today. We have a coffee and chat/moan about BR etc! She says that to save me hassle on the return journey she is sure that someone in the school would be perfectly happy to give me a lift to the station to get a straight-through train back - at least that is a relief!

I meet with Mrs. Sealey in her office briefly. She explains that she has a meeting almost immediately and one later in the day and that I would be able to see her just after lunch when she had a quiet period. She finds two children to show me to Lorna's room where I find her organising the children's work for the day. I tell her when I am due to see Mrs. Sealey and she suggests that I talk to her over lunch - she had hoped that we might be able to go to the pub across the road but as she is busy we might content ourselves with a school dinner instead and a quiet chat in her classroom while the children are outside. In the meantime she has arranged for me to see some indoor PE lessons in the hall until the interview. She explains that she has informed the staff that I will be in the school today and to expect me to be in the hall while they are teaching. I will not see any outdoor lessons today as these are held only on Wednesdays or Fridays. I hope to be able to interview a general class teacher today and Lorna says that this shouldn't be a problem later on in the day.

Observation Gymnastics Lesson i

9.20 - 9.50

"Apparatus" as the children prefer to call it! The class is taken by Mrs. "B", a year 2 teacher - fairly young (I would say that she is in her twenties) but she seems quite old fashioned in her dress (not that this means anything except that it obviously struck me at the time!) The class she is taking today - twenty four children altogether - is not her

own but a reception class. Their own teacher takes recorder classes whilst Mrs. "B" covers her lessons. There are four extra children today as they do not take recorders - they are therefore older than the majority of the group by about two years. She is wearing normal clothes but has put on a pair of plimsolls, the children are barefoot and in their underwear as seems to be usual at infant level. She is accompanied by a young helper who I gather is a pupil from a local school who wants to work with children (must be about fifteen?) Before the start of the lesson, which is late starting (lots of birthdays in assembly!), the register is taken again. This apparently is a fire precaution and is always carried out by teachers in the school. The children are all quite young and as this is their first term they are still learning about space and awareness of others. One of the children (a girl), who obviously doesn't like PE, complains that "I bumped my head at home" but is told firmly that it won't stop her joining in.

The children warm-up, according to the teacher's instructions and with her joining in, by walking and running around slowly and then fast. They then hop and jump and slide on their tummies as they explore different ways of getting around. Although very little time is spent on each activity, they are all very puffed at the end of it!

The children then get the apparatus out. They are dispatched simultaneously, in pairs, to various places around the room to set about their tasks of fetching and placing the equipment. A great deal of activity ensues and the children manage not to bump into each other despite the noise they are making - all of the children have something to put out and they have obviously done this before! Mrs. "B" helps them with the heaviest equipment (benches) as they are after all very small people! There is a great deal of equipment in the hall - ropes are suspended from the pull-out wall bars, there is a trestle holding a bar in place, a box and a beam - in fact, all of the equipment that I could see around the hall seems to be out! There is also a 'cheese' (similar to that at Morrison) on which to practice forward rolls. Mrs. "B" tells the children where to put mats around the apparatus - under the bar, next to the box and beam and anywhere the children will be jumping.

Throughout the lesson children (five of them - I counted!) pass through the hall enroute to other parts of the school - the hall is the only access to the upper year classrooms. Most of them knock on the hall door first, as they are obviously told to do, and wait for the teacher or assistant (or me!) to tell them that they may walk through. This involves stopping the children from climbing on the ropes as access through the hall means passing immediately by them.

Once the apparatus is set up the children sit on the floor to await their instructions. They are told that during the lesson they are to find fast and slow ways (obviously the theme of the lesson) of using the apparatus ("quietly" Mrs. "B" stresses and they are told not to run) and to line up by the apparatus that they want to start with (there are five choices - bar, beam, ropes, wall bars and boxes). Some are more popular than others - the ropes seem to be the first choice for many of them - and Mrs. "B" has to sort them out into manageable groups. The children then are left to their task, though

they seem to have forgotten that they have one at all, and simply enjoy moving about on the equipment. At regular (and very short, intervals) Mrs. "B" tells them to stop and then to move on to the next apparatus so that by the end of the lesson the children have had a go (albeit briefly) on all of the apparatus.

At the end of the lesson Mrs. "B" has a few words with me while the assistant herds the children back into the classroom. She explains that he believes in giving the children clear instructions and then leaving them to explore on their own under her supervision - she does, however, insist on a quiet lesson. The apparatus, she says, is always set out differently in every lesson and that the next teacher coming in to the hall checks the equipment and usually re-arranges it for their own lesson. The third class of the morning session (no apparatus used in the afternoon) is responsible for putting the apparatus away. This means that the class in the middle - that I am about to see - neither puts the apparatus out or away, they must therefore have a longer lesson than the other two classes on either side. The lesson I have just seen was literally ten minutes long once the children had come into the hall from changing and settled down -ridiculous!

Observation Gymnastics Lesson ii

9.50 - 10.20

The next group into the hall is a year 1 class taken by Mrs. "K", they are also late into the hall as they have been on a library visit (and also rather excited because of this) so their time has already been reduced - only by a few minutes but this is significant with such a short lesson time. This class is quite small - thirteen children - which is just as well because they have to warm up in the space that is left around the apparatus from the last lesson - not ideal really. Once again the children are in their underwear, the teacher is barefoot.

They warm up in a similar fashion to the first lesson by following the teacher who jumps and shakes and skips around the room. They then take giant and then small steps around the room counting at the same time. She tells them constantly to look at other people and see where they are in the room.

The apparatus is not moved at all, neither do I see it checked by the teacher. The children are told to use it in different ways and to try and think of high, middle and low movements. They are organised into groups and told what piece of equipment they are to use and when. The lesson ensues in a similar way to that of Mrs. "B", at least as far as the children are concerned. A few of them are attempting to carry out their task and explore different heights but most are simply climbing on the apparatus regardless of any instructions given to them. The children are obviously a little more developed than the previous class, they are also very well controlled/behaved. When, for example, they see a mat that has moved from it's place they do not need to be told to push it back again - they seem well aware of safety whilst on the equipment. The lesson takes place in silence (in contrast to the lesson that Colin White took at Haydn).

At the end of the lesson I have a few words with Mrs. K who explains to the children that she has to "talk to the poor lady on her own"! I commented that some of the equipment was quite high and that, not being a teacher myself and unaccustomed to the daring behaviour of five year olds, it is somewhat nerve-wracking to watch! Mrs. K says that she is well aware of the safety issue but that children are too and, even at this age, they generally know their own physical capabilities. If she panicked whenever one of them got to the top of the rope it might frighten them and this could cause an accident - teachers need nerves of steel! The children are all fairly capable at this age though some need help with balance

Morning Break 10.20

All the staff not on playground duty meet in the staffroom for a coffee. Mrs. Sealey joins them, which I gather is not usual these days from the comments that ensued from her appearance in the room. The head has some letters to give to the teachers to pass on to the children at the end of the day concerning the parent-governor meeting that is approaching. She explains that the teachers must not forget to give them out and stresses that it is important that all parents of children at the school receive a copy as it is now a legal requirement. I gather from her tone that she has a low opinion of legal requirements but that she must comply with them! This is an example of the increased contractual obligations (parent power etc.) that schools now have to fulfil. She also commented that if there were children of the same family in the school that it was necessary for the family to have only one copy - they were rather lengthy documents and she was conscious of the cost that it took to produce them (LMS!)

Mrs. Sealey announces that she has just heard the new regulations for dance in the National Curriculum - ballet and tap - all teachers are to purchase leotards! There is laughter at this once they realise that she is joking. Someone however does mention that she has heard that they will have to do some "modern stuff"! "Oh you mean imaginative whatsname?!" says one of the older teachers and she flings her arms around (in the manner of a tree in the wind, apparently) to demonstrate what she means. I gather that the teachers are not too keen on giving up their BBC 'dance' tapes!

Before the end of the break when some of the teachers, including Lorna, have already returned to their classrooms. I talk to someone that Lorna suggested I interviewed, she agrees to talk to me - she then disappears without telling where her classroom is. I eventually find her in her class where the children are changing for PE and I realise that when she agreed to talk, she meant a brief chat while she is teaching. Today is obviously not going to go as I had planned and I begin to feel frustrated.

Observation Gymnastics Lesson iii

10.30 - 11.00

Mrs. "C" takes a year 1 class of twenty 5/6 year olds. She says before the start of the lesson that the children "love PE" and they get irritated if they can't have it for any

reason, she also acknowledges that the limited time available can cause difficulties, particularly for the younger pupils who have problems with changing.

The lesson focuses on body parts, and seems to have more of a theme than the classes that I have seen earlier in the morning. Mrs. C asks the children to think about what they did yesterday - when the apparatus wasn't out - to think about how different parts of the body use different joints to make them move. They warm up by moving specific body parts while they are sitting down, wriggling their fingers and toes to start with and then their arms, knees and legs followed by their whole body. They then stand up and repeat the movements. She asks the children if they can name some of the joints (ball and socket etc.) Next the children try to imagine what it would be like to have "no joints", she tells them to try and walk around the hall keeping their arms and legs very stiff.

The children then use the apparatus (again it hasn't been moved or checked), each getting a turn on the ropes, and are told to think about how they are using their body whilst they are climbing on the equipment. Mrs. C wants to see them bending and stretching and pointing as they move. She gives them the simple instruction that no more than four children may be on any piece of apparatus at the same time and lets the girls choose where to start (boys and girls generally take it in turns to go first in lessons). They are then left very much to themselves whilst she walks around encouraging, praising and advising them, helping those that need it most. She notices that some of their movements are "sloppy" (jumps etc.) and she tells them to think about when they watch athletes/ gymnasts on the TV at home and how they always follow their actions through. At one point during the lesson she asks them to stop "Are you clever enough to stop where you are?" and the children try to balance in the position that they were in when she spoke. "You've all been listening - well done!" she says. At the end of the lesson she picks a few of the children to show the others some of the more interesting movements that they were making by using their joints on the apparatus - Mrs. C is the only teacher to this (perhaps because her children are older?) "I enjoyed some of those movements" she says". Mrs. C's lesson is one of the more enjoyable ones I have seen, mainly because of her attitude towards the children - she is very encouraging.

Observation – Gymnastics Lesson iv

11.00 - 11.25

I am by now, getting a little weary of watching small children climbing on apparatus and am beginning to feel 'pushed around' (i.e. I should be doing interviews). However, I stay to watch Mrs. L take her reception class of eighteen children. She checks the apparatus and has been the only teacher to do so all morning (is it really still only morning?!) but she does not change the arrangement. The children, apparently, are a bit excitable today as they have had library visits and an unexpected school photographer which has caused all, sorts of problems re. children needing their hair brushed etc.

Mrs. L begins her lesson warm up by first making the children stretch and jump, she then asks them to find different ways of moving around the room, but not yet on the apparatus. She sets them their task for the lesson and asks them to move - "not too quickly" - "close" on the apparatus using their bodies. She will choose who is to use the ropes - this is something that all the teachers I have seen this morning have done (and have been trained to do?!). One of the children bumps into another and is shouted at - "Aaron, you're too close!" which is probably quite confusing for him really! The children then move to stand next to the apparatus that they want to start with.

By this time I have run out of note paper and am beginning to scribble on the backs of interview schedules and anything else that is to hand - not the best arrangement really. I guess I just write too much!

Observation - Dance Lesson i

11.25 - 11.55

This was quite an 'eye-opener'! Mrs. "M" uses the BBC country dancing tape that I had not heard before (though the children seem more than familiar with it), she presses 'play' on the tape recorder and then leaves the children to it apart from the odd "Listen children" (reminding me of Joyce Grenfell!) when they get a bit boisterous - probably to remind them that she is still there! She doesn't join in with their dancing at all.

The children are quite proficient in the set dances and hardly need to listen to the instructions given by the plummy (typically BBC), and often patronising, voice on the tape. Whatever else it is I find it intensely sexist - "boys find a girl and swing"!? - and annoying. "You're nearly good enough to be grown up dancers" it says at the end. What complete rubbish! Will equal opportunities in the NCPE filter through to dance lessons at Sycamore I ask myself! The children don't seem to notice, but neither do they seem to be experiencing any great enjoyment from the lesson.

Observation - Dance Lesson ii

11.55 - 12.15

Mrs. B (see gymnastics earlier) takes her own year 2 class for a dance lesson, again using the BBC tapes. The song that they dance to is "John Brown's Body" and there is a lot of patriotic marching and singing of "Glory, glory, hallelujah"! Once again there is no teacher input apart from turning the tape on and off. I wonder at the appropriateness of using this song - perhaps it should only be introduced in an historical context?

It is finally lunch-time! I chat to Lorna over a school dinner (an OK one - but I had to pay for it!) before we retire to her, now empty, classroom for the interview. Gymnastics, she feels, is important at a young age to encourage development of balance and co-ordination. The children's gross motor skills at this age vary enormously and the teacher has to take account of in this in PE lessons. Some of the children, for example, go to out of school clubs (gymnastics and martial arts, ballet and dance) and their

physical abilities are different from those that do not. Lorna has found that often their performance in PE reflects their general academic ability and behaviour in school. The ones that climb to the top of the rope proclaiming themselves "Tarzan" are usually the same ones that scribble in class, whilst the quiet, inhibited ones in PE, tend to be less able academically. PE illustrates how individual children are in a way that the teacher can pick up on easily- it is much harder to spot the introvert in the classroom.

As far as safety with gymnastics is concerned, Lorna feels that the children are able, generally, find their own level. They won't do anything that they can't do and if they say that they can't do something then Lorna advises them to wait until they feel that they can do it, not to be made to feel that they are inadequate because they can't. Occasionally there is the odd child who will, for example, get to the top of the rope and shout "look at me" trying to show off. This is the only time when their concentration might lapse and accidents could occur. If something like this happens Lorna will say simply and calmly "Yes, very good - now make sure you can come back down nicely". If she were to panic herself then she might panic the child.

I wonder how the children get to this stage of confidence as the apparatus must look quite daunting to the very small. Lorna explains that early entrants are introduced to the apparatus gradually. They first learn to get used to the hall, which in itself is an entirely new situation to them, when it is empty and then they learn the names of the pieces of equipment before they actually use them and so forth. Similarly they learn ball skills indoors before they are "let loose" outside. Lorna thinks of it as a kind of moulding, of learning what is safe and what they should not do. They have to be trained early particularly as the younger children are more excitable.

Most of the children's PE lessons are held indoors despite the fact that there is a large field behind the school. This is mainly for the junior's use whilst the infants are permitted limited access. The junior school gets priority because it pays towards the cost of its upkeep and it is seen as more important to them as they play football and cricket etc.

At the end of the day I meet the teacher who offered to give me a lift back to the station. There is still half an hour or so to go before the end of the school day and she is in the hall with her children, not for a PE lesson but to practice for assembly later in the week. The children are working on the theme of movement and are perfecting their "duck walks" to the tune of "Three Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day". I sit down on a bench and try desperately to sort all my notes and loose pieces of paper out into some sort of intelligible order! The children, when finished, take ages to get their coats on and get out of the school so I chat to Mrs. C while I wait. She asked me what I was doing and said that when she was told that someone was coming from the University she didn't know what to expect, and was really worried about what I wanted to know! Then she said that if she'd realised that I only wanted to sit and watch she wouldn't have been so nervous!

Mrs. C also gave Mrs. Sealey a lift and another trainee teacher who I had an interesting (but short) chat with before we got to the station. I would have liked to have interviewed her properly but this was not possible. An arts graduate she found it difficult to get a job so had decided to pursue a primary teaching career instead and Sycamore was her final placement of her PGCE. She seemed very interested in what I was doing and quite apprehensive about PE. Mrs. Sealey whilst in the car appeared to be a different person, quite chatty and friendly.

Final Impressions

My opinions are bound to be coloured by what happened to me during the day but I have tried to remain objective (if that is possible!) There is very little that is remarkable about the school but it is a perfectly acceptable infant school with, I suspect, a fairly average PE curriculum that has changed little over the years that Lorna has been co-ordinator. In some of the schools that I have visited it is the case that despite having a co-ordinator and a PE policy etc. that teachers adopt their own styles and methods in their lessons. At Sycamore, however, it seems evident that all the teachers (or at least the ones that I saw) have been "well" trained. I came away with the impression that someone needed to breathe life into the school. Most of the teachers are older and there is no-one dynamic at the school to liven things up - compare what I saw to Haydn and Morrison, for example. I am not sure that the National Curriculum for PE will make any great impact to the school or the way that PE is taught.

Comments

An exhausting, frustrating day! Although I gathered a great deal of information from Lorna, I do not feel that the interview with the head teacher went well at all. I must try to work out how I can improve on the organisation of the fieldwork and prevent what amounted to being "pushed around" though I'm sure that no offence was intended! It seems unlikely, however, that I will be able to visit Sycamore again therefore I must simply learn by my experience. If nothing else I did come away with a good impression of what PE at the school is like. I shall probably be seeing gymnastics lessons in my sleep and singing "You're the one, the one for me!"

Visit Report (edited)

Sycamore First School

20 September 1992

Observation of games lesson

I meet the teacher whose lesson I am to observe in her classroom. The children are still getting changed down into their underwear - noisily and not too quickly! "High as a kite" she says of them but can't figure out why except that it is getting near-ish to the end of term. One child comes in late with his mother, a small Chinese boy who does not like PE and I suspect that his being late was an attempt at being excused! His mother seems to speak little English and the boy is very shy but Liz is quite firm with them both. She asks his mother to leave (as she is probably making him worse!) but she seems reluctant to go and the boy is reluctant to change. Eventually Liz says that he can change in the hall to save time and this seems to be agreeable. Aside to me Liz says that she has had problems with this child and not merely in PE. Incidentally Liz does not change for PE - she is wearing a summery dress and open toes sandals.

She remarks that today is not a good day for me to visit as two teachers have swapped their hall time for assembly practice so I might not get to see too much PE (NB. on my initial visit we arranged for me to come back today as it is a day when there is generally lots of PE!) The PE curriculum for this week has already been disrupted for various reasons, for example, yesterday the school had a visit from a dance troupe and all PE lessons were cancelled for this. She remarked that this was a shame because they do try to give PE a high profile in the curriculum but often there is simply so much going on that PE has to give.

Liz has a Year 6 class and is anxious to get them into the hall Whilst lining up outside I see that there has been a gym. lesson before and this is just finishing. From the little that I can see of the lesson the children appeared to be using beanbags and balancing them on parts of their body? (Note. Recent BJPE article re. "bean bag development") I am able to have a quick chat with the teacher before she leaves the hall. She says that bean bags are a marvellous invention and that she (as do the other teachers) uses them a great deal in her lessons - they are light, easy to catch, nice to handle and they don't roll around when the children drop them. They are also useful for throwing into hoops for the children to learn measurement and accuracy. (I can see that there would be progression here). Another advantage is that they are relatively cheap to buy. She has been trying to get hold of "these beach bats with Velcro on them" (called "Scatch" I think?) balls for the children to use but she hasn't managed to find any yet. These are particularly useful for SEN children and those who need a little more help to develop their co-ordination at an early age.

In the hall there is still some apparatus (benches etc.) so she tells the children to be careful as they move around it and to be aware of their space. Throughout the start of the lesson there is a constant stream to and fro of children in pairs taking the registers back to the office. The hall is the only access from the entrance to the classroom in the school, though all classrooms have an outside door that leads straight on the field that I gather they use only in the Summer.

This is a "games" lesson and, although I did not check, I had expected it to be held outside. It starts with a warm-up. The children are told to be aware of their space (i.e. not bump into each other) and to follow Liz's instructions - there is to be no talking for the moment. They run in and out using all of the hall space and when Liz gives a single, quiet tap on a tambourine at which the children must stop. A good exercise in attention and listening as well as a physical activity. The instructions change - next they must hop, then skip (NB. some seem not to be able to skip). Next the children practice some marching - in time - to "The Grand Old Duke of York" which they all sing with Liz. I recall that this is very similar to the sort of thing that I used to do at my own primary school years ago. The children march in their space (attention is constantly drawn to "space") to sing whilst - miming - beating drums, playing pipes and blowing trumpets.

The children, now no longer required to be as quiet as earlier are becoming excited. Liz explains that they have a competition in half an hour. She has chosen to play these varied games today, most of them involving a degree of concentration, in an attempt to keep them occupied and not too boisterous as they seem to be very excitable. Liz goes to a cupboard and gets a bag out - there is a big cheer from the children. She draws out two coloured bands and gives them to two of the children to put on. There follows a variation of the simple game of tag (with minimal contact) and as children are tagged they must sit down ready for the end of the lesson.

The children gather in a circle and are each given a number. As numbers are called, two at a time, they must leave the circle and run around the outside in the same direction and back to their own space to see who is the first one back. This is another listening exercise and it means that they get some more strenuous exercise - as ever they must be aware of space and not bump into the other person running. Liz says that she can tell at a glance which ones are running more than once or who are running at on the wrong number - the game stops when all children have had a "turn". They then must form an inner and an outer circle.

"This", says Liz to the children, "is a more complicated game". Whoever Liz touches must follow around the circle until they reach their own space again. They in turn must touch someone on their way around the circle who must run in the opposite direction. There must be no contact, no overtaking and the children must be careful to avoid crashes in a limited space. The remaining children have to look out for the runners to tell them when to stop as the circle now has been broken up as there will be several children running round at once.

I noticed that the shy Chinese boy became a different person in the PE lesson, running around and jumping, climbing with the rest of them - none of the inhibitions that he showed before the lesson! Liz says that this is quite common with the more introvert children and is one of the reasons why PE is so important. Another of the girls was once very inhibited in PE, she refused for a long time to go on the apparatus and was very apprehensive about it - but I couldn't tell which child it was that Liz was talking about as they all seemed to enjoy their lesson! Liz generally leaves children to discover what they can do themselves, she encourages them to try but does not force them to attempt anything that they are afraid of and often they suddenly venture out. For this reason Liz allows the children to chatter whilst they learn as long as it does not get too noisy and they know that if they says "Stop" they do so immediately and sit down to listen to her. The children are fine as long as they know and understand the rules. PE should be a fun experience!

Comments

At the end of the lesson I am able to talk to Liz for a while. I asked her about the grouping system that she uses in her PE lessons. She explains that she does use them only in PE lessons but for many different activities that the children might participate in, e.g. reading, craftwork etc. The groups are not always the same as she changes the members according to their particular abilities/personality/behaviour which might be appropriate for the task. in PE, for example, she might separate out the extroverts and the only really noisy ones and put them into groups with some of the quieter children. In this way she hopes that the noisy ones will become a little more sober and the introverts will gain more confidence from their friends. This system seems to work successfully for Liz's class and it is something that I have not come across before.

Visit Report (edited)

Sycamore School

June 1993

Observation of Sports Day

This event had been planned for the previous week but it had been raining and I had my fingers crossed at the time that it would be postponed until a later date because I had flu and didn't feel like spending a day in a school. A week later I still didn't feel too great, still had a sore throat and had nearly lost my voice. I was a little concerned that I might spread my own germs around the children but I decided to carry on and attend as Sports Day would not happen again for another year.

The plan originally was that I would arrive at the school at about 10.30 to meet Lorna (the PE co-ordinator) who would assign me to a group of children to look after for the rest of the day. The children, under the supervision of their leader (me) would spend the morning preparing for the event and Sports Day itself would be in the afternoon on the field behind the school when leaders would take their groups of children around the various activities and keep score for them. However, I decided that although I felt I had (and wanted) to attend, it might be better if I did not offer my services as a group leader. I rang the school to apologise to Lorna and to inform them that I would be along for the afternoon but merely to observe along with the other parents.

Fortunately (!) I had not really been aware of the weather from my sick-bed and when I phoned the school I was told by the secretary that, although it was not actually raining now it had been earlier, and the grass on the field was still very wet therefore Sports Day was cancelled once again! I arranged to come in the following week (promising to phone beforehand for a weather report) and I would be reinstated as group leader! I would, however, only be needed for the afternoon as the children, as a consolation for Sports Day being cancelled, had already been allocated their groups and had spent the morning making their "preparations".

Preparations consisted of the children in their groups - each named after an animal - making badges, banners and name badges to identify their team. Lorna explained that she had gradually introduced Sports Day as a "fun" afternoon to replace the competitive and rather serious event that the school had been organising for years without a great deal of thought to the matter. She decided that for the event to have meaning for the children it ought to have a theme that could be linked to the rest of the curriculum. Last year (1992) was Olympic year and "The Olympics" was a topic to which many varied curriculum projects were related. This gave Lorna an ideal

opportunity (i.e. one that would not be met with opposition) to introduce the children (and staff) to the idea of a mini-Olympics instead of a traditional sports day. The event proved to be very successful with the children and set a precedent for following years. This year's theme was "A Day at the Zoo" - hence the animals - and I was interested to see how this would be reflected in the activities.

A Day at the Zoo:

Surprisingly, a week later, although I was "better" (i.e. out of bed and back in the office) I still had the remains of a cold, sore throat etc. I also had been to the dentist that morning and had been given a filling. I had tried to talk my way out of it by assuring the dentist that I had a cold but that didn't work! By 2.30 when I was due at the school my face still felt like latex and I couldn't speak properly I had half-heartedly phoned the school in the morning to be told that Sports Day was going ahead and assumed that, as the children had already made their preparations the previous week, I would simply be observing or helping Lorna with whatever she might want me to do.

I arrived to find the entire school sitting in the assembly hall with various teachers, parents and helpers but I reported to reception anyway as the secretary had been told to expect me. She showed me into the hall, found me a chair and I sat down at the edge of the hall while Miss Sealey tried to quieten the children so she could tell them what would be happening in the afternoon. They were obviously very excited about Sports Day (and the fast approaching end of term) and refused to wait patiently while the remaining classes filed into the already crowded hall. They were constantly 'told off' and 'threatened' by the head teacher. Once assembled Lorna took over and quickly went over the rules as much for the parents and helpers benefit as the children.

The playing field would be set out in two circuits - one for the lower and one for the upper school - the children would know which was theirs. They would be led out to the field to stand by a designated activity until told to start. The starting signal for each activity would be a blow on the whistle and the signal to stop each activity would be another whistle. At this point the children must move on to the next activity and again wait to start. Blowing of whistles would be co-ordinated by Miss Sealey and Lorna. The children must then had to listen for the name of their animal group to be called and follow their leader out on to the field.

The children became extremely impatient and fidgety (and noisy - I could feel a headache coming on) as Lorna read out an endless list of names - Leopards, Bears, Camels, Zebras.....ZZZ I sat and waited until there were only a few children left with Lorna and then she finally looked up and realised that I was there! She hadn't been informed that I had phoned earlier to tell her that I would be coming so wasn't sure of what she was going to do with the last group who had no leader - Monkeys (this title turned out later to be more than appropriate)! I was handed a clipboard and I

ushered my Monkeys out towards the field whilst trying to leaf through the contents of the clipboard to see what I was meant to be doing with them. The pack contained an envelope in which I found the name badges that the children had made (peel-off labels on which they had written their name and drawn a small picture to stick on to their T-shirts), a numbered plan of the activities, a score sheet and a list of names.

After I had successfully quietened my group and gathered them together for long enough to take their names there was a minor panic as I discovered that according to the list two of the children were missing. I was told that one of the missing children was away ill (he had flu no doubt) but nobody seemed to know what had happened to the other one. (I eventually discovered later that the other child was also away ill - this I was told by his brother who was in my group all the time!) Neither did they know what class he was in because the children had been jumbled up to make the teams and some of them did not even know each other! Anyway, I decided not to panic and handed out the badges. One immediately lost his badge so I had to improvise with a sticky label and promise that we'd look for it later - by which time he would hopefully have forgotten it. We finally made it, the last team to arrive on to the field, amid fights over who was carrying the 'banner' (a fairly flimsy paper construction that would not take too much fighting over).

Having succeeded in getting this far I entered the field and became completely disorientated. There were lots of children standing purposefully by piles of hoops and beanbags, and lots of parents (which is encouraging) waiting around the outside of the "arena" but I could not see where I was meant to be. A teacher sensing my confusion came over and asked what year groups I had (um...?) - I guessed that they were lower years as they looked pretty small. Apparently I was at the wrong circuit and had to walk over to the far side of the field where my group was to start at activity No. 4.

Another minor crisis occurred when one of the girls in my group started to cry and refused to participate. I really couldn't understand what she was trying to tell me but fortunately her mother then arrived and explained that she had forgotten her sports kit and had gone home to collect it for her. She was taken back to the school to change and the event had to start without her.

The Activities:

There were ten different activities - none of them had anything to do with animals or the zoo. The theme only stretched as far as identifying the groups - this I found slightly disappointing as I felt that much more could have been done with this aspect of the event (though I didn't have any immediate sensible ideas - fancy dress perhaps or face paints - what about the activities themselves?)

Each activity was designed to be fun and not too competitive. They were also designed with the differentiation in physical abilities of young children taken into

consideration. The children took part in all of them (with one or two exceptions) and their amalgamated score was recorded on my sheet at the end of each session of three minutes when the whistle blew. The aim therefore was to score as much as possible on behalf of your team in those three minutes - simple! None of the teams would know their individual score until the end of the day and final scores of all teams would later be announced when all the children were once again gathered in the assemble hall at the end of the day.

I have outlined some of the activities below - I cannot, unfortunately, remember them all (it was difficult to be a group leader and researcher at the same time!) but I know that there were ten of them. My own comments are in italics below.

1 Bean Bag Throwing

Take three beanbags and throw them into the hoops. If the beanbag lands inside a hoop then you score 2, 4 or 6 depending on which hoop it lands in. Each child may have as many goes as time allows.

This was a good activity that posed no problems for any of the children and all were able to get a beanbag in at least one of the hoops. The boys (and my group was mostly boys) inevitably tried to throw the bags into the furthest hoop to get the highest score but invariably missed in their attempt to show off.

2 Hurdles

Jump over the hurdles without knocking them off the stands. Choose which hurdle is best for your size. Count the number of clear jumps.

I had a problem here with the littlest girl (I'll call her Melissa) in my group who didn't want to jump over either hurdle, not even the smallest one. I tried to coax her to try one jump but she really wasn't happy about it and became quite tearful. I wasn't in the mood for hassle or to be firm with her so said that she could help me keep score. She suddenly became very cheerful!

3 Mini-obstacle Race

Change into the clothes. Climb over the box and then through the hoop. Run back to the start and take the clothes off the hand on to the next person. Count the number of "runs".

Another activity that Melissa wasn't going to do! Three minutes was too short a time to persuade her to take part. She seemed to be reluctant to join in any activity where she was in direct competition with the boys (who were very excitable). She was also very small, much smaller than the other children and she did not know any of them so was perhaps shy when away from her classmates.

4 Skipping Race

Skip around the cones and back to the start without knocking any of them over. Hand the rope on to the next person. Count the number of clear "runs".

The girls clearly outshone the boys here as they are more familiar with skipping ropes (despite recent attempts to modernise their image "Jump Rope for Heart" etc.) The boys nevertheless had a turn, and I remember one small boy in particular who was determined to get round in his own way. All the other children encouraged him in this in spite of him being very slow. He made a deliberate walking movement around each cone, throwing the rope over his head and carefully stepping over it - quite ingenious - but hopeless!

5 Football Dribble

Dribble the ball around the posts. Run with the ball back to the start and hand the ball on to the next person. Count the number of "runs".

Needless to say the boys did very well at this but the girls made a very good effort and their attempts at football dribbling were better than the boys attempts at skipping - or I could just be biased?!

6 Hockey Dribble

Dribble the ball around the cones with the hockey stick. Run with the ball back to the start and hand the stick over to the next person. Count the number of "runs".

One that I expected the girls to be better at due to sex stereotyping but there was in fact very little difference between the boys and the girls. Hockey is perhaps a game that unlike football children are not really exposed to until they reach secondary school.

Comments

Although the events were carefully chosen they did provide a great deal of evidence of sex stereotyping. There were, however, activities that were male and female-orientated so both boys and girls had an opportunity to succeed. My age group was 4-6 and this is a particularly important time for forming attitudes towards gender. I noticed that the girls were very apprehensive to take part in an activity that they considered to be a "boy's game" and became upset if they were and did not succeed. They often needed coaxing or encouragement to participate. The boys, however, were willing to try any activity and seemed to assume that they would be good at it. If they were not they either did not mind or did not notice.

I did feel that the event was a good start as an alternative to the traditional sports day but that further thought could be applied before the next year. Some of the activities could have been more gender neutral. Perhaps the classes need not have been separated to make up the teams? These children are very young and the event was a relatively new event for them. I think that some of the children were a little intimidated by being away from their usual classmates. Overall, it was an pleasant afternoon and the children enjoyed the event. I, however, found it a little difficult to make notes whilst being a 'participant observer'.

Interview Report: Initial Teacher Training I

Interview with Teacher Tutor 'TR'

Dec 9th 1991

Background

Two types of teacher training courses are offered, both are generalist/primary and cover ages 4 – 12:

4 year BEd.
1 Year PGCE

The PGCE course divides into	}	Early years
	}	Primary/Middle years

The timetable for PE is:

Bed	-	40 hours (30 in 3 rd year, 10 in 4 th year)
PGCE	-	25 hours

In the BEd. Three subject areas are taught – gymnastics, games and dance. During one lecture a week the students learn theory, content and planning whilst working with children at the latter stage of the course (in college).

Students take part in teaching practice in schools:

1 st year	-	1 day per week with a 3 week block in the summer term
2 nd year	-	no in-school work as this year is degree-based (TR commented that many students need to be “re-taught” after this break. This is a new element to the course for 1991 and I believe that TR is having doubts as to its effectiveness?)
3 rd year	-	5 week block
4 th year	-	4 - 8 week block

During teaching practice students are “encouraged” to teach in all areas of the curriculum but no time is specified for PE. It depends very much on the school itself

e.g. schools in ----- and ----- employ PE specialists. Much of the early teaching experience is working alongside teachers and taking small groups. I doubt whether much PE is done here?

TR explained that all students are aware of the DES document – they all have a copy. They also are informed of issues such as the Education Reform Act, LMS etc. as part of their Education course which all students take – this is a one term course which goes into considerable detail.

When asked about the **Programmes of study** TR believed that it was possible to teach all areas adequately (though swimming is not compulsory). The college's whole teaching is "geared to the National Curriculum guidelines" – this may be true re. process, but content?

There has been little change in **teaching methods**. The principles expressed in the DES document have always formed the basis of their PE programme – this may demonstrate the usefulness of the guidelines as an example of "best practice". What the National Curriculum has done is to provide a framework in which to teach and learn. TR was concerned that PE is one of the worst courses to teach perhaps because of its practical base and that students tend to "back off" from it – if they choose to miss a lesson it is invariably PE. He hopes that the National Curriculum may help to provide an incentive – the students now have an official document and something to work with – the subject needs to be perceived as important. The only significant change re. National Curriculum is the considerable reduction in teaching time as more timetable space is given over to other subjects (maths, languages etc.) - this does nothing to help the status of PE.

TR accepted that it is difficult to give a non-specialist the kind of depth of understanding necessary to teach them the National Curriculum. Students bring with them models from their own school, both positive and negative. They need strong examples of "good practice" – this TR tries to instil via micro-teaching. Many students continue to see PE as a subject at the margins of education.

Assessment is another problem area. It is a difficult issue to teach and one that is probably best learned in school. TR stressed that some amount of theory is necessary – you don't know how to teach if you don't know what to teach etc. Students are encouraged to develop a thematic approach and to explore methods of evaluation, looking at behavioural objectives as well as skills.

Teacher confidence is a great area of concern for teacher education, particularly in the primary sector. TR put most of the problems down to lack of adequate time in which to help students to overcome their difficulties and to develop self-confidence in teaching the subject. Pre-conceived ideas and poor role models are firm barriers against a change of attitude and will not be removed easily. Many students see PE in terms of the "traditional" (Kes) model. At ----- students begin by using the technique of reciprocal teaching, first in pairs, then gradually progressing to larger groups – this

is within their peer group. The same is done with children but again TR admits that there is insufficient time to allow as much practice as would be desirable. Often a student can learn the theory of teaching, lesson planning etc. but find that they have an inability to teach PE. They can take on board the rationale yet are unable to transfer this to the classroom. More contact and practice in schools would be ideal. Examples of good practice in action need to be observed. The logistics of this are currently under discussion.

Cross-curricular issues – gender, health etc. are introduced into various elements of the course. The work of Ann Williams is closely followed particularly the sections on gender, race, competition. These issues have always been dealt with in the curriculum – they are not a result of the National Curriculum.

Difficulties that lay ahead?

The main issue at the moment is whether the DES recommendations will be accepted. TR agrees that the National Curriculum will enhance the perceived status of PE and wants to see them become statutory. He foresees that patterns of teacher training will continue to change (from necessity) as a result of the needs of the National Curriculum (for all subjects) and also because of economic considerations – in-school training will be cheaper than college-based. TR would like to see more contact with children, greater practical experience though not necessarily “on-the-job” training. It is predicted that there will be most problems with gymnastics as this is an area of poor confidence and there are important safety considerations. Swimming, if it remains in the National Curriculum, also needs to be looked at as at --- it is only taken as an option course leading to the ASA Teacher Certificate (even though they have a pool on-site – missed opportunity?)

TR sees ----- playing some part in in-service training. They have in the past organised courses in various areas e.g. one day swimming/dance course to supplement advisory staff. They have, however, had little to do with the National Curriculum so far. There is an in-service BEd. course – this is a 60 hour human movement option which can take 10 - 12 teachers. It is intended for existing teachers without a degree i.e. mature teachers who only hold a teaching certificate. This is a modular course which keeps open the possibility of institutional links etc. in the future.

Some general comments...

TR admitted to being appalled at the state of teaching in (some) schools today and expressed regret at the inability of “us” i.e. the teacher-training profession to bring about change. It is not necessarily the training that is at fault but the “ethos” of schools when newly-trained teachers enter their initial teaching posts. Many still represent the “traditional” school system and see the national Curriculum as unnecessary interference rather than looking at the rationale behind it. This sort of attitude is difficult to change. There is, therefore, little that teacher-education can do that it is not already – perhaps we must turn to other areas to try and effect change?

Interview report: Initial Teacher Training II

Interview with Teacher Tutor 'JS'

13th Dec 1991

Background

Courses taught:

4 year BEd.	-	Movement Studies
1 year PGCE		

The interview concentrated on the specialist BEd. As this is an area new to me and one which may have greater implications for my research. JS identified the main "strands" to the course –

Human movement	}	Child
	}	Teacher
Applied	}	Curriculum

As the movement studies degree is a specialist course there became evidence some obvious differences and contrasts between this course and the PGCE I discussed with TR (interview 9th Dec 1991).

Time was not so contentious an issue at ----- although JS still said that there wasn't enough of it! Time allocation:

Main subject PE	-	50% teaching item
Teaching Studies}		
School Experience}	-	50% teaching time
Professional Courses}		
(Curriculum work)		

The course was taught in 10 week blocks or units of 40 hours of teaching time each. Within each unit the various strands would be included in the main subject –

- Science/Health Related Fitness
- Behavioural Science – Psychology strand
- Skills Acquisition
- Movement problems – SEN
- Aesthetics – Sociology strand

Teaching practice –

1 st year	3 x 5 weeks (+ some single days initially)
2 nd year	3 x 4 weeks
3 rd year	3 x 5 weeks
4 th year	3 x 7 weeks

Children are also brought in to the college for the students to teach. It is difficult to find the time to participate in teaching experience on a larger scale which would be preferable. Those who are concentrating on Special Needs would also visit cedar school (physical/mental handicaps) as observers, not teachers.

There is a movement towards a more modular course – for the first time students are allowed to choose some options (not all are assessed) and to adopt a specialisation within the course.

National Curriculum

With reference to the National curriculum Des Report JS said that the 3rd and 4th years were “very aware” of the document, both theory and applied. They are asked to analyse the document as a familiarisation exercise and it is brought into their general teaching. All students will know it thoroughly before they leave.

JS (and colleague) BS are in the process of producing a critical report of the National Curriculum recommendations – yet to be published. They identify its strengths: – accessibility, Programmes of Study; and weaknesses: – End of Key Stage Statements lack detail, many teachers may follow them rigidly and overlook other important issues such as equal opportunities.

Programmes of Study

All 6 areas are taught at the college though JS accepts that swimming is a weakness mainly because of lack of time for adequate training within in the timetable. Students are taught enough for a basic understanding but this is not enough for a qualification (however, this is considerably more than is taught at ----- interview 9th Dec). Those who choose to pursue the subject at a higher level may attend ASA courses at ----- for which they have to pay.

Assessment

Some confusion arose here! I was actually referring to the issue of assessment of children re. National Curriculum but JS obviously thought that I meant their assessment procedure re. Students. Anyway...the student experiences various types of assessment – essays, seminars, videos and analysis, laboratory workshops and school work. The students are taught to reflect on and appraise their own and each others; work and to utilise these different criteria on performance work. Re. PE they learn a range of processes (and to think!), the nature of PE, its value, its effects on individuals.

Confidence in Teaching

This was accepted a problem for generalist primary teachers but did not really apply to the specialist students as they already had a strong interest in PE or they would not have applied for the course! The difficulty lies in their unfamiliarity with PE and often an association with a bad experience in their own education. Students learn their teaching skills gradually through independent study and by “teaching” within their peer group (students teaching students as if they were children). These skills are later transferred to children once they have been mastered. Students initially teach small groups of children then as their confidence increases they will progress towards taking whole classes under the supervision of trained teachers and always maintaining close contact with their individual tutor.

Cross-curricular Issues

All students take part in “permeation days” during which issues such as gender, special needs and health are raised. They are not normally treated as separate units but are included in many subjects wherever they are deemed relevant e.g. sport and gender may be discussed in the sociology strand, whilst SEN may be included within the behavioural or movement problems areas as well as the specific SEN component. Such issues must not be seen as individual domains but as part of the educational process. JS mentioned that it has always been the policy of the college to address important cross-curricular issues and that this has not been affected by the National Curriculum. An area of weakness was identified by JS – multi-cultural issues. This is being dealt with in a new history/culture of dance subject option.

Difficulties Ahead?

The National Curriculum presents no threats and will not cause any significant changes in practice (TR made a similar comment. I feel I am more inclined to agree with JS). Time is no problem in the BEd. as PE obviously is not competing for curriculum space with other subjects. Swimming needs to be looked at if all teachers are expected to be able to teach it as it may involve additional qualifications, but this could be adjusted at ----- without too much difficulty (?) With regards to the PGCE, however, there is great concern for the generalists. They are taught only gymnastic activities, dance and general PE in a course that is only 5 – 12 teaching hours duration – the time allowed for this has been reduced significantly by National Curriculum demands on core subjects. In this short time students are taught the understanding of movement in the context of the child rather than specific skills or games – it is questionable, however, just what can be learned in such a brief period.

Teachers Roles

Articled teachers	}	3 days school-based
	}	2 days college-based

JS saw this type of teacher-education as appropriate for some mature students – those who had experience and strengths that could be picked up on and developed.

She had reservations about younger students and was concerned that they would not be able to gain the wealth of knowledge needed "on-the-job". The school-based method of training assumes that all schools are examples of good practice but is this realistically the case? Numerous problems could arise if training moves into the school. Do teachers really have the time to teach and train simultaneously? Will students simply be trained to be a teachers help? Of course the over-rising concern of the Government is to save the money spent on higher education but what will be the cost to education (of both teachers and children).

NB. As I type this today (06/01/92) the Independent carries an article on the Governments decision to take teacher-education out of the institutions and into the schools.

INSET

The college believes it can play a significant role in in-service training for teachers. They already run diploma courses re. SEN (a 2 year certificate course for existing teachers) and see further development in this direction. Courses should be professionally related and links with other institutions were mentioned.

Comments...

JS foresees graduates of ----- being the curriculum leaders and PE co-ordinators that the National Curriculum will need in the near future. They have, however, been turning out such qualified teachers since 1981 when the first students left. The National Curriculum will not affect their methods to any great extent but I am a little concerned about what happens in the other subject areas that primary students must also study. Although I am understand that it is important to help raise the status of PE by training teachers who are dedicated to the subject and will promote its value/enhance its status, I am beginning to wonder if it possible to strike any kind of balance between subjects in the schools? Are ----- producing primary school teachers who have an excellent knowledge of PE? Or are they producing primary PE teachers?

	Head Teachers		Deputy Head Teachers		Main Scale plus incentive allowance												Main Scale no Allowance		Any Other Scale		All Teachers							
					E				D				C				B				A							
	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total	Grad	Total
Nursery and Primary Men																												
Self Governing (GM)																												
LEA Maintained																												
Nursery																												
Infants																												
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