

The PE and sport premium: an investigation in primary schools – final report

Introduction and background

In March 2013, the Government announced a major new funding initiative to support the delivery of physical education (PE) and sport in primary schools. Initially the premium was intended to provide funding of £150 million per year for the academic years 2013-14 and 2014-15. It has since been extended to 2015-16.

The premium is ring-fenced and is paid directly to primary schools to spend on improving the quality of PE and sports activities for all pupils. In 2014-15, all primary schools in England with 17 or more primary-aged pupils received a lump sum of £8,000 and an additional premium of £5 per pupil. Smaller schools with fewer than 17 pupils received £500 each.

This is the final report of a study commissioned by the Department for Education and carried out by NatCen Social Research. Its aims were to: investigate how primary schools in England are spending the premium; understand the decision-making process and the perceived impacts of the funding; and track in more depth how 40 primary schools (designated as 'tracker schools') used the premium.

Data was gathered over a two year period by means of online surveys, telephone interviews and qualitative case studies which were conducted in a sub-sample of 12 of the 40 tracker schools.

Key points

Spending decisions

- The main considerations for schools with regard to spending the PE and sport premium were addressing gaps in provision (71%) and sustainability (69%).
- Schools drew mainly on local sources of advice and guidance to aid decision-making. These were: School Sport partnerships (60% in 2013-14 and 53% in 2014-15); headteachers and staff in other primary schools (55% in 2013-14 and 53% in 2014-15); and their local authority (50% in 2013-14 and 49% in 2014-15).
- Forty-seven per cent of schools surveyed in the second year of funding reported that their spending in 2014-15 was based on different considerations to the spending in 2013-14. These schools gave a number of reasons for the changes such as: a change of school context (size, leadership, nature of pupils); reassessment in the light of evaluation; reassessment in the light of changes to the national curriculum or Ofsted guidance; and a desire to build on progress made in 2013-14.

PE and sport provision using the premium

- The most common uses for the premium were: up-skilling and training existing staff (86% in 2013-14 and 81% in 2014-15); buying new equipment (76% in 2013-14 and 86% in 2014-15); providing more extra-curricular activities (74% in 2013-14 and 69% in 2014-15); employing new sports coaches (67% in 2013-14 and 68% in 2014-15); providing transport to sporting fixtures (49% in 2013-14 and 50% in

2014-15); and involvement with school networks (65% in 2013-14 and 57% in 2014-15). Only 15 per cent of schools in both years reported using the premium to employ new PE staff.

- Before the introduction of the premium, there was a specialist sports teacher in 30 per cent of primary schools; this rose to 46 per cent by 2014-15.
- Before the PE and sport premium, PE lessons were primarily taught by the class teacher (92%), external sports coaches (40%) and specialist PE teacher/leads (27%). After the introduction of the premium, 73 per cent of schools reported a change in who delivered curricular PE lessons. Amongst those who reported a change, the use of the class teacher dropped from 94 per cent to 83 per cent and use of external sports coaches rose from 38 per cent to 78 per cent. The use of a PE specialist teacher or lead in curricular PE rose from 23 per cent before the premium to 55 per cent after.
- The majority of schools reported that they have introduced new sports in both curricular PE (74%) and extra-curricular sport (77%) since the premium was introduced.
- Schools perceived the quality (81%) and range (74%) of equipment to have increased since the introduction of the premium.
- Seventy per cent of schools reported that participation in inter-schools competitions had increased, while 53 per cent reported an increase in intra-school competitions.



- The mean average time which schools reported spending on curricular PE has increased from 109 minutes before the premium to 118 minutes in 2014-15. The median time schools reported spending on PE was two hours a week and this has remained constant over the two years of the study. Amongst schools which reported doing less than two hours of sport before the introduction of the premium, the mean average time increased from 78 minutes before the introduction of the premium to 111 minutes in 2014-15.
- Schools reported a range of impacts of the premium, including increased pupil engagement and participation in PE and sport. There were also impacts on teachers' skills and confidence in delivering PE, on pupil's behaviour and inter-personal skills.

Targeting

- Most schools reported targeting their funds in some way; only twelve per cent said that they did not do this. The least active pupils (51%) and disadvantaged pupils (51%) were the most commonly targeted groups.
- Targeting was either 'direct' or 'indirect'. Indirect targeting meant that the conditions were created to encourage participation (e.g. costs reduced or range of activities widened in order to encourage certain groups).
- The study findings have highlighted challenges for the future of PE and sport in primary schools. A question remains over how to maintain the investment which has been made in CPD once the funding ends. There were also issues regarding the sourcing of good quality provision in some areas.
- The survey found that monitoring and evaluation of the premium was not consistent and schools may need further help with this.

Perceived impacts and sustainability

- Eighty-four per cent of schools reported an increase in pupil engagement in PE during curricular time and in the levels of participation in extra-curricular activities as a result of the premium.
- Almost all schools reported that the premium had had a positive impact on physical fitness (99%), healthy lifestyles (99%), and behaviour of pupils (96%).
- Eighty-seven per cent of schools reported that the quality of PE teaching had increased since the premium had been introduced.
- Schools sought to sustain the impact of the premium by: investing in staff CPD; considering the availability of external sports clubs in the local area when selecting the sports to offer as part of the curriculum; and monitoring impacts so that the best spending decisions could be made in the future.
- The following risks to the sustainability of the premium were identified: loss of provision if funding ends; limits to long-term impact if secondary provision in the local area is poor; and the risk that staff turnover in smaller schools could limit the long-term benefits of investment in CPD.

Future spending plans

- At the time of the survey, 56 per cent of all schools reported that they had planned how to spend next year's funding (2015-16).
- Of schools that had made spending plans, the focus for the premium funds was on up-skilling existing teachers (68%); buying new equipment (63%); and providing more extra-curricular activities (62%).

Conclusions

- Schools welcomed the introduction of the PE and sport premium, reporting that it had increased school focus on both curricular and extra-curricular provision and provided new opportunities for increasing the quality of provision.

The full document can be downloaded from :
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pe-and-sport-premium-an-investigation-in-primary-schools#history>