

## Quality learning, teaching and assessment in core physical education

### Introduction

Quality physical education is designed to inspire and challenge children and young people to experience the joy of movement. 'Learning in, through and about the physical' provides a unique context for learning in the Scottish curriculum. This context creates naturally occurring evidence of children and young people's performances, in every lesson, every week, borne from the practical, experiential nature of core physical education. A focus on what children and young people '**do**' and '**say**' to inform professional judgment has equal validity to what they 'write' and 'make', and provides the evidence to judge 'how much and how well' children and young people have learned. Embracing the value of naturally occurring evidence should go some way to address workload and make assessment in core physical education proportionate and manageable.

### Planning for learning, teaching and assessment.

In response to workload concerns, the Chief Inspector of Education provided a statement for practitioners providing clear, practical advice on planning learning, teaching and assessment (2016).

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/cfestatement.pdf>

The guidance includes statements on 'what to do' and 'what to avoid' to address issues of workload and over-assessment.

The Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os) for each curriculum area illustrate the learning within each level. Therefore, when planning learning, group Es and Os together in ways which best suit learners and avoid 'ticking off' the individual Es/Os separately. Do not plan for individual Es and Os or spend excessive time writing detailed descriptions of learning activities. This then would help avoid tracking and recording progress against individual Es and Os. Similarly, teachers should avoid writing overly-detailed plans for the year ahead which limit their flexibility to respond to children's and young people's needs, interests and progression. Where possible, plan collegiately for learning, teaching and assessment, ensuring breadth, challenge and application, whilst agreeing standards and expectations.

### Learning and teaching

The outline of the lesson should include activities that:

- 'Switch the learners on', both physically and mentally and always challenge their activity level.
- Establish the **quality** levels that are required of the engagement, and work of the learners.

- Place the learner and learning at the centre of the process, and in negotiation, improve the areas that have been identified.
- Encourage the learners to reflect on their engagement and performances.

This requires a range of pedagogical skills which includes;

- creating a safe environment where the learner is encouraged to engage in learning, and experiment
- being able to observe, analyse and support the development of the learner's performance
- having the patience to allow the learner time to work at problems and find solutions
- using intervention strategies that encourage the learners to take ownership of their learning
- recognising when to add layers to enhance the learner's understanding and performance, and when to progress the task

#### **Learner engagement happens when:**

- the tasks are interesting, challenging and achievable
- the tasks are differentiated to suit the needs of the individual
- the learner is given time to work at their own pace
- the learner recognises that learning is a process, as well as an outcome

#### **Assessing progress and achievement**

Assessment is integral to learning and teaching. It is an ongoing process. In practical, experiential subjects, most assessment is 'real time' and formative.

“Formative assessment is the process used by teachers and children/young people to respond to and improve learning **during** the learning.” Cowie and Bell (2010) (1).

In core physical education, evaluate learners' progress on an on-going basis, involving children and young people in leading their own learning and profiling their achievements. Keep short, concise notes to help planning for next steps in learning and to help identify where additional support and challenge may be needed.

Teachers are encouraged to consider a coherent twelve year learning journey through Broad General Education. Where this works well is through a cluster model approach periodically (from time to time) using assessment to sample and pull together learning in a joined-up way. For **periodic/holistic assessments**, the teacher with the learner, should draw on a number of performances across a wide range of physical activities that have taken place over **an extended period of time**.

Again, to minimise workload, avoid spending time on assessment activities which do not help to identify children's and young people's next steps in learning. Similarly, do not over-assess learners or assess the same content repeatedly in different ways.

#### **Evidence**

Do not create large portfolios of evidence. Rather, know where the evidence is.

**LEARNERS ARE OUR EVIDENCE!!** Short, concise notes that capture moments of progress can be used to build a picture of improvement over a period of time, plan next steps in learning and help with reporting purposes. Formative assessment is built into the pedagogy of core physical education, and the quality of staff feedback in the eyes of learners is a key area of interest during an inspection visit. Effective feedback is identified as a highly significant teaching tool. Teachers should observe, assess, reflect, and repeat. Learners should be engaged in the process so that they can talk about their learning, understand how well they are doing, and know how to improve.

**Remember: improving children's progress happens in practice not on paper!**

## **Benchmarks**

The benchmarks are designed to support teacher professional judgement of progress towards, and achievement of a level and identify next steps in learning. They set out very clear statements about what children need to **'know'** and be able to **'do'** to achieve each level of the curriculum.

In core physical education the 'significant aspects of learning' (SALs) are still very relevant and are explicitly embedded within the benchmarks document. Inspectors will not be asking schools to remove the SALs posters or whiteboards should they visit any education establishment. During inspection, HMIE will ask learners about their prior learning, what they are learning now, and if they know how to improve with identified next steps and future targets.

Building on prior learning through the twelve year journey of core physical education in Broad General Education; select and bundle the benchmarks that will ensure that your learners will make progress. Not all of the benchmarks may be relevant for your learners. **It is not necessary for learners to demonstrate evidence of every aspect of learning within the benchmarks before moving on to the next level. However, it is important that this is interpreted in ways which ensure no major gaps in children's and young people's learning.**

**Benchmarks** should be used to **review** the evidence gathered to determine if the expected standard has been achieved. Do not track progress and achievement using the terms 'developing, consolidating, secure' (or an equivalent, for example, bronze, silver, gold). Inspectors do not want to see this at all; learners have either achieved a level or they have not.

## **Monitoring/Tracking/Reporting**

Currently there is no expectation at national level to assign a level for core physical education. Teachers will follow their education establishment/local authority guidance on assessment and reporting. Where possible, teachers should regularly discuss tracking information with colleagues to plan additional support and

interventions to help improve learners' progress. Tracking information in the form of lengthy spreadsheets should be avoided; they lack educational impact and have very limited reference value.

Reporting to parents should highlight latest progress, identify next steps in learning and build on profiling. Discussions should highlight ways in which parents can support their child's progress. Do not spend time writing long reports for parents which describe lots of classwork or use professional jargon.

## **Moderation**

Moderation is an ongoing process, and should not consist of only one meeting to look at a range of evidence. It is not the same as cross-marking or verification. Moderation is the way in which practitioners arrive at a shared understanding of standards and expectations. Teachers can review evidence of practical performances to discuss standards, learners' progress and achievement, and to plan next steps in learning. Departmental meetings in secondary schools provide an opportunity to discuss learning and teaching; sample of 2-3 learners to agree standards and expectations. Similarly, in early learning and child care settings and primary schools, stage partner conversations (or in smaller settings teacher/headteacher conversations) can provide opportunities to discuss 2-3 learners and agree standards and expectations. Those working in remote/rural communities can share 2-3 video clips of performance with a short narrative for feedback to moderate judgements. Online platforms with video clips of a sample of performances also offer the opportunity for effective moderation. The key is to build and sustain proportionate and manageable moderation practices that result in teachers making robust and valid professional judgements which in turn support improvements in learning. Avoid spending too much time collecting a wide range of evidence for moderation purposes.

Further guidance can be found at the following links.

National Improvement Hub

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/The%20Moderation%20Cycle>

Moderation Hub on Glow

<https://glowscotland.sharepoint.com/sites/PLC/moderationhub/SitePages/Home.aspx>

## **Achievement of a level**

Achievement of a level is based on teachers' overall professional judgement, informed by evidence, that shows the learner has:

- achieved a **breadth** of learning across the knowledge, understanding and skills as set out in the experiences and outcomes for the level
- responded consistently well to the level of **challenge** set out in the experiences and outcomes for the level and has moved forward to learning at the next level in some aspects
- demonstrated **application** of what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations

## **Inspection visit**

It is not a case of preparing for an inspection, it is about showcasing what is working well and being solution focused about areas of development. Inspectors expect to see two hours of core physical education timetabled in primary, and two periods of core physical education timetabled S1 – S4. They would also look positively on core physical education being timetabled in S5 and S6..

### **Literacy and numeracy in core physical education**

Literacy and numeracy outcomes should be naturally occurring in any curriculum area. Core physical education provides a rich context to contribute to 'listening and talking' literacy outcomes. Similarly, in numeracy, 'number, time, shape, position, movement and measure' are key features of core physical education. Teachers have a responsibility to understand literacy and numeracy standards in order to plan activities at the appropriate level, and thus help learners develop their skills in literacy and numeracy in core physical education. All teachers should know the levels of literacy and numeracy of each of their learners, so that they do not provide work that has literacy or numeracy content that is either too easy or too difficult for the learner. Teachers of areas other than Mathematics and English need to understand literacy and numeracy standards so they can give appropriate feedback to their pupils on how to improve.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers should be empowered to use the flexibility that Curriculum for Excellence provides to organise learning for children and young people in ways that best meets learners' needs. This flexibility can sometimes result in over-bureaucratic processes which can lead to an increase in workload. To counteract this, all planning, learning, teaching and assessment must focus directly on enhancing the learner journey.

**When asked to complete paperwork which does not directly relate to improving the learner journey, challenge this with your colleagues.**

### Reference

A Model of Formative Assessment in Science Education, Cowie, B and Bell, B, 2010; pp 110 - 116; Published online <https://doi.org/10.1080/09695949003026>

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