

A level playing field – all pupils entitled to high-quality PE

News story

Ofsted has published the latest in a series of reviews into different subjects across the curriculum. Today's review looks at physical education (PE).



The review draws on a range of sources, including our education inspection framework (EIF) and other literature, to identify factors that can contribute to a high-quality PE curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and systems. We will use this understanding of subject quality to examine how PE is taught in England's schools, before publishing a subject report to share what we have learned.

High-quality PE is an entitlement for all pupils, regardless of their starting points or prior experiences of sport and physical activity. The national curriculum for PE aims to ensure that all pupils are physically active for sustained periods of time and develop the competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities. This may encourage them to engage in competitive sports and activities, and to lead healthy, active lives.

To meet these aims, today's review highlights the importance of building firm foundations in fundamental motor skills, as well as providing pupils with high quality instruction, practise and feedback.

A strong PE curriculum should clearly state what it means to get better at PE. Pupils should learn increasingly intelligent movement and important knowledge that can reduce barriers to participation and inform their own healthy, active lifestyle choices. While Ofsted recognises that there is no single way of achieving high-quality PE, our review finds that high-quality provision may have the following features:

- Teachers know that PE includes clearly defined knowledge that can usefully be categorised as either declarative or procedural.
- Leaders and teachers have thought carefully about what it is to know

more and do more in PE. This understanding is informed by the national curriculum's aims, and component knowledge has been identified to develop pupils' competence.

- A strong foundation is built on fundamental movement skills (FMS), starting in the early years and developed through transitional activities into more specialised sport and physical activity.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' movement is not only efficient and effective but intelligent and context-related. They ensure pupils have knowledge of rules, strategies and tactics in order to guide successful movement
- Leaders and teachers select physical activities and sports based on their capacity to develop pupils' competence in PE. They identify key concepts to teach and build pupils' understanding incrementally.
- The PE curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils feel included and able to succeed within the subject.
- Pupils are supported to know more and do more All pupils benefit from high-quality instruction, practise and feedback.
- Assessment approaches should identify the knowledge pupils have and have not acquired.
- Teachers of PE have high levels of subject and pedagogical knowledge.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman said:

For many pupils, those two hours of school PE each week are their only structured physical activity. An ambitious PE curriculum levels the playing field by giving all pupils the benefits of physical activity and sport, despite the advantages that some pupils will have outside the school gates. I hope this review helps raise the quality of PE for all young people.

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