



Department  
for Education

# **PE and sport premium: an investigation in primary schools**

**Research brief**

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## Introduction

Research was commissioned to conduct two surveys of primary school headteachers and senior managers, to examine how the [PE and sports premium](#) is being used in schools in England and the perceived impacts of the fund on PE and sports provision. The first survey was undertaken between April and July 2014 and the second survey will follow up the responses to the first survey in February/March 2015. This research brief presents the key findings from the first school survey, focusing on changes and perceived impacts of the fund as reported by school based staff.

# Key Findings

## Spending the premium

- Nearly all schools (99%) had started to spend the PE and sport premium allocation at the time of the survey, with most having started implementing changes before the end of the Autumn 2013/14 term.
- Schools were asked about the different ways they had spent their PE and sports premium and tended to report using the fund in a number of ways. Eighty-six per cent of schools reported using the premium to up skill and train existing staff. Changes reported by more than two thirds of schools included buying new equipment (76%), providing more extra-curricular activities (74%), and employing a new sports coach (67%).

## Changes to PE and sport provision using the premium

Schools reported the following changes between 2012/13 and 2013/14 (the first year of the premium):

### Changes to curricular and extra-curricular PE & sport staffing

- Seventy per cent of schools reported making changes to who delivered curricular PE lessons as a result of the funding.
- Of those who had made changes to their **curricular** PE staffing, the use of external sport coaches had increased from 37 per cent to 82 per cent of schools, and the use of specialist PE teachers had increased from 22 per cent to 54 per cent of schools. The use of School Sport Partnerships Co-ordinators had also increased from 9 per cent to 29 per cent of schools.
- Sixty-four per cent of schools reported making changes to who delivered their **extra-curricular** PE and sport as a result of the premium. Of those who had, the use of external sport coaches had increased from 56 per cent to 91 per cent of schools; and the use of specialist PE teachers from 26 per cent to 47 per cent of schools.

### Changes to PE and sport provision

- The vast majority of schools (91%) reported that due to the funding there had been an increase in the quality of PE teaching, with 9 per cent reporting it had stayed the same.

- Other changes to PE and sport in the first year of the funding included an increase in the range of equipment (79%), and an improvement in the quality of equipment (73%).
- Sixty-seven per cent of schools reported offering a wider range of sports during curricular time whilst 77 per cent reported doing so during extra-curricular time. On average an additional three sports were offered in both curricular and extra-curricular time compared to the year prior to the premium.
- Smaller schools and those with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) were more likely to report improvements in the quality and availability of facilities. Around half of small schools<sup>1</sup> (52%) reported an increase in the facilities available to them, compared to 40 per cent of large schools. Similarly, 51 per cent of schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils<sup>2</sup> reported an increase in the facilities available, compared to 39 per cent of schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils<sup>3</sup>.

### Changes to PE and Sport engagement

- Eighty-four per cent of schools reported that there had been an increase in pupil engagement in PE during curricular time; this was more likely amongst schools with higher levels of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM). Similarly, 83 per cent of schools reported an increase in the levels of participation in extra-curricular activities.
- Seventy-nine per cent of responding teachers thought that the premium had increased participation for *all* children. Particular groups of pupils were also mentioned in relation to this increased participation, including those less engaged/least active (38%), disadvantaged children (35%), and children with SEN (30%). Around a fifth of schools reported an increase in participation particularly amongst girls.
- Around half of schools (51%) had increased participation in intra-schools competitions, and 63 per cent reported an increase in inter-school competitions.
- Thirty-five per cent of schools made changes to the costs of extra-curricular PE and sports – a third of these reduced the costs to attend (33%), and a fifth made some clubs free to attend (21%).

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<sup>1</sup> For this research a small school was defined as having up to 149 pupils; a medium school between 150 and 299 pupils, and a large school was defined as over 300 pupils.

<sup>2</sup> Schools with more 27.9% of pupils eligible for FSM (the highest quartile).

<sup>3</sup> Schools with less than 7.2% of pupils eligible for FSM (the lowest quartile).

- There was no significant change in the average time pupils spent in curricular PE – this was two hours in both 2012/13 and 2013/14.

## Plans to use the 2014/15 PE and sport premium

- The majority of schools (70%) said they had already started planning how they were going to use the second year of PE and sport premium funding. A minority (14%) reported that they had already committed to spending some of the second year's funding. Sixteen per cent of schools had not got to the stage of planning how to use next year's funding yet.

## Perceived impacts of the premium

- Overall, perceptions about the impact of the premium on pupils were positive.
- Around a third of schools felt that the premium had had a big positive impact on behaviour - including confidence (35%); a healthier lifestyle (33%) and physical fitness (26%). There was less of a perceived big impact on improvements in other academic subjects (9%).
- Approximately two thirds of schools felt that there had been 'a little' impact on the above behaviours, however a quarter (25%) felt that there had been no impact at all on improvements in other academic subjects.
- Schools with the lowest levels of FSM eligibility were less likely to report that there had been an impact on pupils' behaviour compared to schools with higher levels of FSM eligibility.

### **Note: Interpreting the perceived impacts**

It is important to note that this report uses survey methodology to examine any perceived impacts of the fund as reported by school based staff. It was not able to provide a robust assessment of impact as there were no control group schools available.

## Making decisions about spending the premium

- Key members of staff involved in making decisions about how to spend the PE and sport premium included: the headteachers (97%), other teachers (73%), and members of the senior management/leadership team (71%). Governors (54%) and the School Sports Partnership (44%) were also commonly involved in this process. Pupils were involved in the decision making in 33 per cent of schools, and parents/carers were involved in 10 per cent of schools.
- Sixty-eight per cent of schools reported accessing information from the School Sport Partnership to help inform their spending; other common sources included head/teachers in other primary schools (55%), the local authority (51%), and the Department for Education (45%).

## 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.

This cross-government funding is provided by the Department for Education, with contributions from the Department of Health and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The PE and sport premium will provide over £150 million per year for the academic years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

The PE and sport premium is paid directly to primary schools and is ring-fenced to spend on improving the quality of PE and sport provision for all their pupils.

In 2013/14 all primary schools in England with 17 or more primary-aged pupils received a lump sum of £8,000 plus a premium of £5 per pupil. Smaller schools with fewer than 17 pupils received £500 per pupil.

## Aim of the survey

The aim of the survey was to find out how primary schools in England were spending the first years' PE and sport premium; how spending decisions were made, and the perceived impact of the new premium on schools.

## Methodology

Telephone and web surveys of schools were commissioned. Interviews were completed with the headteacher or another member of staff responsible for making decisions about PE spending and provision, such as the PE co-ordinator. A total of 586 interviews were carried out in primary schools between April and July 2014.

## Sampling

The sampling frame for the survey was state-funded primary schools in England. The sample was designed to be representative of primary schools in England but with an over-sample of academies to enable comparisons between primary academies and LA maintained schools. With the exception of the academies, the sample was representative of primary schools in England. The responses were weighted to correct for non-response bias so the sample for analysis was representative of primary schools in England.

## Confidence Intervals

Confidence intervals are a measure of precision, they are intervals placed around survey estimates which give an indication of where the true population is likely to fall. A 95 per cent confidence interval is calculated in such a way that 95 times out of 100 it captures the true population value. Therefore, they provide an idea of how large the true



population value might be (i.e. the upper limit) and how small it might be (i.e. the lower limit). The table below shows the confidence intervals expected for a number of sample sizes for a simple random sample which does not take into account design effects. For example, an estimate of 30% where the base is all schools surveyed (n=586), has a confidence interval of + or - 3.7%, hence the true value is within the range of 26.3 to 33.7%.

**Table 1 Confidence intervals expected for a number of sample sizes for a simple random sample**

Sample size	Survey estimate		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
200	4.2%	6.4%	6.9%
300	3.4%	5.2%	5.7%
400	2.9%	4.5%	4.9%
586	2.4%	3.7%	4.0%
600	2.4%	3.7%	4.0%



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