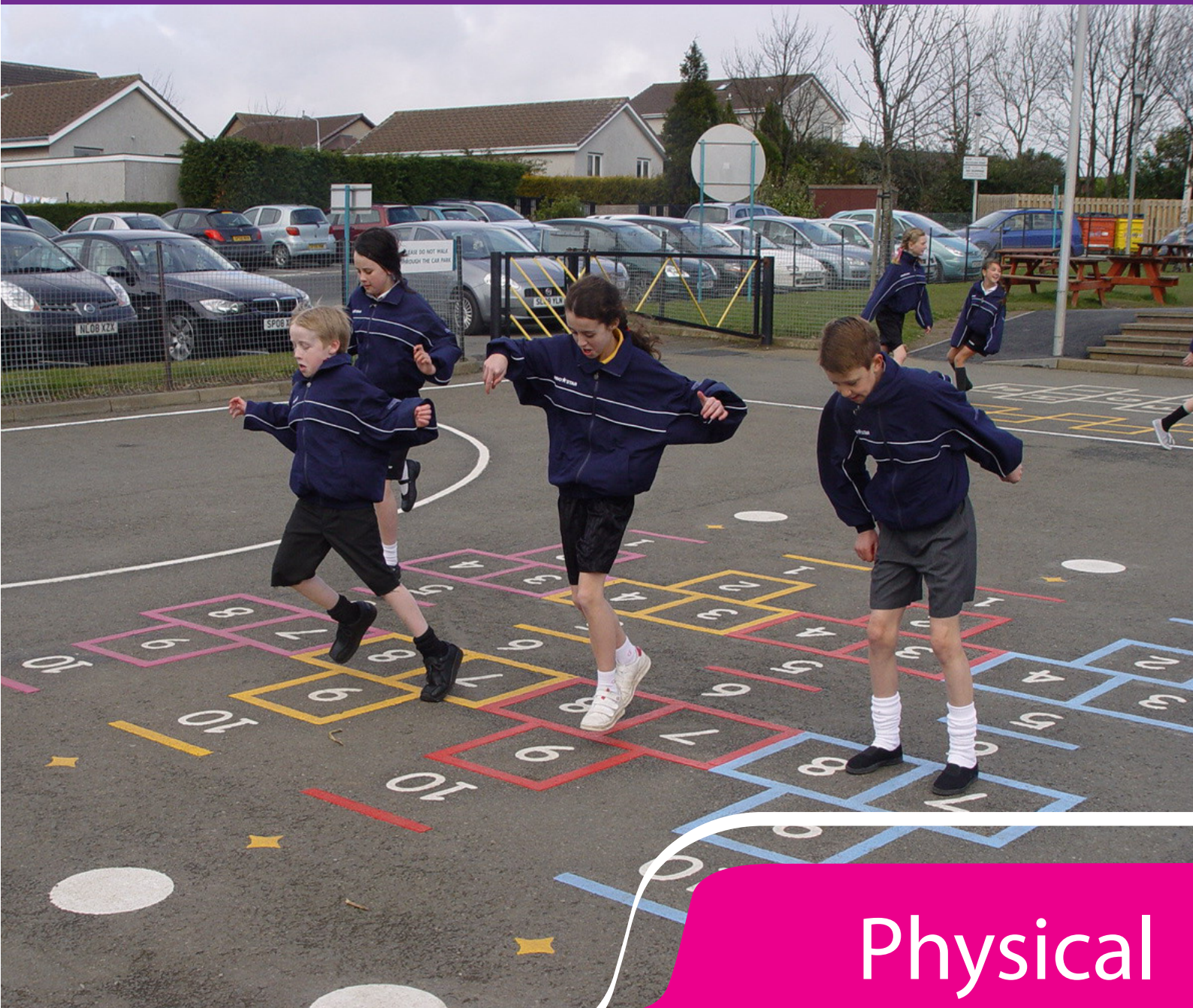




Physical Education in Scotland in the 21st Century

Background

This afPE Scotland position paper presents a vision of the future for school physical education in Scotland in the 21st Century: a vision which will place Scottish physical education at the forefront of global developments in physical education.

The paper is being written at a time when physical education is entering a new era: an era which has the potential to have the most significant and long lasting impact on children and young people's engagement in physical activity. Since devolution in 1999, the place of physical education in Scottish schools has received increasing attention from politicians, professionals and academics. Many government publications, including the HMle Report on Primary School Physical Education (HMle, 2001), the National Physical Activity Strategy (Scottish Executive, 2003a), the Active Schools Programme (Scottish Executive, 2003b) and, most significantly, the Report of the Review Group on Physical Education (Scottish Executive, 2004a), have focused on issues surrounding physical education.

At the launch of the Physical Education Review Group Report, the Minister for Schools and Young People highlighted that the recommendations in the report represented 'the biggest boost to physical education for generations' and proposed that physical education was 'an aspect of the curriculum which, exceptionally, needs greater priority to support the health and well-being of young people in Scotland' and subsequently should 'build the foundations for healthy and active lifestyles at an early age' (Scottish Executive, 2004b). Since then, physical education has remained high profile on each of the education, health and sport agendas and there has been gradual and sustained development in key areas including curriculum development, curriculum time, initial teacher education and the continuing professional development of primary teachers.

In May 2009, with physical education newly housed within the core curriculum area of health & wellbeing and dance remaining in expressive arts, the Scottish Government published the Curriculum for Excellence learning outcomes for physical education, physical activity and sport, physical activity and health and dance. In line with the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence, this paper offers a clear pathway forward for all those involved in physical education.

The paper will be split into 6 interrelated sections:

1. What is Physical Education?
2. Physical Education and a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
3. What is the main aim and the key principles of Physical Education?
4. What are the learning experiences of Physical Education?
5. The structuring and delivery of Physical Education
6. School Physical Education in the 21st Century



1. What is Physical Education?

afPE Scotland believe there is an urgent need for a clear definition of physical education and that this definition is best articulated by describing the differences and similarities between four key, often misinterpreted, terms: physical activity; physical education; school sport and physical education for lifelong learning. Although these terms are similar in that they all include physical movement, there are important differences between them, as clarified in the following afPE Scotland definitions.

A. Physical Activity

This is a broad term referring to all bodily movement that uses energy. Physical activity, therefore, not only includes physical education, sport and dance it also includes active play and habitual activities such as walking and cycling, as well as housework and gardening.

B. Physical Education

Physical education is the planned, progressive learning experiences that take place in specified preschool, primary and secondary school curriculum time and acts as the foundation for a lifelong engagement in physical activity. For some children and young people, physical education is their only organized and regular engagement with physical activity. Physical education is the planned, progressive learning experiences that take place in specified preschool, primary and secondary school curriculum time and acts as the foundation for a lifelong engagement in physical activity. For some children and young people, physical education is their only organized and regular engagement with physical activity.

C. School sport

School sport is the structured learning that takes place beyond the specified curriculum. School sport has the potential to develop and broaden the foundation learning that takes place in school physical education and also form a strong link with community sport and physical activity. Whilst all children and young people are encouraged to be involved in school sport, not all choose to or are able to do so. As such, it is important schools create opportunities for all children and young people to be involved in a range of different physical activities in addition to the specified physical education curriculum time.

D. Physical Education for Lifelong Learning

In its broadest sense, physical education is a lifelong and life wide process which sets out to help individuals of all ages develop the movement skills, the physical activity habits, the knowledge, the confidence, the motivation and the social skills that lead to a rich, active lives.

The key characteristic of physical education is that it is the only context in which all children and young people can be guaranteed the opportunity to regularly engage in physical activity and develop the foundation for an active life.



2. Physical Education and a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

AfPE Scotland believes the introduction of CfE offers physical education the opportunity to make a significant contribution to both the overall education and the health and well being of all children and young people in Scotland.

Three key CfE developments foreground this key role for physical education:

1. CfE defines curriculum as the 'totality of experiences' which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated (Scottish Executive, 2004c).
2. Physical education is the only subject area within CfE with a specific timetable target: i.e. every child and young person is entitled to at least two hours of good quality physical education every week.
3. Physical education has been re-housed within the core curriculum area of health and well-being and has been explicitly grouped with the physical activity and sport and physical activity and health aspects of health and well-being which extend beyond specified physical education curriculum time.

afPE Scotland believes these CfE developments have significant implications for physical education and offer the opportunity for powerful connections to be developed between the specified physical education curriculum time and;

- Physical activity and sport and physical activity and health.
- Those aspects of health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy which are the 'Responsibility for All' and which reinforce the importance of transferable skills for learning, work and life.
- From a health and wellbeing perspective, in particular, physical education has a key role to support children's mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing, their physical activity and sport and their planning for choices and changes.
- Interdisciplinary learning across other CfE curricular areas.
- Physical activity and sport experiences within the community and in the home setting.

3. What is the main aim and the key principles of physical education?

afPE Scotland proposes that the main aim of physical education is;

To ensure that all children and young people are regularly offered the appropriate learning experiences to acquire a foundation which will enable them to choose to be physically active throughout their childhood and adolescent years and will also prepare them for involvement in physical activity throughout the rest of their lives.

afPE Scotland believe the key principles which drive physical education are;

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| Principle 1: | Physical education is Developmentally Appropriate |
| Principle 2: | Physical education is Inclusive |
| Principle 3: | Physical education is Connected |
| Principle 4: | Physical education is Life wide |

Principle 1: Physical Education is Developmentally Appropriate

- The learning experiences offered to children and young people in physical education should be developmentally appropriate to help them acquire the psychomotor skills, the cognitive understanding, the social skills and the emotional learning they need to lead a physically active life.
- To consistently offer children and young people developmentally appropriate learning experiences in physical education, teachers must have a detailed understanding of the developing child and adolescent and how this development influences their engagement and learning in physical education.
- Developmental appropriateness is a core principle of CfE as highlighted by the cohesive and progressive nature of children and young people's curriculum experiences across the 3-18 age range.

Principle 2: Physical Education is Inclusive

- Physical education should ensure all children have regular opportunities to learn and benefit from their specified curriculum time experiences. Inclusion is not only about all children being in attendance and taking part, but also about all children receiving appropriate experiences to enhance their learning. Physical education should, therefore, be child-centred, and as they get older, increasingly child-directed, if young people are to achieve, autonomously, the potential benefits of a physically active life.
- If all children and young people are to be included appropriately, teachers (in collaboration with children and young people) need to differentiate the learning intentions and the learning experiences on offer. This has important implications for all teachers' pedagogy.
- With inclusion at the heart of the CfE all children and young people's learning experiences focus on personal achievement, personalisation and choice.

Principle 3: Physical Education is Connected

- Physical education should help children, young people and teachers see physical education as series of a 'joined up' learning experience and an experience that is an authentic part of life. These authentic learning experiences should not only be connected within the physical education curriculum itself but also across the different areas of the curriculum and the different sectors of life.
- To create authentic, connected learning experience, physical education needs to move beyond the traditional multi-activity approach made up of short blocks of, often unrelated, physical activities which lead to learning experiences that are compartmentalised and fragmented.
- The focus of CfE on interdisciplinary learning, coherence, progression, depth and breadth offers physical education many opportunities to connect children and young people's learning experiences with many aspects of their overall education.

Principle 4: Physical Education is Life wide

- Building on the notion of authenticity, physical education should acknowledge and develop strong links with the various life wide physical activity contexts children and young people will meet during their school years. These opportunities not only relate to the development of pathways into sport and dance, but also to the many outdoor and indoor physical activity contexts on offer.
- To create these pathways, physical education needs to develop close partnerships with key school based and community-based stakeholders to ensure that robust routes from school to community are created and sustained.

4. What are the learning experiences of Physical Education?

afPE Scotland believes physical education should focus on children and young people's 'Learning to Move' and 'Moving to Learn' over 3 interrelated age phases.

'Learning to Move'

- The learning of the movement skills required for participation in different types of physical activities.

'Moving to learn'

- The learning needed for successful participation in different physical activities and the learning integrated with other aspects of school learning beyond the physical domain.

- **Physical Activity-Related Learning**

Cognitive Learning • Planning; critical thinking; problem-solving; tactics; strategies; evaluation and judgements

Social Learning • Cooperation; collaboration; competition

Emotional Learning • Resilience; motivation; winning; losing;

- **Beyond the Physical Domain**

Learning in Health & Well-being; Expressive Arts; Languages, Maths, Sciences; Social Studies; Technologies and Religious and Moral Education

Physical Education involves:

- More than learning different movements.
- A complex mix of learning from the psychomotor, cognitive, social and emotional domains which enhances physical activity participation and cross-curricular learning.



The Physical Education Learning Phases

afPE Scotland believes that learning in physical education takes place across three interrelated age phases. It is important to acknowledge that these phases are 'age-related and not age-dependent' and, as such, some children and young people will be learning beyond their age-related phase whereas others are yet to reach their age-related phase.

The Foundation Physical Education Phase

Age range 3-7/8 and CfE Early & 1st Level)

- The focus of the foundation phase is children's developing movement foundation which comprises their core movement competence and the accompanying conceptual learning which supports their movement adaptability and creativity.
- This movement foundation acts as the basis for future development, progression and achievement. Without this foundation, many children and young people will be unable to access many physical activities and will never reach their full potential.
- The foundation phase also introduces children to different physical activity, sport and dance-related opportunities beyond the curriculum

The Formative Physical Education Phase

(Age range 7/8 -14 and CfE 2nd & 3rd levels)

- During the formative phase, children and young people extend and consolidate their core movement competence, their cognitive understanding and their social and emotional skills in order to apply them in increasingly more complex and authentic/'real life' contexts e.g. Sport, dance, outdoors and recreation activities.
- The formative phase embraces the transition between primary and secondary school where efforts need to be made to improve progression and continuous achievement.
- The formative phase further develops links to different physical activity, sport and dance-related opportunities beyond the curriculum. The tracking of children and young people's non-curricular physical activity engagement becomes an important consideration.

The Physical Education Life Skills Phase

(Age range 14 onwards and CfE 3rd & 4th levels)

- During the life skills phase, young people are supported in their choices between performance and participation, leadership, administration, officiating, academic achievement and vocational preparation.
- Consideration is given the transitional nature of this phase as the young people move beyond the school into further education, higher education or join the workforce.
- The life skills phase consolidates links to different physical activity, sport and dance-related opportunities beyond the curriculum and seeks to introduce additional lifelong opportunities. The tracking of young people's non-curricular physical activity engagement continues to be an important consideration.

5. The structuring and delivery of physical education

afPE Scotland believe a number of structural and delivery issues need to be addressed if physical education can meet its long term aim. Four key issues need to be considered are;

A. Experiential and Active Learning in Physical Education

afPE Scotland supports the moves in Scotland to involve children and young people in experiential and active learning experiences to engage and challenge their thinking using authentic real-life and/or imaginary situations. afPE Scotland believes physical education offers many opportunities for teachers to employ experiential and active learning approaches and, subsequently, offer children and young people authentic experiences that connect to their lives outside school.

B. Different Curriculum Models

afPE Scotland believe that authentic and connected learning experiences are only possible if physical education embraces a range of curriculum models that concentrate on the creation of learning experiences focused on children and young people's 'learning to move' and 'moving to learn'. Teachers, children and young people need to become more aware of those physical education experiences that lead to embedded core learning and authentic, 'real-life' learning. Contemporary developments in Teaching Games for Understanding, Sport Education, Dance Education and Outdoor Learning offer exciting opportunities to explore these 'real life' experiences.

C. Interdisciplinary/Cross-Curricular Learning

afPE Scotland re-emphasises the need to explore the many opportunities physical education offers to connect with different aspects of the 3-18 curriculum and also with the wider physical activity community.

D. Effective Partnerships

afPE Scotland encourages the establishment of effective local partnerships with specialist expertise within the wider community. These partnerships are essential to create and sustain successful participation and performance pathways which link the school to the wider community. In particular, afPE Scotland recognises the importance of developing close links with the Active Schools programme, sports development officers and other physical activity professionals who work with school-age children

6. School Physical Education in the 21st Century

As we move into the 21st Century, it is being increasingly recognised that the quality and the regularity of children and young people's physical education plays a significant role in developing a solid foundation for their lifelong engagement in physical activity. afPE Scotland, in this position paper, has presented a clear vision for physical education in Scotland in the 21st Century: a vision which will place Scottish physical education at the forefront of global developments in physical education.

Contact Details

Association for Physical Education
Room 117, Bredon
University of Worcester
Henwick Grove
Worcester
WR2 6AJ

Tel: 01905 855584

Web: www.afpe.org.uk

Email: enquires@afpe.org.uk

ESP Scotland Ltd
272 Bath Street
Glasgow
G2 4JR

Tel: 0845 604 1455

Web: www.espplayscotland.co.uk

Email: info@espplayscotland.co.uk