

**AN EVALUATION OF
YOUTH SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND**

HEAD TEACHERS REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Youth Sport Northern Ireland was launched in Belfast in January 1995. The Youth Sport programmes are delivered through partnerships consisting of:

- Sports Council Northern Ireland *Youth Sport Director and Resource Officer*
- Education and Library Boards *Expressive Studies Advisors/ Sport Development Officer*
- Schools *School Sport Co-ordinators*
- District councils *Sports Development Officers*
- Governing Bodies *Coach Development Officers*

By the summer of 1998, Youth Sport was established in 4 education and library boards (Belfast, North East, South East, Western), involving 67 school sport co-ordinators working in 325 schools. The programme included 12 curriculum sports and was linked to the work of sports development officers in 16 district councils.

In August 1998, the Centre for Leisure Research (CLR) was commissioned by the Sports Council Northern Ireland and Making Belfast Work to “*measure the impact of Youth Sport Belfast and Youth Sport beyond Belfast*”. This is a summary of the key findings of the research.

Opportunities Provided for Young People

Feeder Primary Schools

- In the 12 months prior to the survey, each co-ordinator had provided an average of 11 programmes in across their feeder primary schools.
- 94 per cent of co-ordinators had provided at least one *new* sport.
- 7 of the top 10 sports were team games, with soccer and basketball the most common.

Co-ordinators' Post Primary Schools

- An average of 8 extra-curricular sports were provided *prior* to the co-ordinators' appointment.
- 81 per cent of co-ordinators introduced an average of three new activities.
- Although the top 2 sports were basketball and rugby, 6 of the top 10 new sports were individual activities.
- 87 per cent of co-ordinators had established links with local clubs - mainly in traditional team sports.

Levels of Participation by Young People

- In the 10 surveyed schools, 88 per cent of pupils had been involved in extra-curricular sports in primary school and 58 per cent in post-primary school.
- At primary school, 80 per cent of pupils had been involved in clubs outside school and 68 per cent at post-primary school.
- 51 per cent of co-ordinators said that there had been an increase in number of post-primary school pupils joining local clubs.
- Although pupils' participation rate is lower in post-primary school, their perceptions are that they are offered a greater choice of sports than in primary schools and that generally sport was more fun.
- In and out of school, boys' participation rates were higher than girls', especially for post-primary competitive sports, where it was twice that of girls'. In 8 of the top 10 extra-curricular sports boys' participation exceeded girls', except in hockey and netball.

- Although girls' participation was lower, it was not dominated by a single sports activity as boys' was by soccer. Girls participated in a wider range of sports, with swimming, netball, hockey and dance being especially popular.

School Sports Co-ordinators: Key Observations

- In very few cases have there been any issues with the quality and commitment of those appointed as Co-ordinators.
- Personal interest and enthusiasm for sport by co-ordinators has been a significant factor in the success of the initiative.
- Most co-ordinators have received limited timetabled time for the initiative.
- Payments to co-ordinators represents only a token contribution towards their time on the initiative.
- Co-ordinators have delivered a significant range of new and extended sports activity.
- Half the co-ordinators have noted an increase in the number of post primary school pupils joining local sports clubs.
- Co-ordinators work in an average of 4 feeder primary schools but there is great demand to extend to a greater number of schools and a wider range of activities.
- The availability of coaches between 3-5 pm is a major constraint for Youth Sport as is developing links with primary schools in rural areas.
- Improvements in pupil/teacher relationships and increases in pupils self esteem were evidenced.
- Networking with Councils and Governing Bodies has been restricted due to the workload of everyone concerned.
- Success was unanimously recognised but demand to expand is unlikely to be satisfied within the current structures and resources.

Headteachers: Key Observations

- The main reasons for becoming involved in Youth Sport were:-
 - to strengthen and develop general links with primary schools,
 - to involve pupils in community regeneration,
 - to promote sport and enhance PE in their own schools.
- Many head teachers regarded sport as important to encouraging personal and social development and a lifelong interest for their pupils in physical activity.
- Many of the head teachers were keen that Youth Sport targeted young people that were previously turned off traditional sports activities.
- The head teachers recognised the potential of Youth Sport to:
 - bring own board pupils that did not identify with school, and
 - contribute indirectly to broader aspects of school development.
- They agreed that young peoples' self esteem was improved by involvement in Youth Sport. .
- Youth Sport was recognised to have presented staff development opportunities.
- Some head teachers said there would be little difficulty resourcing Youth Sport at their school whilst others saw considerable difficulties allocating resources.

Partner Agencies: Key Observations

Education & Library Boards

- All boards were committed to the continuation and development of Youth Sport.
- They believed that priorities needed to be more specific to the needs of the different geographic areas within Youth Sport.
- They identified that a greater commitment is required at senior level with a more strategic approach to involvement in Youth Sport.
- Concern was expressed about the lack of suitably qualified coaches, lack of exit routes and the role of clubs.

- It was thought that through time the Sports Development Officers role could be expanded to take more general responsibilities for education-based sports activities.
- A need for 'assistant school sports co-ordinators' to be appointed was identified
- It was recommended that new schools meet 'readiness factors' before making co-ordinator appointments. These would include a commitment to:
 - the extended curriculum,
 - to staff development,
 - to providing necessary resources for Youth Sport.

District Councils

- Councils were positive about the continuation of Youth Sport and about the links at operational level between SDOs and co-ordinators.
- Stronger links at Chief Officer level would assist SDOs with the strategic development of Youth Sport.
- The absence of SDOs in some councils has weakened links.
- Councils prefer long term partnerships to short term initiatives - Youth Sport is seen as a long term partnership.
- There was a recognition that Youth Sport may play a role in the delivery of 'Best Value'.

Governing Bodies

- Governing body approaches to Youth Sport have varied.
- There is recognition that there is an overwhelming need to provide support to match the undoubted opportunities for development of sport among young people.
- Governing Bodies cannot meet the demands for resources and staff - Youth Sport has moved ahead too fast for these largely volunteer organisations to keep up.
- Their limited human and financial resources has greatly limited the governing bodies' ability to provide support for Youth Sport.

Conclusions

On average, Belfast co-ordinators had been in post for about 3 years and outside Belfast for an average of just over 1 year. With an *average* allocation of just over 2 hours per week, it is a testimony to the commitment of the co-ordinators and their partner agencies that so much has been delivered and well-received by pupils and teachers.

However, Youth Sport is paying the price of its success. There are demands to expand the programme at every level. To ensure the continued success of Youth Sport, the following need to be addressed:

- A commitment among all partner agencies *at a strategic level* to ensure long term sustainability.
- Increase the number of quality coaches available for after-school programmes.
- Development of more child-friendly clubs that are willing and able to meet young people's needs.
- Greater efforts to secure and/or maintain timetabled time for co-ordinators.
- Need to remain focused on Youth Sport as a key initiative - avoid "initiativitis".

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In February 1993, a Strategy for Sport for Young People in Northern Ireland was officially launched. The Strategy, developed by a range of agencies responsible for the development and delivery of sport in Northern Ireland, identified the following fundamental needs:

- Improved partnerships.
- Improved structures to develop pathways of performance.
- Opportunities for post-school sport.
- Support for teachers.
- Resources.
- Education and Training.

These needs were to be met by programmes that focused on 13 curriculum sports:

Athletics	Hockey	Netball	Camogie
Badminton	Hurling	Soccer	
Basketball	Gaelic Football	Rugby	
Cricket	Lifestyle Sport	Tennis	

These programmes were to be delivered through a network of:

- Sports Development Officers
- Coach Development Officers
- School Sport Co-ordinators
- A Central Unit to resource, develop, co-ordinate and train.

Presentations of the Strategy were made by the Sports Council Northern Ireland (SCNI) to district councils, governing bodies of sport, education and library boards and community associations. Demonstration projects were also established in two schools (Antrim High School and Fleming Fulton School) to show how the school co-ordinator element of the strategy could work.

The appointment of a Youth Sport Director and a Resource Officer has meant that it was possible for the SCNI to develop partnerships throughout Northern Ireland.

In January 1995, this development started with the launch of Youth Sport Belfast, part-funded by Making Belfast Work and undertaken in partnership with the Sports Council Northern Ireland (SCNI) and the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). The initiative started with the appointment of a development officer in the BELB and 14 school sport co-ordinators.

Since 1995, the programme has extended to the South East Education and Library Board area (1996/97), the North East Education and Library Board area (1998) and the Foyle area (1997) of the Western Education and Library Board in a cross border initiative with schools in Donegal. Proposals for other areas of the Western Board and a cross-border initiative in the Southern Board currently are being developed.

At the start of this research, there were a total of 67 school-sport co-ordinators working in 325 schools throughout Northern Ireland (this excludes the schools in the Donegal area). There were also 16 designated sports development officers in district councils that were linked to the programme.

This project has sought the views of all partner agencies involved in the initiative and has had the following aims and objectives.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research project (as identified in the client brief) was to:

“... develop means of measuring the impact of Youth Sport Belfast and Youth Sport beyond Belfast”

More specifically, the following objectives were identified:

1. To measure:
 - the increase in after school opportunities at sites employing a school sport co-ordinator,
 - the increase in the number of children attending activities and the range of activities offered,
 - the increase in girls' involvement in sports activities,
 - the increase in pupil membership of sports clubs in the community,
 - the involvement of parents and the number trained in the delivery of programmes,
 - the number of teachers trained and involved,
 - the use of schools by the community,
 - the extent to which the programme, in part or whole, has established itself on a self-financing basis,
 - the increase in participation in curriculum PE,
 - the reduction in the cost of vandalism and the decrease in truancy rates,
 - the greater involvement by pupils in the spirit and purpose of school,
 - the improved interpersonal relationships with school, pupil and teacher.
1. To evaluate the structures and systems established to manage the initiative.
2. To compare, when appropriate, the initiative with other similar initiatives.
3. To propose options for the sustainability of Youth Sport NI.

Within all of these objectives, there was a concern to consider the 'capacity building aspects of regeneration' (client brief, para.4.6) especially from the perspective of the children involved in the initiative.

For example:

- Has the initiative given children a greater sense of self-esteem?
- Has Youth Sport affected positively children's sense of belonging and their sense of wanting to contribute to an area?
- Has Youth Sport made the environment more liveable, lively and safe for children?

These objectives have been addressed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods as set out in Section 2.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is set out as follows:

Section 2: This section provides details of the research approach (copies of all questionnaires are include in appendix 1).

Sections 3-6: These sections provide a detailed account of the levels of activity and the views of the key partner agencies involved in the Youth Sport programme, including the activity patterns and views of young people.

Section 7: This section presents the conclusions and recommendations for the future of the initiative.

SECTION 2: RESEARCH APPROACH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The issues identified in Section 1.2 were addressed using a combination of surveys, face-to-face interviews and group discussions. At each stage in the project design the steering group were invited to comment on questionnaires, contacts for interviews and the interim survey findings.

2.2 SURVEYS

Postal surveys were undertaken with school sport co-ordinators and head teachers and classroom surveys were undertaken with school pupils.

School Sport Co-ordinators

This survey obtained information on:

- Background information (when appointed, why they applied).
- Sports provision in own school and in feeder primary schools.
- Numbers of boys and girls involved in school sport and changes in this.
- Views about the effects of participation in school sport on pupils.
- Links with local sports clubs.
- Resources to support the current and future programme.
- Views about the adequacy of the infrastructure (coaches, facilities, training etc).
- Views about the future of the programme.

Given the small sample available it was decided not to pilot the questionnaire. However, comments were received on the draft questionnaire from the clients and amendments made accordingly.

Of the 72 co-ordinators in post, a number were excluded:

- 5 schools in Donegal (outside the SCNI remit),
- 2 special schools (these were omitted on the advice of the ELB for that area),
- 1 school where the co-ordinator was on maternity leave, and
- 1 school where the co-ordinator had resigned and a replacement was not yet appointed.

Questionnaires were mailed to co-ordinators at their school address (with a pre-paid envelope for their return) and from the 63 co-ordinators, a total of 53 replies (85%) were received.

Non-respondents were chased extensively over an eight week period by the Centre for Leisure Research (CLR) (using reminder letters and telephone calls), by the relevant Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and by the SCNI. Every effort was made to achieve a 100% response but due to staff sickness and pressure of work, some co-ordinators were unable to respond.

Head Teachers

This survey obtained information on:

- Background information about the school (size, sports facilities available).
- Their perception of the value of school sport.
- Issues regarding current and required resources for school sport.
- Changing relationships with primary schools.
- Their views on the future of the programme.

As with the school sport co-ordinators, it was decided not to pilot the questionnaire. However, comments were received on the draft questionnaire from the clients and amendments made accordingly.

Questionnaires were mailed to head teachers in the 63 schools where a school sport co-ordinator had been included in the survey. From the 63 head teachers a total of 50 replies (80%) were received. Non-respondents were chased by CLR (using reminder letters) and by the relevant ELBs and the SCNI (using personal contacts).

Young People

A survey of young people was undertaken using self-completion questionnaires that pupils completed in the classroom under the supervision of a teacher. The questionnaire was piloted with a group of 20 Year 8 pupils in Edinburgh and changes were made to simplify the layout and routing of questions.

The questionnaire included sections on the following:

- About themselves (age, sex school year, primary and secondary schools attended).
- About sports activities they did at primary school.
- About sports activities they do at secondary school.
- Their favourite sports.
- Places and times when they take part in sports.
- What they think about sport at secondary school compared to primary school.
- Their involvement in and attitudes towards sports competitions.
- Their views about the positive and negative aspects of being involved in sport.

A total of 11 schools were involved in the survey and they were asked to distribute the questionnaires to a sample of about 50 pupils in Year 8. In the case of Belfast schools, where the initiative had been in place for a longer period of time, pupils from Years 8 and 9 were included.

Teachers were asked to select pupils randomly and the structure of the sample obtained can be seen in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Composition of the pupils' sample

	Percentage of respondents
Gender	
Boy	46
Girl	54
Age	
11 years old	44
12 years old	42
13 years old	14
School year	
Year 8	89
Year 9	11
Location of secondary school	
Belfast	29
Elsewhere	71
<i>Base number: 497</i>	

The achieved sample size was 497 pupil respondents from ten schools - questionnaires from one school were posted but never received.

2.3 INTERVIEWS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Following initial analysis of the survey data, a programme of qualitative interviews and discussion groups was drawn up. This included:

- 6 school sport co-ordinators,
- 6 head teachers,
- 4 governing body development officers,
- 4 district council development officers,
- 4 education and library board development officers,
- 4 education and library board PE advisors (or equivalent),
- 1 programme sponsor, and
- 1 SCNI officer.

In addition, group discussions were undertaken in 6 schools with groups of around 10 boys and 10 girls from Year 8. These pupils were selected randomly and not necessarily for their involvement in Youth Sport programmes.

It was thought that this broader group of pupils would give a more balanced perspective on the role of sport in the lives of young people and allow us to comment on Youth Sport from the perspective of non-participants as well as participants.

The purpose of the interviews and group discussions was to clarify and explore further some of the findings of the postal surveys. Additionally, this qualitative dimension allowed for a more in-depth discussion and understanding of the 'capacity building' concept.

SECTION 3 - SCHOOL SPORTS CO-ORDINATORS

Available in Separate Report.

SECTION 4: HEAD TEACHERS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Head teachers in schools with school sport co-ordinators were mailed a questionnaire and 80 per cent (50) responded. The questionnaire sought their views about strategic issues such as the perceived benefits of being involved in Youth Sport, the resources required to sustain the initiative and their views about its future.

4.2 BACKGROUND TO INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH SPORT

Nearly all the schools (98%) in which co-ordinators worked had previously provided at least one extra-curricular sport. Therefore head teachers were asked about the *added value* provided by Youth Sport and why they agreed to participate.

Reasons for Involvement in Youth Sport

About half (52%) of the head teachers regarded the development and strengthening of *general links* with feeder primary schools as important (although the interviewees placed much stronger emphasis on this). Most of the other reasons given for involvement related to the improvement of sporting opportunities (in primary and post-primary schools) and the broader issue of community regeneration.

Table 4.1: Reasons for applying for Youth Sport post

	Percentage of respondents
Strengthen/develop <i>general</i> links with primary schools	52
Involve pupils in community regeneration	22
Develop physical education in primary schools	20
Promote sport to pupils	20
To enhance existing physical education and sport in own school	17
Believe in the value of sport for young people	9
Develop an extra-curricular programme for own school	9
To improve sports participation rates among young people	7

Base number: 46

Note: Multiple response, percentages add to more than 100%

There were a further 14 responses each provided by individual head teachers

About one in five (22%) viewed Youth Sport as an opportunity to involve pupils in a broader process of community regeneration and an equivalent proportion viewed it as an opportunity to develop PE in primary schools. Others had more generalised rationales – a desire to promote sport to pupils (20%), a belief in the value of sport for young people (9%) and the need to improve sports participation rates among young people (7%).

Smaller proportions gave reasons specifically related to their own school - 17 per cent to enhance both PE and sport in their own school and one in ten (9%) to develop an extra-curricular sports programme.

The interviewees also commented on the more general links with primary schools. As one head teacher commented,

“especially in country areas like this, we can be the hub of the community. It’s important that we reach out beyond our own school.”

More specifically, another head teacher saw value in Youth Sport that went beyond marketing,

“it’s not just about marketing the school. It’s good teaching practice to get to know incoming pupils – you learn very little about them from a transfer form.”

However it was also noted by one head teacher that too often involvement in programmes has to be seen to have as many benefits as possible in order to justify the time and expenditure. Although acknowledged as somewhat idealistic given schools’ resource constraints, this head teacher nonetheless thought that,

“one way of justifying involvement in Youth Sport is that sport is very important to young people in itself”.

Another head teacher stated,

“we’re not looking for specific outcomes, we just wanted to offer more choices to pupils”.

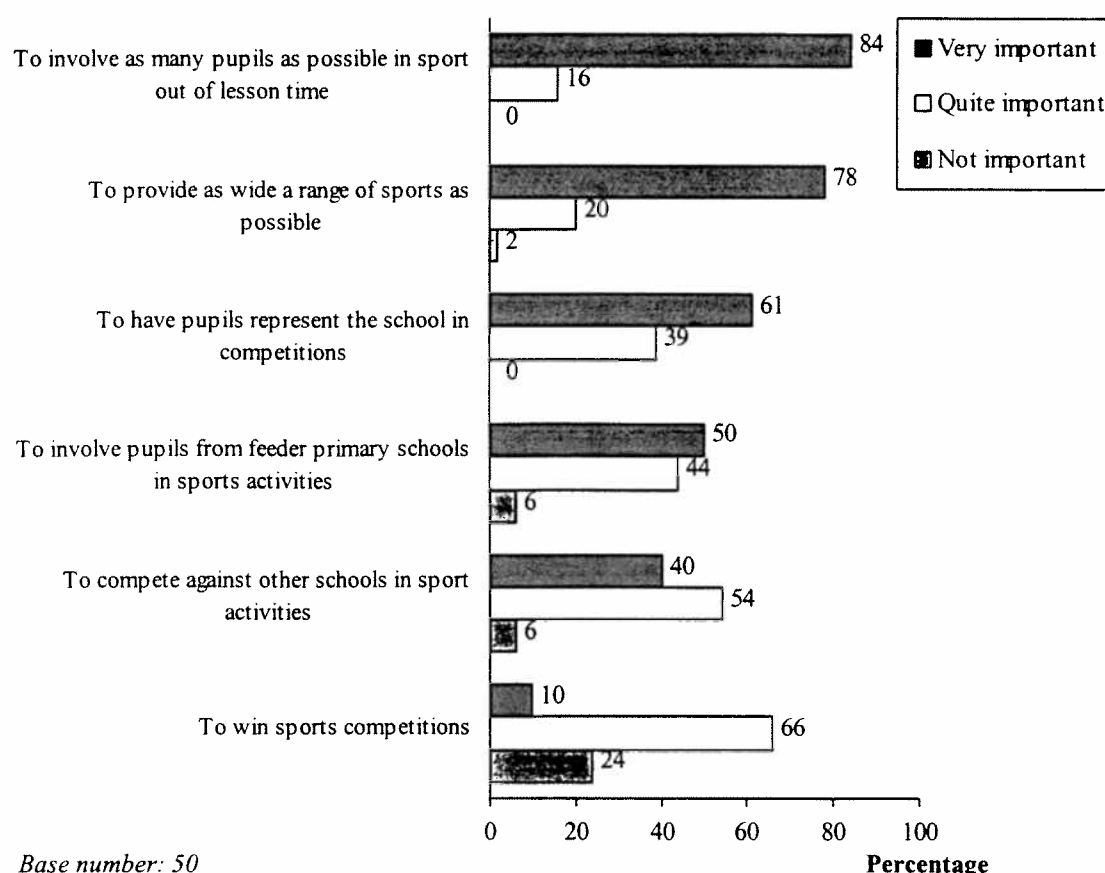
Sport and School Aims

Head teachers were asked to comment on the importance of sport in relation to the overall aims of the school. In this context, the maxim, ‘it’s not winning, it’s taking part that counts’ seemed to apply.

About eight out of ten head teachers (84%) thought that it was very important to involve as many pupils as possible in extra-curricular sports. Reflecting this desire, a broadly similar proportion (78%) regarded it as very important to provide as wide a range of sports as possible. Reflecting the potential importance of sport for developing a commitment to the school, nearly two thirds (61%) felt that it was very important to have pupils representing the school in competitions (a view also expressed by many of the pupils in the group discussions).

Although head teachers regarded increased opportunities for participation as important, this was clearly a higher priority for their own pupils. For example, only half thought that it was “very important” to involve pupils from feeder primary schools in sports activities, with 44 per cent regarding it as “quite important”.

Figure 4.1: Head teachers: Importance of aspects of sport to overall aims of school



Participation was accorded a higher priority than competition. Although 61 per cent thought that representing the school was “very important”, only 40 per cent thought that *competing* with other schools was “very important”. Further, 10 per cent thought that it was “very important” that pupils won sports competitions, with a quarter (24%) regarding it as “not important” (making it the least important aspect of sport).

This general theme of the importance of taking part in sport was repeated in most of the interviews. A number of head teachers thought that Youth Sport should seek to maximise participation and this objective should have a greater emphasis than the development of competitive sport.

As one head teacher commented,

“in our school we have traditionally focused on competitive team games. Youth Sport gives us an opportunity to extend the range of extra-curricular sports and to offer more opportunities to more pupils.”

Similarly, another head teacher stated,

“we need a greater number of children involved – new children especially. Children that currently don’t identify with our school sports programme.”

However, one head teacher was slightly sceptical about whether a participation focus could be maintained. He stated that,

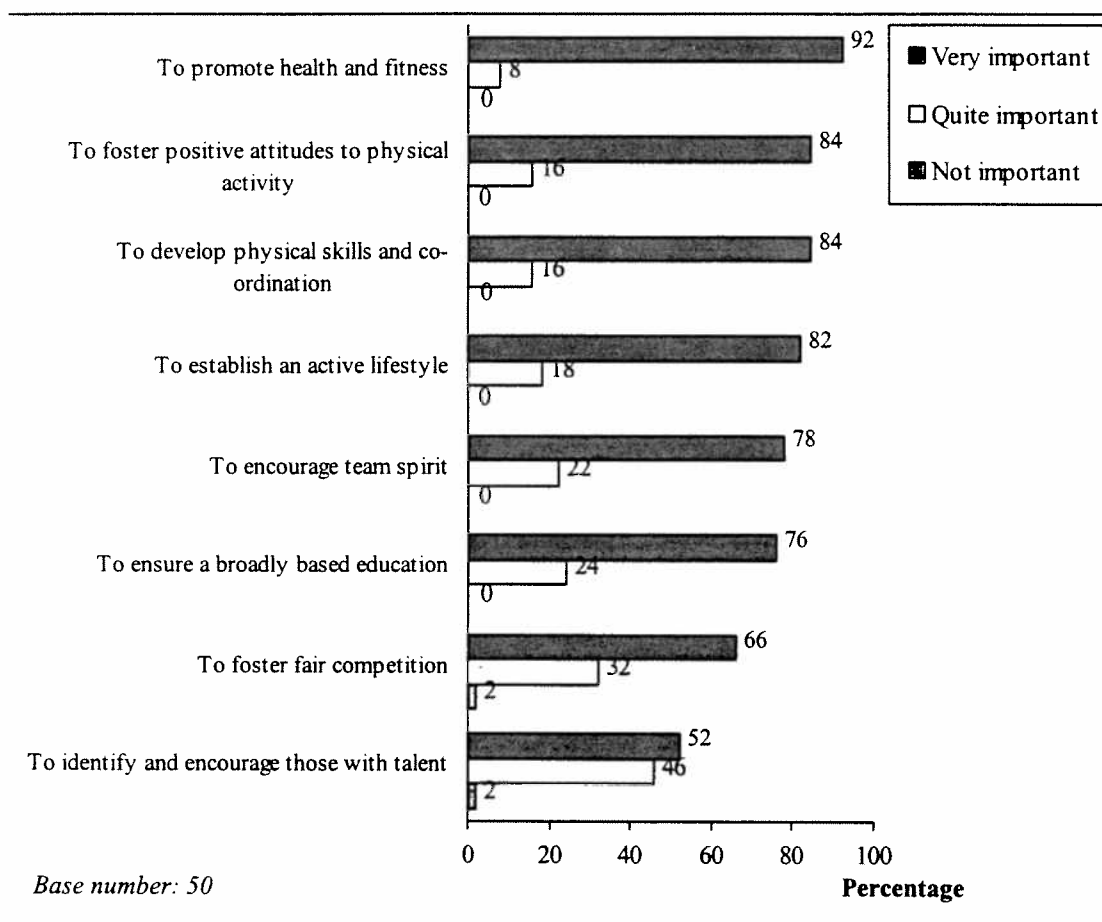
“children have to be allowed to play. There is a danger with a Sports Council initiative that if someone is just taking part in sport, they are at the base and then somehow they become implicated in a performance pyramid.”

Although interviewees did not rule out the development of competitive sport, it was regarded as a lower priority than a more broadly based ‘sport for all’ approach.

Importance of Aspects of Sport

There is a wide range of possible outcomes associated with providing sport in schools and head teachers were asked about the relative importance of each to their school. Although all aspects of sport were thought to be important to some degree, the most important factors related to general lifestyle. For example, the most important aspect of sport was regarded as the promotion of health and fitness (92% viewed this as “very important”), followed by the fostering of positive attitudes to physical activity (84%), the development of physical skills and co-ordination (84%) and the establishing of an active lifestyle (82%).

Figure 4.2: Head teachers: Importance of aspects of sport in school



About three-quarters viewed sport as contributing to the educationalists’ desire to ensure a broadly based education (76% “very important”), with a similar proportion viewing the traditional role of sport in encouraging team spirit (78%) as very important.

The more sports-specific outcomes of fostering fair competition (66%) and identifying and encouraging those with talent (52%) were viewed as least important.

Interviewees confirmed these findings, with one head teacher commenting that, for example,

“it is important to give them sports that they’ll continue with after they leave school.”

Assisting pupils to develop a generic set of physical activity skills and a basic level of fitness was generally regarded as more important than having specific sports achievements and results.

4.3 PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF YOUTH SPORT

Overall Benefits of Youth Sport

Head teachers were presented with a range of statements about the possible benefits of their pupils’ participation in extra-curricular activities and were asked whether they agreed with the statements.

The head teachers were in broad agreement with the school sport co-ordinators about the benefits of extra-curricular sport. With one exception, both groups agreed on the order of the top six benefits. Whereas the co-ordinators had regarded a general improvement of pupil-teacher relationships as the top benefit, head teachers chose increased self-confidence among pupils as the main benefit – 52 per cent strongly agreed that this had been an outcome (a further 46 per cent agreed).

Paralleling this increased pupil self-confidence, 40 per cent of head teachers strongly agreed (and 48% agreed) that participation in extra-curricular sport had *led to a general improvement of pupil-teacher relationships*. However, although their evaluations were still positive, head teachers were less sure about the broader impacts on the general social relations within the school. For example, although agreeing that participation in extra-curricular sport had *led to a greater involvement in the general life of the school*, only 20 per cent “strongly agreed” that this had occurred. Further, although 50 per cent agreed that participation had *led to an improvement in general behaviour in school*, only 12 per cent felt secure enough to “strongly agree” and a third (34%) did not know.

Table 4.2: Head teachers: Possible benefits of Youth Sport

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Percentage of respondents				
Has contributed to increased self-confidence among pupils	52	46	2	0	0
Has led to a general improvement of pupil-teacher relationships	40	48	12	0	0
Has increased enthusiasm for PE	26	52	22	0	0
Has led to greater involvement in the general life of the school	20	65	14	0	0
Has enabled pupils to look beyond their local communities	16	50	28	6	0
Has led to an improvement in general behaviour in school	12	50	34	4	0
Has contributed to a reduction in vandalism on school premises	10	8	60	21	0
Has contributed to a decrease in truancy	4	19	53	23	0

Base number: 49

One of the main aims of Youth Sport was to increase enthusiasm for PE (although given the popularity of the subject with most pupils this might be difficult). Head teachers regarded this as the third most significant impact, with over a quarter (26%) “strongly agreeing” and 52 per cent “agreeing”. However, as one might expect from head teachers who would not be involved in the delivery of PE, 22 per cent did not know.

Many head teachers were also unsure about the broad impacts of sports participation on pupils’ horizons and the reduction of anti-social behaviour. Although two thirds (66%) agreed that extra-curricular sport had *enabled pupils to look beyond their local communities*, only 16 per cent “strongly agreed” and more than a quarter (28%) did not know. The greatest uncertainty related to the effect of sport on vandalism and truancy. Sixty per cent of head teachers did not know if sport had *contributed to a reduction in vandalism on school premises* and 21 per cent stated that it had not had this effect. More than half (53%) did not know if it had contributed to a decrease in truancy, and a quarter (23%) were sure that it had not done so. Of course, such responses might be taken to reflect an already low level of vandalism and truancy.

Many interviewees were sceptical about making claims about sport's ability to reduce vandalism and truancy. However, they did not rule out an indirect association. For example, one head teacher commented,

“sport may help truancy, but not by x, y or z percent. Sport can help some young people's self-esteem and confidence, that often helps them to identify better with school.”

In response to an open ended question about the benefits of participation in extra-curricular sports, most head teachers mentioned individual benefits to pupils. These repeated many of the above benefits and included the development of social skills (42%), development of confidence (42%), development of identity within school (32%) and greater enjoyment of school life (10%).

Links with Primary Schools and Local Clubs

Primary Schools

Overall, almost nine out of ten (88%) head teachers believed that Youth Sport had led to improvements in their schools' relationships with their feeder primary schools (the rest were not sure). Nearly three quarters (71%) said that their school facilities were used by feeder primary schools and in two thirds (65%) of cases this use had increased since the appointment of the Youth Sport co-ordinator.

However, more than three quarters (78%) did not know if these improved relationships had led to an increased pupil intake from these schools. It seems that the relationship between Youth Sport and these broader educational and community outcomes are difficult to measure in isolation from other factors.

Local Clubs

Almost two thirds (63%) of the head teachers' schools are available for use by local clubs. Among these, almost a third (30%) said that use by local clubs had increased since their involvement in the Youth Sport initiative. As half of the head teachers regarded their sports facilities as inadequate to meet their current teaching requirements, it is possible that club use of these facilities is constrained by their poor quality or small scale.

4.4 RESOURCING YOUTH SPORT

Introduction

Schools involved in Youth Sport contribute a variety of resources (financial, staffing, equipment) and are required to make an increasing financial contribution from year to year eventually resuming responsibility for all staffing costs. Consequently, it was important to consider head teachers' views about the resourcing of the initiative.

Finance

Overall

Schools are required to make a financial contribution to the co-ordinators' additional salary contribution. However, 79 per cent of head teachers said that they had already committed resources additional to this core cost.

Despite these additional contributions, 59 per cent of head teachers thought the financial resources available to Youth Sport were inadequate to provide a relevant programme to meet pupils' needs. Nearly two thirds (62%) said that there was not enough money available, 28 per cent viewed the cost of maintaining and developing facilities as prohibitive and 24 per cent regarded transport costs as too expensive.

Interviewees had mixed views about the long term viability of Youth Sport, given the expectation that schools would eventually incur the full cost of their co-ordinators' payment. There were two main factors which would influence a decision about whether they could continue to make this financial commitment - the impact of the board of governors and the competition from other initiatives and programmes.

In some schools the governors will play a major role in the decision about whether to continue. As one head teacher stated,

“they will want a very exhaustive evaluation report from the co-ordinator to prove what the school is getting for the money.”

However in another school, the head teacher commented that,

“I doubt if it will be debated at governor level – we're extending opportunities to pupils, that is justification enough for me to allocate resources.”

Irrespective of the level of involvement the governors have in the financial decision-making about Youth Sport, or how supportive they are, a number of head teachers commented that,

“there simply isn't enough to go round – if we choose this we have to say no to something else.”

In one school, the head teacher pointed out that,

“there is definitely competition between programmes and initiatives. The issue is how do you fund them when there is no new money coming in. This year alone we have thirty new initiatives running.”

Additional Contributions

Despite the overall difficulties of resourcing the initiative, head teachers had been able to support staffing inputs in a number of additional ways. The most widespread form of support was *teaching cover*, provided by about two thirds (63%). Other forms of staff support included giving teachers time off in lieu (26%) and a similar proportion paying teachers for their time (24%). Interviewees explained that in most cases, this support is given to the co-ordinators themselves.

Table 4.3: Additional resources provided to support Youth Sport

	Percentage of respondents
Teaching cover provided	63
Assistance with travel	55
Clothing/equipment	50
Funding for paid coaches	40
Teachers given time off in lieu	26
Teachers' time paid for	24
Equipment maintenance	2
Sports hall lent to primary schools	2

Base number: 38

Note: Multiple response, percentages add to more than 100%

In addition to these various forms of support for teachers, 40 per cent of head teachers had provided funding for the employment of coaches. Other forms of support included assistance with travel (55%) and clothing and equipment (50%).

Staffing

Overall

Only half the head teachers (51%) regarded the existing human resources as adequate to provide a relevant programme to meet pupils' needs. Among those who felt that current staffing was inadequate, 44 per cent said that there was a general lack of staff willing to be involved and 33 per cent identified a shortage of appropriately qualified sports coaches.

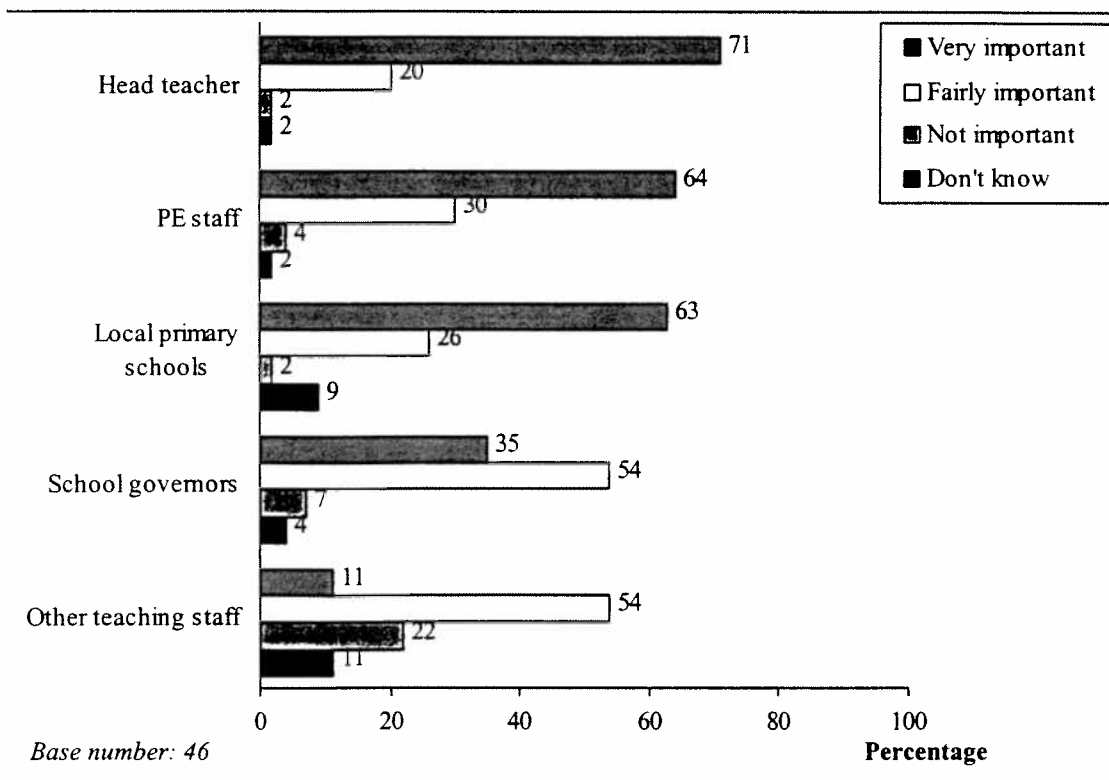
Co-ordinators' time

On average the Youth Sport co-ordinator was allocated 2 hours and 20 minutes for Youth Sport per week. However, 12 of the 50 head teachers (24%) did not answer this question. If their answer had been 'no time', then the average time would be considerably less. Our interviews with co-ordinators and others indicated that many were operating with no timetabled time (or had been unable to protect the timetabled time).

Importance of other school staff

When considering the relative importance of various staff (other than the co-ordinator) to the Youth Sport initiative, head teachers rated themselves as more important than any other group. Nearly three quarters (71%) regarded their contribution as "very important". The next most important contributors, selected by about two thirds of respondents as "very important", were the PE staff and the local primary schools. Taken together, this group of staff would have had the major contact with the Youth Sport programme.

Figure 4.3: Perceived importance staff contributions to Youth Sport



Although over half (54%) regarded the contribution of other teachers as fairly important, only 11 per cent stated that it was very important and 22 per cent regarded it as not important. However, interviewees explained that in many cases other teachers are committed to other programmes and even if willing, would be unable to contribute.

Although only one in three head teachers (35%) thought that the contribution of school governors was “very important”, most (89%) thought it to be in some way important and only 7 per cent thought it not to be important.

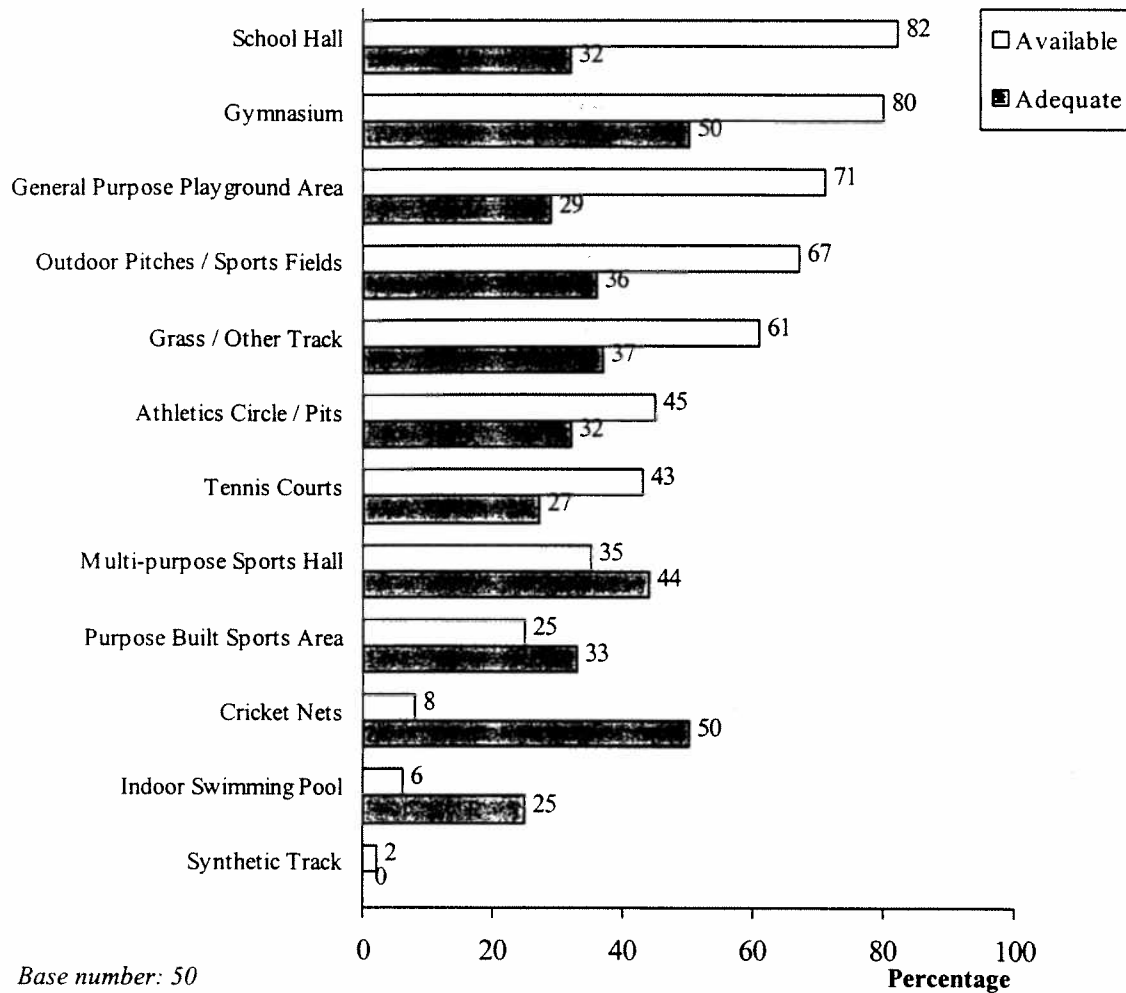
Facilities

Head teachers were asked about the schools’ sports facilities and their adequacy for the needs of their pupils. About half the schools had a combination of a school hall, a gymnasium, a general purpose playing area, outdoor pitches and a grass track. However, of these schools, only half of the head teachers thought that these facilities were adequate.

The two most common sports facilities were (multi-purpose) school halls and gymnasias, with about eight out of ten schools owning and managing these facilities. However, only one third regarded their school halls as adequate and a half regarded gymnasias as adequate.

Nearly three quarters (71%) had general purpose playgrounds and two thirds (67%) had outdoor pitches/sports fields. However, only 29 per cent regarded the playgrounds as adequate, with about a third regarding the pitches (36%) and grass/other tracks (37%) as adequate. All other facilities were provided in a half or less of the schools.

Figure 4.4: Sports facilities



In terms of more specialist sports facilities, 43 per cent had tennis courts but less than one in ten had cricket nets, swimming pools or synthetic running tracks.

4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The two main reasons for becoming involved with Youth Sport were associated benefits - strengthening/developing general non-sporting links with primary schools and involving pupils in community regeneration. However more directly sport-related issues were also important - developing PE in primary school, promoting sport and enhancing PE and sport in their own schools. In relation to their own school, sport was regarded as important to encourage personal and social development and encourage a lifelong interest in physical activity. In this context, they were keen that Youth Sport developed activities in a way that included young people who may previously have been turned off traditional extra-curricular school sport.

Head teachers not only commented on the potential of Youth Sport to “bring on board pupils that don’t identify with school” but also the potential of Youth Sport to contribute *indirectly* to broader aspects of school development. For example, most believed that Youth Sport had improved relationships with primary schools although few believed that there was a *direct* relationship between Youth Sport and increasing pupil intake from linked primary schools. Similarly, head teachers agreed that young people’s self esteem was improved by involvement in Youth Sport but did not believe that this directly contributed to any reduction in truancy or vandalism - certainly not to an extent that could be quantified.

It was not only pupils that head teachers believed had benefited from Youth Sport. In most cases Youth Sport had presented opportunities for staff development, especially for staff in unpromoted posts. The limited contributions from other school staff to Youth Sport was not regarded as an issue by head teachers who explained that in most cases these teachers are making extra-curricular contributions to other areas.

The head teachers regarded their own role as crucial to the future of the programme, in partnership with PE staff and primary head teachers. However, the extent to which head teachers could secure a future for Youth Sport varied depending on the financial pressure that their school faced. In some cases, it was clear that there would be no difficulty resourcing the programme but in others, regardless of the success of Youth Sport, it would be difficult for head teachers to allocate the necessary resources.