

REPORT

A Baseline Survey Of Timetabled PE In Post Primary Schools In Northern Ireland - 2010



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report contains the findings from a Physical Education (PE) Survey conducted by Sport Northern Ireland in June 2010, which identified the following key findings:

1.2 OVERALL AVERAGES (TIME, PERCENTAGE, RANGE AND TREND)

- **Overall time**
The overall average time spent on curricular PE in post primary schools in Northern Ireland during the academic year 2009 - 2010 was 85 minutes;
- **Overall percentage**
9% of the post primary schools that took part in the survey delivered the recommended 2 hours of PE or more;
- **Overall range**
The lowest school average time spent on PE was 38 minutes and the highest school average was 252 minutes; and
- **Overall trend**
Overall, the length of time decreased from Year 8 to Year 14.

1.3 SCHOOL STATUS (MANAGEMENT AND SEX OF PUPILS)

- **Management**
Based upon known school status controlled schools had the highest overall average time of PE (96 minutes) and special schools had the lowest (75 minutes);

50% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target were controlled schools;
- **Sex of pupils**
Co-educational schools had the highest overall average PE time (90 minutes), compared to schools with single-sex girls (88 minutes) and single-sex boys (85 minutes); and

67% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had co-educational status.

1.4 SCHOOL SIZE (ENROLMENT FIGURE)

There does not appear to be any correlation between enrolment figure and the amount of time allocated to curricular PE; and

25% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had 401 – 500 pupils.

1.5 SCHOOL LOCATION (ELB, COUNCIL AREA, RURAL/URBAN AND SOCIAL NEED)

- **ELB**
Schools in the North Eastern and Education Library Board (NEELB) allocated the most time to PE (95 minutes) and schools residing in the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) allocated the least time to PE (85 minutes);

42% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target were in the NEELB;
- **Council area**
Schools residing in Ballymoney Council area achieved the most amount of PE time (115 minutes) and schools in Newry and Mourne Council area achieved the least (72 minutes);

The 12 schools (9%) that achieved the 2 hour target resided within 8 of the 26 council areas;
- **Urban/rural**
Schools in rural locations delivered more PE (94 minutes) than urban schools (87 minutes);

58% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target were in an urban location;
- **Social need/free school meals**
There does not appear to be any correlation between the number and/or percentage of free schools meals and the amount of time allocated to PE; and

25% of the schools that achieved the 2 hour target had between 21-25% of free school meals.

1.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research and the Primary PE survey conducted by Sport Northern Ireland in 2009 have informed the following recommendations:

- **Equal access and provision**
Immediate and sustained application of political support that will ensure equal access to and provision of 2 hours of curricular PE for every child and young person in Northern Ireland is at the forefront of the political agenda;
- **Strategic design and dissemination of evidence-based research**
Strategic design and dissemination of evidence-based research relating to the physical, psychological and cognitive benefits of PE, that will assist in elevating the status of PE and increase allocated curricular time;
- **Statutory requirement and entitlement**
A statutory requirement of, and statutory entitlement to, at least 2 hours of quality PE each week for every child and young person in compulsory education, which is effectively resourced and monitored; and
- **Partnerships and policy integration**
Cross-departmental commitment to share resources, and fully align and integrate PE into Education, Sport and Health policy.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

2.1 DEVELOPING PHYSICAL LITERACY

2.1.1 “Sport Matters” – The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-19, aspires to “create a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport and physical recreation”. Being physically active throughout life depends on an individual’s ability to feel competent and confident in an activity setting. This competence and confidence normally comes from having developed physical literacy skills as a child.

2.1.2 Physical literacy can be defined as the ability to use body management, locomotor and object control skills in a competent manner, with the capacity to apply them with confidence in settings which may lead to sustained involvement in sport and physical recreation¹.

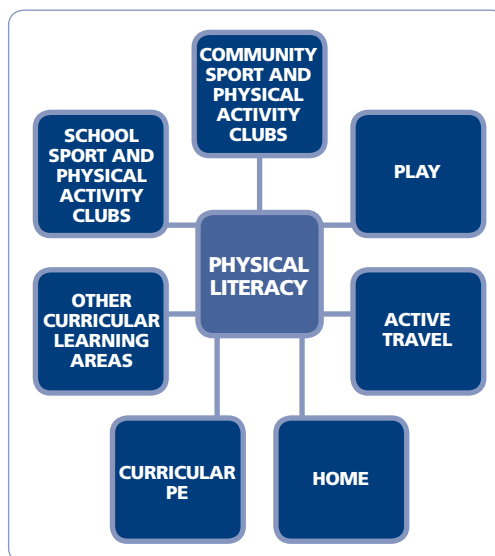
2.1.3 Physically literate children will be able to perform a range of fundamental movement skills e.g. hop, climb or catch at levels of agility², balance³ and coordination⁴ appropriate to their capabilities. A child’s movement confidence will develop as they become more competent in performing these skills.

2.1.4 Physical literacy is essential for children’s:

- Long-term health and well-being; and
- Lifelong Involvement in sport and physical activity⁵.

2.1.5 Physical literacy needs to be actively developed through a range of appropriate opportunities as it is unlikely to occur naturally as part of normal growth:

Diagram 1: Opportunities for developing physical literacy



2.1.6 Diagram 1 recognises that the development of physical literacy is not confined to one particular setting or indeed the responsibility of one particular provider. A range of individuals and organisations are required to:

- Encourage children to participate in all of these different opportunities in order for them to achieve their full potential; and
- Create and sustain a range of different opportunities for developing physical literacy.

2.2 DEVELOPING PHYSICAL LITERACY THROUGH PE

2.2.1 One of the main opportunities for developing physical literacy is through sustained participation in PE:

“The aim of Physical Education is to develop physical competence so

that all children are able to move efficiently, effectively and safely and understand what they are doing ... the outcome, physical literacy, along with numeracy and literacy, is the essential basis for learners to access the whole range of competencies and experiences as they begin their journey to become independent, confident and responsible citizens.” Association for Physical Education (2009)⁶

2.2.2 The statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum⁷ from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4 provides a balanced and broadly based curriculum that:

- Promotes the spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby of society; and
- Prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life by equipping them with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.

2.2.3 In order to meet their statutory requirements, schools must provide learning opportunities in relation to six Areas of Learning. PE, as one of the six Areas of Learning, focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding through play and a range of activities. The enactment of the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 provides every child with a statutory minimum entitlement to all areas of the curriculum, including PE.

¹ Sport Matters: NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-19, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), page 9.

² Agility is the movement of the body at speed when it is both balanced and coordinated, An Introduction to the Fundamentals of Movement, Sports Coach UK, 2009, P32.

³ Balance is a state in which a body or object remains reasonably steady and stable, An Introduction to the Fundamentals of Movement, Sports Coach UK, 2009, P32.

⁴ Coordination is the skilful and balanced sequencing of the body and its segments to produce movement of the body and generate force, An Introduction to the Fundamentals of Movement, Sports Coach UK, 2009, P32.

⁵ Lifelong Involvement In Sport and Physical Activity (LISPA) theoretical framework for sports development.

⁶ Professor Talbot M, Valedictory reflections on politicians, bureaucrats and experts, PE Matters, Association for Physical Education (AfPE), 2009, Vol. 4, No 4, Page 8.

⁷ The Northern Ireland Curriculum, Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), 2007.

2.2.4 Sport Matters recommends that government pursue a target for 2 hours of curricular PE and sport per week. This will form part of an overall 4 hour offer:

4 HOUR OFFER



2.2.5 Sport Matters further recommends establishing a baseline for the number of children participating in a minimum of two hours quality PE a week as this will assist in strengthening the link between research and policy, and provide the evidence-base to inform subsequent investment programmes.

2.3 CURRENT BASELINES/RESEARCH

2.3.1 Primary

An evaluation⁸ commissioned by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and conducted by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in December 2008 involved primary aged children and produced the following results:

- 50% of the children reported they had spent about 1 hour in PE per week;
- 24% claimed they spent about 2 hours in PE per week; and
- 14% responded they spent 3 or more hours in PE per week.

2.3.2 This evaluation involved only 11 primary schools and children aged 9-10 and it is therefore not representative of all primary schools in NI. The need to establish a more comprehensive baseline was identified.

2.3.3 Sport Northern Ireland therefore conducted a Primary School PE Survey⁹ in May 2009 which produced the following results¹⁰:

OVERALL AVERAGES (TIME, PERCENTAGE, RANGE AND TREND)

Overall time

- The overall average time allocated to curricular PE in primary schools in Northern Ireland (NI) during the academic year 2008 - 2009 was 89 minutes;

Overall percentage

- 17% of the primary schools that took part in the survey delivered the recommended 2 hours of PE or more - the average time for these 71 schools was 137 minutes;

Overall range

- On the basis of the reported data, there appears to be significant equality of opportunity issues given the range in average time spent on PE reported by schools. The lowest school average time spent on PE was 34 minutes and the highest school average was 240 minutes; and

Overall trend

- Overall, the length of time decreased from years 1-3 and then increased from years 4-7.

SCHOOL STATUS (MANAGEMENT)

- Integrated schools had the highest overall average time of PE (94 minutes). There was very little difference (2 minutes) between the amount of PE delivered in controlled schools (88 minutes) compared to maintained schools (90 minutes);

SCHOOL SIZE (ENROLMENT FIGURE)

- There was a negative correlation between enrolment figure and time, as the amount of time allocated to PE steadily decreased as enrolment figures increased;
- Schools with enrolment figures of less than 100 spent the most time on PE (94 minutes), whereas those with enrolment figures greater than 700 spent the least amount of time (59 minutes); and
- 45% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had enrolment figures of less than 100 pupils.

SCHOOL LOCATION (ELB, COUNCIL AREA AND URBAN/RURAL)

ELB

- Schools in the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) and South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) allocated the most time to PE (91 minutes) and schools residing in the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) allocated the least time to PE (84 minutes); and

Council area

- Schools residing in Magherafelt Council area achieved the most amount of PE time (111 minutes) and schools in Limavady Council area achieved the least (73 minutes); and

Urban/rural

- Schools in rural locations delivered more PE (93 minutes) than urban schools (85 minutes); and
- 68% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target resided in rural locations.

⁸ "An evaluation of the contexts in which children and young people engage in sport and physical recreation, the extent of their engagement and their attitudes to sport and physical recreation", Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), June 2009, P2.

⁹ All 873 primary schools listed by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) were asked to complete a postal and/or online questionnaire. A total of 419 responses were received – 413 by post and 6 online, representing a return rate of 48%.

¹⁰ A Baseline Survey of Timetabled PE in Primary Schools in Northern Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland, 2009.

2.3.4 Post-primary

The Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey¹¹ (YPBAS) of 2007 was carried out in a representative sample of 62 post-primary schools across NI. Overall, 3,463 pupils (Years 8-12 inclusive) participated in the sport module of the survey.

2.3.5 A secondary analysis of the data by Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure' (DCAL) Statistics and Research Branch published in September 2009 highlighted the following results for the post-primary sector:

- 51% of respondents reported that they spent 2 hours or more per week doing PE/games;
- 45% spent up to 2 hours doing PE/games; and
- 3% did not spend any time doing PE/games at school.

2.3.6 In order to gather additional data on the average time spent on curricular PE, and in line with the recommendations made by Sport Matters, Sport Northern Ireland conducted a survey to ascertain the level of time-tabled curricular PE in the post-primary sector. Note that some figures presented may have been rounded up or down for the purposes of this report.

¹¹ Conducted by Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Branch (NISRA) on behalf of a range of government departments including Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

¹² A breakdown of the 253 schools is provided in Figures 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A and 7A.

¹³ This survey investigated the amount of curricular time allocated to PE, and did not assess the quality of the PE experiences, measure the amount of time the

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sport Northern Ireland, with assistance from:

- Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA);
- Inter-Board Panel for PE and School Sport;
- Department of Education for Northern Ireland's (DENI) Statistics and Research Branch; and
- DCAL's Statistics and Research Branch,

Devised a questionnaire (Appendix I) that would help establish a baseline for the amount of time-tabled PE in post primary schools in Northern Ireland during the 2009/10 academic year. In June 2010, all 253 post primary schools¹², including special schools, listed by DENI, were invited to complete an online or a postal survey.

3.2 The questionnaire asked schools to record how much time¹³ was devoted to curricular PE¹⁴ per week within each year group 8-14. Schools were advised that the following activities should not be included:

- Break/lunch-time initiatives;
- Extra-curricular sport and physical activity; and
- Time allocated for the teaching of PE to GCSE, AS or A-Level.

3.3 To encourage honest and accurate reporting schools were assured that all responses would be treated in confidence and reported anonymously; for this reason respondents were not requested to provide details of the school name. The following information was also requested:

- School status - management;
- School status – sex of pupils;
- School size – enrolment figure;
- Location – Education and Library Board (ELB);
- Location – council area;
- Location – urban/rural; and
- Location – social need/free schools meals¹⁵.

3.4 A voucher for sports equipment provided an incentive for schools to return completed questionnaires. Schools were given the option to return a separate form listing their school details with the completed questionnaire if they wished to be entered for the voucher competition. The separate forms were detached immediately from the completed questionnaires when received to ensure confidentiality assurances were adhered to.

3.5 A total of 136 responses¹⁶ were returned – 22 online and 114 by post. This represents a return rate of 54%. Data was then electronically scanned and entered into a database for analysis.

children were physically active or how the reported times were allocated according to the 5 different activity areas – namely Games, Athletics, Gymnastics, Dance and Swimming.

¹⁴ Curricular PE is defined as the planned teaching and learning programme during curricular time that meets the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum for Physical Education.

¹⁵ Local and international research has confirmed that entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM) is a robust indicator of social disadvantage among school pupils and is closely correlated with poor educational achievement. DENI has therefore used FSM as the means of distributing TSN resources: http://www.deni.gov.uk/april_2001_consultation_targeting_social_need_factor.pdf

¹⁶ A breakdown of the 136 responses is provided in Figures 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A and 7A.

¹⁷ Fahey T, Delaney L and Gannon B, School Children and Sport in Ireland, The Economic and Social Research Institute, 2005, page 82.

¹⁸ Across Years 1-13, pupils spent an average 115 minutes taking part in PE a week during 2008-09, PE and Sport Survey 2008-9, Department for Children,

4. FINDINGS

The key findings generated from data analysis are detailed in the tables and comments below:

4.1 OVERALL AVERAGES (TIME, TREND, PERCENTAGE AND RANGE)

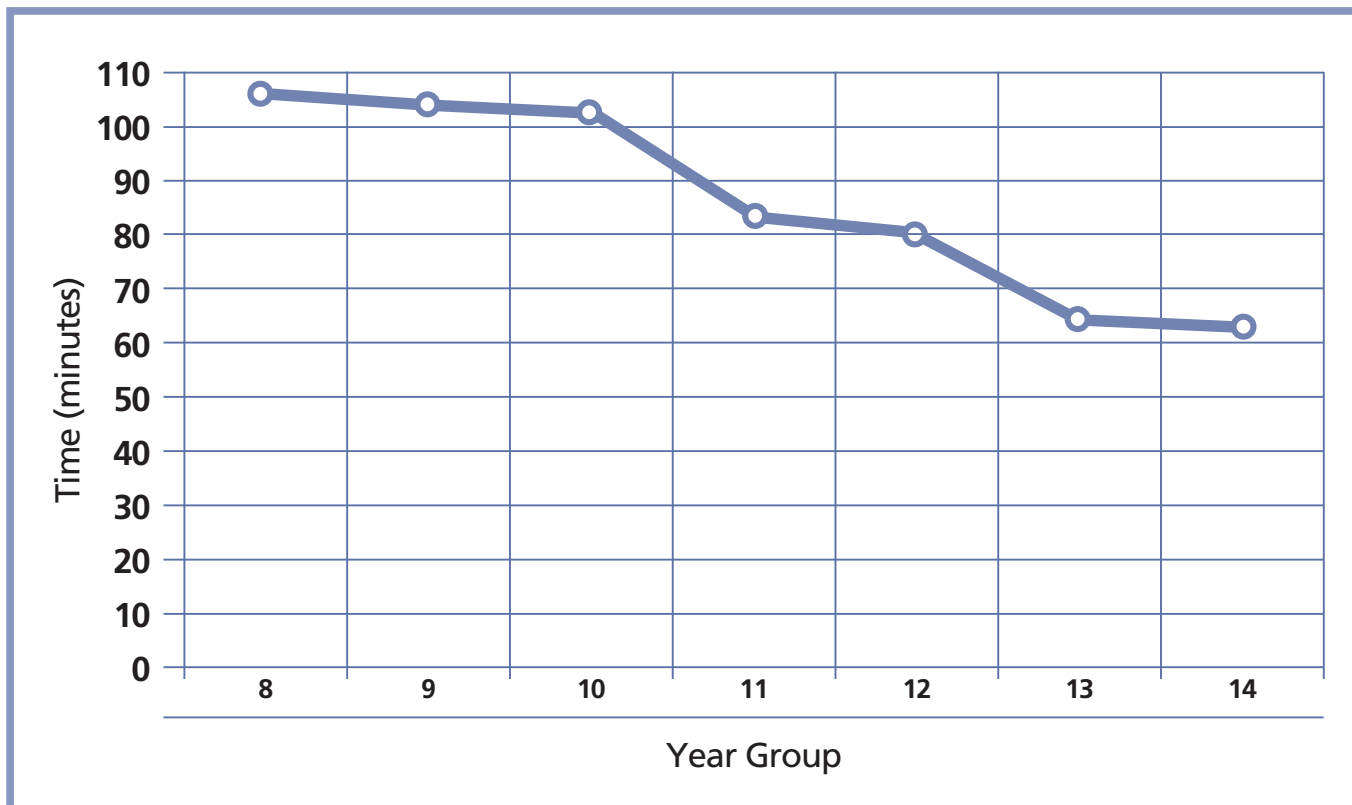
Figures 1A and 1B show that:

- The overall average time spent on curricular PE was 85 minutes;
- Pupils in Year 14 received the least amount of PE (62 minutes) and pupils in Year 8 participated in the most amount of PE (105 minutes); and
- Overall, the length of time decreased from Year 8 to Year 14.

Figure 1A: Average PE time by year group and key stage

Average time (minutes)	Year Group							Overall average	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
	105	103	102	82	80	64	62		85
	Key Stage 3		Key Stage 4		Key Stage 5				
103		81		63					

Figure 1B: Average PE time by year group



Figures 1C and 1D show that:

- 9% of the schools (12 schools) that took part in the survey delivered the recommended 2 hours of PE or more; and
- 91% of the schools (124 schools) that took part in the survey delivered less than the recommended 2 hours of PE.

Figure 1C: Frequency and cumulative frequency of PE time

Time spent on PE	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency
30-39	1	1
40-49	5	6
50-59	6	12
60-69	14	26
70-79	23	49
80-89	28	77
90-99	14	91
100-109	18	109
110-119	15	124
120-129	2	126
130-139	2	128
140-149	4	132
150-159	1	133
160-169	2	135
170-179	0	135
180-189	0	135
190-199	0	135
200-209	0	135
210-219	0	135
220-229	0	135
230-239	0	135
240-249	0	135
250-259	1	136
Total	136	

Figure 1D: Percentage of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target

% of Schools that did achieve the 2 hour target	% of Schools that did not achieve the 2 hour target
9%	91%

- Figure 1E shows that 42% of pupils in Year 8 were offered the recommended 2 hours of PE, compared to 3% of pupils in Year 13.

Figure 1E: Number and percentage of schools that did achieve the 2 hour target by year group

Year Group	Number of Schools	% of Schools
8	57	42
9	54	40
10	50	37
11	13	10
12	12	9
13	4	3
14	6	4.5

- Figure 1F shows that the lowest overall school average was 38 minutes and the highest overall school average was 252 minutes.

Figure 1E: Number and percentage of schools that did achieve the 2 hour target by year group

Time (minutes)	Overall School Average
Lowest	38
Highest	252
Difference	214

- Figure 1G shows that the biggest range in PE time per year group was in Year 12 – the lowest reported time in Year 12 was 0 and the highest reported time in year 12 was 280 minutes.

Figure 1G: Range of average PE time by year group

Time (minutes)	School Average	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Lowest	38	45	45	45	30	0	0	0
Highest	252	210	280	280	210	280	270	270
Difference	214	165	235	235	180	280	270	270

4.2 SCHOOL STATUS (MANAGEMENT)

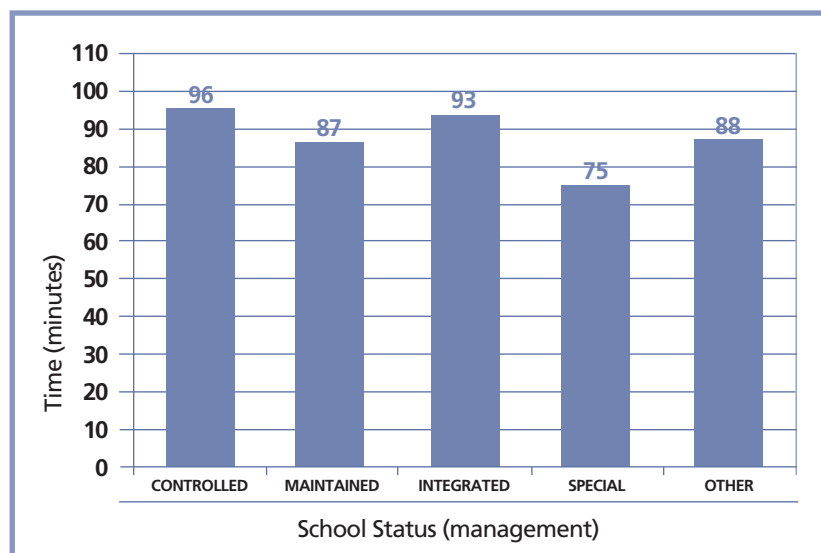
Figures 2A, 2B and 2C show that:

- Based upon known school status controlled schools had the highest overall average of PE (96 minutes) and special schools had the lowest (75 minutes); and
- As noted in paragraph 4.1, the length of time decreased from Years 8-14, with the exception of integrated schools where the length of time increased in Year 13 and then decreased in Year 14.

Figure 2A: Average PE time by school status (management)

School Status	School Average								Sample Size		Total in Northern Ireland	
	Average PE Time by Year Group							Overall Average			Number of Respondents	% of all responses
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14					
Controlled	117	116	113	81	79	63	62	96	52	38%	74	29.2
Maintained	99	96	95	82	81	61	57	87	38	28%	73	28.9
Integrated	106	112	112	76	73	93	70	93	8	6%	20	7.9
Special	74	77	78	80	83	50	59	75	14	10%	52	20.6
Other	106	101	100	86	83	72	69	88	24	18%	34	13.4
Total									136	100%	253	100

Figure 2B: Overall average PE time by school status (management)



- Figure 2C shows that 50% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had controlled status.

Figure 2C: Number and percentage of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target by school status (management)

School Status	Met 2 Hour Target		Did not meet 2 Hour Target	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools
Controlled	6	50	46	37.1
Integrated	0	0	8	6.5
Maintained	3	25	35	28.2
Special	1	8	13	10.5
Other	2	17	22	17.7
Total	12	100	124	100

4.3 SCHOOL STATUS (SEX OF PUPILS)

Figures 3A, 3B and 3C show that:

- Based upon reported data, co-educational schools had the highest overall average of PE (90 minutes); and
- As noted in paragraph 4.1, generally the length of time decreased from Years 8-14. However in single-sex girls’ schools the length of time increased between Years 8-9. There is then a 21% decrease between Years 10-11, and a 25% decrease between Years 12-13.
- In single-sex boys’ schools the length of time remained static in Years 9-11. There is then a 44% decrease between Years 12-13.

Figure 3A: Average PE time by School Status (sex of pupils)

School Status	Year							Overall Average	Sample Size		Total in Northern Ireland	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		Number of Respondents	% of all responses	Number of Schools	% of Schools
Single-Sex (Boys)	101	95	95	95	94	53	46	85	13	9.5	25	9.9
Single-Sex (Girls)	99	102	100	79	83	62	58	88	16	11.8	28	11.1
Co-Educational	106	105	103	80	78	67	67	90	107	78.7	200	79
Total									136	100%	253	100

Figure 3B: Overall average PE time by school status (sex of pupils)

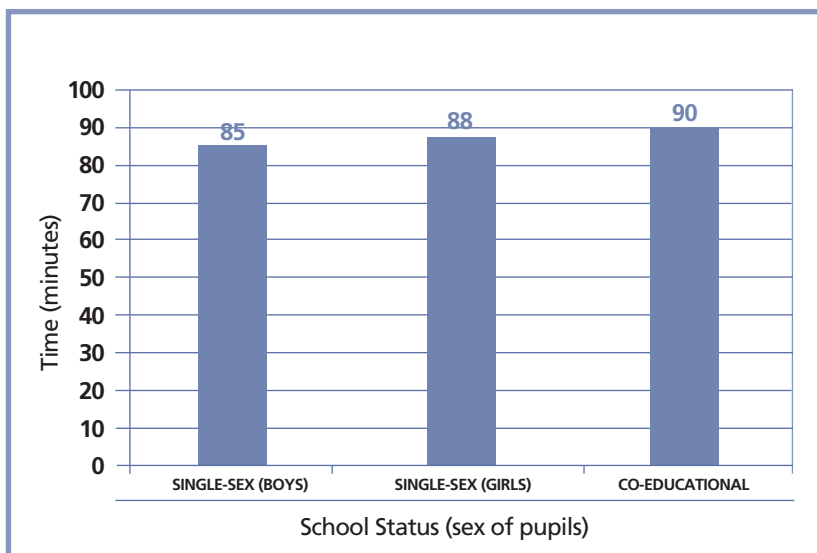
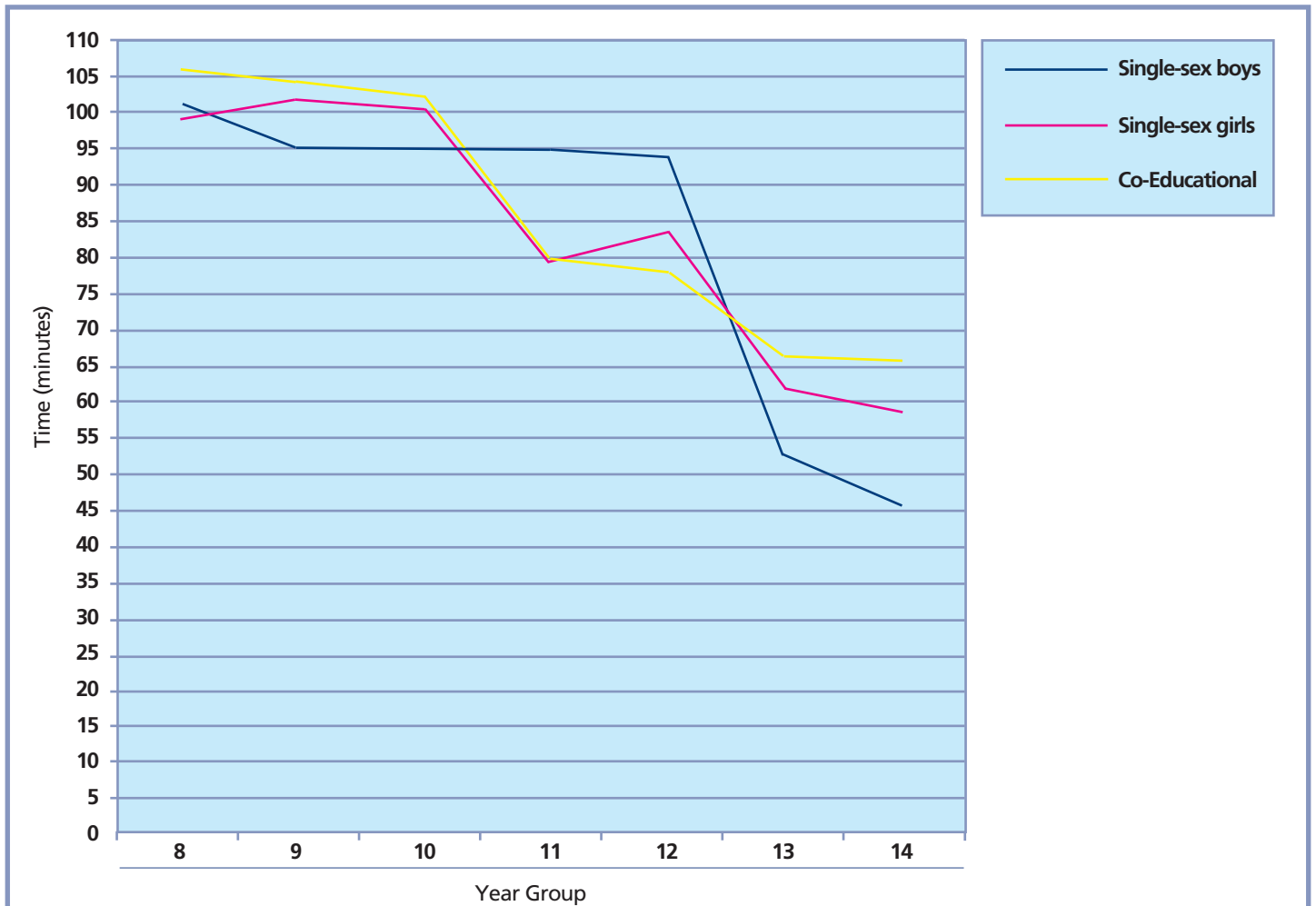


Figure 3C: Average PE time per year group by school status (sex of pupils)



- Figure 3D shows that 67% of the schools that achieved the 2 hour target are co-educational schools.

Figure 3D: Number and percentage of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target by status (sex of pupils)

Sex of Pupils	Did Achieve 2 Hour Target		Did not achieve 2 Hour Target	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools
Co-Educational	8	67	99	80
Single-sex Boys	3	25	10	8
Single-sex Girls	1	8	15	12
Total	12	100	124	100

4.4 SCHOOL SIZE (ENROLMENT FIGURE)

Figures 4A, 4B and 4C show:

- There does not appear to be any correlation between enrolment figure and the amount of time allocated to curricular PE; and
- Schools with the lowest and highest enrolment figures allocated the least amount of time (60 minutes and 75 minutes respectively).

Figure 4A: Average PE time by school size (enrolment figure)

Year Group									Sample Size		Total in Northern Ireland	
Enrolment Figure	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Overall Average	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents	Number of Schools	% of Schools
<100	54	63	68	58	60	54	59	60	8	6	32	12.6
101-200	99	99	99	92	86	40	60	92	12	8.5	14	5.5
201-300	106	101	101	69	67	60	60	91	8	6	17	6.7
301-400	125	116	108	74	71	74	74	97	12	8.5	18	7.1
401-500	120	123	123	90	96	96	94	111	13	10	27	10.6
501-600	99	95	91	76	71	48	45	77	9	7	25	9.8
601-700	108	106	104	82	79	75	75	91	16	12	21	8.3
701-800	108	108	105	79	76	61	58	88	21	15	29	11.5
801-900	118	119	116	88	87	65	61	94	11	8	21	8.3
901-1000	101	92	92	92	86	67	59	85	10	7	13	5.1
1001-1100	97	97	96	89	93	98	98	94	8	6	14	5.5
1101+	93	96	96	84	84	46	30	75	8	6	22	8.6
Total									136	100	253	100

Figure 4B: Overall average PE time by school size (enrolment figure)

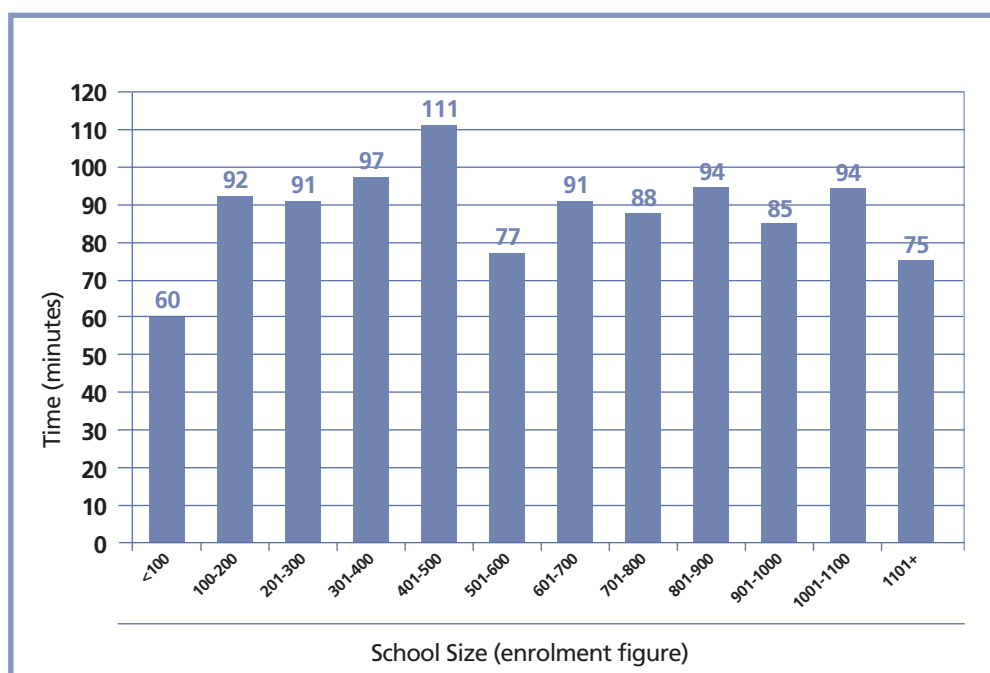
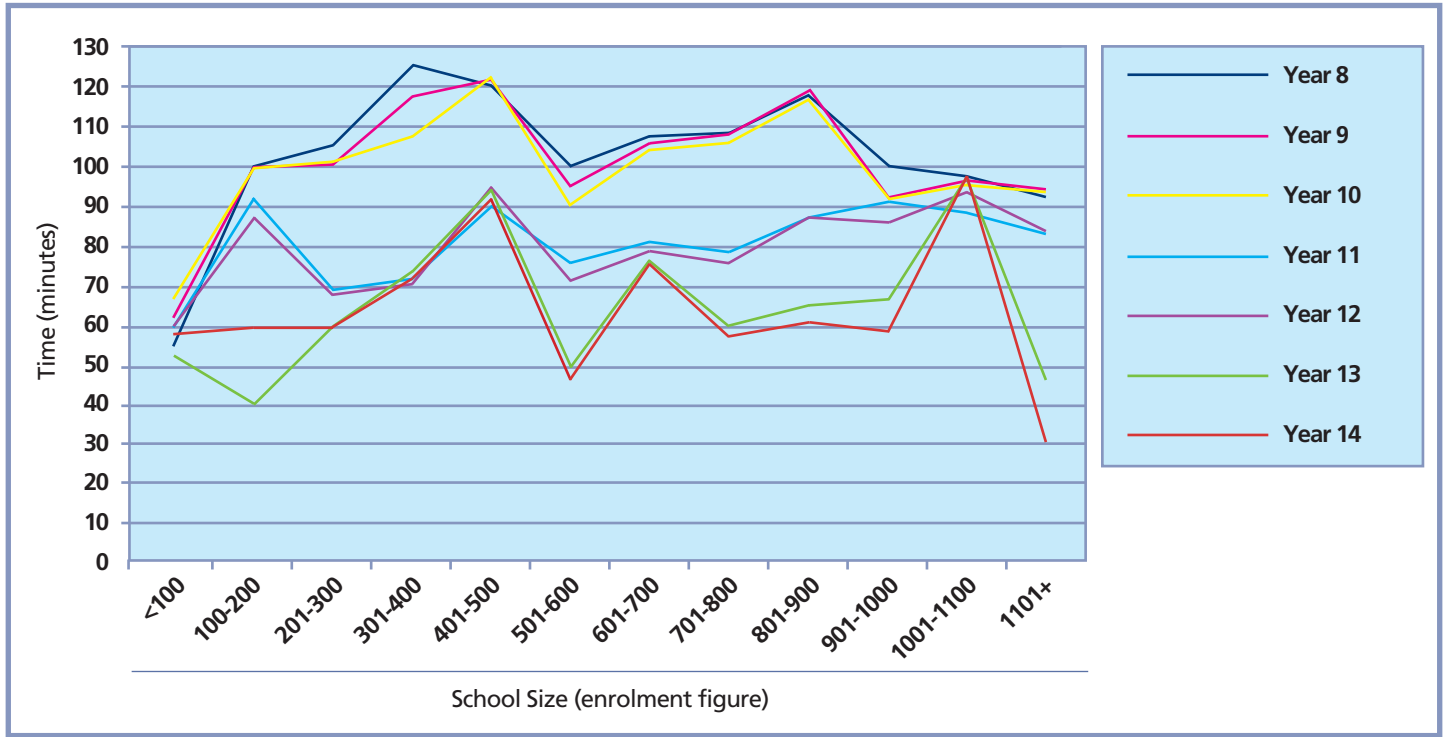


Figure 4C: Average PE time per year group by school size (enrolment figure)



- Figure 4D shows that 25% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had enrolment figures of 401-500.

Figure 4D: Number of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target by school size

School Size	Met 2 Hour Target		Did not meet 2 Hour Target	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools
<100	0	0	8	6.5
101-200	1	8.32	11	8.9
201-300	0	0	8	6.5
301-400	2	16.7	10	8
401-500	3	25	10	8
501-600	0	0	9	7.3
601-700	1	8.32	15	12.1
701-800	1	8.32	20	16.1
801-900	2	16.7	9	7.3
901-1000	1	8.32	9	7.3
1001-1100	1	8.32	7	5.5
1101+	0	0	8	6.5
Total	12	100	124	100

4.5 LOCATION - EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD (ELB)

Figures 5A, 5B and 5C show that:

- Schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) allocated the most time to PE (95 minutes) and schools residing in the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) allocated the least time to PE (85 minutes);
- There is a 34% decrease between Years 12-13 in schools in the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB);
- There is a 26% decrease between Years 10-11 in schools in the NEELB.

Table 5A: Average PE time by ELB

ELB	Year Group							Overall Average	Sample Size		Total in Northern Ireland	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		Number of Respondents	% of all responses	Number of Schools	% of Schools
BELB	107	108	107	89	97	64	58	92	20	15%	41	16.2
NEELB	115	110	109	81	79	70	75	95	35	26%	60	23.7
SEELB	106	103	97	78	73	66	59	87	26	19%	57	22.5
SELB	93	94	94	80	78	61	56	85	31	23%	44	17.4
WELB	100	100	100	83	80	60	57	87	24	17%	51	20.2
Total									136	100%	253	100

Figure 5B: Overall average PE time by ELB

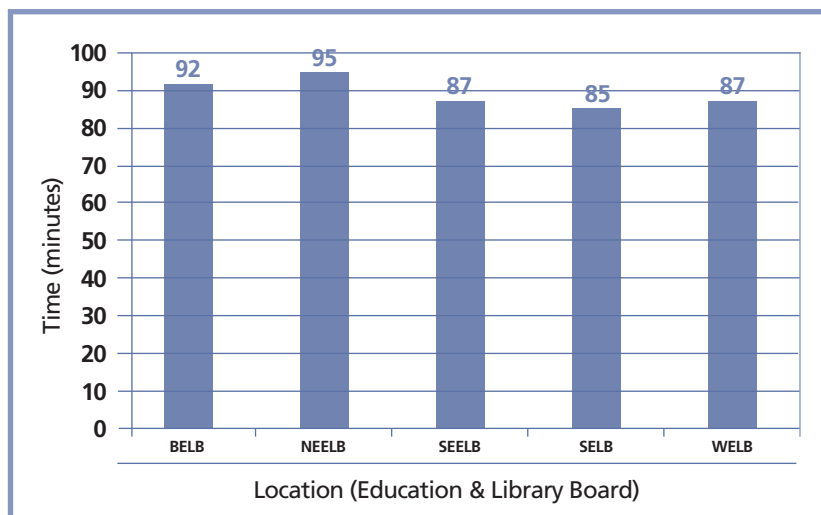
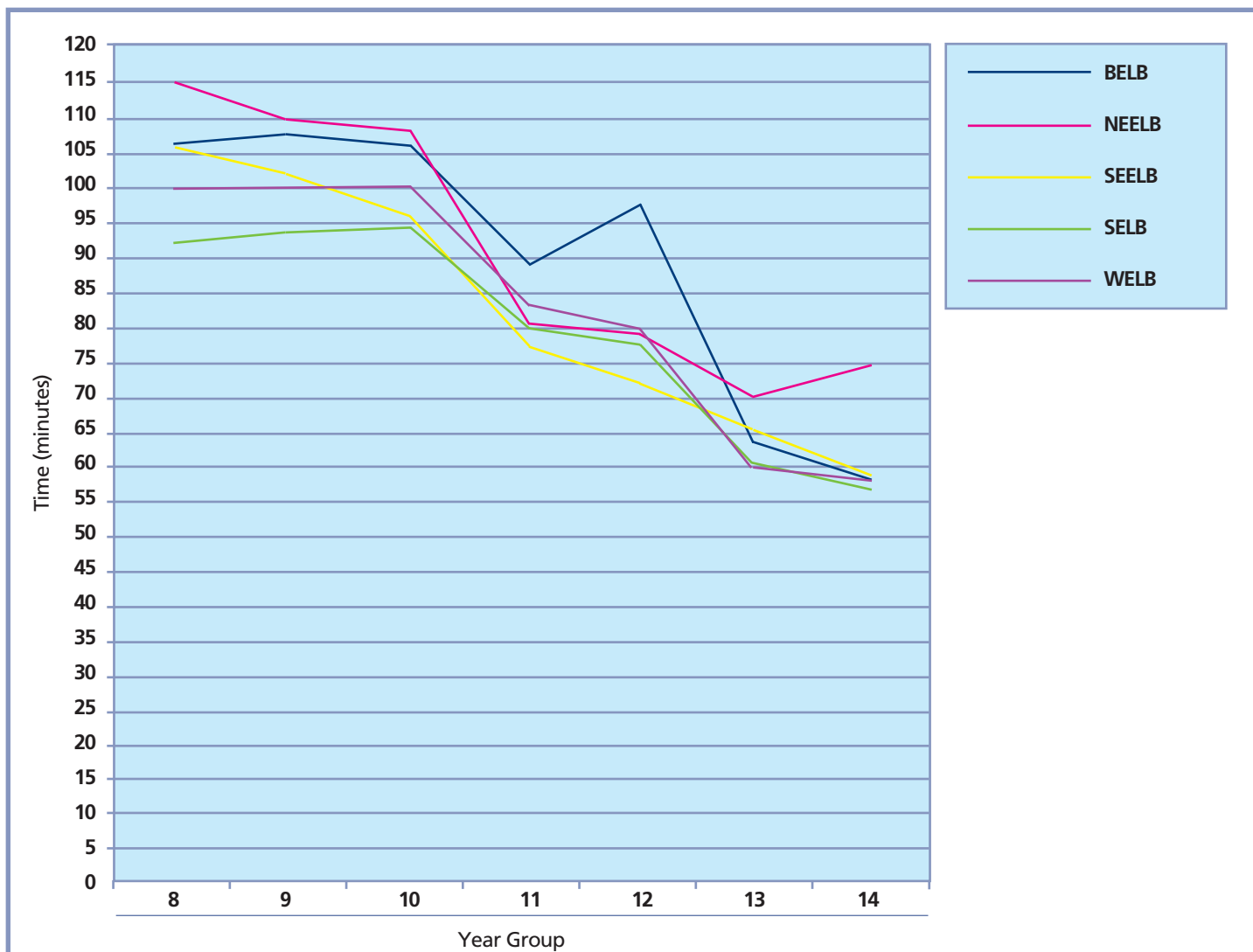


Figure 5C: Average PE time per year group by ELB



• Figure 5D shows that 42% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target resided in the NEELB.

Figure 5D: Number and percentage of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target by ELB

School Status	Did achieve 2 Hour Target		Did not achieve 2 Hour Target	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools
BELB	3	25	17	14
SEELB	1	8	25	20
SELB	3	25	28	23
WELB	0	0	24	19
NEELB	5	42	30	24
Total	12	100	124	100

4.6 LOCATION – COUNCIL AREA

Figure 6A shows that:

- Schools residing in Ballymoney Council area achieved the most amount of PE time (115 minutes) and schools in Newry and Mourne Council area achieved the least (72 minutes).

Figure 6A: Average PE time by council area

Council Area	Overall Average in minutes	Sample Size		Total in Northern Ireland	
		Number of Respondents	% of Respondents	Number of Schools	% of Schools
Antrim	104	2	1.5	5	2
Ards	95	3	2.2	7	2.8
Armagh	82	6	4.4	9	3.6
Ballymena	99	7	5.1	9	3.6
Ballymoney	115	3	2.2	3	1.2
Banbridge	114	3	2.2	7	2.8
Belfast	88	18	13.2	41	16.2
Carrickfergus	85	3	2.2	4	1.6
Castlereagh	98	8	5.9	7	2.7
Coleraine	101	7	5.1	10	3.9
Cookstown	-	0	0	2	0.8
Craigavon	95	8	5.9	13	5.1
Derry	90	5	3.7	15	5.9
Down	81	5	3.7	13	5.1
Dungannon	80	9	6.7	11	4.3
Fermanagh	83	7	5.1	16	6.3
Larne	78	3	2.2	5	2
Limavady	80	2	1.5	5	2
Lisburn	90	7	5.1	10	3.9
Magherafelt	83	4	3	9	3.6
Moyle	97	3	2.2	4	1.6
Newry and Mourne	72	7	5.1	15	5.9
Newtownabbey	90	3	2.2	11	4.3
North Down	80	3	2.2	7	2.8
Omagh	93	5	3.7	9	3.6
Strabane	88	5	3.7	6	2.4
Total		136	100	253	100

- Figure 6B shows that the 12 schools (9%) that achieved the 2 hour target resided within 8 of the 26 council areas.

Figure 6B: Number and percentage of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target by council area

Council Area	Did achieve 2 Hour Target		Did not achieve 2 Hour Target	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools
Antrim	0	0	2	1.6
Ards	0	0	3	2.4
Armagh	0	0	6	4.9
Ballymena	1	8.5	6	4.9
Ballymoney	2	16.5	1	0.8
Banbridge	1	8.5	2	1.6
Belfast	2	16.5	16	12.9
Carrickfergus	0	0	3	2.4
Castlereagh	1	8.5	7	5.7
Coleraine	2	16.5	5	4
Cookstown	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	2	16.5	6	4.9
Derry	0	0	5	4
Down	0	0	5	4
Dungannon	0	0	9	7.2
Fermanagh	0	0	7	5.7
Larne	0	0	3	2.4
Limavady	0	0	2	1.6
Lisburn	0	0	7	5.7
Magherafelt	0	0	4	3.2
Moyle	0	0	3	2.4
Newry and Mourne	0	0	7	5.7
Newtownabbey	0	0	3	2.4
North Down	1	8.5	2	1.6
Omagh	0	0	5	4
Strabane	0	0	5	4
Total	12	100	124	100

4.7 LOCATION – URBAN/RURAL

Figures 7A, 7B and 7C show that:

- The overall average PE time is higher in a rural location (94 minutes) than an urban location (87 minutes);
- There is a 24% decrease between Years 10-11 in rural schools; and
- There is an 17% decrease between Years 10-11 and a 26% decrease between Years 12 -13 in urban schools.

Figure 7A: Average PE time by urban/rural location

School Location (Urban/Rural)	Year Group							Overall Average (Minutes)	Sample Size		Total in Northern Ireland	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		Number of Respondents	% of all Respondents	Number of Schools	% of Schools
Rural	108	107	106	81	78	78	77	94	47	34.5	50	19.8
Urban	103	101	99	82	81	60	58	87	89	65.5	203	80.2
Total									136	100	253	100

Figure 7B: Overall Average PE time by urban/rural location

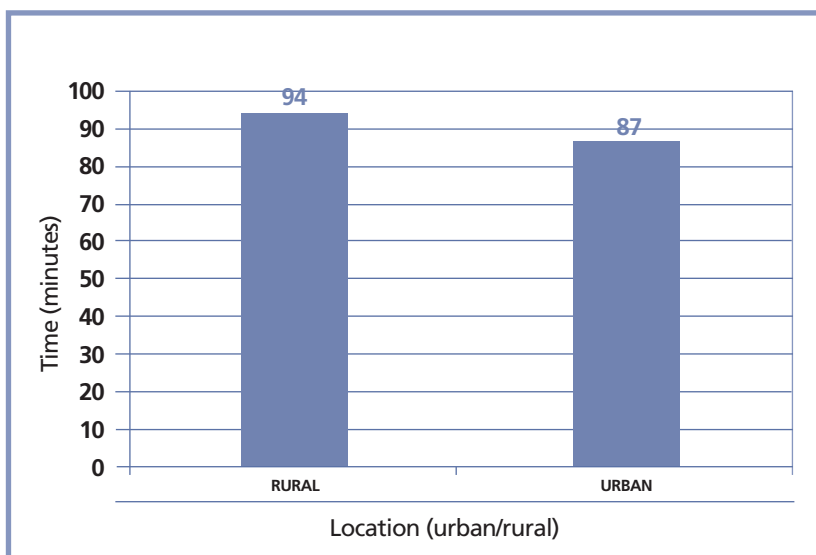
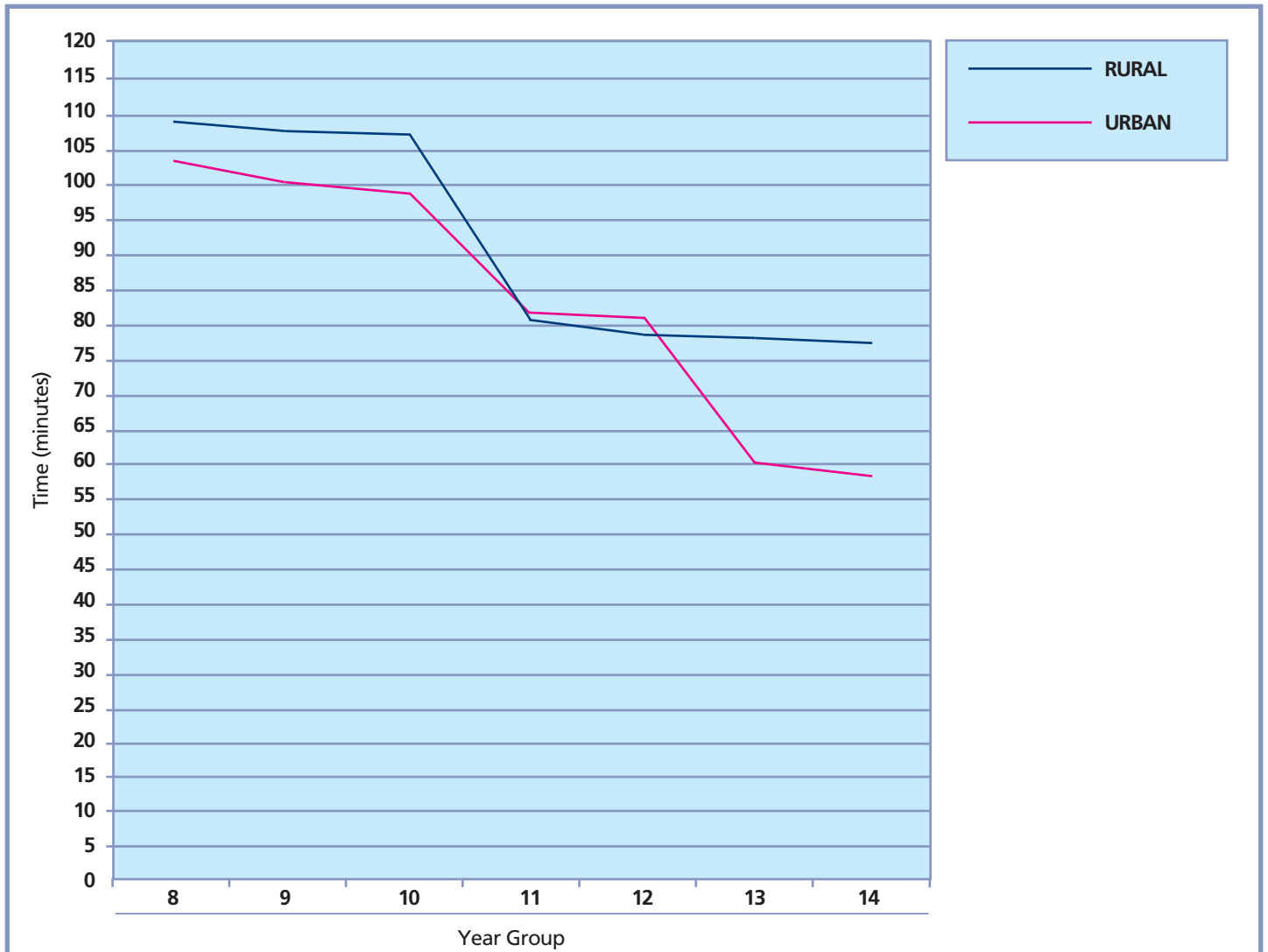


Figure 7C: Average PE time per year group on PE by urban/rural location



- Figure 7D shows that 58% of the schools who delivered the 2 hour target were in an urban location.

Figure 7D: Number and percentage of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target by urban/rural location

School Status	Did achieve 2 Hour Target		Did not achieve 2 Hour Target	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools
Rural	5	42	42	34
Urban	7	58	82	66
Total	12	100	124	100

4.8 LOCATION – SOCIAL NEED/FREE SCHOOL MEALS

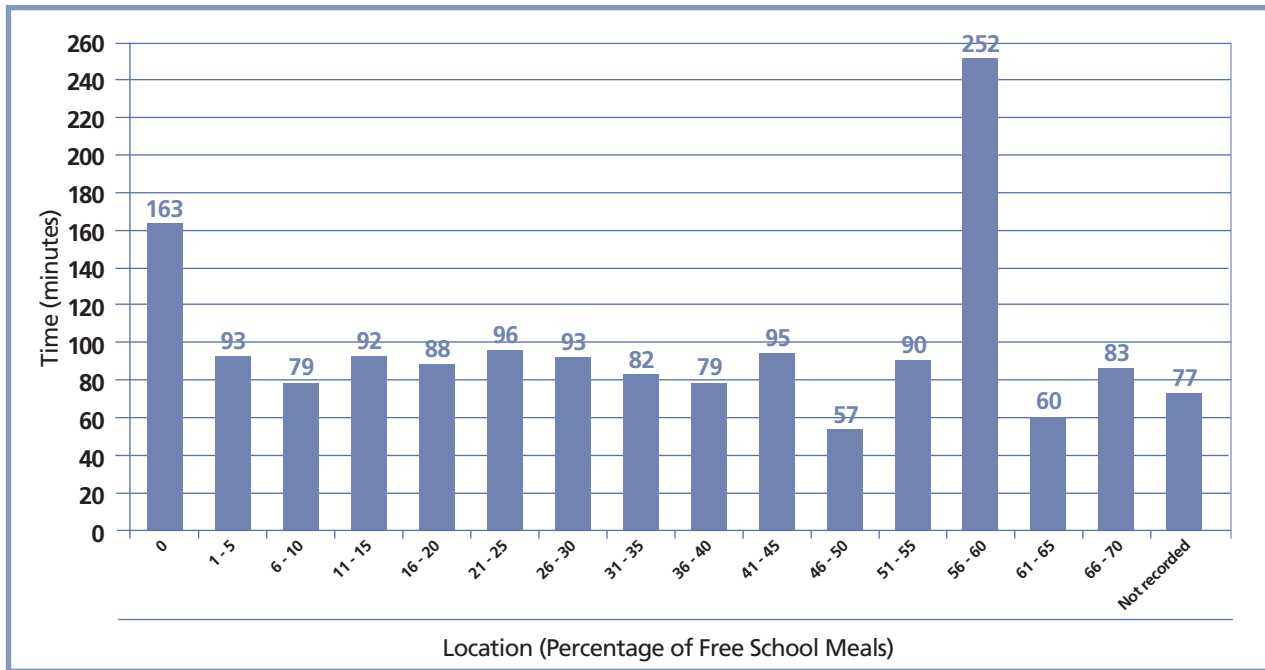
Figures 8A and 8B show that:

- There does not appear to be any correlation between the number or percentage of free school meals and the average PE time per year group.

Figure 8A: Average time spent per year group on PE by % of free school meals

% of Pupils Receiving Free School Meals	Year Group							Overall Average in minutes	Sample Size		Total in Northern Ireland	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		Number of Respondents	% of all responses	Number of Schools	% of Schools
0	180	180	180	180	180	120	120	163	1	0.75	0	0.0
1 - 5	114	108	107	92	86	73	75	93	23	17	34	13.4
6 - 10	94	90	88	73	73	74	71	79	17	12.5	30	11.9
11 - 15	112	112	110	72	72	65	54	92	25	18	34	13.4
16 - 20	98	102	99	75	74	46	46	88	15	11	27	10.6
21 - 25	112	108	105	83	80	40	67	96	12	9	29	11.5
26 - 30	110	104	101	93	91	54	49	93	10	7.5	21	8.3
31 - 35	94	89	88	77	73	71	71	82	9	6.5	24	9.5
36 - 40	92	92	92	68	73	43	30	79	8	6	19	7.5
41 - 45	119	117	116	92	79	68	55	95	4	3	12	4.7
46 - 50	60	60	75	75	60	0	0	57	2	1.5	8	3.2
51 - 55	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	1	0.75	2	0.8
56 - 60	210	280	280	210	280	-	-	252	1	0.75	4	1.6
61 - 65	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	1	0.75	4	1.6
66 - 70	100	100	100	70	70	60	60	83	2	1.5	2	0.8
Not recorded	83	86	86	89	89	45	45	77	5	3.5	3	1.2
	Total								136	100	253	100

Figure 8B: Overall average PE time by % of free school meals



- Figure 8C shows that 25% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had 21% - 25% of pupils receiving free school meals.

Figure 8C: Number and percentage of schools that did/did not achieve the 2 hour target by free school meals

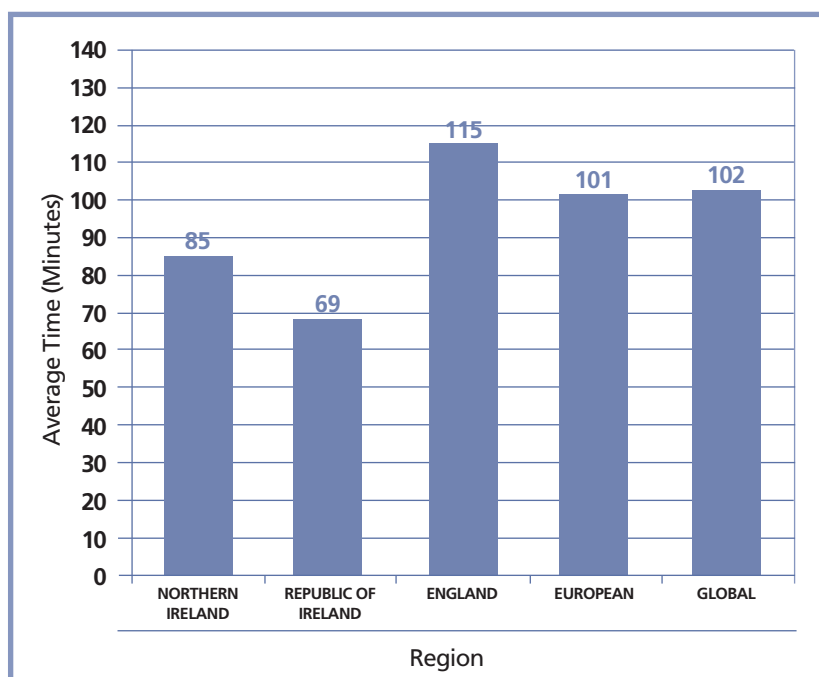
% of Pupils Receiving Free School Meals	Met 2 Hour Target		Did not meet 2 Hour Target	
	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Schools	% of Schools
0	1	8.4	0	0
1 - 5	2	16.5	21	17
6 - 10	0	0	17	13.5
11 - 15	2	16.5	23	18.5
16 - 20	0	0	15	12
21 - 25	3	25	9	7.3
26 - 30	1	8.4	9	7.3
31 - 35	0	0	9	7.3
36 - 40	1	8.4	7	6
41 - 45	1	8.4	3	2.5
46 - 50	0	0	2	1.5
51 - 55	0	0	1	0.8
56 - 60	1	8.4	0	0
61 - 65	0	0	1	0.8
66 - 70	0	0	2	1.5
Not recorded	0	0	5	4
Total	12	100	124	100

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 OVERALL TIME

5.1.1 The survey revealed that the overall average time allocated to curricular PE in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland was 85 minutes. Comparisons may be made with a reported average of 69 minutes¹⁷ in the Republic of Ireland, 115 minutes¹⁸ in England, and an estimated global average of 102 minutes and European average of 101 minutes for the post-primary sector¹⁹, presented in Figure 9A below:

Figure 9A: Overall average time by region



5.1.2 A global decline in the amount of curricular time allocated to PE in post-primary schools continues to be reported in numerous studies²⁰. A European average of 117 minutes in post-primary schools was reported in 2000 thus indicating a perceived reduction in curricular time allocation in the period 2000-07²¹. A similar trend is apparent in the primary sector – an estimated European average of 121 minutes in primary schools, reported in 2000, decreased to 109 minutes in 2007²².

Schools and Families (DCSF), 2009, page 1.

¹⁹ Hardman, K, Situation and sustainability of PE in schools: a global perspective, University of Worcester, UK, 2008, page 7.

²⁰ Hardman K and Marshall J, Update on the state and status of PE worldwide, University of Worcester, 2005, page 7.

²¹ Hardman, K, Situation and sustainability of PE in schools: a global perspective, University of Worcester, UK, 2008, page 7.

²² Hardman, K, Situation and sustainability of PE in schools: a global perspective, University of Worcester, UK, 2008, page 7.

²³ A total of 150,192 pupils were enrolled in all post-primary schools, including special schools in Northern Ireland for academic year 2009-2010, DENI Statistics and Research Branch, June 2010.

5.2 OVERALL PERCENTAGE

- 5.2.1** Only 9% of post-primary schools that participated in the survey reported achieving the recommended 2 hours of PE. If a 9% rate is applied to all post-primary schools in Northern Ireland, this suggests that 13,517 pupils received the recommended 2 hours of PE a week and 136,675 pupils did not²³.
- 5.2.2** Year group percentages in post-primary schools in NI can be compared to findings of a report relating to curricular PE provision in England presented in Figure 10A below:

Figure 10A: Comparison of year group percentages in post-primary schools in NI and England

Year Group ²⁴	% of schools delivering at least 2 hours of curricular PE	
	NI	England
8 (age 11/12)	42	89
9 (age 12/13)	40	86
10 (age 13/14)	37	80
11 (age 14/15)	10	46
12 (age 15/16)	9	43
13 (age 16/17)	3	8
14 (age 17/18)	4.5	8

- 5.2.3** The Sport Northern Ireland post-primary PE survey reported an overall average time of 85 minutes and that 9% of post-primary schools achieved the recommended 2 hour target. A previous primary PE survey, undertaken by Sport Northern Ireland in 2009, reported an overall average time of 89 minutes and that 17% of primary schools achieved the recommended 2 hour target.
- 5.2.4** Insufficient provision of PE within the primary school sector has been partially attributed to the fact that PE is normally delivered by general class teachers rather than specialists. Primary teachers often undertake training in the delivery of PE at Initial Teacher Training (ITT) stage or during their Continuing Professional Development however the time allocated is viewed as insufficient²⁵ and the general perception is that primary teachers are poorly equipped to deliver PE²⁶.
- 5.2.5** However similar rationale does not explain the under-provision of PE within the post-primary sector, where curricular PE is usually delivered by PE specialists²⁷.

The indication that generalist primary teachers are delivering more PE than specialist post-primary teachers warrants further research to discern discriminating and mitigating factors.

²⁴ In England, Year 7 is the equivalent to Year 8 in NI; Year 8 is the equivalent to Year 9 in NI, etc.
²⁵ The Association for Physical Education (AfPE) estimates that more than 40% of newly qualified primary teachers begin their careers with only 6 hours or less preparation to teach PE, A Manifesto for a World Class System of PE, 2008, page 2.
²⁶ MacPhail A and Halbert J, 2005, The implementation of a revised physical education syllabus in Ireland; circumstances, rewards and costs, European Physical Education Review, Vol.11, p300.
²⁷ In the Republic of Ireland, curriculum guidelines require that PE be delivered by formally qualified PE teachers in the post-primary sector, but in practice up to 30% of post-primary schools do not have a qualified PE teacher on their staff, A and Halbert J, 2005, The implementation of a revised physical education syllabus in Ireland; circumstances, rewards and costs, European Physical Education Review, Vol.11, p291.
²⁸ The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007.
²⁹ Following the publication of the NI Physical Activity Strategy 1996-2002 in March 2006 by the Health Promotion Agency, the ETI were commissioned by

5.3 OVERALL RANGE

5.3.1 The lowest overall post-primary school average was 38 minutes and the highest post-primary school average was 252 minutes. As noted previously in the Primary PE survey which highlighted a similar difference in range, this finding raises equality of opportunity issues as it indicates that children are offered significantly more or less PE, depending on which school they attend.

5.3.2 Article 7 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 requires “each pupil at the school to be taught the minimum content within that area of learning” and that teaching is “consistent with the minimum content”. Disparities in the range of curricular time devoted to PE between schools, raises the question whether those schools with very low average times are able to deliver the statutory minimum entitlements²⁸ for PE to every pupil in less than the recommended 2 hours.

5.3.3 In response to a finding that fewer than one third of the post-primary schools taking part in a “Physical Education in Schools” report²⁹ allocated 2 hours a week to PE, the ETI commented that “For the majority of schools, the allocation is inadequate to cover fully the programme of study.”³⁰ This fact was further highlighted as one of the areas of concern as these:

“... deficiencies have a direct influence on the quality of the pupils’ learning experiences, their standards of work and knowledge and understanding in PE.” (paragraph 6.2)

Furthermore, to improve the quality of provision and raise standards further the ETI recommended that the following action needed to be prioritised:

- Sufficient time should be allocated to PE each week for all pupils: and
- Enough time should be allocated to all areas of the programme of study to ensure sufficient progression in each area.³¹

5.3.4 A school’s ability and duty³² to effectively promote and assess arrangements for the promotion of health and well-being of pupils may also be compromised in those schools where insufficient curricular time is allocated to PE.

the NI Physical Activity Strategy Implementation Group as per the action plan, to conduct a survey of PE. This would include identifying and disseminating good practice, and encouraging schools to use the additional flexibility in the school timetable to offer at least 2 hours of PE a week.

³⁰ Report on Physical Education in Secondary Schools, Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), Department of Education 1998-99.

³¹ Report on Physical Education in Secondary Schools, Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), Department of Education 1998-99, Priorities For Action, page 13.

³² The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

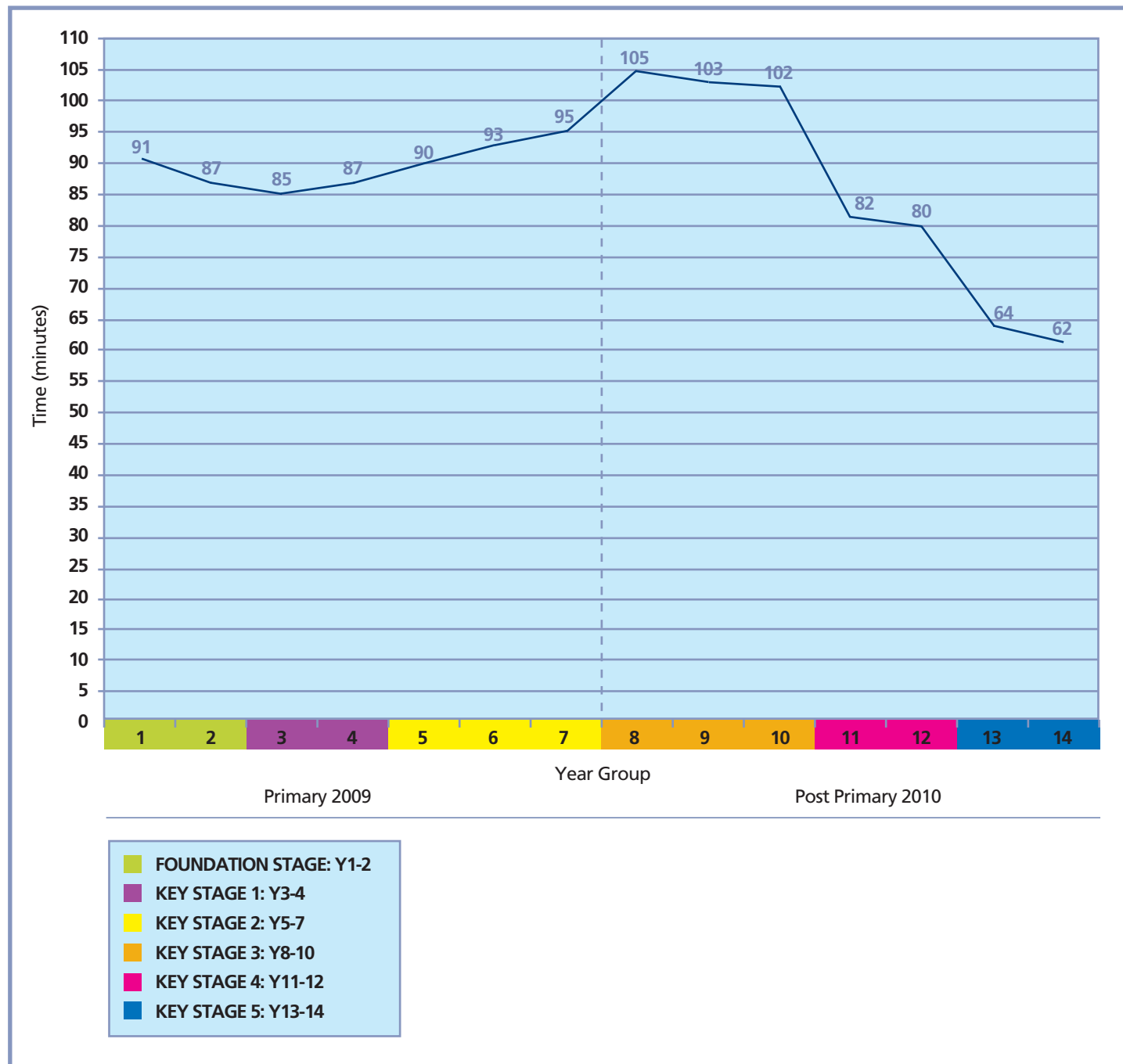
³³ A similar trend was reported in England, PE and Sport Survey 2008-9, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2009, page 14.

³⁴ This can be compared with children and young people in England that are offered 124 minutes when starting their primary education and only 27 minutes

5.4 OVERALL TREND

5.4.1 The length of time allocated to curricular PE decreased from Year 8 to Year 14 in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland³³. The findings of the primary and post-primary survey are presented in Figure 11A below:

Figure 11A: Average PE time by year group – primary/post-primary comparison



when completing their post-primary education – a difference of 97 minutes, PE and Sport Survey 2008-9, Department for Children, Schools and

- 5.4.2** Analysis of Figure 11A indicates that from Year 3 to Year 8 average PE time steadily increases. A 10.5% increase in PE time occurs between the transition period between primary school (Year 7) and post-primary education (Year 8). There is then a 2% decrease between Years 8 and 9, and a 1% decrease between Year 9 and Year 10. However there is a 20% decrease when children go into Year 11 which is repeated when they enter Year 13. Young people commence their first year of GCSE studies in Year 11 and their first year of A-levels in Year 13. These findings may indicate that time allocated to PE is curtailed in pursuit of academic attainment. This suggestion warrants further investigation and validation.
- 5.4.3** It is also noteworthy that children in Northern Ireland³⁴ starting their compulsory education in Year 1 are offered more PE (91 minutes), than young people completing their compulsory education in Year 12 (80 minutes).

Families (DCSF), 2009, page 14.

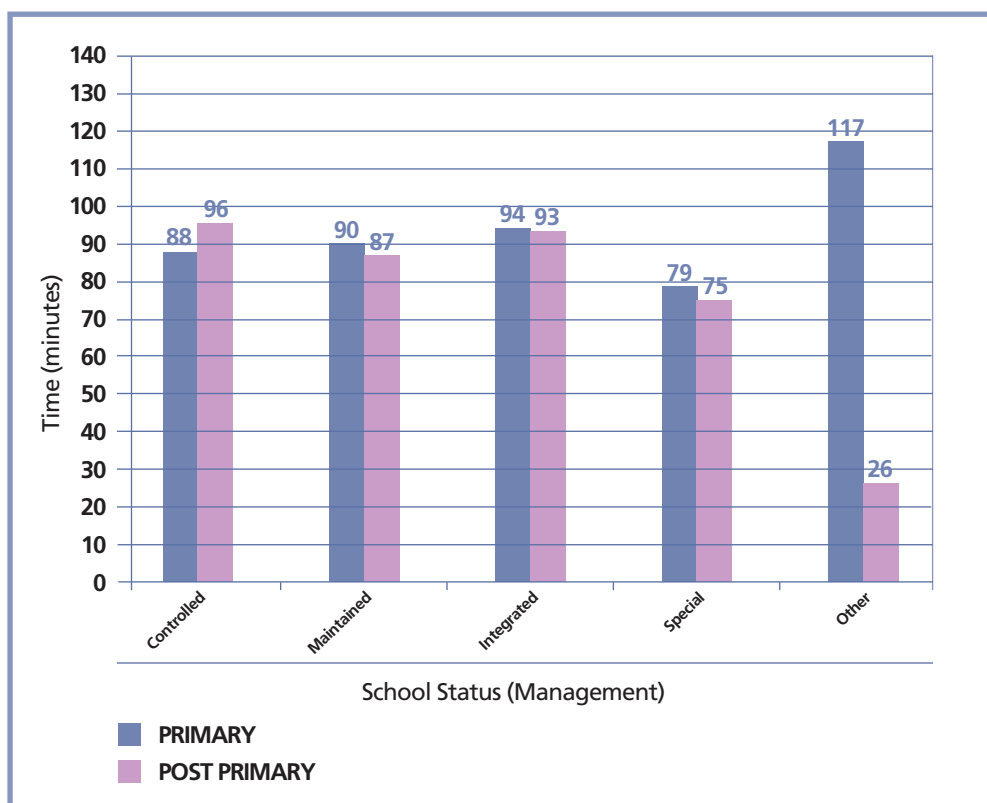
³⁵ 14 special schools took part in the post-primary survey out of a possible 34, this represented 10% of all responses. 3 special schools took part in the primary survey out of a possible 39, this represented 1% of all responses.

5.5 SCHOOL STATUS

5.5.1 Management

Based upon known school status, controlled schools had the highest overall average time of PE (96 minutes) compared with 87 minutes for maintained schools. This can be compared to the findings of the Primary PE survey where maintained schools had a slightly higher overall average time (90 minutes) than controlled schools (88 minutes), as highlighted in Figure 12A below:

Figure 12A: Overall average PE time by school status (management) – primary/post-primary comparison



5.5.2 Special schools had the lowest overall average time in the post-primary survey (75 minutes) and the primary survey (79 minutes). None of the special schools that took part³⁵ in the post-primary and primary survey delivered the 2 hour target. These findings are of concern, although special mitigating factors³⁶ may explain these findings and should be investigated further.

5.5.3 Sex of pupils

Co-educational schools had the highest overall average PE time (90 minutes), compared to schools with single-sex girls (88 minutes) and single-sex boys (85 minutes). Moreover, 67% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had co-educational status. In light of concerns about low female participation rates in sport and physical activity³⁷, this finding is encouraging as it suggests that young girls attending single-sex female schools are not disadvantaged when compared to their male counterparts attending single-sex male schools.

³⁶ For example, a child attending a special school may receive physiotherapy sessions in lieu of PE.

³⁷ Sport Matters: Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-19, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

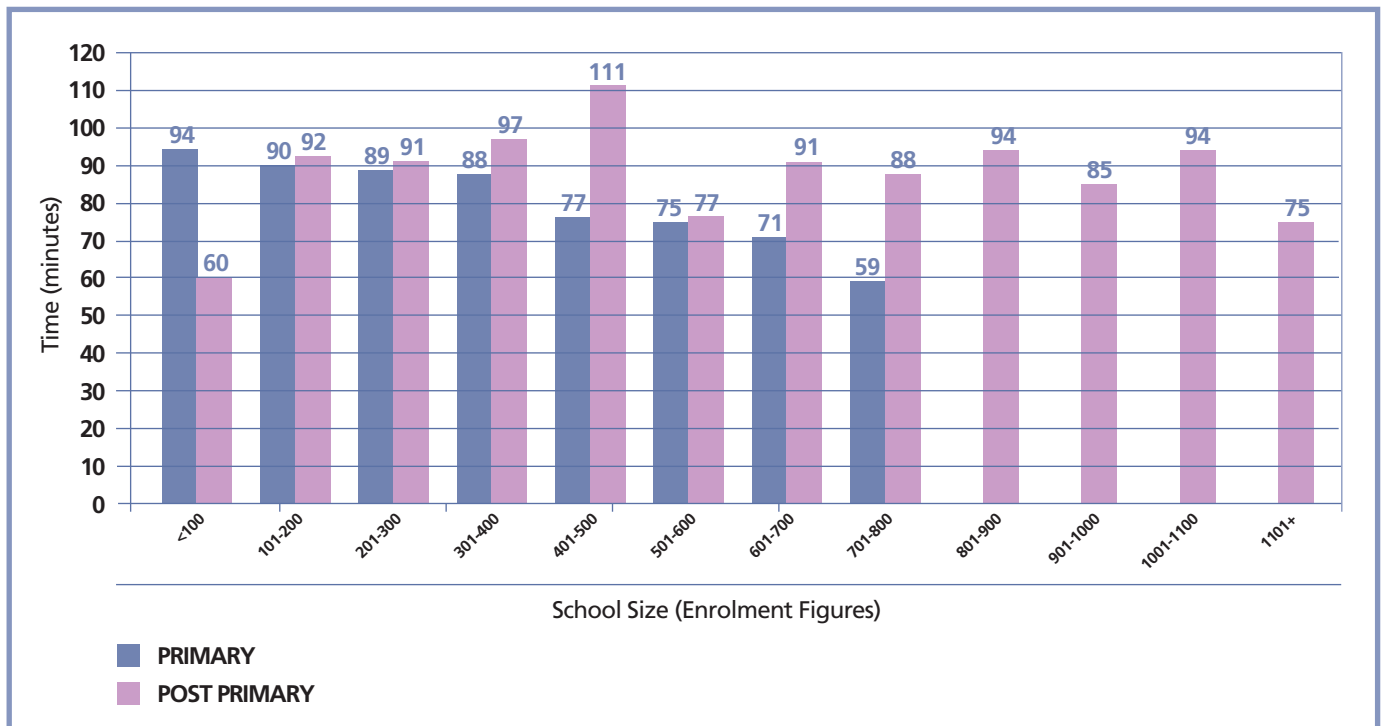
³⁸ Professor Bain G, Report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education, 2006.

³⁹ In England, participation in PE is higher in rural (56%) than urban (48%) areas, PE and Sport Survey 2008-9, Department for Children, Schools and

5.6 SCHOOL SIZE (enrolment figure)

5.6.1 This survey reported no discernible correlation between enrolment figure and curricular PE time within the post-primary sector. This finding can be compared to the Primary PE survey which highlighted a negative correlation between enrolment figure and time, as the amount of time allocated to PE steadily decreased as enrolment figures increased. The results of the primary and post-primary PE surveys are presented in Figure 13A below:

Figure 13A: Overall average PE time by school size (enrolment figure) – primary/post-primary comparison



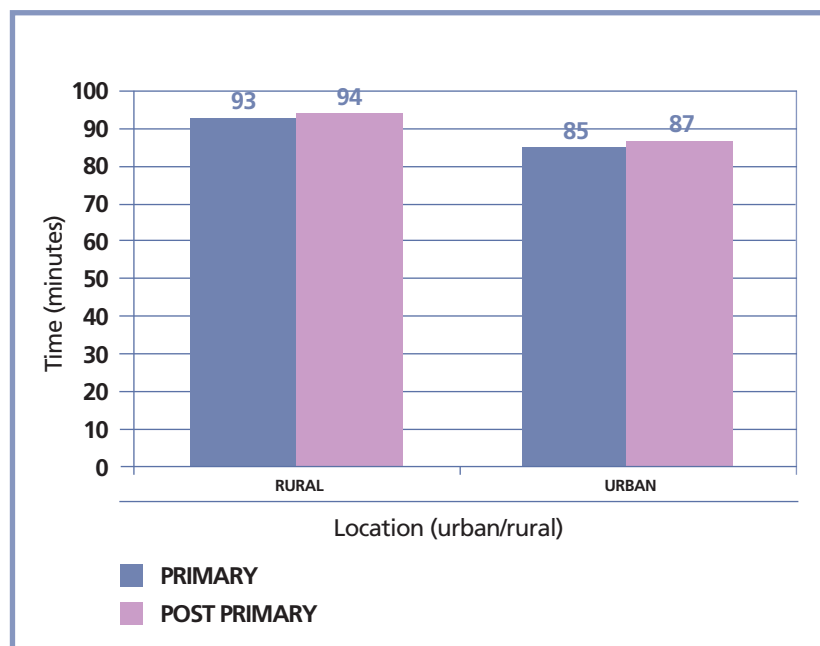
- 5.6.2** 25% of the schools that delivered the 2 hour target had 401-500 pupils. These findings should be read in conjunction with the Bain Report³⁸ which recommended that the minimum (not optimal) enrolments for Years 8-12 in new post-primary schools should be 500 pupils. Furthermore, according to the Bain Report, when the enrolment in an existing school falls below the relevant level, the future of the school should be reviewed.
- 5.6.3** Should the Bain Report recommendations be fully implemented, without regard to the findings of this research and the Primary PE survey, there is a risk that a number of schools currently achieving or exceeding the recommended 2 hours of PE per week could be adversely impacted upon.

5.7 SCHOOL LOCATION

5.7.1 Rural/urban

The Sport Northern Ireland primary and post-primary PE surveys have highlighted that schools in rural locations in Northern Ireland³⁹ delivered more PE (93 minutes and 94 minutes for primary and post-primary respectively) than urban schools (85 minutes and 87 minutes for primary and post-primary respectively), as highlighted in Figure 14A below:

Figure 14A: Average PE time by rural/urban location – primary/post-primary comparison



5.7.2 Social need/free school meals

There does not appear to be any correlation between the number and/or percentage of free school meals and the amount of time allocated to curricular PE. This finding is encouraging as it indicates that children attending schools in areas of social deprivation are not currently disadvantaged on the basis of socio-economic factors. Comparisons may be made with a survey⁴⁰ in England which reported that in general schools with lower levels of participation in PE tend to have relatively high proportions of children who are eligible for FSM.

⁴⁰ PE and Sport Survey 2008-9, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2009, page 1.

⁴¹ A Manifesto for a World Class System of PE, Association for Physical Education (AfPE), 2008.

⁴² DENI Circular Number 2003/14, Subject: Education (School Information and Prospectuses) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, issued 5 September 2003,

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 EQUAL ACCESS AND PROVISION

6.1.1 Although the pedagogical underpinnings of the Northern Ireland PE curriculum are highly developed and premised on a child-centred approach to children and young people's holistic development, the reality of the delivery of PE is less impressive.

6.1.2 The allocation of sufficient curricular PE time in every year group in every school is critical to the provision of a quality PE experience as for many children and young people, curricular PE remains their only guaranteed exposure to physical activity and sport⁴¹. The Department of Education has previously recommended that schools should seek to deliver 2 hours of PE per week to every child.⁴²

6.1.3 This survey and the Primary PE survey conducted in 2009 have highlighted significant deficits and disparities in the delivery of the recommended 2 hours of PE in primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland.

6.1.4 The Northern Ireland Curriculum advises that:

"Schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all children and schools should aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible." Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (2007)⁴³

6.1.5 However, despite official commitment to entitlement⁴⁴ to a broad and balanced curriculum, the research indicates that equal access to and provision of PE is not necessarily assured for all children and young people in Northern Ireland due to inconsistencies in the localised implementation of the PE curriculum. It follows that not every child is being provided with an equal opportunity to experience success and achievement in PE.

6.1.6 A similar finding of insufficient curricular time and inconsistent provision between schools for Literacy and Numeracy may be considered unacceptable and would warrant immediate intervention. It is reasoned that deficits and variances in the delivery of PE, and hence opportunities for developing physical literacy, should be viewed as equally unacceptable and concerning.

6.1.7 Political support is vital to ensure that all children and young people in Northern Ireland have equal access to and provision of 2 hours of quality PE every week regardless of their age or the status, size or location of their school.

6.2 STRATEGIC DISSEMINATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

6.2.1 The preamble to the European Parliament's Resolution⁴⁵ on the Role of Sport in Education alludes to PE as:

"... the only subject, which seeks to prepare children for a healthy lifestyle and focused on their overall physical and mental development, as well as imparting important social values such as fairness, self-discipline, solidarity, team spirit, tolerance and fair play ..." (November, 2007)

6.2.2 While the contribution of PE to children's physical, social and emotional development is widely recognised, PE is often perceived as the poor relation of the school curriculum and therefore receives less time and attention than examination subjects⁴⁶.

6.2.3 Numerous global studies have linked physical activity with cognitive development and educational attainment, and proved that daily PE does not adversely impact on academic performance⁴⁷. Many schools may have wrongly reduced or eliminated curricular PE time under the assumption that more classroom instructional time will improve academic performance and increase examination performance.

paragraph 5.

⁴³ The Northern Ireland Curriculum, Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), 2007, page 2.

⁴⁴ The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007.

⁴⁵ European Commission, European Parliament Resolution on the Role of Sport in Education, Strasbourg, 13 November, 2007, Ref: 2007/2086NI.

⁴⁶ MacPhail A and Halbert J, 2005, The implementation of a revised physical education syllabus in Ireland; circumstances, rewards and costs, European Physical Education Review, Vol.11, pp 287-308.

⁴⁷ Active Education: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Academic Performance, Active Living Research, A National Report of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Research Brief, 2007.

⁴⁸ Evidence emanating from Sport Specialist Colleges in Northern Ireland linking sport specialist status with improved GCSE performance, Game of Three Halves Conference, Regional Training Unit (RTU), December, 2009.

6.2.4 To address this issue, the evidence-base linking PE and educational attainment should be strengthened and disseminated⁴⁸. This will inform and convince policy makers, head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils that participation in PE does not detract from academic performance, rather it can contribute to cognitive development and academic achievement, in addition to physical and psychological well-being. This approach should assist in elevating the status afforded to PE within schools and may indirectly effect more curricular time allocated to the delivery of PE.

6.3 STATUTORY REQUIREMENT AND ENTITLEMENT

6.3.1 Although Sport Matters recommends that government pursue a target of 2 hours of PE per week, and the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 provides every child with a statutory minimum entitlement to all areas of the curriculum, including PE, there is no statutory entitlement to 2 hours of PE per week.

6.3.2 Notably, in the European Parliament's Resolution, is the call on Member States to make PE compulsory in primary and secondary schools with a guaranteed principle of at least 3 PE lessons per week. Recommendations by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2003 featured a significant reference to PE time allocation including an agreement to "move towards a compulsory legal minimum of 180 minutes weekly, with schools endeavouring to go beyond this minimum where this is possible."⁵⁰

6.3.3 In light of the extent of insufficient curricular time and the inconsistent provision between schools, a statutory requirement of, and entitlement to, 2 hours of PE a week should now be considered. To ensure full implementation of any statutory requirement or entitlement, all schools should be appropriately supported and resourced.

6.3.4 In the absence of a statutory requirement of and entitlement to 2 hours of PE, achievement of this aspiration may be pursued through effective dissemination and implementation of the guidance contained in a DENI circular relating to information in school prospectuses.

6.3.5 The Education (School Information and Prospectuses) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 prescribes the minimum requirements for information which must be included in a school's prospectus and Annual Report Of the Board of Governors. The Regulation requires all schools to provide details of sporting activities open to, and the facilities available to, pupils at the school⁵¹. A corresponding DENI Circular explains that:

"The Department continues to encourage schools to use the flexibility that exists in school timetabling to offer at least 2 hours of energetic physical activity for children, in keeping with any guidance on health education and physical activity that may emanate from the Department or its partner bodies from time to time."⁵²

6.4 PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICY INTEGRATION

6.4.1 Although the Department of Education has statutory remit for curricular PE, the findings of this report also present challenges and opportunities for Sport policy and Health policy.

⁴⁹ Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendations Rec (2003)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states in improving PE and sport for children and young people in all European countries, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 30 April 2003.

⁵⁰ Hardman, K, Situation and sustainability of PE in schools: a global perspective, University of Worcester, UK, 2008, page 18.

⁵¹ The Education (School Information and Prospectuses) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, Schedule 3, Section 21.

⁵² DENI Circular Number 2003/15, Subject: Education (School Information and Prospectuses) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, issued 5 September 2003, paragraph 5.

⁵³ Fahey T, Delaney L and Gannon B, School Children and Sport in Ireland, The Economic and Social Research Centre and The Irish Sports Council, 2005, page 1.

- 6.4.2** Sport policy has been traditionally concerned with extra-curricular sport played in the schools and clubs within the community, however within recent years an important policy evolution has occurred whereby sports promotion programmes have extended into curricular PE. Whilst the core orientations of Education and Sports policy are not identical, they arguably overlap in important ways and are likely to support each other⁵³.
- 6.4.3** It has been argued that the health and health promotion sector should not have central responsibility for the inputs to children's PE in the form of policies, structure or expenditure, and that they should have only a background role in these areas, as their main interest lies in the outputs of PE rather than the inputs and structures that determine its effective delivery⁵⁴.
- 6.4.4** However, it may be counter-argued that because participation in quality PE yields considerable health benefits both in childhood and in later adulthood⁵⁵, the health and health promotion sector should directly contribute to policy formulation, investment and implementation relating to the provision of PE. This rationale is becoming increasingly more credible and relevant as obesity rates⁵⁶ in children and young people in Northern Ireland continue to rise.
- 6.4.5** In 2008 a cross-departmental Obesity Prevention Steering Group (OPSG) was established to oversee and drive forward Fit Futures⁵⁷. The OPSG and its Advisory Groups are now working towards the development of an Obesity Prevention Strategic Framework with a view for publication in the Summer of 2010. The development of a Strategic Framework could provide an opportunity for an existing cross-departmental partnership to issue an authoritative recommendation of 2 hours of quality PE per week to assist in off-setting the decline in activity levels.⁵⁸
- 6.4.6** Undoubtedly, there are numerous examples⁵⁹ of recent positively, implemented programmes and good practices in PE that have originated in Education, Sports and Health policies. The impact of these institutional endeavours could be optimised through an agreed, strategic and co-ordinated approach by the three respective government departments.
- 6.4.7** Cross-departmental commitment to co-ordinating strategies and sharing resources will enhance the quality and quantity of PE delivery within all schools and ultimately enrich the PE experiences of all children and young people in Northern Ireland.
- 6.4.8** Formulation of this proposed cross-departmental partnership may also effect an obligation on Education, Sports and Health professionals to exchange the best of insights, practices and research available from their respective profession that will be fully integrated not only into curricular PE, but also extra-curricular PE, sport and physical activity.

⁵⁴ Fahey T, Delaney L and Gannon B, School Children and Sport in Ireland, The Economic and Social Research Centre and The Irish Sports Council, 2005, page 2.

⁵⁵ The main health benefits commonly associated with physical activity for children are improved cardiovascular performance, strengthening of the musculoskeletal system, reduced stress and anxiety, enhanced self-esteem, reduced risk of chronic disease such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease. Koplan JP, Liverman CT and Kraak VI, Preventing Childhood Obesity, Health in the Balance, Committee on the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth, Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, Washington, National Academy Press, 2005, page 114.

⁵⁶ Inquiry into Obesity, Northern Ireland Assembly, 2009.

⁵⁷ Fit Futures: Focus on Food, Activity and Young People, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland, (DHSSPSNI), <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/fit-futures-implementation-plan.pdf>, 2007.

⁵⁸ In Scotland, 20% of 12 year olds are clinically obese with a further third diagnosed as overweight. Consequently a Scottish Executive established Physical Activity Task Force has recommended a target of 2 hours of quality PE per week for all school children by 2007 to assist in offsetting the decline in health-related fitness and activity levels.

⁵⁹ Downey R, Developments in Northern Ireland, Physical Education Matters, Association for Physical Education (AfPE), Vol.3, No.1, Spring 2008.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** Insufficient provision of PE will inevitably restrict children's opportunities to develop and apply their physical literacy skills. Without the development of physical literacy, many children and young people will withdraw from sport and physical activity, and are more likely to become inactive and lead unhealthy lifestyles.
- 7.2** The Sport Northern Ireland Primary and Post-primary PE surveys have highlighted the challenges and opportunities faced by all those stakeholders with a responsibility for ensuring that all children and young people are equipped with the necessary skills that will empower and enable them to fulfil their potential, and access a whole range of valuable experiences in life as they continue their journey to become informed, responsible and healthy citizens.
- 7.3** On the basis of the findings of this research and the discussion of results therein, the following recommendations are noted:
- 7.3.1 1. Equal access and provision**
Immediate and sustained application of political support that will ensure equal access to and provision of 2 hours of curricular PE for every child and young person in Northern Ireland is at the forefront of the political agenda;
- 7.3.2 2. Strategic design and dissemination of evidence-based research**
Strategic design and dissemination of evidence-based research relating to the physical, psychological and cognitive benefits of PE, that will assist in elevating the status of PE and increase allocated curricular time;
- 7.3.3 3. Statutory requirement and entitlement**
A statutory requirement of, and statutory entitlement to, at least 2 hours of quality PE each week for every child and young person in compulsory education, which is effectively resourced and monitored; and
- 7.3.4 4. Partnerships and policy integration**
Cross-departmental commitment to share resources, and fully align and integrate PE into Education, Sport and Health policy.

APPENDIX I



1st June, 2010

Dear Principal,

"Sport Matters" – The NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-19 aspires to provide every child of compulsory school age with a quality physical education. In order to inform future policy and align investment programmes that aim to enhance the delivery of curricular PE, Sport NI would like to establish a baseline for the length of time that is devoted to physical education within the post-primary sector.

I would therefore be very grateful if you could spend a couple of minutes to complete the enclosed survey and return it in the pre-paid envelope on or before Friday 11th June, 2010. Your response will be treated in confidence and data will be aggregated so that no individual school can be identified. If you require further information please email colmjennings@sportni.net or phone **02890 383844**.

It is hoped that your support will assist in improving the future provision of PE.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John News'.

John News

Participation Manager

Competition for PE survey participants



If you would like your school to be entered for a competition to win **£250 vouchers** for sports equipment please provide the additional details.

Name of school: _____

Address of school: _____

Post code: _____ **Contact Tel:** _____

*Please note that the details provided above will be separated from the survey



SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND POST PRIMARY PE SURVEY 2010

AIM: To establish a baseline for the length of time that is devoted to curricular PE within the post-primary sector.

REQUEST: Please record the average length of time (in minutes) devoted to the delivery of curricular PE every week for each year group (this does not include break/lunch-time initiatives, extra-curricular sport and physical activity, and time allocated for the teaching of PE to GCSE, AS and A-level).

Unique Reference Number

Average Time of curricular PE per week (Minutes)

Year Group 8	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Year Group 9	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Year Group 10	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Year Group 11	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Year Group 12	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Year Group 13	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Year Group 14	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Enrolment Number

**Please select your type of School
(tick one or more where appropriate)**

- Controlled
- Maintained
- Integrated
- Special
- Other

Please select your School's Education and Library Board

- SEELB
- NEELB
- BELB
- WELB
- SELB

Please select your School's location

- Rural
- Urban

Gender

- Single-sex (male)
- Single-sex (female)
- Co-educational

Number of free school meals

District Council are

Thank you for your support

APPENDIX II

The main findings of the Primary PE Survey and the Post-Primary PE survey have been combined in the tables below:

Figure 15A: Overall average PE time by ELB – primary/post-primary comparison

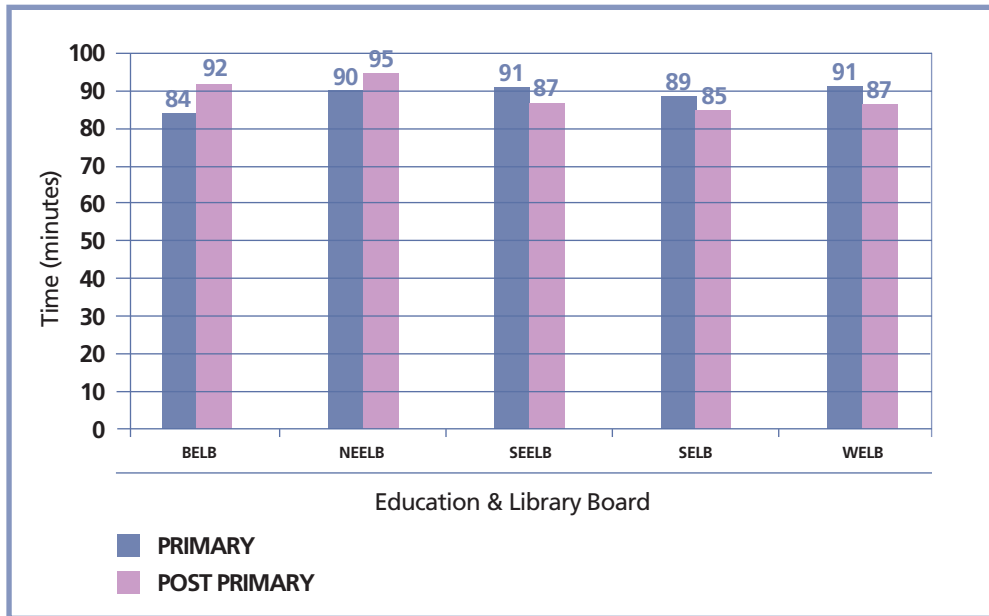
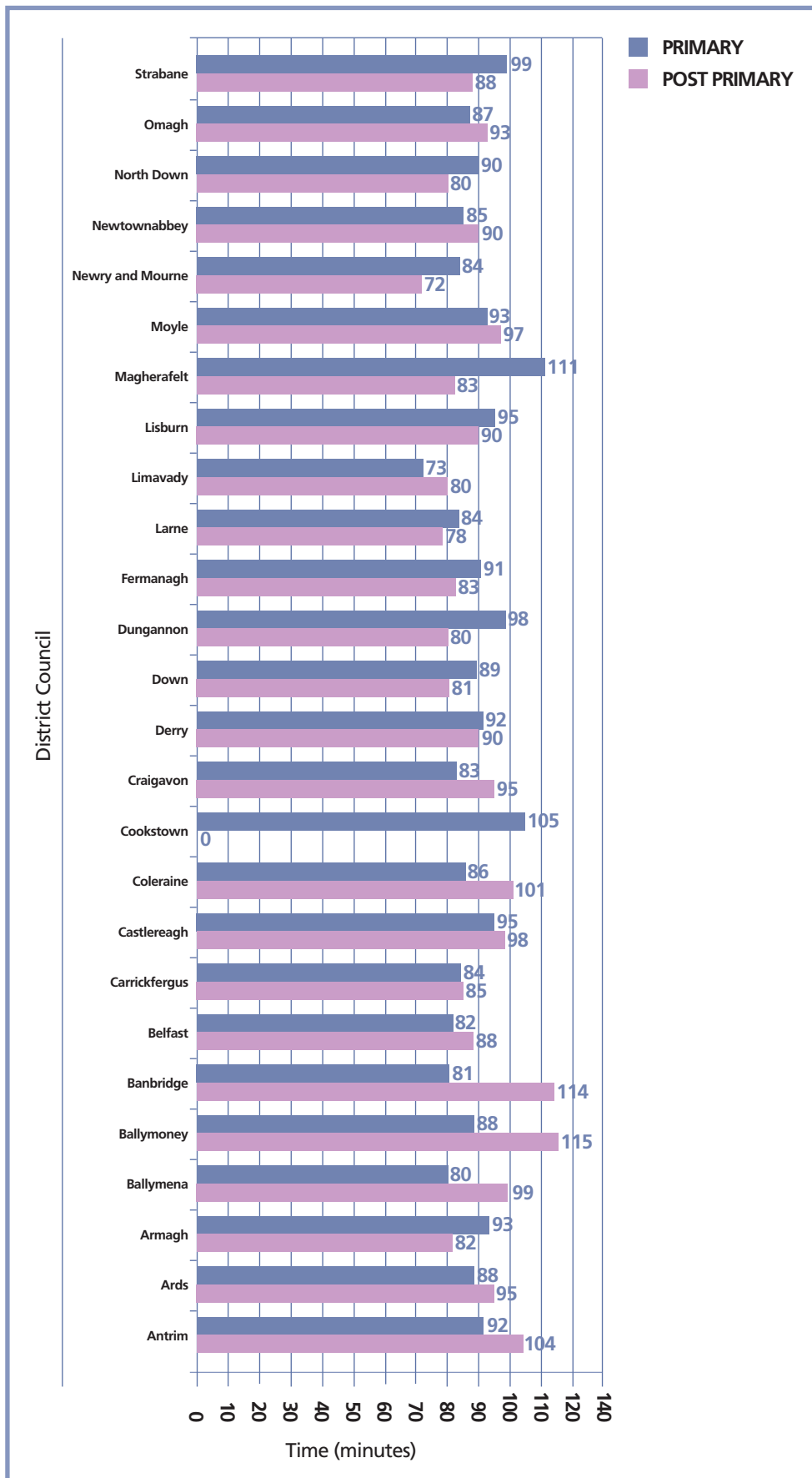


Figure 15B: Overall average PE time by council area - primary/post-primary comparison



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