Primary School Curriculum

Physical Education

Teacher Guidelines

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Physical education in the primary curriculum

Physical education in the primary curriculum

Physical education provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives.

What is physical education?

Physical education provides unique opportunities for children to move with ease and confidence as they enjoy actions such as running, turning, twisting, chasing, throwing, catching, striking, floating and balancing. They are encouraged to respond to challenges to the mind and body, to participate, to compete and to co-operate with others.

From their earliest years children enjoy physical activities. The physical education programme which provides a wide variety of movement activities builds on these early experiences of the child. The physical education lesson should answer the needs of the child who looks forward to it with a sense of anticipation and excitement.

In contributing to the holistic development of children, physical education shares much with the other subjects of the curriculum. Children learn to relate to and communicate with each other and to develop self-esteem and confidence. They are encouraged to develop initiative and leadership and to acquire positive attitudes towards physical activities. They are helped to make informed decisions concerning a healthy life-style. Learning in other subject areas can be enhanced and consolidated in the physical education lesson. For instance, skills developed in the physical education lesson, such as estimating, measuring and reading simple maps, are common to other subjects.

Physical education in a child-centred curriculum

When implementing the programme, the school, building on the principles of variety and diversification, should consider

- the importance of enjoying physical activity. The child who associates fun and enjoyment with physical education lessons and who gains a sense of achievement will develop the positive attitudes so necessary for continued participation in physical education lessons and physical activity.

- the importance of play in its many forms in the learning and developmental process. Through play the child learns to move effectively, to think, to interact socially with others and to express feelings.

- maximum participation by all children in the physical education lesson. The desire by children for active participation can be seen as the starting-point for the teacher when planning and implementing physical education lessons. Lessons which can be identified as successful in achieving the pre-determined objectives will inevitably be those where the children were active throughout the entire lesson.

Considerations when implementing a programme of physical education

- the importance of enjoyment and play

- maximum participation by all children

- the development of skills and understanding

- a balance between competitive and non-competitive activities

- a balance between contact and non-contact activities

- providing opportunities for achievement for each child

- providing activities equally suitable for girls and boys

- the development of skills and increasing understanding of the activities which the children are experiencing. The development of skills forms a significant part of the curriculum for physical education, beginning through structured play activities at infant level and extending throughout the class levels. As the skills are developed there should be an emphasis too on increasing the child's understanding of the activities he/she is engaged in. This can be achieved by adopting appropriate teaching methods where discussion is an essential part of the process.

- providing a balance between competitive and non-competitive activities. Activities incorporating some elements of competition can benefit the child as he/she progresses towards the achievement of his/her potential. The positive opportunities presented include the development of respect for opponents, rules and classmates as officials. However, the pressures of competition can form barriers to progress for some children, and competition does not always present the ideal environment for development of skills. A balance should therefore be sought between provision for competitive and non-competitive activities.

- providing a balance between contact and non-contact activities. The needs of the individual child should be considered when selecting suitable activities. A balance should be sought which, for example, allows the child who favours non-contact activities to enjoy those activities and yet be able to engage in contact activities, where possible modified to suit his/her needs.

- providing opportunities for achievement for each child. It is essential that the child be presented with achievable tasks, regardless of the activity he/she is engaged in. The satisfaction of achievement is the factor that motivates many children to continue to participate in physical activity.

- providing activities equally suitable for girls and boys. Activities which have traditionally been associated with either sex can be presented, sometimes with modifications, to a mixed class. Single-sex classes should be exposed to a range of activities from all six strands where possible, thus ensuring that a balanced programme is presented to them.

The content of the physical education curriculum

The content of the physical education curriculum

Strands of the physical education curriculum

- Athletics

- Dance

- Gymnastics

- Games

- Outdoor and adventure activities

- Aquatics

Strand units of the athletics curriculum

- Running

  – walking, jogging or running over distance

  – sprinting

  – relays

  – hurdling

- Jumping

- Throwing

- Understanding and appreciation of athletics

As the athletics programme embraces activities related to the diverse skills of running, jumping and throwing, it is easily adaptable to suit different abilities.

Basic structure and terminology

The physical education curriculum offers the teacher a structured, balanced programme of work. The content has been delineated at *four levels:* infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes, and fifth and sixth classes, and divided into six strands: *Athletics, Dance, Gymnastics, Games, Outdoor and adventure activities* and *Aquatics.* Five of the strands are outlined for implementation at each level; the aquatics strand is outlined for implementation at any of the levels or over a number of levels, depending on the availability of a facility for aquatics and the stage at which the child begins the programme. Each strand is sub-divided into strand units, a number of which will form the basic sections of the content covered.

Athletics

The *Athletics* strand contains a broad range of running, jumping and throwing activities. Emphasis in the athletics programme should be on providing opportunities for the child to challenge him/herself to run faster or for a longer period, to throw an implement further and to jump further or higher. These natural movement activities should be developed into simple athletic activities and events. Early activities focus on individual challenges and competition with the emphasis on personal improvement

related to appropriate targets. As children gain satisfaction from these experiences they are motivated to engage in the more formal running, jumping and throwing practices.

Traditionally, athletics has been taught as a summer term activity, but aspects of the strand can be taught throughout the year. For instance, some hurdling and long jump practice can be undertaken indoors, and most running activities can be undertaken outdoors throughout much of the school year. Indeed, if the indoor area is large enough, some throwing activities may also be possible.

As the athletics programme embraces activities related to running, jumping and throwing, it is particularly suitable for children of different abilities. Progress can be measured individually, and for children of limited ability this is particularly satisfying because they can see their improvement. The athletically able child has unlimited targets and is not restricted by any lack of ability on the part of other children in the class. In addition, the rules are simple and easy to understand, and this makes it easier for the child to act as a judge.

Strand units of the dance curriculum

• Exploration, creation and performance of dance

• Understanding and appreciation of dance

Children who have little or no dance experience have to begin at a level suitable to their needs, gradually building up skill and confidence with an experience which every child enjoys.

Exploration of social and cultural aspects of dance

Folk dances celebrating work such as the 'Danish Shoemaker's Dance' provide opportunities for children to examine the cultural background of the dance.

Dance

The *Dance* strand helps children to learn through dance and to learn about dance. Through dance, children are encouraged to improve body management skills, understand a range of movement concepts, work harmoniously with others, and develop creativity and imagination. In exploring, creating and performing dances children come to understand that dance is a medium for the expression of ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Participation in dance is appropriate for children of any age and either gender and provides many opportunities to enhance work in other subject areas within thematic work. Teachers can provide a basic framework through which to develop a love of dance. It is important to begin the dance activities at the appropriate level. Children who have little or no dance experience have to begin at a level suitable to their needs, gradually building up skill and confidence with an experience which every child enjoys. The dance strand consists of folk and creative dance.

Folk dance

Folk dancing can be presented to children with opportunities to share the rhythms, feelings and actions of other dancers. Children learn to dance some Irish dances and some folk dances from other traditions. The teacher should remember that the emphasis should be on enjoyment in the dance and on full involvement by the children rather than mechanically concentrating on the movements involved in the dance. The spirit of caring for and looking after others in a dance, sharing and being part of a harmonious group, is a most important aspect of folk dancing for the child.

In the early stages children are given the opportunity to invent and create as they gradually experience the enjoyment of performing folk dances from other countries and some Irish dances. Beginning with individual work, they progress to dancing with others in pairs and in small groups. Music should be selected carefully to allow children to enjoy lively rhythms at a pace which is appropriate for them to perform the dance. Opportunities may arise where the social and cultural background of some of the folk dances can be explored.

Gymnastics ... an essential aspect of the overall movement education of the child

Creative dance

When creating dance, the child develops movements which express and communicate ideas and feelings. Children should have opportunities to explore and develop an idea in progressive stages, allowing time to practise, discuss and refine their movements. Creative dance encourages children to acquire simple technical and performing skills, focusing on the expressive qualities of movement. The emphasis should be on enjoyment and developing positive attitudes to dance, thus creating an environment where children feel confident to experiment with ideas and to perform the dances which they create.

Gymnastics

The *Gymnastics* strand outlines the movement activities for each class level and indicates how movement can be developed sequentially. The activities outlined are designed to promote skilful body management, an essential aspect of the overall movement education of the child. The focus is on body actions such as jumping, turning, swinging and balancing and with the control and management of body movements in increasingly challenging situations. Movement tasks should provide all children with opportunities for achievement, with tasks set to match their stages of development.

As the children gain in competence, the teacher should apply appropriate questioning to seek to increase the child's understanding of movement. The gymnastics curriculum also emphasises the importance of safety when handling equipment.

Specific skills in gymnastics

The *Gymnastics* strand contains activities which refer to the teaching of specific skills. A specific skill is a set move which, to be performed correctly, requires good body line, for example a headstand or handstand. Whereas all aspects of gymnastics have to be planned with an emphasis on the state of readiness of the child, this applies particularly to the teaching of specific skills. To be able to perform these with a degree of success, the child needs to be strong and supple and be able to create tension throughout the body. The teacher should only teach these skills when the child is proficient in the introductory exercises. However, this does not mean that skills are an end in themselves: they are a basis from which purposeful and creative gymnastics can develop.

Strand units of the gymnastics curriculum

- Movement

- Understanding and appreciation of movement

Children prepare for a gymnastics lesson

Strand units of the games curriculum

- Sending, receiving and travelling

- Creating and playing games

- Understanding and appreciation of games

Developing an understanding of games should enable children to appreciate and enjoy games as participants and spectators.

Games

The *Games* strand is concerned with the development of skills, the creation and playing of games and the understanding of games. Traditionally, there has been an emphasis on 'playing the game' or practising skills in isolation from the game. This curriculum endeavours to link the practice of skills with the playing of a mini- (small-sided) game. These mini games are modified to suit the developmental stages of the children; rules should be adapted and the size of the playing area and equipment adjusted to meet their needs. In addition, emphasis is placed on skills such as the effective use of space and decision-making, thus encouraging the development of a greater understanding of how games are played.

The games programme should provide opportunities for children to develop skills and understanding through enjoyable individual, small-group and team activities. Throughout the games programme they should be presented with appropriate tasks for developing their understanding of games. As they become more skilful they gain a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Opportunities to improve personal performance and to guide others to improve should be provided. Developing an understanding of games should enable children to appreciate and enjoy games as participants and spectators.

Children should experience a balance of skills and games in a number of categories. Playground games help the child to move effectively and to interact with others. They are included in the strand unit 'Creating and playing games'. A selection of invasion games, net games, striking and fielding games, target games and shared court games is also suggested in this strand unit. The suggested games are included as exemplars. Invasion games suitable for modification for children at primary level include hockey and hurling, soccer, Gaelic football and rugby, basketball, netball and Olympic handball. Net games include tennis, volleyball and badminton. Striking and fielding games most suitable for this age group would be rounders or cricket. Target games include bowling, and shared court games include handball. The class programme should include a balanced selection from the above categories.

Strand units of the outdoor and adventure activities curriculum

• Walking (cycling*, camping*)

• Orienteering

• Outdoor challenges

• Water-based activities*

• Understanding and appreciation of outdoor and adventure activities

*strand units or sub-units for fifth and sixth classes only

Many of the suggested activities appeal to the child who may not be highly motivated to participate in physical activity.

Outdoor and adventure activities

The *Outdoor and adventure activities* strand is an aspect of the physical education curriculum that traditionally might not have been considered by schools in their programme. However, aspects of the content may have been part of the geography programme, for instance. Many of the suggested activities appeal to the child who may not be highly motivated to participate in physical activity.

In the infant programme children are presented with a variety of activities which lay the foundation for outdoor and adventure activities. Simple challenges are offered to them to negotiate obstacles or to find their way. The skills gained while engaging in these activities are built upon as they progress through the primary school, sampling aspects of outdoor challenges and orienteering, for example. The presentation of the curriculum caters for a broad range of activities. While individual circumstances may prevent the implementation of some of these activities, the selection of a sample of activities will provide children with a flavour of the opportunities presented by engaging in outdoor pursuits. Sometimes schools may select other appropriate activities suited to their circumstances.

Some of the suggested activities in the outdoor and adventure activities strand can take place indoors. This is often the best place in which to learn basic skills before applying them outdoors. Many orienteering skills, for example, can be developed initially using the school building as a base. Other activities can be undertaken within the school environment with little outside help or may require travelling to centres suitable for these activities. A local playground may provide the ideal environment for some of the outdoor challenges, for instance. Whichever option is chosen, an opportunity is presented for the child to begin a programme which leads to a love of outdoor activities.

The programme can be linked closely with the social, environmental and scientific education curriculum. For instance, children develop directional skills while exploring their school or locality when they undertake orienteering tasks, while positive attitudes towards caring for the environment are fostered as the children engage in outdoor activities.

Strand units of the aquatics curriculum

- Hygiene

- Water safety

- Entry to and exit from the water

- Buoyancy and propulsion

- Stroke development

- Water-based ball games

- Understanding and appreciation of aquatics

Aquatics

The *aquatics* curriculum recognises that there is more to swimming than learning to swim strokes and competing in swimming competitions. The emphasis is on acquiring a set of fundamental skills, attitudes and understanding before becoming competent in traditional strokes. It is important that the child displays confidence, eagerness to participate, willingness to listen to instructions and an understanding of and respect for rules before development of a stroke is attempted.

Play in the water assists the child in learning and is the preferred path for helping the child experience the beneficial aspects of water. Many of the strand units contain sample games which can be used to introduce, reinforce or develop the skills to be taught. These aquatic games are learning experiences which can motivate a child to try something or reward the child for accomplishing a task. Games can augment learning by serving as a means for practice, feedback and reinforcement. The aquatics programme should reflect the importance of play in the development of competence in the water.

The strand is presented as one complete unit, allowing implementation progressively at whatever stage the child has an opportunity to begin water-based activities. Where the aquatics strand is provided for infants, careful consideration needs to be given to the appropriateness of the activities to the developmental stage of the child and to the practical considerations of changing clothes.

Developing understanding and appreciation

Each strand in the curriculum contains a strand unit 'Understanding and appreciation' which is designed to foster an understanding and appreciation of the activities experienced by the child as the strand is explored. Observation, discussion and questioning are features of this strand unit. For instance, the child is encouraged to observe particular aspects of movement in gymnastics (e.g. pathways taken), to interpret a mood (e.g. excitement) in dance or to develop an understanding of pace when running. A knowledge of events in athletics or recognising opportunities to become involved in clubs are other examples of the content of this unit.

Pictured opposite

Outdoor and adventure activities present exciting challenges for children in the physical education lesson.
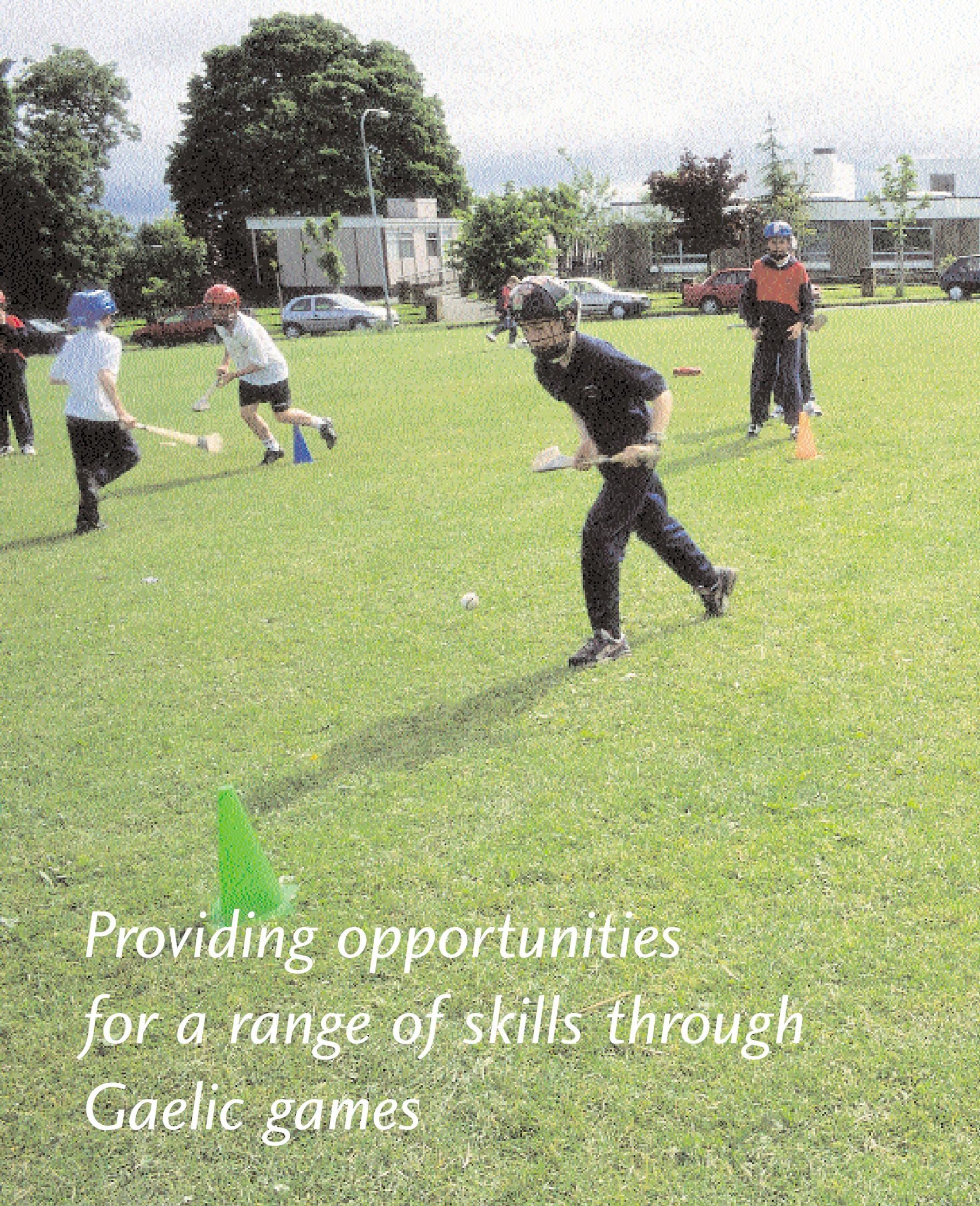
Providing opportunities for a range of skills through Gaelic games

School planning for physical education

School planning for physical education

Providing a broad, balanced physical education programme

The programme should

- meet the needs of the school

- include all strands of the curriculum where possible

- provide for progression and continuity

- recommend some selection within strands

The successful implementation of the physical education curriculum will be dependent on efficient planning by the school and teachers. This section will examine two aspects of this planning process:

- curriculum planning issues in physical education

- organisational planning.

Curriculum planning

Some of the issues which may need to be discussed as part of the school's planning for physical education include the following:

The purpose and nature of physical education in the school

Exploring and discussing the purpose and nature of physical education in the school can form the starting point for planning the programme. The contribution of physical education to the harmonious development of the child should be examined, leading to an understanding of the role which physical education may play in the curriculum.

A broad and balanced physical education programme

As the curriculum provides considerable flexibility for the school, planning at school level will help teachers to ensure that the physical education programme

- meets the needs of the school. Where a school has a strong tradition in a particular activity, it should ensure that due emphasis is placed on other aspects of the physical education programme, thus ensuring that children experience a balanced programme of activities. The school that is situated in an area with a strong games tradition, for instance, while acknowledging the need for games in the programme should also emphasise other strands within the programme.

- includes all strands of the curriculum where possible. It is important to remember that where it may appear impossible to implement a complete strand, because of constraints of facilities or resources, it may be possible to implement a strand unit or indeed part of a strand unit.

- provides for progression and continuity between classes. Each level of physical education is dependent on the implementation of the previous level.

Progression involves children moving

- from simple tasks to more difficult tasks

- from natural movements to skilful, artistic ones

- from dependence to independence in learning

- from performing given tasks to being able to structure their own

- from using given criteria to judge performance to developing their own criteria to evaluate performance.

There are two elements of the progression: *difficulty* and *quality*. Progress in the level of *difficulty* of performance may be achieved in a variety of ways. For instance, the use of smaller targets at which to aim a ball when playing games, or combining movements to create increasingly complex sequences in gymnastics, increase the levels of difficulty. Progress in the *quality* of performance can be identified through a variety of activities, some requiring better poise, others requiring increased control of the body, better footwork in netball or basketball, or improved tension in gymnastics.

Continuity is ensured when regular lessons which are appropriately timed are built in to the whole school plan, with activities outlined for each class and implemented by teachers in accordance with the school plan.

- recommends some selection within strands. Where it is possible to include all strands of the curriculum in the school's programme, some selection within strands may be necessary. For instance, within the *Games* strand it may be useful to offer advice on the selection of a number of small-sided (mini-) games while still ensuring a wide range of experiences. Within the *Gymnastics* strand it may be possible to achieve the objectives outlined in a relatively short unit of work by carefully selecting themes. The programme should advise teachers on such a selection.

The amount of time to be devoted to physical education

The allocation of time to the different strands of the physical education programme will have to be considered and agreed. Time-tabling requirements will have to be discussed, allowing for maximum time for activity in the physical education lesson. Arrangements could be agreed where classes share the responsibility for laying out and storing equipment.

Timetabling should allow for maximum time for activity in the physical education lesson.

'… ensure that the child pursues a healthy life-style and develops a positive attitude towards physical activity.'

While a timetable for use of facilities on a weekly basis is necessary, it may be helpful to consider the amount of time devoted to a subject over a period of two weeks or a month, when strands of the programme which may need to be 'blocked' are considered, e.g. *Aquatics* or *Outdoor and adventure activities.* Provision could also be made for ensuring that strands of the curriculum which need to be spread over the school year to ensure progress are given consideration.

Integration with other subjects

Many of the broad objectives of physical education, such as the development of self-esteem, confidence and initiative, are shared with other subjects. Within physical education it is through learning opportunities provided in the various aspects of movement that the achievement of these objectives can be enhanced. Physical education can be integrated with English, Gaeilge, geography, art, music, mathematics and especially social, personal and health education. The development of other curricular areas can be enriched through a programme of physical education which is broad and balanced. Planning for the transfer and reinforcement of learning from one area of the curriculum to another is essential to ensure success. It is important therefore for schools to consider the links that exist between physical education and other subjects at each class level.

Physical education and health

Health-related fitness emphasises the state of health of the body – a body which works efficiently – and a feeling of physical well-being. It is not specific to any particular sport and is not to be confused with physical fitness, which implies various levels of fitness as appropriate to particular stages of development and to particular sports.

From the earliest years the health-related fitness of the child is promoted by school and parent partnerships. Both should co-operate to ensure that the child pursues a healthy life-style and develops a positive attitude towards physical activity. Initially, this is promoted through experimenting with and exploring movement and developing the natural tendency to play. As the child progresses through the primary school, opportunities to develop further his/her awareness of the role of physical activity for health should be provided.

Promoting gender equity through physical education

In planning the physical education programme, consideration should be given, on an equitable basis, to the needs and interests of both girls and boys. Access to a balanced programme of physical education activities should be ensured for girls and boys.

The suitability and modification of activities within individual strands should be considered carefully to ensure the benefits to the child.

Safety precautions cannot remove all risks but should eliminate unnecessary hazards.

Consideration should be given to

- the need for gender equity

- helping children to build positive attitudes towards all activities

- providing equal access for all children to the physical education equipment and facilities and to the play areas

- grouping children for physical education. While it may be necessary to group pupils occasionally for different activities, this should not be done solely on the basis of gender.

- the needs of girls and boys when promoting the health-related fitness of children.

Providing for differing abilities

Teachers need to consider planning to suit differing abilities. Guidelines on possible methods of providing for the range of abilities would be helpful when the teacher plans work for a particular class.

Planning for the child with special needs

As physical education is a necessary part of the curriculum for all children, the programme should offer each child the widest possible range of experiences. A safe and secure environment should be provided for physical education appropriate to the child with special needs.

A child who is especially gifted should be challenged by tasks appropriate to his/her level of ability. On the other hand, the child whose rate of progress is considerably slower may need to have skills, activities and equipment modified. Specialist advice may be sought to identify the appropriate activities. The suitability and modification of activities within the individual strands should be considered carefully to ensure the benefits to the child.

Safe practice in physical education

Physical education includes many activities which offer a challenge to the child's initiative, determination and courage. Safety precautions cannot remove all risks but should eliminate unnecessary hazards. The following should be considered:

- the working relationship established between teacher and class is one of the most important factors in fostering a safe learning environment

- the medical condition of individual children, which may affect their safety during a physical education lesson, should be made known to the teacher

- the skill and knowledge of the teacher, combined with the sense of responsibility of the child, can help prevent accidents

- an awareness of the age, stage of development and any special needs of the child is essential in ensuring the child's safety

- the safety statement within the school plan should contain procedures to be adopted should accidents occur in the physical education lesson.

Posture

Emphasis should be placed on the maintenance of good posture throughout all activities, which is especially important when lifting and carrying apparatus.

Warm-up, cool-down

Children need to acquire a practical knowledge and understanding of warming-up and cooling-down in order to prepare the body safely and effectively for exercise and to recover afterwards. This process starts with their following consistent good practice and culminates in their designing their own relevant and appropriate procedures. Teachers need to present warming-up and cooling-down activities that are safe and enjoyable.

Clothing

Each school should devise an appropriate practice for dress for physical education. Changing out of the clothes worn during the physical education class immediately afterwards is a desirable practice where possible. The clothes worn should allow mobility during all activities and should be appropriate for a variety of conditions.

Appropriate footwear is especially important. On no account should pupils work indoors in stockinged feet, which do not grip the floor, nor should they be allowed to work barefoot unless conditions are suitable. Jewellery should not be worn.

Equipment

The equipment used for all activities should be suited in size, weight and design to the age, strength and ability of the child and should be of good quality and in good repair.

Great care is needed in the choice and use of apparatus; damaged apparatus should never be used. The condition of all equipment and working areas should be checked regularly to ensure that the children are working in a safe and clean environment.

Assessment—an integral part of teaching and learning in physical education

'... to enhance the experiences of the child in physical education.'

Assessment in the curriculum

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process in physical education, as in other areas of the curriculum. While individual teachers have been forming judgements about progress in physical education, it has not always been approached by the school in a systematic way. As teachers discuss and plan for the implementation of the physical education curriculum, assessment issues should be considered at school level. Such discussion should lead to a shared understanding of how assessment can enhance teaching and learning in physical education and culminate in the formulation of a school policy for assessment. The following considerations could inform such discussion.

Purposes of assessment

The curriculum identifies the roles of assessment in physical education on pp. 68-74. Assessment provides the teacher with information which helps to enhance the experiences of the child in physical education. It can help the teacher to discover what pupils can do and what they know and understand. It can indicate the different rates of progress that children are making and help to monitor the child's achievements related to the objectives of the physical education programme. Assessment can help teachers in the planning of future work in physical education and identify difficulties which children may be experiencing, thus helping the teacher to adapt activities for the individual child. Communication with other teachers, with parents and with other professionals and transferring information to second-level schools is enhanced by the information gleaned from assessment. Assessment can help schools evaluate the development of the curriculum in physical education.

Assessment tools in physical education
- teacher observation
- teacher-designed tasks
- curriculum profiles

A range of assessment tools

The curriculum advises that a variety of forms of assessment be used to ensure that a full range of abilities in physical education is assessed and to allow for individual learning styles. The forms identified below are compatible with teaching and learning in physical education, as they can be undertaken as teaching and learning take place. The forms of assessment recommended are

- *teacher observation:* the monitoring of children's progress as the actual learning takes place in physical education

- *teacher-designed tasks:* the wide range of tasks which the teacher sets for the child to complete and which can be assessed as the children are learning

- *curriculum profiles:* a way in which the child's progress can be assessed and recorded using indicators. As curriculum profiles for physical education have not yet been developed at national level, schools might wish to devise profiles which meet their individual needs.

Manageability of assessment

If assessment is to complement the teaching of physical education it should provide useful information without impinging on valuable teaching time. The system introduced should be practical and should be quickly and easily implemented. The recording of information during a physical education lesson should be minimal to ensure that the children are active and safe throughout and that they continue to enjoy the lesson.

Building a common understanding of assessment

Discussing the progress and achievements of individual children and the curriculum profiles from different classes will facilitate discussion among teachers about assessment. A common understanding of the language used in the recording of assessment will be necessary to ensure consistency throughout the school. Moderation of

assessment occurs as teachers share teaching experience in this way and come to a common understanding of what assessment of physical education represents.

Recording and communicating

The assessment tools recommended in the curriculum which are selected for use by the school will provide information on a child's progress and achievement and will provide the basis for communication with other teachers, parents and others in the educational community.

The *pupil profile card* will be used to record this information and will facilitate communication. The profile will need to be adjusted and updated on a regular basis, thus helping to ensure continuity and progression between classes.

Any report of a child's progress might contain information, gathered by the use of the assessment techniques outlined above, related to

- the attitude of the child to participation, which is indicated by factors such as

  – acceptance of winning or losing

  – understanding of fair play

  – the appropriateness of dress for the physical education lesson

  – the effort displayed by the child

  – the application of safe practices

- the child's achievement related to the strands of physical education which he/she engages in, which is indicated by factors such as

  – physical competence

  – knowledge and understanding of activities

  – creative and aesthetic development

  – development of health-related fitness.

Creative and aesthetic development through dance

Planning for physical education should

- create a common understanding of physical education

- aim to utilise fully the interests and expertise of the teaching staff

- provide real help to the teacher

- involve an examination of the facilities and resources available to the school

- contribute to the overall school plan which will be reviewed by the board of management

- determine how the school intends to phase in the introduction of the new programme

- involve review and evaluation

- involve communication between teachers, parents and the board of management

- determine the roles of the principal and the teacher in the planning and implementation of the programme.

Organisational planning

Developing the school plan for physical education

Planning for physical education should

- create a common understanding of physical education. Organisational planning for physical education should be a collaborative and consultative process. The principal has a key role to play in encouraging the contribution of all staff and in fostering a shared responsibility for planning the programme. The planning process should help to build a common understanding of physical education. This understanding will be fostered by a process of consultation and collaboration involving the principal and teachers and, where appropriate, parents and the board of management.

- aim to utilise fully the interests and expertise of the teaching staff. Some members of the school staff may have developed expertise in one particular strand of the curriculum, others may have developed and used a variety of approaches. While the class teacher is the most appropriate teacher to teach the physical education curriculum, the implementation of the programme is enhanced when teachers share expertise with other staff members. This may extend to teaching physical education or a particular strand of physical education to another teacher's class. However, it should be remembered that in order to implement the programme a teacher does not need to be a specialist in the teaching of physical education or to be able to demonstrate or perform the skills to be taught.

- provide real help to the teacher. The written statement that results from the process of planning provides a valuable reference for the staff. The process of planning itself, however, is equally important in giving the work of teachers a clear sense of direction and purpose.

'… a teacher does not need to be a specialist in the teaching of physical education or to be able to demonstrate or perform the skills to be taught.'

- involve an examination of the facilities and resources available to the school. Every effort must be made to improve the quality of the facilities and resources where it is deemed necessary. The availability of suitable outdoor and indoor facilities and the large and small equipment provided for use should be examined. Provision should be made for the recording, storing and accessing of all equipment. It should be remembered, however, that where facilities are limited it may not be possible to implement all strand units of a particular strand but one strand unit could be taught very effectively. The implementation of part of another strand unit may also be possible. For instance, when teaching athletics it may be possible to teach all aspects of the 'Running' strand unit in a school yard with little or no equipment as well as parts of the 'Throwing' strand unit.

- contribute to the overall school plan which will be reviewed by the board of management. Within the resources available to it, the board should ensure that adequate facilities and resources are available for the implementation of the plan. The safety statement for the school devised by the board should make provision for safety during the physical education lesson.

- determine how the school intends to phase in the introduction of the new programme. Where new schemes are being drawn up it may be possible to incorporate some of the learning activities which formed part of the previous schemes. A sensible schedule for implementation will take into account changes in the subject and changes in other subject areas.

- involve review and evaluation. The on-going review and evaluation will identify successful aspects of the programme and those which may need further development. This process helps the teacher to plan efficiently and informs the development of the school plan for physical education.

- involve communication between teachers, parents and the board of management. This can be fostered through discussions, school or class meetings, circulars or a range of other methods.

- determine the roles of the principal and the teacher in the planning and implementation of the programme.

  The principal should

  – examine the facilities and resources available and seek to improve provision where necessary

  – raise awareness among all those involved in teaching physical education of their different, although complementary, roles

– devise a timetable to meet the needs of all classes within the school, ensuring the maximum use of all facilities throughout the year.

The role of the teacher could be outlined as

– devising balanced programmes, in line with the school plan, which cater for the particular needs of each child

– helping the child develop a positive self-image, co-operation with others and a sense of fair play

– ensuring that the child experiences a variety of vigorous and challenging activities

– fostering a stimulating and secure environment in which the child can be creative and imaginative

– linking physical education activities with other curricular areas when appropriate

– evaluating the programme and assessing the progress of the child

– providing information to parents, in line with school policy, about the class programme for physical education

– consulting parents on the progress of the child

– having due regard for safety by ensuring that the child adopts safe practices.

Some of the work of developing or co-ordinating the implementation of physical education might be undertaken by a teacher or teachers with a particular interest or expertise in the area. If this approach is used, such a teacher can undertake responsibility for

– encouraging the teaching staff to participate in the formulation of the physical education plan

– gathering information about the amount of physical education currently taught and the content of the existing programme

– devising, in consultation with the staff, a written plan

– reporting on the progress of work on the plan

– organising the necessary resources to implement the plan

– presenting draft documents to the staff at each meeting

– supporting colleagues as they prepare schemes of work and implement the plan

– informing new members of the teaching staff about the plan.

Organising and managing support for the physical education programme

Support of parents

Effective partnerships are dependent on good organisation and management. The support of parents for the programme of physical education should be sought so that children derive maximum benefit from physical education. An appreciation of the importance of physical education should be fostered in the wider school community. Parents with particular experience in the area of physical education could be encouraged to assist when specific opportunities arise. Talks on topics related to physical education could be organised by parents or they could be encouraged to help with activities such as Sport for All Day, visits to the swimming pool and outdoor education trips.

Support of coaches

National and local sports organisations may offer to provide coaching of particular sports on a voluntary basis as part of the physical education programme. In the same way, dancers associated with particular projects to promote dance in education may offer to teach dance. Employment schemes may offer personnel to assist in the development of particular sports.

In determining the role of any coaches, leaders or dancers the teacher should identify the

- needs of the children

- gaps in provision

- extent to which the support personnel will benefit the individual child and class

- previous experience with young people of the personnel selected

- qualifications of the support personnel

- knowledge of health and safety displayed by the support personnel

- organisational skills of the support personnel.

The class teacher should then discuss with the personnel selected the requirements of the class and of individual children within the class where appropriate, the school's policy on physical education and the class programme for physical education. The selected personnel can then support the role of the teacher in the implement-ation of a programme which will benefit the individual child and the class. It is essential that a class teacher be present as the coach works with the class.

The teacher must retain overall responsibility for planning, organisation, control and monitoring to ensure that the child's physical activity is coherent, consistent, progressive and controlled.

Provision should be made for the recording, storing and accessing of all equipment.

The school should take on the responsibility for ensuring that all those involved in teaching are aware of their different, although complementary, roles. It should consider the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland* which offers guidance for personnel involved in sport. While it may be beneficial for sports coaches and dancers to assist during curriculum time, their role should be one of support, not of substitution for the teacher. The teacher must retain overall responsibility for planning, organisation, control and monitoring, to ensure that the child's physical activity is coherent, consistent, progressive and controlled.

The in-career development needs of teachers

During planning for the physical education programme, the needs of teachers for in-career development education should be met. Any staff members who wish to avail of in-service training for physical education should be encouraged and supported. Courses designed to enhance the teacher's implementation of a strand or strands of the physical education programme should be provided. The co-ordinator of the programme could identify the relevant courses for teachers. Practical advice on how a range of assessment tools could be used in the assessment of physical education will be required by many teachers.

Managing and organising resources and facilities

The availability of suitable outdoor and indoor facilities and the large and small equipment provided for use should be examined. Provision should be made for the recording, storing and accessing of all equipment.

Use of indoor and outdoor facilities

It is possible to implement many aspects of the programmes of athletics and games using an indoor area. However, an outdoor area provides more scope for the development of a comprehensive programme. An outdoor grass facility is an additional feature which can enhance both programmes.

Gymnastics and dance are best suited to an indoor area, with only very small aspects of each programme being possible outdoors for a limited time each year.

The organisation of aquatics will be influenced by the degree of access to pool facilities, the provision of transport and the availability of suitably qualified swimming teachers. For some schools access to a facility for aquatics is not possible, but every effort should be made to provide even a short block of time for each class at some stage during the primary years.

Outdoor and adventure activities can be undertaken initially in most schools or school grounds. When the school and its surroundings have been explored, progression will naturally lead to new activities beyond the school grounds. The need then arises to explore outdoor facilities in the local area. Where possible, a visit to an outdoor education centre which offers a wide range of activities may be undertaken. The class teacher should consult the staff of the chosen centre to plan activities appropriate to the needs of the individual class.

Use of community facility

Where an appropriate indoor or outdoor facility is not available within the school, access to a community facility should be examined and time allowed to travel to use it where necessary.

Availability of equipment

A comprehensive range of equipment is necessary to teach a balanced programme of physical education. Storage and maintenance of equipment is essential and children should be taught to store equipment carefully and to report any damaged equipment. Advice on handling and storage of equipment should form part of the safety statement of the school. *(See Appendix for list of suggested equipment.)*

Use of publications, books, video and audio tapes

During planning, teachers should review the materials available for supporting the programme. Many of the governing bodies of various sports publish valuable materials for use by teachers and coaches. A wide range of books on physical education is available, as well as books concentrating on particular sports modified for teaching children. Posters and charts are also valuable in raising awareness of aspects of the programme. Some form of indexing or filing of teaching materials within the school can help teachers use them most effectively.

Video recordings of carefully-selected dance performances or sports programmes can enhance the teaching of the programme. Specific skills, for instance, can be demonstrated with the aid of a video. Audio tapes are an important resource for the teaching of dance. Suitable music for folk and creative dance should be collected and filed.

In addition, many books based on sporting themes are available for children; some relate the story of a sports personality, some contain facts about sport and others relate the stories of children involved in sport. These books will prove useful in the teaching of physical education and should be available in the school library where possible.

Support of national governing bodies, local clubs or groups

National governing bodies representing various sports offer training programmes for teachers, as well as support materials. Local sports clubs can support schools in implementing the physical education programme, and dance groups may offer to perform for children or invite children to take part in workshops. Any opportunity the class can get to watch a game or a performance can make a valuable contribution to their physical education.

Establishing links with local sports clubs and dance groups

Schools should consider liaison with local sports clubs and dance groups where possible to facilitate participation by the children in activities provided by clubs or groups. Specialist coaching is often offered by clubs, and children are provided with opportunities for social and personal development as they join in activities with other children.

Physical education in small schools or schools with limited facilities

Where schools have specific problems related to a lack of indoor and outdoor space, consideration might be given to

- the use of the classrooms, corridors and school grounds for orienteering exercises

- the provision of markings on the playground for athletic activities and small-sided games

- the use of local facilities, e.g. community centres, parish halls, youth clubs, etc.

- co-operation with other primary or second-level schools in sharing facilities

- allocating more time to physical education in good weather

- visiting an outdoor education centre providing facilities for many worthwhile activities

- forming links with sports or dance organisations which provide support personnel and equipment. *(See also p. 27, Organising and managing support for the physical education programme.)*

When planning the teaching of composite classes the teacher might consider

- individual or partner work which allows for different activities appropriate to different stages of development using the same equipment and play area

- introducing follow-up activities to a basic lesson where one group has an opportunity to practise again what was covered in the basic lesson while the other group moves ahead and develops further the content of the basic lesson

- group work using the 'station' teaching method where a group work together at a 'station' and move on to complete a different task or play a different game at another 'station'. In this way a group can be composed of children of similar ability or children at the same class level. *(See Approaches and methodologies, p. 51.)*

- using the support personnel provided by sports or dance organisations to help with group teaching. *(See also p. 27, Organising and managing support for the physical education programme.)*

Organisational planning

Classroom planning for physical education

Classroom planning for physical education

Considerations for the class programme

- the experience of the class
- the guidance offered by the school plan
- use of a variety of teaching methods and approaches
- the time devoted to each strand and the depth of treatment
- the period of the year in which activities might take place
- establishing a code of practice for physical education lessons
- the availability of resources and support
- the integration of strands with other subjects
- the involvement of pupils in the organisation of physical education
- how to provide for differing abilities
- how pupil progress might be assessed

Considerations for the teacher

Many of the most important concerns for the teacher when planning a programme of work for a class are those discussed already in *Curriculum planning*.

In addition, consideration should be given to the following:

The learning needs of the children

It is essential to establish the experience of the class to date with particular reference to the work completed in the various strands. Liaison with the previous class teacher and consulting the class records containing information gained from previous assessment should provide the information necessary for building a new programme.

The school's programme for physical education

The aims and broad objectives of the school's programme and the guidance offered in the school plan on the selection of appropriate strands and strand units will provide further direction for the teacher's work with the class.

Teaching methods and approaches

The use of a wide range of methods and approaches is essential when teaching physical education and should be considered as the teacher selects the content of the class programme. Suggestions for a range of approaches which are particularly suited to the teaching of physical education are provided on pp. 42-101.

Time

Planning a class programme involves considering the time to be devoted to each strand and the depth of treatment of each strand. It should be noted that it is not necessary for each strand to have an equal share of curriculum time, provided that the agreed objectives outlined for each class can be achieved in the time allocated to a particular activity. Some activities will require more time than others. Time for travelling to a pool or outdoor activities centre, for example, should be planned. It is recommended that the year be divided into blocks of four to six weeks. A strand or part of a strand may be completed in this time. Where a part of a strand is covered in a block of time, it may be useful to complete it at another time of the year. Fig. 1 illustrates a games unit which is initiated in September and is completed later in the programme.

When to teach each strand

Selecting the period of the year in which activities might take place i.e. *when* to teach each strand, may involve some of the factors outlined below

- where access to the indoor or outdoor facility is restricted at any time it may be helpful to have two strands running concurrently – one suitable for teaching indoors, the other for teaching outdoors. It is essential to consider activities which may be affected by weather and to plan an alternative activity which can be undertaken indoors, where possible, where a late cancellation is necessary.

- the time of the year at which access to an aquatics facility is possible

- the time of the year at which travelling off the school site is feasible, e.g. for an orienteering exercise

- the importance of encouraging maximum participation in vigorous activity should be considered during cold weather or when a class is conducted during the early morning.

September – October	November – December	January– March	April – June
Games	Dance	Gymnastics	Games
Athletics	Gymnastics	Dance	Outdoor/Adv.
		Games	Athletics

Fig. 1(a). Sample plan of work for physical education for infant classes

September– October	November– December	January– March	April– June
Games	Dance	Aquatics	Games
Athletics	Gymnastics	Gymnastics	Athletics
		Dance/Games	Outdoor/Adv.

Fig. 1(b). Sample plan of work for physical education for first to sixth classes

Establishing a code of practice for physical education

Consideration should be given to devoting time in initial lessons to establish a code of practice for physical education lessons including changing of clothes, moving to and from the play area and methods of organising, distributing and setting out equipment. Suggested methods of organisation are outlined on pp. 51-54.

The availability of resources and support

It is helpful to establish what resources and support might be available:

- another staff member may share expertise

- another class may share the task of setting up or dismantling equipment

- materials or resources may be available to help plan units of work

- an in-service course may give guidance on the implementation of the strand

- a national governing body (with responsibility for a particular sport) may offer support in the form of coaching of a particular sport with teacher guidance, or a local dance group could visit the school to perform or to engage children in dance

- parent volunteers may be invited to help with certain activities, e.g. trips to a local adventure playground.

Integration

It is important to consider how certain strands or strand units can be integrated with other subjects. Integration could take place within physical education (linkage) or with other subjects. Many playground games, for example, could be planned as part of an athletics or games unit. While Fig. 1, page 35 presents a programme where a block of time is devoted to a series of lessons, aspects of the *Outdoor/ adventure activities* strand are particularly suited to an integrated approach combined with a full-day experience at a given time. Further suggestions for integration are described on pp. 45-47.
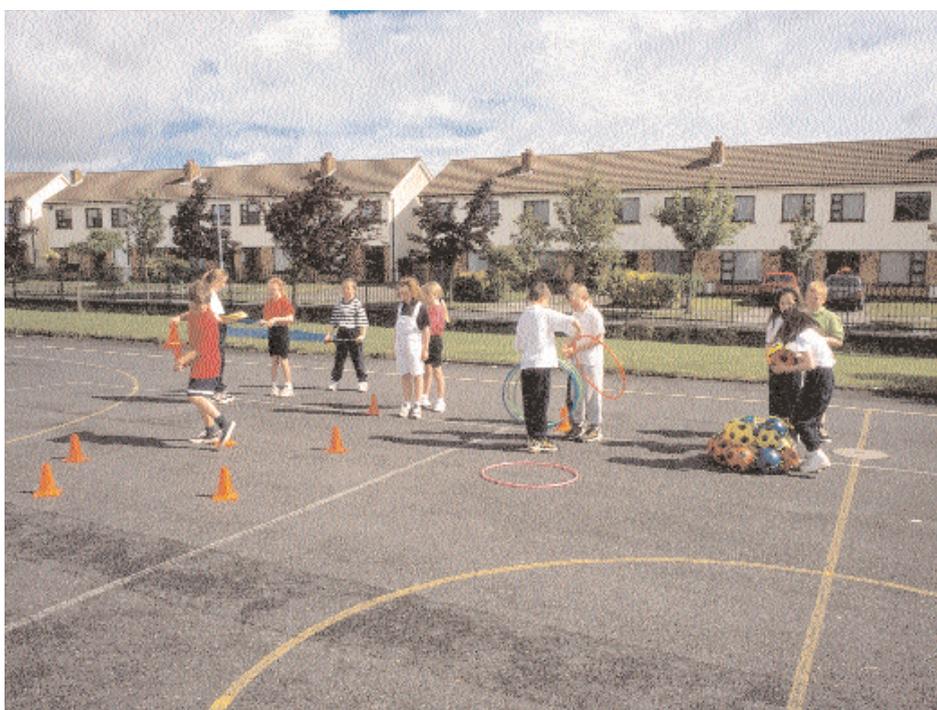
Preparing for a games lesson, setting up 'stations' for different activities

Involvement of pupils in the organisation of physical education

It is recommended that the teacher identifies how pupils can be active in organising lessons. Examples of such practices are:

- Children at all class levels can be involved in laying out the equipment for the lesson.

- Children from third class onwards may be encouraged to devise and present a simple warm-up exercise or series of exercises having experienced many presentations of good practice. Some children may develop this aspect further by creating a warm-up routine accompanied by music and presenting it to the class.

- Children in fifth and sixth classes may be able to devise simple orienteering exercises based on a map of the school grounds which they could present for use by younger children in the school.

Providing for differing abilities

Providing for differing abilities

Teachers will need to plan activities that allow children to undertake tasks appropriate to their levels of ability. When planning to suit differing abilities, consideration should be given to the following strategies:

- applying different levels of difficulty to tasks. For instance, one child may be asked to throw a beanbag and catch it with both hands while stationary, another child may be challenged further by being asked to perform the activity while moving. In a different context, a child is asked to discover how far she can run in two minutes, while another child is asked to discover how far he can run in one-and-a-half minutes.

- setting a common task but allowing children to operate at different levels. For instance, composing a dance where children may show a different response to the same stimulus allows for individual differences.

- placing an emphasis on a variety of strands, strand units or different activities within a strand. The teacher can cater for the varying abilities and experience within a group of children by selecting from a range of strands or strand units when planning the programme. In this way, he/she can provide opportunities for the children with experience of particular activities to excel and to work at a different level

in other activities of which they have little or no experience. Planning should provide for a balance in the selection of activities, thus catering for differing abilities.

- grouping children sometimes by ability and sometimes by gender. Where the 'station' teaching method is used (see p. 51) it is possible to group children of similar ability where this may prove beneficial. In a lesson where children are playing a small-sided version of a game, they can be more active in the game if they are playing with children of similar ability. It may be important to form single-sex groups for some activities. For instance, in a class where girls haven't had experience of a game such as football, it may be more beneficial if a group of girls played the small-sided version of the game together. This will encourage girls to become more active in the game situation. However, it should be remembered that many girls may be capable of joining with boys in other groups. When children are engaging in contact activities, the size of the child should be considered and children could be paired or grouped accordingly.

Assessment

Assessment is an essential component of the cycle of planning, teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation. The ways in which various activities can be assessed should be considered, with reference to the school policy on assessment, as the teacher plans classes or units of work. The exemplar lessons and units of work contained in the 'Approaches and methodologies' section, pp. 42-101 indicate how assessment techniques may be applied in the context of lessons or units. The approach 'Looking at children's work' outlined on pp. 98-100 offers further guidance on how children's experience of physical education can be enhanced by observing their progress. The outcomes of such assessment will in turn inform the planning of future work.

Approaches and methodologies

Approaches and methodologies

A variety of approaches

One of the keys to the successful teaching of physical education is the use of a broad range of approaches and methodologies. This section of the guidelines outlines some of the approaches that have been found to be particularly suited to physical education in the primary school.

As it is acknowledged that schools, classes and teachers will vary, some methods will suit particular circumstances better than others, and the nature of the strands themselves necessitates the use of a variety of teaching methods. There is a need to examine the teaching methods which will best enhance the achievement of the objectives, taking factors such as the content and context of the lesson into account, as well as the needs of the learner.

Teaching approaches are not necessarily exclusive. An effective teacher is likely to switch and mix approaches to suit the objectives of the unit of work or the lesson. As objectives vary within a lesson, the effective teacher will move between different teaching approaches or methods. The teacher begins by deciding what he/she wishes to achieve and then chooses the most appropriate method of realising those objectives.

Exemplars

Throughout this section of the guidelines exemplars are included. Many exemplars contain lessons or units of work illustrating a broad range of approaches and methodologies, detailed content of the lesson or unit and some methods of assessment. Exemplar 2 illustrates how physical education can be integrated with other subjects, while Exemplars 6–8 illustrate folk dances which may be used to form folk dance lessons or units of work.

Selecting appropriate methodologies and approaches

Among the teaching approaches which are particularly appropriate for teaching physical education are

- the direct-teaching approach
- the guided-discovery approach
- integrated approaches.

Direct-teaching approach

The direct-teaching approach involves the teacher in telling or showing children what to do and in observing their progress. It entails the teacher making all, or most of, the decisions concerning the content of the lesson and the child responding to instructions. It is a useful approach if the objectives are concerned with performing folk dances, for instance. It allows for practice of skills within a games situation where the teacher decides on the nature of the practice and the time allocated to it or the number of repetitions. Direct teaching is appropriate too for use when organising activities, ensuring that safety practices are being applied and in the handling of PE equipment. Thus, it can feature as part of the teacher's approach in a wide range of lessons.

Guided-discovery approach

The guided-discovery strategy involves the teacher in designing a series of questions that will eventually lead to one or more appropriate answers and ultimately the discovery of a particular concept or 'solution'. It is one of the approaches that offer children the opportunity to make decisions, solve problems or take initiative. The use of this approach promotes discussion among children and enhances the child's capacity to evaluate.

The guided-discovery approach can be used where the teacher wishes to place an emphasis on leading the children to explore and experiment with movement challenges. It may be utilised as a child explores movement through informal play experiences. It can be used when the teacher wants children to think about the application of concepts or tactics in games, where appropriate questioning can lead to a deeper understanding of how a skill can be employed in a games situation.

This section of the guidelines provides many examples of the application of these approaches in the exemplar lessons.

Exemplar 1 illustrates many instances of guided-discovery learning. Where the guided-discovery approach is used it is indicated by the use of **bold** type. Throughout all the activities where, for example, children are challenged to discover better throwing techniques and striking actions, to develop scoring systems and rules or to select better options or tactics when playing games, the teacher is guiding their learning. The teacher may select a direct-teaching approach when organising and setting up some of the practices and games in this unit.

Exemplar 1

A guided-discovery approach in a unit of work in games   second class

Theme

This unit of work is designed to develop the games skills of throwing, catching, striking, carrying and running. It aims to encourage children to play games that develop these skills and to create games.

Warm-up activities

- focus on running, dodging and chasing games
- stretching exercises

Assessment

Among the techniques which may be used are:

- teacher observation: observations on child's interaction with partner and group, competence displayed as skills are practised, understanding of activities, creativity displayed when creating games, fitness level of child, application of safety practices
- teacher-designed tasks: striking practices, carrying a ball on a bat, etc.
- curriculum profiles: use teacher observations to complete curriculum profile.

Lesson 1, 2

Twos: rolling and stopping practices.

Twos: throwing and catching practices, using a small ball, include under-arm and over-arm throw.

Children discuss

- **which throw is more effective for height or length?**

Individual: striking practices using a bat

- strike a ball along the ground with a bat and retrieve it
- strike a ball against a wall using a bat.

Children discuss

- **how can you control the striking action to produce a strong or a gentle shot?**

Group: Relay activities, carrying a ball on a bat.

Lesson 3, 4

Twos: develop throwing and catching practices while moving in a given area (grid).

Twos: create a striking game where only one partner has a bat.

Children discuss

- **scoring**
- **rules**

Fours: One pair teaches another pair or the class the game they created.

Children continue to work in pairs playing the games that others created.

Lesson 5, 6

Fours: play games of mini-rounders (2 fielders, 1 batter, 1 bowler)

batter rotates after every three bowls, batter scores by running to marker and back to base before fielder returns ball to bowler

Children discuss

- **how fielders return the ball to the bowler: under-arm throw, over-arm throw or roll**
- **when each of the above actions is appropriate.**

Lesson 7, 8

Fours: play mini-rounders as in previous lesson.

Children discuss

- **where batters aim to hit the ball, e.g. between fielder and bowler, over the head of the bowler, to the 'open' side of the fielder.**

Integration

The teacher should consider how objectives can be achieved through integration. Physical education has many objectives which are developed by other subjects such as Gaeilge, English, art, music, mathematics and especially social, personal and health education. The development of these subjects can be enriched through a programme of physical education which is broad and balanced. Some of the opportunities to develop links with these subjects are outlined below:

- SPHE: The emphasis in the physical education programme on promoting enjoyment of and positive attitudes towards physical activity and its lifelong contribution to health complements the strand unit of the SPHE programme 'Taking care of my body'. Engaging in activities outdoors can be linked with the strand unit 'Environmental awareness and care'. Games and athletics provide valuable opportunities for the child to learn to accept decisions and rules and to develop the concept of fair play, which the strand unit 'Relating to others' explores. Swimming and other aquatic activities can promote safety considerations developed in the strand unit 'Safety and protection'.

Measuring and recording achievement

- Language: The use of a varied movement vocabulary (verbs, adverbs), the interpretation of directions, descriptions of movements, discussion of rules and writing or telling of experiences in sport or outdoor activities all help to develop and enrich language. Poetry and literature may be used as stimuli for dance.

- Gaeilge: Ba chóir an Ghaeilge a shníomh isteach go nádúrtha agus de réir a chéile sna ceachtanna corpoideachais agus i mionchluichí agus i ngluaiseachtaí súgartha na bpáistí. Is féidir céimniú a dhéanamh ar an méid Gaeilge a úsáidtear sna ceachtanna ó rang go rang. Is fiú go mór na páistí a spreagadh chun Gaeilge a labhairt eatarthu féin agus iad ag imirt cluichí éagsúla agus ag cleachtadh na scileanna a bhaineann leo.

Is féidir

- bainisteoireacht ranga a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge

- gnáthorduithe a thabhairt

- ceisteanna a chur

- fearas beag a ainmniú as Gaeilge

- foclóir a bhaineann le cluichí éagsúla a úsáid

- damhsaí a mhúineadh trí Ghaeilge

- comhréir a bhaineann le gluaiseacht a úsáid, m.sh. 'bígí ag crochadh/ ag luascadh/ ag dreapadh'

- foclóir a bhaineann le lúthchleasaíocht a úsáid, m.sh. 'bígí ullamh, réidh, gluaisigí'

- cuid de na treoracha a scríobh as Gaeilge nuair atá an treodóireacht ar siúl ag na páistí.


Timing and recording achievement

- SESE: The development of geographical skills such as using maps is promoted as the children engage in outdoor activities. In addition, the study of the environment, weather and terrain can be undertaken through outdoor activities. The origin of dance music and the history of games and sports can be explored. Local, national and international sports can form the basis for study.

- Arts education: Non-verbal communication can be developed through gymnastics and dance, linking with activities in the drama lesson. Themes from sporting experiences and outdoor activities can be explored through drama also and may form the springboard for art work. Music can be used for warm-up activities and complements gymnastics and dance lessons. Art work can inspire ideas for dance and dance movements and themes may be interpreted in a variety of visual arts media, e.g. drawing, painting, clay and costume design. National tunes for sporting occasions can be explored, as well as folk songs or campfire songs during outdoor activities.

- Maths: Opportunities are provided to develop appreciation of shape and balance and to estimate, measure and compare. Results may be recorded, angles may be explored and league tables examined.

Exemplar 2 illustrates how strands of the physical education curriculum can be integrated with other subjects.

Exemplar 2

An integrated approach applied to dance and athletics

Music

- listening to music, e.g. Skater's Waltz, Walking in the Air

Visual arts

- interpreting a flood/ thunderstorm/ blizzard/hurricane in a fabric and fibre collage (see Visual Arts Teacher Guidelines, Exemplar 3)

Dance
Stimulus: Weather

English

- language
- poetry
- creative writing

SESE

- formation of ice
- gales, storms

Gaeilge

- léim, tomhas na léime agus an toradh a scríobh

SPHE

- record heart rate before and after running, discuss the differences found

Athletics
Running, jumping, throwing

Maths

- record time taken to run 20 m and 200 m and compare the results

- measure standing long jumps or throws and compare the results

SESE

- discuss the influence of altitude on performance

Organising the physical education lesson

The physical education lesson needs to be carefully planned to ensure effective organisation. All lessons should be organised to encourage maximum participation by the child. This can be achieved in some instances by carefully planned whole-class activity, but very often it is more effective to divide children into groups. Some methods for group work are outlined below.

Individual, pair, group and team play

Teachers need to plan for children to work alone or with others, co-operatively and competitively. At infant level, most activities will be undertaken first by an individual child, and this can then be developed into partner work. Small groups may learn to work together. Providing opportunities for group work during first and second classes should enhance co-operation in preparation for the development of team play in a games situation, for instance. Team play is appropriate for children from third to sixth class, but team play should always suit the individual needs of the child. Small-sided games and mini versions of games with modified rules are most suitable. Larger groups of children can work together in dance and gymnastics lessons from third to sixth class, developing from initial work undertaken individually to work with a partner and work as a member of a small group.

'Station' teaching

The use of 'stations' is appropriate in teaching games, gymnastics, outdoor and adventure activities, athletics or aquatics. This is a framework which allows maximum numbers of children to participate, providing opportunities for continuous practice for groups working on different tasks at the same time. It is particularly useful where equipment is limited.

Children work with specific equipment, practising certain skills or playing designated games. The class may consist of six to eight groups. After a given time (30 seconds to 5 minutes, according to the activity being completed) they move on to another 'station' or point to practise a different set of skills or play different games.

Exemplar 3 illustrates this approach being implemented in the athletics lesson.

Exemplar 3

Use of 'station teaching' in an athletics lesson   infant classes

Class organisation

The class is divided into five groups, and the equipment for the lesson is placed at five different stations (points in the play area as shown below). Each group assembles at an assigned station. Before the activities begin the groups are seated at the station assigned to them. The activity to be performed is demonstrated. Each child in turn carries out the required activity at the particular station and waits until each child in the group has had a turn before he/she repeats the activity. A child who displaces any equipment should replace it correctly before the next child begins. The groups rotate from station to station during the 'circuit' of activities. Each group is allowed approximately five minutes at each station.

Activities at each station

Station 1: Hop (facing sideways) from hoop to hoop. Explore other ways of travelling from hoop to hoop.
Station 2: Bounce towards each pair of lines, bounce over the space between them. Explore other ways of crossing over the lines.
Station 3: Begin inside the hoop, take off on one foot and land on two feet inside the next hoop, land on one foot inside the next hoop and continue this pattern to the end. Explore other patterns when you repeat the activity.
Station 4: Run over the hurdles.
Station 5: Walk to each pair of hurdles. Bounce over the space between the pair of hurdles. Explore other ways of crossing the pair of hurdles.

Assessment: among the techniques which may be used are:

• teacher observation: observations on child's interaction within a group, competence displayed
  (e.g. co-ordination), understanding of tasks set, application of safe practices, rules within the group or class
• teacher-designed tasks: application to tasks set during lesson
• curriculum profile: use teacher observations to complete curriculum profile.

Layout of equipment
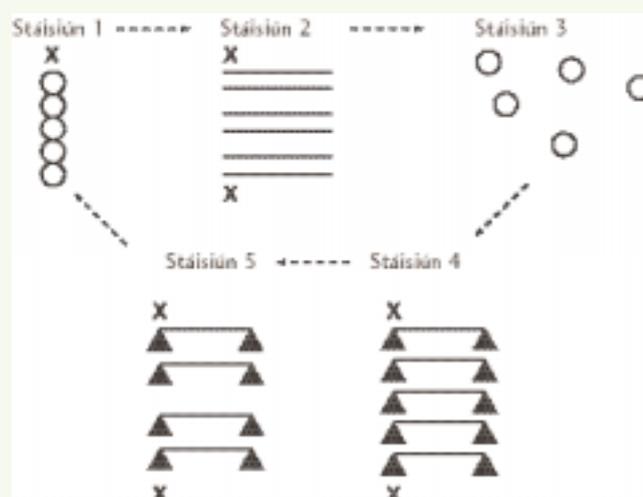
Equipment is laid out as in the diagram above. X denotes a marker to indicate where each activity begins and ends.

Station 1: Hoops are placed end to end.
Station 2: Lines are marked on the ground in pairs, using chalk or tape.
Station 3: Hoops are scattered no more than 30 cm apart.
Station 4: Canes are placed across pairs of cones (approx. 30 cm high), or use low hurdles.
Station 5: Low hurdles are placed in pairs, with approx. 30 cm between each hurdle and 2 m between each pair.

Using play areas divided into grids

This method of organising a class lesson is useful for games teaching, especially for third to sixth classes.

The size of the play area should be considered and how it can be divided most effectively to allow individual or pair practices, group work and small-sided games. The area is divided into grids, approximately 8 m by 8 m.

The play area illustrated in Fig. 2 is divided into eight grids. Cones or markers to indicate the grids allow flexibility in the shape of the grid, but permanent lines can be useful.

Four children play in each grid, practising individual skills or skills with a partner. Two grids combined provide space for small-group work. Combining four grids allows for team play within the enlarged space.

Additional space (even if it is an irregular shape) can supplement this grid space. Individuals, pairs or small groups can use the additional space for practising skills while others play a team game in the grid space.

Exemplar 4 illustrates the use of grids in a games lesson for fifth class.

Fig. 2. Division of a play area into grids
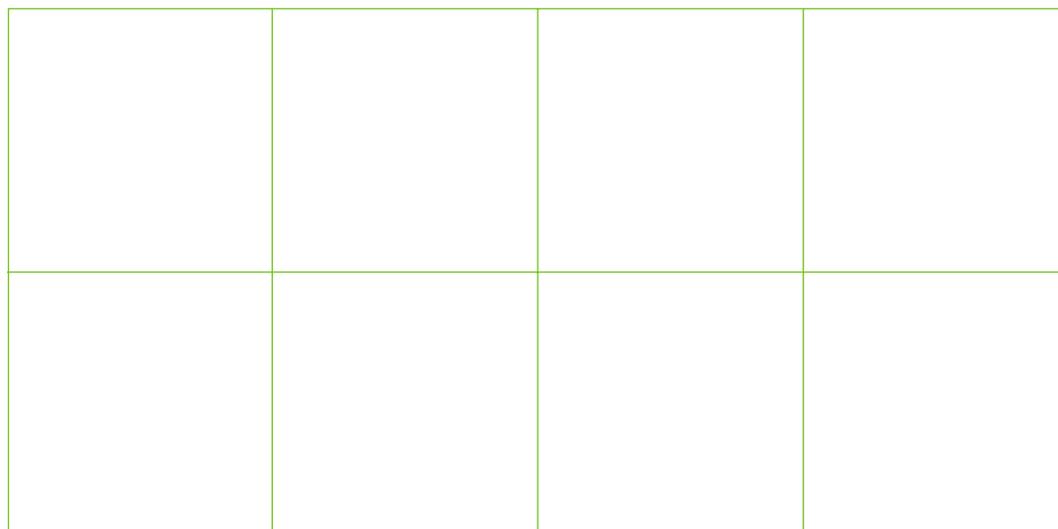
Exemplar 4

Using play areas divided into grids in a games lesson

fifth class

Class organisation

Divide the class into groups of six, with one ball per group. Divide the play area into a number of grids, each grid measuring approximately 8 m by 8 m. Each group plays inside a grid.

Activities

Activity 1: 4 v. 2: B players pass the ball around the grid area. A1 and A2 try to intercept the pass. Once the pass is intercepted, the child who lost possession joins the A team and the child who intercepted the pass joins the B team.

Activity 2: Dribble relay. Arrange teams and markers as in diagram, one ball per team. Each player in turn dribbles around the markers. The first team to complete the exercise is the winner.

Activity 3: 6 v. 6 game.

Combine two grids to make a larger playing area for each group. Each new grid has four goals, 1 m wide, one at each corner. The teams play with no goalkeeper, but with two goals to defend and two goals to attack. No player may stand within 3 m of the goals.

Play area divided into grids
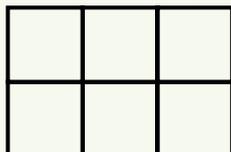
Sample grid
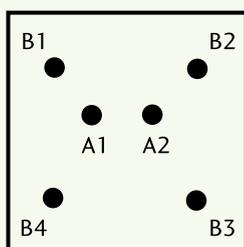
Activity 1
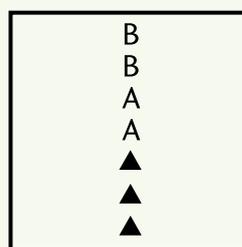
Activity 2
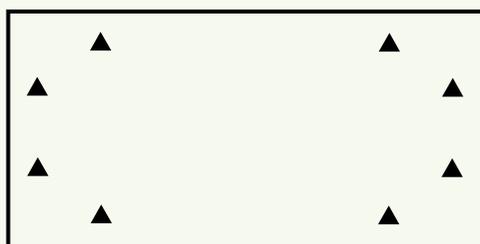
Activity 3

Note: ▲ denotes marker such as cone

Approaches to athletics

In addition to the considerations for planning the class programme outlined on pp. 34–39 the following guide will aid the planning process for athletics:

- When planning to teach a unit of work for athletics (a number of lessons) it is recommended that the teacher plans in advance how the strand units can be delivered. Some lessons may focus on *one* strand unit, while it would be possible to cover content from *all* strand units in many of the lessons.

- A selection of warming-up and cooling-down exercises should be outlined for each lesson including running, mobility and flexibility exercises and games.

Exemplar 5 illustrates an approach to the selection of content for a unit of work and possible methods of organisation for the athletics lesson. Some examples of how a teacher can promote the understanding and appreciation of athletics are indicated in italic type and in the section 'Concluding activities'.

A further example of an athletics lesson is included on p. 52 to illustrate the use of 'station' teaching.

Exemplar 5

A unit of work in athletics

Strand units
Running, Throwing

Equipment
Batons, quoits or primary discus, beanbags or foam javelins, multi-markers or cones

Warm-up activities
Jogging, flexibility and mobility exercises, some strength exercises.
Pair work: each pair devises a warm-up and teaches it to another pair.

Assessment
Among the techniques which may be used are:
- teacher observation: observations on child's interaction within the class, competence (e.g. throwing technique, baton-changing ability), fitness level
- teacher-designed task: shot-put from a stationary position, record the distance
- curriculum profile: use teacher observations to complete curriculum profile.

Integration
SPHE (caring for the body, safety), maths (timing, measuring)

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
Development of lesson	Sprinting: • practise reaction sprints • practise formal standing start • sprint 3x30 m. *Teacher questions children on use of arms and legs to develop good technique.* Sprinting: Pair work: observe partner sprinting and comment on leg and arm action Relays: Pair-work: baton change-over technique (stationary): pass the baton to a partner, with emphasis on smooth receiving and handing over of baton.	Running over distance: Run with a friend crossing low obstacles, at a comfortable pace (time taken should be between 30 seconds and 5 minutes, depending on experience of children) Throwing: Shot put: put from a stationary position Throwing: Javelin throw: 'plant' the foot and throw *Teacher questions children on body position when beginning to throw and when releasing the beanbag or javelin.* Relay: Pair work: baton change-over technique: pass the baton to a partner, with emphasis on moving slowly and using the correct hand position when receiving the baton.	Sprinting: Sprint 5x30 m Relay: Pair work: baton change-over practice: pass the baton to a partner while jogging, with emphasis on increasing pace and using the correct hand position when receiving the baton Throwing: Discus throw: practise throwing a quoit or primary discus, with emphasis on different aspects of the throw, e.g. swing, release Running over distance: Teams of six run a Parlauf (circle) relay.
Concluding activities	Play a tag game in pairs. Cool down and stretch.	Discuss importance of flexibility for running and throwing.	Cool down and stretch.

	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
Development of lesson	Sprinting: Teams of four: shuttle relay, where each child sprints 10 m, then 15 m, then 20 m, returning to the start after each sprint before next child in team begins Relays: Groups of four: baton change-over practice, 4 x 20m in line formation with emphasis on keeping the baton moving fast Throwing: Discus throw: stand, swing and release the quoit or discus *Teacher questions children on height of throw to achieve distance.* Throwing: Javelin throw: run three strides, 'plant' the foot and release the beanbag or javelin.	Running over distance: Teams of four children run a Parlauf (circle) relay over a distance of 800 m. A number of teams could run at the same time; teams who are waiting to run time the active teams. *Teacher encourages the teams to record the time it took to run 800 m and endeavour to improve on that time in subsequent classes, while questioning teams to review their tactics, e.g. which children were assigned the longer sections of the race.* Throwing: Shot put: put from a stationary position, with emphasis on observing and recording the distance of the throw. Sprinting: Sprint 3x50 m with emphasis on a strong start and finish.	Relays: Groups of four: baton change-over practice, 4x20 m, in line formation with emphasis on keeping the baton moving fast. *Teacher questions children on role of incoming runner when passing the baton.* Throwing: Javelin throw: run three strides, 'plant' the foot and release the beanbag or javelin. Running over distance: Run with a friend over low obstacles, aiming to increase the distance or pace of previous runs. *Teacher encourages children to record heart rate at the beginning and at the end of the run.*
Concluding activities	Play a tag game in pairs. Cool down and stretch. Discuss local clubs providing opportunities for athletics.	Cool down and stretch. Discuss and record the safety points for throwing events. Identify local or international athletes who run, walk, jump or throw.	Cool down. Individual children demonstrate a variety of flexibility exercises. Discuss the effects of exercise on the heart.

Follow-up work: Develop sprinting further, introducing hurdling. Introduce and develop long and high jump.

Approaches to dance

In addition to the considerations for planning the class programme outlined on pp. 34–39 the following guide will aid the planning process for dance:

- Consider the two aspects of dance contained in the strand: folk dance and creative dance.

- Consult the year plan and decide how many units of work can be developed for each of these aspects.

Ag baint taitnimh as damhsa traidisiúnta

Folk dance

The following guide will aid the planning of folk dance lessons:

- Select steps or movement patterns which may be explored to develop co-ordination.

- Select the dances to be developed throughout the unit.

- Select the sections of a dance or dances to be developed in each lesson.

- Select the appropriate accompaniment.

- Plan the understanding and appreciation of folk dance to be developed throughout the unit.

Exemplar 6 illustrates a Westphalian folk dance 'Come to Me' which is suitable for teaching to children in first or second class or to introduce folk dancing to older children.

Exemplar 7 illustrates a simple Irish dance 'An Damhsa Mór' which introduces children to some of the basic steps of Irish dancing. It could be performed by children from first to sixth classes who are being introduced to Irish dancing.

Exemplar 8 illustrates the Haymaker's Jig, an Irish dance suitable for fifth and sixth classes who have some experience of Irish dancing.

Exemplar 6

A folk dance: 'Come to Me'   first and second classes

This is a simple Westphalian peasant dance adapted for teaching young children.

Formation

Any number of couples in a double circle, boys on the outside, facing their partners.

Section A

Couple stand facing each other 2 or 3 m apart. When first chord sounds, the boy bows and the girl curtseys. As the music plays, they sing 'Come to me, come to me, come to me', beckoning to each other and skipping inwards. Then they skip outwards as they sing 'Go from me, go from me, go from me', pointing their fingers to dismiss their partners.
(Couples finish in original places.)

Section B

Joining right arms at the elbow, they skip clockwise singing 'Tra la la la, Tra la la la, Tra la la la la la la', turning to finish in their places.

Section C

Facing each other they clap their own hands, then their partner's right, they clap their own hands, then their partner's left. Repeat.

Section D

Joining their left arms at the elbow, they skip around anti-clockwise as they sing 'Tra la la la, Tra la la la, Tra la la la la la la', turning to finish in their places.

Repeat dance for duration of music, approximately four or five times.
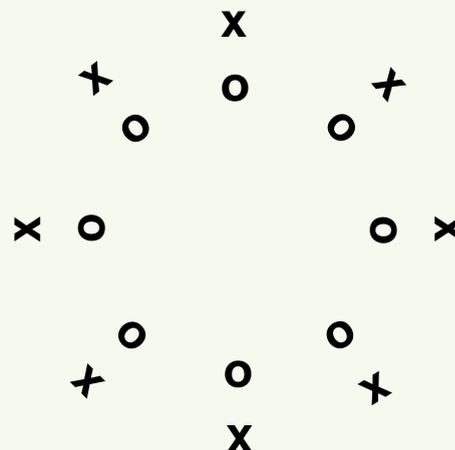
Exemplar 7

An Irish dance: An Damhsa Mór   first and second classes

This simple, informal Irish dance incorporates some of the basic steps in Irish dancing, such as the side step, the promenade step and 'advance and retire'.

Formation

This dance is a round dance in reel time for any number of couples.

A. Side step

All children form a large ring around the room. Side step to the right [2 bars], finishing with two short threes, (1, 2, 3), [2 bars]. Side step back to place, finishing with two short threes [4 bars].

[8 bars]

B. Advance and retire

Using the promenade step, advance to centre [2 bars], retire to place [2 bars]. Repeat.

[8 bars]

Note: to add variety to this dance, simple clap routines can be developed for a further eight bars. The dance is then repeated.

Promenade step is danced as the '1, 2, 3'.

Rising step is danced as 'kick, hop back, hop back 2, 3, 4'.
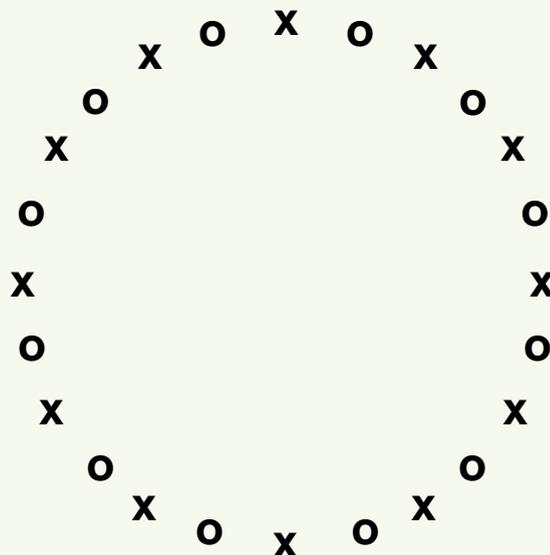
Exemplar 8

This is a traditional long dance in jig time for five couples.

(Note: although the Haymaker's Jig is usually danced by mixed couples, it may also be danced by all-boys or all-girls teams.)

Formation: Partners face each other in two lines:

    o o o o o   girls

    x x x x x   boys

    1 2 3 4 5

A. Advance and retire

The lines of dancers advance towards each other with *promenade step* and retire to place [4 bars].

Repeat [4 bars].

All dance *rising step* on right foot [2 bars], then on left foot [2 bars], and lines advance and retire once more [4 bars].

[16 bars]

B. Turn in centre

Boy no. 1 and girl of last couple meet in centre with promenade step and, taking right hands, turn once and dance back to their places [4 bars].

Boy of last couple and girl of first couple repeat the movement, returning to their places [4 bars].

This whole movement is now repeated by each of the same couples but this time they take left hands when turning [8 bars].

[16 bars]

C. Swing in centre

Boy of first couple and girl of last couple again meet in centre, but this time they take both hands crossed and swing around [6 bars] before returning to place [2 bars]. Boy of last couple and girl of first couple repeat this movement [8 bars].

[16 bars]

D. Link arms

First couple advance to meet, link right arms and turn once [2 bars]. Then they continue to dance on to second couple, the boy linking left arm with the second girl, and the girl linking left arm with the second boy returning to partner [2 bars].

The leading couple link right arms again, turn once [2 bars] and pass on to the third couple, whom they turn, and so on until they have danced with the last couple.

The first couple now take hands and swing down the centre to original places.

E. Arch

The boy and girl of the first couple now turn outwards and march along outside their own line, followed by their own line of dancers until they come to the end of the set, where they face each other and hold both hands uncrossed to form an arch. The other couples meet in turn and, taking inside hands, pass under the arch and back along the line of the dance till couple no. 2 occupy the place of couple no. 1 before releasing hands as below.

o o o o o   girls

x x x x x   boys

2 3 4 5 1

The original leading couple now fall into line in the place of the last couple, and all are now in line to start the dance again from their new positions.

The dance is repeated until each couple has had an opportunity to become the leading couple in the line.

Note

Promenade step is danced as the '1, 2, 3'

Rising step is danced as 'kick, hop back, hop back 2, 3, 4.'

Creative dance

When planning the structure of a creative dance lesson or series of lessons it is useful to consider the principles of movement.

The principles of movement which are required by children to dance can be grouped under the following headings:

- what *the body can do (body action)*
- how *the body moves (dynamics)*
- where *the body moves (space)*
- with whom or with what *the movement is taking place (relationships).*

The principles are outlined and expanded in Fig. 3, opposite. By helping children to understand and use these principles, the teacher will enable them to develop a vocabulary of movement which they can then call upon when creating, performing and appreciating dance. Initial lessons may focus on developing an understanding of these principles by using one or two of them as the stimulus for the lesson.

– A lesson on body awareness may involve exploration of the different body actions – travel, turn, jump, elevate, gesture, stillness – and through this children create a short dance linking two or three of these actions together.

– A lesson on space may involve an exploration of pathways, which leads to the creation of a dance based on contrasting pathways in space.

In such lessons the stimulus for the dance is movement itself.

Art work may be used as a stimulus for dance

Fig. 3 The principles of movement

WHAT?

Body awareness
actions *travel, turn, jump, weight transference, gesture, stillness*
body parts *head, shoulders and other mobile parts*
shapes *regular (symmetric), irregular (asymmetric)*

WHERE?

Spatial awareness
personal and general space
space surrounding and beyond us
levels *high, medium, low*
directions *up, down, forward, sideways*
pathways *linear, curved*

Principles of movement
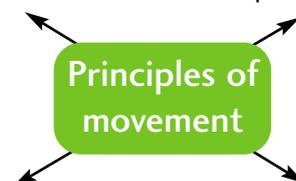
WHO?

Relationships
with different parts of the body
with others – *partners, groups*
with objects – *use of props*

HOW?

Dynamic awareness
weight *strong/light (with/without tension)*
time *sudden (quick burst) sustained (leisurely, smooth)*
space *qualitative (direct, indirect)*
flow *controlled/free-flow movement*

Exemplar 9 is an example of an initial lesson for infants, focusing on body awareness and spatial awareness.

Exemplar 10 is an initial lesson for fifth and sixth classes, focusing on body awareness and relationships.

When children become familiar with the principles they can then apply them when exploring a wide range of themes or ideas, for instance:

- Animals – shapes, levels, actions

- Traffic – pathways, directions

- Snow – dynamics of tension in a freeze and letting go of tension in melting

- Friendship – relating to another dancer, showing movements of unison and conflict.

Exemplar 11 is an example of a unit of work based on the theme of outer space, applying a number of the principles of movement.

Children engaged in a creative dance lesson, forming a 'rocket' (see Exemplar 11, p. 72)

Exemplar 9

Theme

Body awareness—body parts

Spatial awareness

Stimulus

Imaginary magic dust

Assessment

Among the techniques which may be used are
- teacher observation: ability to control movement, interaction with class
- curriculum profile: use teacher observation to complete profile.

Introduction

- Teacher and children sit in a circle and discuss rules of lesson, e.g. listen, look and concentrate.
  - Listen: teacher calls 'switch on your ears', teacher and children tweak ears gently.
  - Look: 'switch on your eyes', teacher and children rub eyes gently.
  - Concentrate: 'switch on your brain', teacher and children rub the top of the head gently.
- In the circle, teacher leads children through a simple warm-up, focusing on swinging, stretching arms, legs and torso, walking and jumping on the spot.

Development

- Teacher asks children to stand in their own space or 'space bubble' and using the stimulus of magic dust landing on different parts of the body, the teacher and children explore the way in which they can move the head, shoulders, back, arms, elbows, fingers, etc.
- Exploration now focuses on moving a part of the body and 'freezing' when teacher blows the dust away. Look at the different shapes created.
- Teacher asks children to move in their 'space bubble' and follow the magic dust around the room, catching it close to the floor, above their heads or on different parts of the body. Look at the different shapes created and the different levels used.

Conclusion

- Teacher and children create a short dance phrase based on the following:
  All bodies begin in stillness, the dust lands and shakes a part of the body (each child chooses own part) but a wind comes and blows it away; all freeze. Follow the magic dust and 1, 2, 3 … catch and freeze. The dust floats away and all the bodies sink to the floor.
- Relaxation: Lie on the floor and relax arms, legs, torso.

Exemplar 10

Creative dance
fifth and sixth classes

Theme

Body awareness—body parts

Relationships—partner work

Stimulus
'Waking up body parts': body jiving

Assessment
Among the techniques which may be used are
- teacher observation: balance, control and co-ordination displayed, understanding of body awareness, ability to work with a partner
- curriculum profile: use teacher observations to compile a profile.

Introduction
- Teacher and children gather together and discuss the lesson ahead, what understanding of dance they have and what to expect in dance.
- Teacher leads children through a warm-up, using a variety of stretching and swinging movements, and simple co-ordination exercises (walking on the spot and moving arms: up, up, down, down).

Development
- Exploring the movements of different body parts, guided by the teacher and focusing on a variety of joints and surfaces (arms, back, tummy).
- Having explored the movements of different body parts, teacher asks children to 'wake up a number of body parts and jive (move) them one at a time and together begin jiving/moving your head ... now keep it going and start to jive your shoulders ... now add your elbows … hips ... back ...'
- Jive and freeze
  While children are jiving different body parts, teacher calls 'freeze' and they must keep still, teacher calls 'jive' and they continue.

Conclusion
- Creating a body jive phrase
  A body jive phrase is a sequence of body parts moved one after the other to a count of eight; four body parts are chosen, given two counts each and arranged in sequence:
  shoulder (1), shoulder (2), hip (3), hip (4), elbow (5), elbow (6), palm (7), palm (8)
  Teacher begins by asking pupils to create a body jive with him/her. Call this 'body jive A'.
- Partner body jive (B)
  Pupils work with a partner to create their own body jive, choosing four body parts and creating a sequence of movement.
  (Teacher moves about, guiding where necessary. Some children may need a starting suggestion, others may need help in keeping their timing together.)
- Linking A and B
  Standing beside partner, children all dance 'body jive A' together and, using the action 'palm, palm' (last two counts of body jive A) to turn to partner, they now dance 'partner body jive B' with partner.
  The total dance: 'Body jive A' and 'Partner body jive B' = 16 counts.

- Relaxation: Children stand in their own spaces again and teacher leads them through some gentle stretches to relax and cool down.

Note: This theme may be developed as a lesson or as a unit of work.

Helping children to create dances

When creating dances, children should be guided to

- explore movements in response to a stimulus or idea

- select movements to express ideas

- create a simple phrase of movement

- develop the phrases into a dance, varying body actions, spatial aspects, dynamics and relationships.

The form of the dance

Each dance should have a clear beginning, middle and ending. Simple structures similar to those found in music can be used:

- narrative form

  unfolding of a story

- binary (AB)

  'A' section followed by a different 'B' section

  in a dance about life and death, section A shows movements of lightness, happiness and growth while section B shows movements of heaviness, despair and decay.

- ternary (ABA)

  'A' section, 'B' section, repeat of 'A' section

  the dance about life and death could be seen as the ending leading back to the beginning, the hope of happiness of section A contrasted with despair and decay of section B, but there is a return to hope by a repeat of section A as the ending.

Relationships in dance

Dances can be performed alone, in pairs or in small or class groups. Formation of groups can be in lines, circles, scattered, in huddles, or in solid group formations.

Children use partner or group techniques such as those outlined below to guide their dance with others:

- following and imitating: follow the leader

- meeting and parting: dancers travel in towards each other and away from each other

- copying: when partners both do the same movements

- contrasting: where the movements of one dancer or group of dancers are contrasted with the movement of another in speed, level, direction, etc.

Planning a creative dance unit of work

The following guide will aid in the planning of a dance unit of work:

- Select a variety of warm-up routines. These should incorporate

    – swings, which will include large movements involving the whole body and smaller movements using parts of the body

    – isolations and co-ordination of body parts: involves moving individual body parts independently of each other (circling the shoulder or hips) and moving body parts together (bending the elbows and knees, circling the shoulders and head)

    – stretching exercises

    – travelling steps, including walking, running, skipping and jumping.

- Select the idea or theme for the unit.

- Decide on the stimulus or stimuli. This may be one or more of the following types:

    – auditory: music, sounds, words, percussion, poems, stories

    – visual: pictures, photographs, designs, sculptures, objects

    – tactile: props, objects

    – kinaesthetic: movement used as a starting-point for dance.

- Consider ways of developing the theme into a series of lessons. Lessons should involve

    – exploring, creating and performing

    – individual, partner or group work appropriate to the age of the children

    – aspects of the appreciation and understanding of dance to be developed.

- Consider a broad outline of how the dance might develop, remembering that, during the lessons many ideas will emerge which will contribute to this outline.

Exemplar 11 illustrates how a unit of work for a theme may be developed, e.g. the theme of outer space. This unit is planned for implementation over six lessons. The theme is developed beginning with the countdown and take-off of the rocket and its landing on the planet Zor. The poem 'The Death of the Whirly Gums' by Elizabeth Powell, photographs (rockets, planets, astronauts, balloons), children's rocket designs and balloons are used as stimuli for this unit. The dance uses narrative form, as seen in the development of section A, B and C of the dance. It is suitable for use from third to sixth class.

Exemplar 11

A unit of work in creative dance   third to sixth classes

Theme: Outer space

Lesson 1: Countdown

Introduction
Body alignment exercises, swings and stretches.
Isolation and co-ordination of body parts through 'ball of energy' idea – bouncing the ball from shoulder to shoulder, etc.
Following and catching the ball of energy in different places.

Development
Discussion on rockets … focus on countdown and take-off.
Individuals exploring build-up of energy in different parts of the body, leading to explosions and travelling movements.
Individual phrase created based on 'countdown-explode-takeoff and travel', demonstrating use of different body parts, shapes and pathways in space.

Application
Partner sharing:
A and B show their work to each other, identifying the body parts used and pathways taken.

Conclusion
Class perform phrases together and conclude by relaxing and stretching.

Lesson 2: Rocket into space

Introduction
Body alignment exercises, swings and stretches.
Recap and performance of individual phrase created at the end of lesson 1.

Development
Discuss rocket designs created in art lesson. Groups of four working on one design chosen by the group; create the shape of the design using all four bodies.
Discuss the journey of the rocket through space; the jettison of boosters, fuel tanks.
Return to groups and from group rocket identify how each part of the rocket can be jettisoned after take-off.

Application
Create phrase based on 'countdown-explode-takeoff and jettison in space'.
Whole class perform the group rocket dance phrases together. Identify clear start and conclusion of phrase.
(The above forms section A of planned dance.)

Conclusion
Relax and stretch.

Lesson 3: Walking on Zor

Introduction
Body alignment exercises, swings and stretches.
Using stimulus of balloon, individuals explore 'floating' of different body parts through space: up/down, forward/back, side to side, in curved and zigzag patterns.

Development
Examine and discuss pictures of astronauts in spaceships etc.
Discuss effect of gravity on body.
Individuals explore everyday movements and how they would move without gravity.
Individuals explore astronauts' actions: putting on space suit, leaving the craft, exploring an unknown planet, Zor, where there is no gravity and encountering unknown adventures.

Application
In pairs, create a phrase 'Walking on Zor' based on ideas explored above.
In the phrase make use of canon and unison movement.
(The above represents section B of planned dance.)
Whole class perform partner phrases together.

Conclusion
Relax and stretch.

Lesson 4: 'The Whirly Gums'

Introduction
Body alignment exercises, swings and stretches.
In pairs, perform partner phrase created in lesson 3 for another pair and observe their phrase.

Development
Whole class perform section A (Rocket into space) and B (Walking on Zor) together, allowing time for group and partners to practise and link movement phrases.
Reading and discussion of 'The Death of the Whirly Gums'.
Identify the characters described: how they appear in the poem, how they move and look.

Application
In pairs create a Whirly Gum creature together in response to following cries:
'The Whirly Gums come out at night, They come to dance in the pale moonlight.'

Conclusion
In pairs, draw a sketch of a Whirly Gum character to be developed in art lesson.

Relax and stretch.

Lesson 5: The Death Dance

Introduction
Body alignment exercises, swings and stretches.
Recap on Whirly Gum partner phrase developed in lesson 4.
Sharing of picture and performing of phrase with another pair.

Development
Discussion of the action of the poem - action words, descriptive words.

With a partner, join another pair to form a group of four.
Develop partner phrases to show the meeting of two Whirly Gums and their death dance.

Application
Whole class perform group dances of Whirly Gums at the same time.
(This is section C of the planned dance.)

Conclusion
In pairs: simple mirror movement to relax and stretch to music.

Lesson 6: Dance performance

Introduction
Body alignment exercises, swings and stretches.
Partner 'follow the leader' dance, focusing on different levels and pathways through space.

Development
Class discussion of whole dance:
Section A - Rocket into space
Section B - Walking on Zor
Section C - The death dance
with particular reference to linking each section, moments of unison and canon, how each phrase begins and concludes, how overall dance begins and ends.

Application
Practice of whole dance A, B and C, linking each section. Performance of whole dance for another class, or tape performance for later discussion.

Conclusion
Discussion with another class on how the dance evolved.

Assessment: Among the techniques which may be used are
- teacher observation: appropriateness of response, variety of ideas, contribution to class discussion, ability to work with a partner/group
- teacher task: as a group performs a dance, another group/individual is asked to identify a child who used a curved pathway, another child/group is asked to identify when the group move in unison or canon
- curriculum profile: use teacher observation to complete a curriculum profile.

Approaches to gymnastics

In addition to the considerations for planning the class programme outlined on pp. 34-9, the following outline is useful in planning the structure of a gymnastics lesson or series of lessons.

The principles of movement which are required by children in the gymnastics lesson can be grouped under the following headings:

- *what* the body can do

    balancing, rolling, turning, etc.

- *how* the body moves

    how much effort and speed is employed: moving strongly, lightly, quickly, slowly etc.

- *where* the body moves (space)

    at different levels, following different pathways, etc.

- *with whom or with what* the movement is taking place (relationships)

    with a partner or group, with a bench or hoop, etc.

A thematic approach based on the 'language of movement' outlined above is recommended when planning a gymnastics programme. A theme is a category of movement within which the child is asked to explore specific movements. For instance, the child may be asked to explore hopping or jumping movements as part of the theme 'travelling'. The 'language of movement' is illustrated in Fig. 4.

The themes chosen provide a basis for all work in gymnastics. The exploration of a movement theme (e.g. travelling) can be done by asking the child to focus on different aspects over a series of lessons. These aspects may include directions, levels, space, speed, effort, body parts, the use of apparatus and the basic actions as illustrated in Fig. 4.

Fig. 4. The language of movement

Space
general
personal

Directions
forward
sideways
backwards
upwards
downwards

Speed
fast
slow

Levels
low
medium
high

Movement theme: travelling

Effort
strong
light

Apparatus
under
over
across
around
along
through

Actions
travel by:
walking, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, sliding, pushing, swinging, pulling, rolling, rocking

using:
feet, hands and feet, one hand and one foot, etc.

Body parts
feet, hands and feet, side, back, front, hips, shoulders, thighs, etc.

Integrating a thematic approach with the teaching of specific skills

Specific skills are taught in the context of different themes, rather than in isolation. For instance, when treating the theme 'supporting weight/balance' at fourth-class level, various balances can be explored, including the handstand, where the child has developed the necessary arm strength.

Developing themes through floorwork and work on apparatus

All themes should be explored initially on the floor. The range of movement can be extended and the quality of movement enhanced when children work on the floor and then transfer work onto apparatus. Work on the floor can be transferred onto apparatus and practised using gymnastic benches, climbing- frames and bar boxes.

A plentiful supply of mats is necessary to undertake floorwork ensuring maximum participation. One mat for every two to four children is recommended. The apparatus must always be used with a plentiful supply of mats for safety purposes. Any jumping from a height should be onto a mat or mats. Mats should form the base for all climbing apparatus. Instruction on the best methods of lifting and carrying apparatus safely will be necessary when children begin to use it, and selection should be related to the age of children, adjusting apparatus where necessary.

The following guide will aid the planning process:

- select a theme (e.g. travelling) or themes which may be developed over a number of lessons, forming a unit of work

- consider the specific skills (if any) which are appropriate for teaching within this unit of work

- review the apparatus required

- decide what aspects of the theme(s) will be explored in each lesson. For instance:

  – Lesson 1: focus on travelling on feet, exploring space, directions and speed

  – Lesson 2: develop travelling on feet, exploring levels and effort

  – Lesson 3: focus on travelling using apparatus

- plan for the understanding and appreciation of gymnastics to be developed while exploring this theme.

Exemplar 12 illustrates a unit of work developing a number of themes: travelling, supporting weight and raising parts of the body high. It is planned for implementation over ten lessons at infant level.

The travelling theme focuses first on travel on the feet, then on hands and feet and finally travel by rocking and rolling. The floorwork is expanded using hoops. The theme 'supporting weight' is developed first on the floor and then using apparatus: hoops, mats and benches. The theme 'raising parts of the body high' is developed in the same way; initial work is on the floor and then work is transferred onto apparatus.

Exemplar 13 represents a unit of work for third or fourth class and focuses on the themes of travelling and weight-bearing, with an emphasis on creating sequences. It is planned for implementation over eight lessons.

Exemplar 14 represents a unit of work for fifth and sixth classes. It develops the theme of 'symmetry and asymmetry' and is planned for delivery over five lessons. Work on 'symmetry and asymmetry' is part of the mathematics programme for third and fourth classes; these lessons can consolidate the work undertaken in mathematics.

Exploring symmetry and asymmetry in the gymnastics lesson

Exemplar 12

A unit of work in gymnastics senior infants

Themes
Travelling, supporting weight, raising parts of the body high

Warm-up activities
Jogging, stretching exercises
Mobility exercises, e.g. animal movements (bear walk, caterpillar walk, snake glide, kangaroo jump, bunny jump)

Assessment
Among the techniques which may be used are
- teacher observation: co-ordination and control of movements, variety displayed in creating sequences, understanding of supporting weight
- teacher-designed task: create a sequence incorporating travelling and supporting weight, using apparatus
- curriculum profile: use teacher observation to complete curriculum profile.

	Lesson 1, 2	Lesson 3, 4
Theme of lesson	Travel on feet	Travel on hands and feet
Development of lesson	Practise travelling using feet only, vary direction, level, speed, effort – hop, walk, skip, bounce, take giant or little steps – jump: practise five basic jumps, i.e. two feet to one foot, one foot to same foot (hop), one foot to other foot (step), one foot to two feet, two feet to two feet. Link two travelling movements.	Practise travelling using hands and feet, vary direction, level, speed, effort – two hands and two feet, – two hands and one foot, etc. Link two travelling movements.
Apparatus work	Using hoops, travel to the hoop, balance in the hoop and travel back to the starting point – travel to the hoop using feet only, balance for three seconds on one foot in the hoop and return by using a different travelling action.	Using hoops, travel to the hoop, into and out of it and back to the starting point – travel to your hoop using hand(s) and feet, jump into and out of your hoop, travel away from your hoop using a different combination of hands and feet.

	Lesson 5, 6	Lesson 7, 8	Lesson 9, 10
Theme of lesson	Travel: rocking, rolling	Supporting weight	Raising parts of the body high
Development of lesson	Practise a stretched roll, then a tucked roll (using mats, where necessary), vary the speed of the roll. Find parts of the body on which to rock.	Practise supporting weight on large body parts, e.g. back, side, shoulders etc. Practise supporting weight on small body parts, e.g. hands and feet, vary level, shape.	Practise a balance (supporting weight) with your feet/hands/heels/ toes etc. highest. Vary the shape and level of the balances. Travel with various body parts highest. Find a space, lift a body part high and lower it gently.
Apparatus work	Using hoops and mats, travel from the hoop to the mat, across the mat and back to the hoop – travel to the mat using feet only, roll sideways (stretched or tucked) across the mat or rock on the mat and travel (using your hands and feet) to the hoop.	Using hoops, mats, benches (climbing frame, bar box, etc.) travel to, over, under and around the apparatus and practise supporting weight on the apparatus at appropriate points – travel to the bench using feet only, jump onto the bench and support your weight on the bench in a stretched shape.	Using apparatus as in previous lesson, travel onto the apparatus and show two balances on the apparatus with different body parts highest – jump into the hoop and show a balance with elbows highest, then with hands highest – jump onto the bench and show a balance with one foot highest then knees highest

Integration: oral language (in, out, across, over, slowly, high, low etc.)

Follow-up work: Develop further lessons linking these themes.

Exemplar 13

A unit of work in gymnastics   third and fourth classes

Themes

Travelling, weight-bearing

	Lesson 1, 2	Lesson 3, 4
Theme of lesson	Travelling: creating sequences	Travelling and weight-bearing; creating sequences (1)
Warm-up	Practise running and jumping, emphasising stretched jumps.	Jog … stretch Practise a sequence including a roll, a balance and a jumping action.
Development of lesson		
• floorwork	Run and jump, taking off from two feet and landing on two feet. Create a sequence of three jumps linked by running movements. Create a sequence to include a balance, a roll, a jump and a travelling movement.	Find ways of balancing on four points, three points, two points and one point. Select two or three balances and find ways of moving into and out of them in a smooth, controlled way.
• apparatus work	Combine travelling movements with a balance and a roll.	Find ways of moving onto the apparatus, holding a balance on hands and feet on it and moving off it into a roll. Repeat, holding a different balance on the apparatus.
Concluding activity	Stretch gently. Walk, then relax	Stretch gently. Jog, then relax
Teaching points	*Emphasise correct take-off for jumping; different ways of ordering the actions; smooth linking of actions and changes of speed; variety of balances; starting and finishing sequences with clear, controlled position.*	*Emphasise good body tension, maintaining stillness of movement, smooth linkages and making wide and narrow shapes.*

	Lesson 5, 6	Lesson 7, 8
Theme of lesson	Travelling and weight-bearing: creating sequences (2)	Travelling and weight-bearing: creating sequences (3)
Warm-up	Jog … stretch	Jog … stretch
	Practise movements showing wide and narrow body shapes.	Practise running a few steps, jumping high and landing softly with knees bent.
Development of lesson		
• floorwork	Show three balances, two with wide shapes and one with a narrow shape, and link them together to form a sequence.	Create a sequence containing two rolls and two balances showing wide and narrow shapes.
	Practise taking weight on two hands, kicking one or two feet into the air and bringing them down on a different spot.	Pair work: one partner performs the sequence and the other follows.
		Pairs then perform the sequence together.
• apparatus work	Create a sequence involving travelling onto the apparatus, performing a balance on it, moving off it and travelling to form another balance using the apparatus as support.	Pair work: create a sequence to include one balance on the floor and one matching balance on the apparatus, lead into and out of the balances with a variety of travelling activities.
Concluding activity	Stretch gently. Jog, walk and stop.	Stretch gently. Walk and relax.
Teaching points	*Emphasise wide and narrow shapes, smooth linkages.*	*Emphasise timing of sequence performed by pair together, ensure a clear understanding of a matching balance.*

Assessment: Among the techniques which may be used are

- teacher observation: ability to work with a partner, poise, balance, control
- curriculum profile: use teacher observation to complete curriculum profile.

Follow-up work: Develop specific skills of headstand and handstand where appropriate, develop different themes, e.g. rotation, mirroring.

Exemplar 14

A unit of work in gymnastics

fifth and sixth classes

Theme
Symmetry and asymmetry

Warm-up activities
Jog, stretch, show ways of moving along the floor and through the air using symmetrical shapes

	Lesson 1 Symmetry: developing sequences	Lesson 2 Symmetry: development of partner work
Development of lesson • floorwork	• Travel using hands and feet to support weight symmetrically. • Jump to show a symmetrical shape in the air. • Balance your body on various body parts showing symmetrical body shapes. • Create a sequence which includes rolling, jumping, taking weight on hands and balancing which is symmetrical throughout. Teaching points: *observe different points of support for body weight, shape of body: stretched, curled, arched*	Partner work: • Create a partner sequence showing symmetrical shapes (matching movements, over and under movements and combinations). • Create a movement sequence to include a balance, a jump, a roll and a hands or feet action showing symmetrical shapes. Partner follows, works alongside or mirrors actions. • Practise aiming for fluent, continuous movement. Teaching points: *encourage different ways of ordering the movements, stretched and curled shapes*
• apparatus work	• Travel on any body parts onto, along and off the apparatus using symmetrical movements. • Find ways of supporting the body symmetrically on the apparatus.	Partner work: • Create two matching symmetrical actions on the apparatus. • Travel onto the apparatus using symmetrical actions, perform two matching symmetrical balances on it and come off using a symmetrical movement.
Concluding activity	• Combine a fast travelling movement with two symmetrical jumps. • Stop and relax.	• Run and jump in the air, landing showing symmetrical shapes. • Stop and relax.

	Lesson 3 Symmetry and asymmetry (1): developing sequences	Lesson 4 Symmetry and asymmetry (2): sequences and partner work
Development of lesson • **floorwork**	• Take weight on two body parts showing a symmetrical shape. Move a part of the body to change the balance and show asymmetry. • Travel along the floor and through the air showing asymmetrical shapes. • Explore ways of supporting the body weight showing asymmetrical shapes. • Develop a sequence, to include travelling movements and balances, showing asymmetrical shapes. Teaching points: *encourage use of a wide variety of support points*	• Create a movement sequence to include two jumps, a roll and two balances showing symmetrical shapes (curled/stretched/wide/narrow shapes and stillness in the balances). • Create a travelling sequence showing symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes. • Create a sequence to include jumping, rolling, taking weight on hands and balancing showing contrasting symmetrical and asymmetrical movements. • Partner work: create sequences showing symmmetrical and asymmetrical shapes. Partners can match, mirror or contrast movements or create over and under sequences.
• **apparatus work**	• Travel onto, along and off the apparatus using hands and feet, showing asymmetrical shapes. • Travel onto, balance on and come off the apparatus showing asymmetry.	• Partner work: create a series of asymmetrical movements moving onto and along the apparatus but include a symmetrical balance. Partner matches the movements.
Concluding activity	• Run and jump, showing asymmetrical shapes when landing. • Repeat, lower the body to the floor and relax.	• Run and jump showing alternate symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes when landing. • Lower the body to the floor and relax.

Assessment

Among the techniques which may be used are
- teacher observation: ability to produce and perform individual and group sequences, application of safety practices when handling equipment, quality of extension, body tension and clarity of body shape
- teacher-designed tasks: create two matching symmetrical actions as part of a sequence using apparatus
- curriculum profile: use teacher observation to complete profile.

Approaches to games

In addition to the considerations for class planning outlined on pp. 34-9 the following guide will aid the planning process for games:

• Consult the year plan and decide how many units of games can be developed.

• Plan a selection of warm-up and cool-down activities to include

– general running, turning, dodging and stopping activities

– games requiring little or no equipment

– mobility and flexibility exercises.

• Select strand units to be developed and plan a theme or themes linked to the objectives of these units. Possible themes might be

– sending, receiving and travelling skills

– co-operative or playground games

– games to develop use of space

– creating games

– playing small-sided invasion games

– developing principles of defence and attack.

• Plan to link the games to be played with the 'Sending, receiving and travelling' strand unit, modifying the games to suit the level of ability of the class.

• Select aspects of understanding and appreciation of games to be developed throughout the unit.
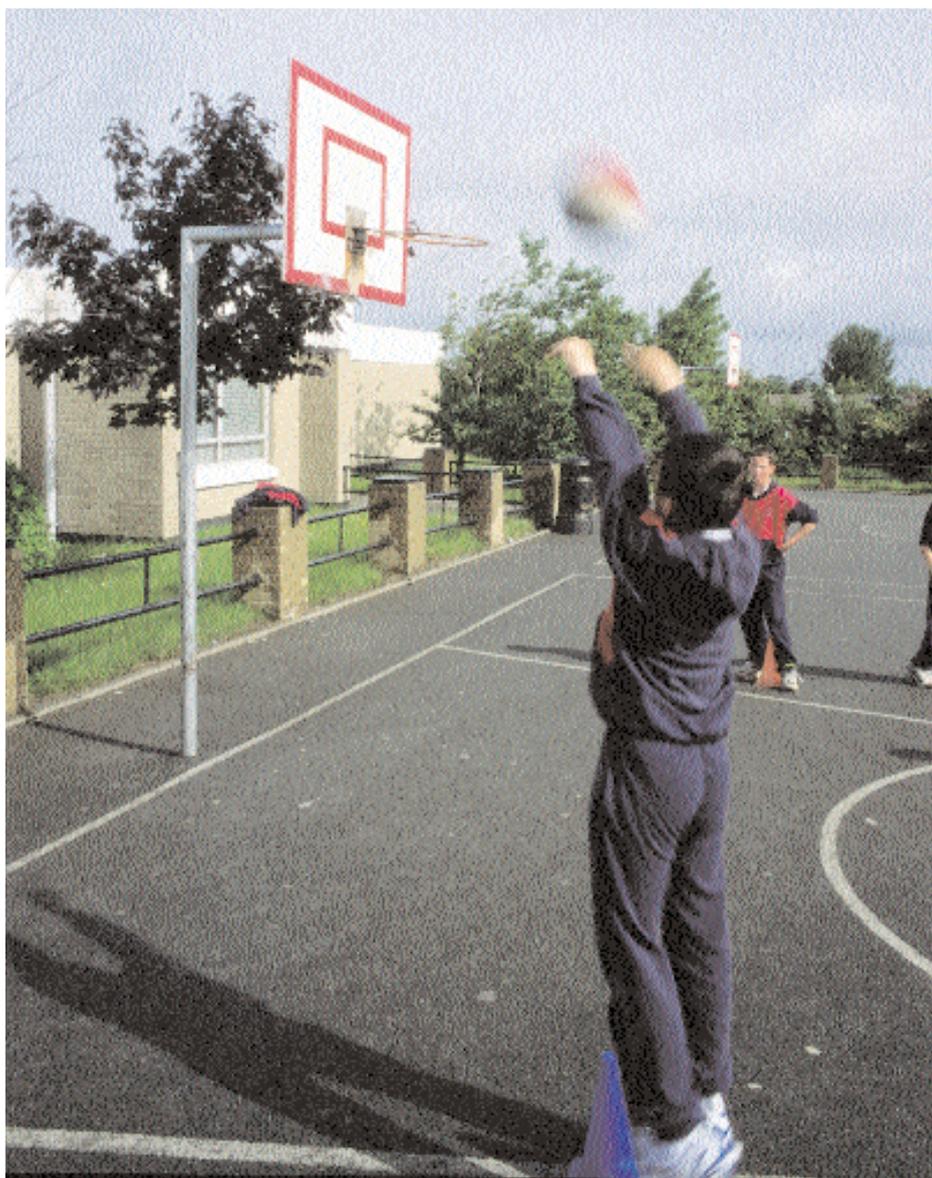
Exemplar 15 focuses on developing an understanding of the use of space. It is designed for implementation at third or fourth-class level and consists of six lessons. The content includes throwing, catching and striking skills which are developed into games created by children and the more formal striking games. Throughout the lessons the children are challenged to think about moving into space and receiving, when to send and when to receive.

Exemplar 16 focuses on three themes: the role of attackers and defenders, the use of space in games and the creation and playing of small-sided invasion games. It is designed for implementation at fifth and sixth-class level for a duration of ten lessons. Throughout the lessons the children are given opportunities to discuss their tactics of defence and attack in small-sided invasion games and finally in games of football and mini-basketball. The skills developed include throwing, catching, running and kicking.

Exemplar 15

Theme
Moving into space and receiving

Warm-up activities

Focus on running, dodging and chasing games; practise sprinting, longer steady runs and stretching exercises

Lesson 1

Moving into space and receiving (1)

Twos: throwing and catching practices using small balls.

Introducing a target:

Twos: move in space, throwing and catching. After a set number of passes, one player aims to hit the target.

Each pair decides

- *when the target is to be attempted*
- *whether the target should be attempted from a set distance.*

Group activity: 2 v. 2 or 3 v. 1, create a passing game with a target.

Lesson 2

Moving into space and receiving (2)

Fours: play a variety of 2 v. 2 and 3 v. 1 games created in previous lesson.

Children decide

- *rules*
- *boundary*
- *scores.*

Introduce striking implements: hockey sticks, hurleys.

Twos: practise striking the ball along the ground.

Twos: adapt one of the group games created above for use as a striking game (no tackling).

Lesson 3

Moving into space and receiving (3)

Select an invasion game which uses striking, e.g. hurling, hockey.

Play a 5 v. 5 game of hockey or hurling.

Consider
- modified rules
- use of a larger ball
- size of playing area and goals
- no tackling, emphasis on interception.

Children discuss
- *moving into space and receiving: when to send and when to receive*

Lesson 4

Moving into space and receiving (4)

Practise striking and blocking or stopping skills.

Practise tackling skills (e.g. frontal tackle).

Play a 5 v. 5 game of hockey or hurling (as in lesson 3), allow tackling where a group is experienced.

Children discuss
- *moving into space when attacking*

Lesson 5

Moving into space and receiving (5)

Practise tackling skills (e.g. frontal tackle, tackle from behind).

Play a 5 v. 5 game of hockey or hurling (as in lesson 3), allow tackling where group is experienced.

Children discuss
- *moving into space for hit out/puck out.*

Assessment

Among the techniques which may be used are:

- teacher observation: child's ability to use space and apply skills in games situation, interaction with others (teamwork), understanding of tactics

- teacher-designed task: group work: create a passing game with a target

- curriculum profile: use teacher observation to complete curriculum profile.

Lesson 6

Moving into space and receiving (6)

Practise tackling skills (e.g. frontal tackle, tackle from behind).

Play a 5 v. 5 game of hockey or hurling (as in lesson 3), allow tackling where group is experienced.

Children discuss
- *moving into space for sideline strike.*

Integrate with Gaeilge: when playing games, vocabulary such as 'anseo', 'cúl', 'beir ar an liathróid', 'ná déan é sin' etc. could be developed

Follow-up work: this unit could be developed by using court games, e.g. tennis, badminton.

Exemplar 16

A unit of work in games   fifth and sixth classes

Theme

role of attackers and defenders

use of space in games

creating and playing small-sided invasion games

Warm-up activities

Emphasis on start-stop nature of games, continuous steady run, fast sprint

Change body level: low defensive stance, high attacking body position

Stretching exercises.

Lesson 1

All activities in threes.
Possession games:
2 v. 1: Throwing and catching, defender tries to gain possession.
2 v. 1: Throwing and catching, ball carriers pass the ball as many times as possible in one minute.

Children discuss
- *role of defender in each game, e.g. preventing player receiving, need to go and force pass*
- *role of attacker in each game, e.g. type of pass favoured, where to move to receive pass*

Practise skills: sending using a variety of passes, intercepting.

Lesson 2

Fours: develop possession games of previous lesson to 2 v. 2, add rules.

3 v. 1: End ball: the ball must be carried over the end line by attackers to score, travel is allowed. Defender touches player in possession to score.
Play for 3 minutes.

Children discuss
- *the problems for attackers and defenders.*
Vary the game to alter the problems: use rugby ball, football, uni-hoc sticks.

Fives: develop above to 3 v. 2 game

Create small-sided invasion game (may choose skittle or line as target).

Lesson 3

Identify modified game to be played, e.g. Gaelic football
Practise sending, receiving and travelling skills:
- ground kick
- high kick and catch
- free kick
- fist pass
- solo run.

2 v. 1: ball carriers fist the ball as many times as possible in one minute, defender tries to gain possession.

2 v. 1: kick and catch with defender trying to gain possession.

Lesson 4, 5, 6

Play a modified game of Gaelic football:
- 5 v. 5
- playing area or size of goal modified
- ball may be picked off the ground
- only one toe to hand and one bounce to constitute a solo run.

Children discuss
- *role of attackers and defenders*
- *use of space, e.g. where to move to receive kick-out.*

Assessment

Among the techniques which may be used are

- teacher observation: understanding of role of attacker and defender, competence in sending, receiving and attacking skills, interaction with others (teamwork)

- teacher-designed tasks: play a game of end ball using uni-hoc sticks, observe how child applies concepts in new game

- curriculum profile: use teacher observations to complete profile.

Approaches to outdoor and adventure activities

When planning to teach an outdoor and adventure activities programme it is recommended that the teacher plan in advance how the strand units can be delivered. Some lessons may focus on one strand unit, other lessons may outline the content of a number of strand units.

In addition to the considerations outlined on pp. 34–9 the following guide will aid the planning process for outdoor and adventure activities. The teacher should consider

- warm-up and cool-down activities appropriate to the particular lessons

- inviting support from additional personnel to help with group work or any activity that involves travelling from the school site

- visiting an outdoor activities centre which provides opportunities for orienteering, adventure challenges or water-based activities

- planning for aspects of a number of strand units to be delivered in each lesson or emphasising a particular strand unit for some lessons.

Exemplar 17 outlines a series of five lessons for first or second class. It incorporates content from the four strand units of the curriculum for this level. Lessons 1–3 outline three activities to be undertaken—*one* activity is undertaken by each group in each of the lessons.

Exemplar 17

A unit of work in outdoor and adventure activities first and second classes

Strand units

Preliminary orienteering, Outdoor challenges, Walking

Warm-up activities

Jogging and running, turning to face north, south, east and west (simple guidance to recognise that sun rises in east, etc.),

Walking and learning to orientate a map

Lesson 1, 2, 3

Development of lesson

Class is divided into groups and each group is assigned a different task for each lesson.

Group 1: Orienteering activity (1):

A 'snake walk'

Follow a route marked on the ground using beanbags which takes the child around obstacles. Draw it onto your plan of the yard (different routes may be marked using various colours).

Group 2: Orienteering activity (2):

Pair activity: Using a plan of the yard, one child leads another around a course of his/ her choice. They record the route taken on a plan of the yard.

Group 3: Outdoor challenges:

Further pair work

Pair activity 1: complete the blind trail*

Pair activity 2: complete the adventure trail*

*activity outlined in curriculum for first and second classes

Lesson 4

Development of lesson

Orienteering activity (1):

Whole-class activity: Using a plan of the school grounds, make a simple journey to each feature marked. Orientate the map and record the control mark at that point.

Orienteering activity (2):

Pair activity: Repeat the above, recording the second symbol at the control mark.

Lesson 5

Development of lesson

Walking:

Whole-class activity: Walk in an area of parkland or countryside, noting how to care for the environment.

Run a short course on clearly marked paths or follow a taped route. (This activity may be undertaken in groups.)

Resources

map of school yard, obstacles or apparatus, blind trail and adventure trail equipment

Integration

Geography: map work, care of environment

Assessment

Among the techniques which may be used are

• teacher observation: child's attitude to the environment, competence in negotiating trails, fitness level (walking, running, negotiating obstacles)

• teacher-designed tasks: identify features from photographs and find them

• curriculum profile: use teacher observations to complete curriculum profile.

Approaches to aquatics

Planning an aquatics programme for most teachers will differ from planning for other strands of the curriculum, as it involves liaison with other personnel who may deliver the programme. However, this does not diminish the role of the class teacher, who should ensure that the programme caters for the needs of the class and forms part of the school plan for aquatics.

In addition to the considerations for planning the class programme outlined on pp. 34–9, the following guide will aid the planning process for aquatics.

The teacher should consider

- the number of qualified swimming teachers required to meet the needs of the class. Where a class teacher is a qualified swimming teacher, he/she can teach any of the strand units of the programme. The class teacher who is not a qualified swimming teacher may work alongside the qualified swimming teacher.

- how the class can be organised to cater for a wide range of abilities if necessary

    – where the practical difficulties related to the changing of clothes can be overcome, an infant programme for aquatics may be considered. It could focus on the strand units 'Hygiene', 'Water safety', 'Entry to and exit from the water' and 'Understanding and appreciation of aquatics'. Simple elements of the 'Buoyancy and propulsion' strand unit could also be included. It is essential that the children experience many structured play activities in water

Groups of children enjoy the aquatics lesson.

– a fifth and sixth-class programme should draw on all strand units of the programme, with an emphasis on some units for individuals or groups within the class: for example a few reluctant swimmers may benefit from extra time devoted to structured water play or simple buoyancy and propulsion activities; more competent swimmers may benefit from an emphasis on improving stroke technique

– each lesson should contain a range of activities from different strand units where possible to ensure a balanced approach.

• establishing liaison with the local pool personnel, outlining the proposed unit of work and his/her role in the aquatics lesson.

Exemplar 18 is designed for a mixed-ability class of any age. It incorporates activities from all of the strands.

Exemplar 18

Group 1
represents children who are beginners, some fearful of water.

Group 2
represents children who are beginning to show confidence in the water and a willingness to learn to swim strokes. They also indicate a willingness to put their face in the water.

Group 3
represents children who have good balance, breath control, arm and leg movements and an ability to develop strokes.

Introduction to the lesson (A)

- class-based session on hygiene practices when using the pool

    clothing, use of footbath, shower, toilet, etc.

- class or pool-based session on pool rules

- class-based session on safety at the pool

- pool-based check on hygiene practices

Introduction to the lesson (B)

- entry into the water practices vary depending on developmental stage of child

    Group 1: entry via the steps

    Group 2: entry by sitting, turning and slipping into the water

    Group 3: entry by stepping in from the poolside

Water play: group or whole-class activity

Group 1:

Play simple games in separate area of the pool

- walking races

- Simon says … where activities match level of ability of the group

- splish-splash (where bucket is placed floating in the middle of the circle of children, group tries to sink the bucket by splashing it full of water as fast as possible).

Group 2:

Play games in separate area of the pool

- over-and-under relay (ball is passed over the head and under the legs of a line of children)

- water push-ball (ball is moved by splashing and pushing water with their hands)

- 'Who can?' (where instructor calls out a 'who can' question followed by appropriate activities, e.g. float like a duck, put face in the water, etc.)

Group 3:

Play games in separate area of the pool

- chin ball (each swimmer pushes a small ball with the chin across the pool to another team member while walking on the bottom and holding hands behind the back)

- bobbing relay race (swimmers enter the water individually or in groups and progress across the pool by repeatedly submerging, then pushing off the bottom and jumping to the surface with help of the arms. It is important to emphasise getting a breath upon surfacing each time and exhaling underwater).

Development of the lesson

Group 1:

Further water play activities aiming to extend the child will benefit this group

- running across the pool
- placing the face in water or submerging on a signal.

Some children may not be ready for these activities and may need simple tasks to build up their confidence.

Group 2:

Practise buoyancy and propulsion exercises:

- float in a stretched shape, prone and supine positions
- push off the side of the pool and glide a distance
- practise arm and leg movements.

Use appropriate games as a method of teaching these skills: kicking like a frog, a 'Simon says' game where activities suggested are mainly promoting buoyancy and propulsion.

Group 3:

Practise arm and leg propulsion exercises that develop a stroke, e.g. front crawl.

Practise specific strokes.

Note: Many games are useful in teaching strokes, e.g. one-arm swim, kickboard killer (in pairs swimmers kick towards one another while holding on to the kickboard, trying to push their partner backward).

Concluding activity

Children leave the pool in order. Children may climb out using the steps or exit directly onto the side.

Assessment

Among the techniques which might be used are:

- teacher observation: confidence in the water, competence displayed entering the water, completing tasks in the water, application of safety and hygiene practices
- curriculum profile: use teacher observations to complete curriculum profile.

Integration

Aspects of the lesson can be integrated with science, e.g. floating.
SPHE lessons consider safety in the water and hygiene practices related to using a pool.

Looking at children's work

Children's work

Throughout the physical education lesson, the teacher is involved in various forms of assessment of children's work as a natural part of teaching and learning activities. Each form helps the teacher to ensure that on-going achievements are recognised, areas of learning difficulty and high achievement are identified, the progress of a child is recorded and communicated to other teachers and parents and the next stages of learning are planned.

A number of tools can be used to gather information about a child's progress.

Teacher observation

Teachers continually observe children as they engage in activities within the physical education lesson. The response of children to teacher questions and suggestions or the responses the child makes when set a task provide much valuable information about the child's learning. Information can be gathered on the child's level of skill, interaction within the class or group and level of understanding, for example. While questioning a child is an obvious means of examining his/her understanding, it is often useful to observe the child, for instance as a game is played. This situation provides not only an indication of the understanding of the child but also information on his/her skill level and interaction with a group. Such observation can indicate how he/she

applies skills in the context of a game: the child may be able to adapt the skill for use in a variety of situations in the game (striking a ball in a defensive position while being challenged by an opponent, striking the ball to score a goal from a number of angles) or may be limited to performing the skill in a restricted situation (striking the ball over a short distance, unchallenged by an opponent). This activity also provides useful information on the depth of understanding displayed (whether the child chooses the most appropriate means of attacking when he/she is challenged by an opponent) and on the interaction of the child within the group (how he/she supports team members in a defensive situation).

Talking to children individually or in groups and listening carefully to what they say as they plan or discuss their own work or the work of others helps the teacher to collect information. Looking at children as they practise skills can often result in more detailed information than testing a child to determine whether he/she has mastered the skills. Observing a child explore an idea for a dance as part of a group provides a range of information related to his/her creative development, social development in the form of interaction within a group and physical skills which can be assessed in the performance of the dance.

While teachers generally observe with learning outcomes in mind, sometimes it may help to identify particular groups or individuals in advance whose work might be the focus of more detailed observation during a particular class or for a specific activity within a class. Where a teacher observes a group, it allows for the assessment of how the individuals within the group interact. In this way, observation is undertaken in a more systematic way.

The simple recording of information in a notebook or on a clipboard helps to ensure that teachers' observations can complement other forms of assessment when compiling pupil profiles.

Teacher-designed tasks

Tasks will be designed by the teacher to provide a variety of opportunities for learning by the child. The curriculum describes tasks which are undertaken as part of the teaching and learning situation so that a normal class activity set up for teaching purposes can be used for the purposes of assessment. The teacher can set a task, for example, in games which may be an isolated skills practice. In gymnastics this may be an isolated movement or a full performance. The teacher should ensure that the task is valid, relevant and appropriate to the level of the child. The task can be controlled to meet the needs of the child and assessment needs by varying the level of difficulty, for instance. It is usually possible to adjust tasks in the teaching context as required.

The use of a wide range of tasks related to different strands is recommended in order to provide opportunities for all children to demonstrate their skills. The attitudes of children can also be assessed where they are likely to achieve varying degrees of success as they are challenged by tasks. A child who excels when completing a task in gymnastics, for example, may not cope as well with a task in the aquatics lesson. The quality of performance of the task can be noted as well as his/her acceptance of the levels of performance. Samples of a variety of tasks related to different strands are outlined below:

- roll a ball at a target

- play a 4 v. 4 game where two goals are to be defended and two goals can be attacked

- create a pair sequence using simple apparatus

- undertake a score orienteering event where a group discusses which controls to find in order to gain the highest score value

- pitch a tent involving a group deciding where to place it, how to prepare the location and how to construct it.

Some tasks may be completed as part of a lesson; others may require a number of lessons to complete.

This technique of assessment is especially useful in evaluating children's development of particular skills, and information gathered can contribute to the profile of the child.

Curriculum profiles in physical education

Curriculum profiles provide a means of assessing and recording the child's progress using indicators. These indicators are related to elements of the six strands of physical education, and teachers match their observations of pupils to the indicators in the profiles as the children undertake work. Sometimes the indicators are written in the form of summary paragraphs. Examples of such statements (which are not specific to a particular level) are outlined below.

The child

- understands and responds to stimuli and instructions

- begins to show control in ways of moving such as running, climbing, twisting and jumping

- measures performance in running, jumping and throwing activities

- moves with poise, control and co-ordination

- uses simple tactics to outwit an opponent in a games situation

- begins to create simple dances and games

- is confident and safe in water

- carries, uses and stores equipment safely.

Children's ability in relation to statements of achievement could be highlighted or marked, thus retaining a record of the child's progress. Information gathered by using curriculum profiles can supplement the information gleaned from other techniques of assessment to complete a pupil profile.

Information and communication technologies

Information and communication technologies can be used to supplement and research specific areas within the physical education curriculum as children complete units of work.

The internet contains a wealth of knowledge and information on many aspects of sport. Information can be sourced to extend the children's knowledge and appreciation of activities which they are experiencing in the physical education lesson. The history of sports, pictures of sports personalities or venues and results of sports events are readily available on-line. Daily newspapers provide further on-line information on current sporting events. The school could develop its own website to convey information about its physical education or extra-curricular activities. E-mail is also a useful medium for gathering information for projects related to physical education. The GAA website for example, providing information on the history of Gaelic games, sports results or club activities could complement a games unit of work which involves the children playing hurling. Any images which the children would access of local, national or international sportspeople could provide them with positive role models.

CD Rom Encyclopaedias on sport are also available and would allow children pursue their interests in physical activities.

The use of databases presents exciting opportunities to record sports day activities, league tables or results of orienteering events. When measuring achievements, children could use blank tables produced by word processor or using a simple publishing program to design simple record cards or charts. Control cards for orienteering customised for the school environment could also be designed.

Appendix

Suggested list of equipment for physical education

Suggested equipment for athletics and games

The ratio of equipment to each child is an important consideration. Where possible, for games lessons each child should have access to the striking implement being used, e.g. a tennis racquet per child and a ball per child or per pair of children. Similarly, for throwing and catching practices, each child or pair of children should have a ball.

Some aspects of the athletics programme require little or no equipment, but to provide a comprehensive programme certain basic equipment is necessary:

- a variety of small and large balls may include
  - tennis ball cores or tennis balls
  - vinyl balls of varying sizes (115 to 255 mm diameter)
  - lightweight size 5 balls (suitable for younger children and for volleying practices)
  - midweight size 5 balls (suitable for throwing, catching, rolling and kicking practices)
  - coated foam balls (for use with racquets)
  - foam or plastic mini rugby balls
- plastic hoops
- canes
- skipping ropes

- beanbags
- quoits
- wire skittles, foam hurdles
- plastic cones, multi markers or space markers
- braids or bibs
- plastic racquets, wooden play bats
- hockey sticks, hurleys, uni-hoc sticks
- wooden, plastic or alloy relay batons
- plastic or wire containers
- ball-carrying nets
- chalk
- tape
- stop-watch.

Suggested equipment for gymnastics and dance

The ratio of pieces of equipment to child should be considered when selecting apparatus for gymnastics. Gymnastic mats are a basic requirement, and an adequate supply of these is necessary to ensure maximum participation. A mat (6 feet by 4 feet) should be available for every two to four children where possible. Balance benches are another very versatile piece of equipment; between four and six benches would be adequate for most class sizes. The list below may be helpful:

- selection of music
- tape recorder

- hoops

- plastic cones, multi markers or space markers

- gymnastic mats

- portable or fixed climbing frame with attachments

- balance benches

- bar box or movement table.

Suggested equipment for outdoor and adventure activities

Outdoor education centres may provide a variety of equipment for use by class groups, e.g. stepping-stone courses, wall-climbing courses, rope walls, life jackets, etc.

Within the school it may be possible to construct adventure trails using benches, mats, climbing-frames, etc.

Suggested equipment for aquatics

At the swimming-pool, useful equipment may include

- swimming-floats

- diving-rings

- diving-sticks

- weighted diving-hoops

- ropes

- poles.

Suggested list of equipment for physical education

A. Playground/indoor games

The physical education curriculum refers to some playground and indoor games which may be used. These games are described below.

Cat and mouse

Groups of six to eight children form circles. Each group selects a cat and a mouse. On a given signal, the mouse runs around the circle, weaving in and out between the children. The 'cat' follows the path taken by the mouse, trying to catch the mouse in a given time, signalled by the teacher. The game is restarted with different children taking turns to be the cat or mouse.

Keep the basket full

A basket filled with beanbags is placed in the centre of the play space. The children are spaced around the play area facing the teacher. On a signal, the teacher tries to empty the basket by throwing the beanbags out as the children try to refill it. Each group of children is given about one minute to fill the basket, and each child is allowed to return only one bag at a time. The winning group is the one that has the most beanbags in the basket at the end of the given time.

Fox and geese

Children form groups of four: Mother Goose, Father Goose and Baby Goose; the fourth member is the fox. Mother Goose, Father Goose and Baby Goose join hands, with Baby Goose between Father and Mother. The fox is outside the ring and attempts to catch the baby. By twisting, turning or dodging, the parents must protect the baby.

Frozen bean bag

Each child walks, jogs or runs around the play space with a beanbag balanced on his/her head. If the bean bag falls off, the child kneels on the ground and waits for a friend to replace it. It can only be replaced by a friend who has to pick it up while continuing to balance his/her own beanbag.

Hot ball

Each group of six to eight children forms a circle. A ball is passed around the circle as quickly as possible and the children imagine the ball is 'hot' and so must pass it on very quickly. The winning group is the one that passes the ball past the leader the greatest number of times in a given period.

Stuck in the mud*

The children are spaced around the play area with five or six 'catchers' (identified by wearing coloured braids or bibs) spaced among them. On a signal, the catchers attempt to tag individual children. Any child who is 'tagged' can only be released when another child travels between his/her legs.

*An indoor surface is best for this game.

Hunt the beanbag

Children form groups of six to eight. Every player in one group collects a beanbag, except the player chosen to be the tagger. Children find a free space and move in the general space. The tagger tries to tag a player who has a beanbag. To avoid being caught, players run and dodge the tagger or throw the beanbag to another player. A player who is caught with a beanbag becomes the new tagger.

Prison ball

Two teams of ten to fifteen children face each other as in Fig. 5. Each team begins with four small balls. On a signal the balls are thrown across the centre line, aiming to hit any child in the opposing team below the knees. If a child is hit he/she must run to the 'prison' behind the opposing team. He/she can only be released by gaining possession of a ball which runs through the opposing team and crosses the end line. Once the prisoner gains possession and is released, he/she can rejoin his/her own team and continue playing. Additional balls can be introduced to speed up the play.


Prison for Y	x x x x
	
	        x
	x
	
	            x x
	x x
		y y y
		y y y
		            y
		y y y
			Prison for X
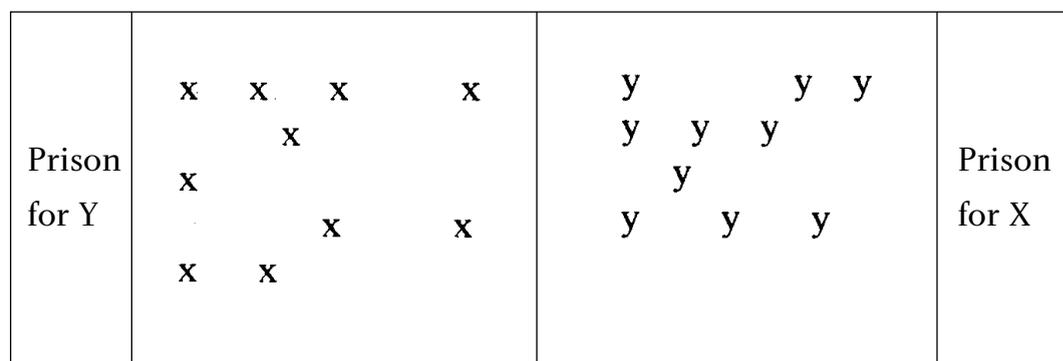
Fig. 5

Tunnel ball

Groups of six to eight children form lines, one behind the other, with the leader in front. They make a tunnel using their legs. The child at the front of the line (the leader) rolls a ball back through the tunnel until the last child receives the ball. When the last child receives the ball, he/she runs to the front with the ball while the rest of the group move back one space. The ball is passed back along the tunnel as before until all the children in the group have had a chance to roll the ball. The winning team is the first one to have its leader back in front. This game can be played by passing the ball overhead, or overhead and between legs alternately.

Wheel relay

Form into four groups and line up behind the bases in a wheel formation (see Fig. 6). Each team leader has a baton. Player 1 runs around the circle in a clockwise direction outside the other three teams and then joins in at the end of the team line. The baton is passed down the line to player 2, who runs around the course. Repeat until all players have had a turn. The relay is finished when player 1 arrives back at the head of the line and holds up the baton.


Fig. 6

NOTE: △ denotes marker such as cone
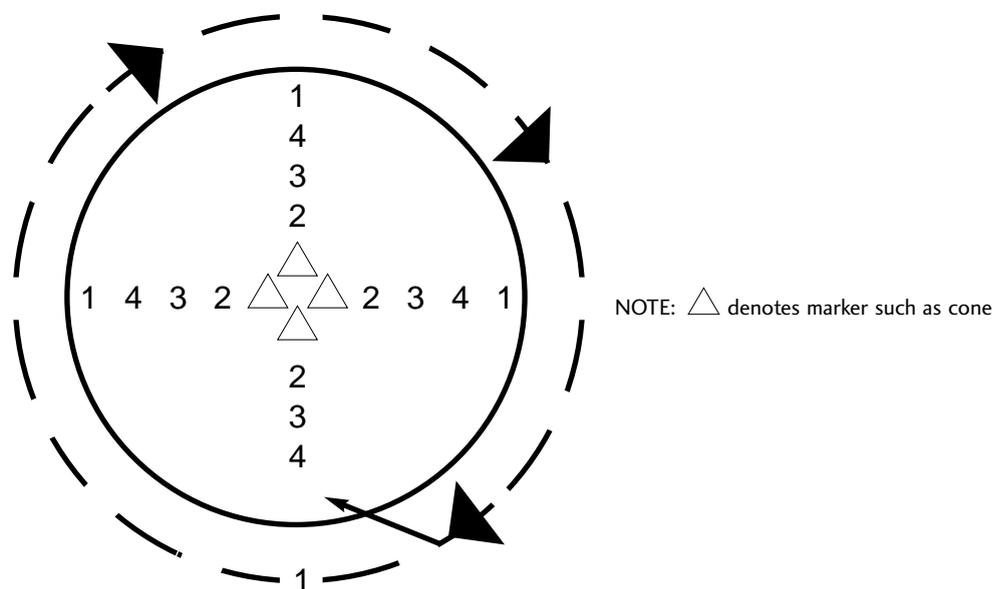
B. Athletics games

C. Games for aquatics

See physical education curriculum:
Athletics – Running

Parlauf (circle) relay

Children form groups of eight or ten.
They space around the perimeter of a
pitch or track as in Fig. 7. The aim is to
run in relay formation for a given time,
e.g. five minutes, and to record how
many laps they can run in that time.
Two or three teams may run at the same
time if space is available. The distances
covered by each runner will vary
depending on when the baton is
received and handed over. It is
important that two runners stand at the
start line; one runs with the baton, the
other waits until the baton is passed
around to him/her before running.
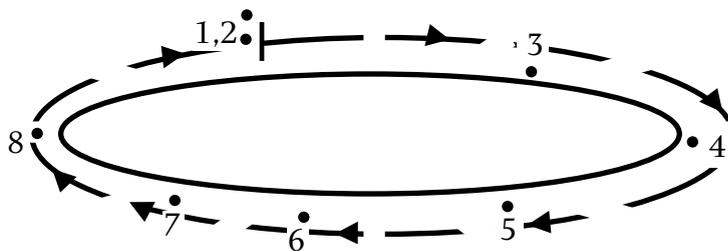
The physical education curriculum
refers to some games for aquatics.
These games are described below.

Crows and cranes

The children form two lines facing each
other about three metres apart. One
group are the crows, the other are the
cranes. Teacher calls out either 'Crows'
or 'Cranes', who become the taggers
and try to capture the other team
before they reach their home side.
Children who are tagged join the
other side.

This game can be adapted to suit levels
of ability: for example, some groups may
be required to swim during the game,
others could run.

What time is it, Mr Shark?

Children (fish) spread out in water and
try to avoid being caught by the Shark.
Safe areas may include a side of the
pool or a buoyed line. In unison, the
fish call out 'What time is it,
Mr Shark?' Shark calls out random
times (e.g. 5 o'clock) and the fish swim
that number of strokes towards the
shark. They then head for a safe area.
When the shark calls out 'Dinner time',
he/she tries to catch the fish before
they reach safety. Tagged fish can
become sharks or simply return to
the game.

Fig. 7

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Glossary

The definitions below are commonly understood working definitions for use with the primary curriculum and teacher guidelines.

aesthetic	concerned with appreciation through using the senses with imaginative attention
approach run	the running action before a long jump is attempted to ensure a good take-off when jumping
bivouacking	making a makeshift camp or tent
bounce pass	X passes the ball to Y, allowing it to bounce once on its way
bound	a movement that can be stopped or held without difficulty at any stage
buoyancy	capacity for floating lightly on water
canon	where dancers perform movements one after the other: A followed by B followed by C
chest pass	X holds the ball at chest level and passes the ball through the air to Y
chipping	the skill of passing the ball by kicking it from the ground and forcing it to rise into the air to travel
dig technique	a technique used in volleyball to strike a ball that is close to the ground
dynamics	the energy of movement
flow	the flow of a movement can be 'bound' or 'free'
foam javelin	lightweight javelin with dependable flight pattern, safe for class use
folk dance	the dance associated with a particular country, often part of a traditional celebration
form	the overall design for patterning the dance, its shape and structure
HELP	heat-escape-lessening posture. A life-saving technique in which the individual uses a floating aid and adopts a floating position that reduces heat loss
huddle	used in an emergency in water: participants huddle together around flotation aids to conserve heat

invasion games	games such as hockey, basketball, hurling and football that involve players contesting a shared space while defending an area and attacking another area
lead leg	the leg which leads when clearing a hurdle
orienteering	making one's way quickly across terrain with the help of a map and compass
overhead pass	X holds the ball above the head and passes it to arrive at chest height of Y
Parlauf relay	a circle relay, which involves six to eight children spread around the perimeter of a track or pitch. They run in relay formation for a given time and record how many laps they complete
pathways	the pattern made by movements in the air or on the floor
pop pass	popping a rugby ball in the air to the target (one metre approximately) with hands held underneath the ball
primary shot/discus	soft, light shot and lightweight foam discus, both safe for class use
propulsion	swimming actions that drive the body forward
reaction sprints	sprinting from various starting positions, e.g. a sitting position, lying on face or back, standing with back to starting line, etc. The emphasis is on reacting quickly to the command 'go'
scissors technique	a basic jumping technique where the child approaches the jump from the side and kicks the near leg vigorously up and over the centre of the bar (opens the scissors). This is followed by bringing the far foot up and over (close the scissors), while the near foot is brought down into the landing area
sculling	a skill by which the body can be propelled, balanced and controlled in the water
sequence	one movement followed by another creates a sequence

shuttle relay	a relay where the chosen distance is completed two or three times without pause before the next child starts
sling	the 'swing and throw' action of the discus
space	personal space is the area around the body when from a stationary base it can be extended in all directions and at all levels
spin pass	one hand underneath to spin the rugby ball, an upward movement with this hand when passing
sweep pass	passing the rugby ball sideways to the target
tension	stretching without straining the body
theme	a movement idea that is studied and developed throughout a lesson or series of lessons
time	any movement uses a quantity of time, and variations of time may be developed into rhythmic patterns. The quality of time is shown by the suddenness of movement or how movement can be sustained
toe tapping (soloing)	a skill of Gaelic football which involves running while kicking a ball from foot to hand; the ball may be bounced off the ground once between each toe tap
trail leg	the leg that trails over the hurdle, i.e. the back leg
travel	move from A to B
treading water	a skill that allows a swimmer to remain afloat, in one place, in an upright position, with the least expenditure of energy
unison	all dancers move at the same time
weight	the use made of the weight of the body and the muscular action, that together enable the child to move with varying degrees of strength or lightness
weight bearing	taking or balancing the weight of one's body on one part or parts of the body

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