

The PE and Sport Premium: An assessment of primary schools' spending and reporting

Research undertaken by the

Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Durham University



Executive summary

This report presents research commissioned by the Sport and Recreation Alliance that investigated primary schools' usage of and accountability for ring-fenced funding provided for the PE and Sport Premium (PESP). The research focused on the school year 2017/18 in which overall funding for the PESP was doubled to £320m and new requirements on reporting swimming attainment were put in place. The report draws on both quantitative and qualitative interview data in order to address lack of national and publicly-available information on spending of the PESP since an earlier evaluation, commissioned by the Department for Education, was published in 2015.

Analysis was undertaken of public reporting of PESP spending through a representative sample of 423 primary school websites. Only 59.3% of sampled primary schools were fully compliant with Department for Education (DfE) requirements to publish their overall allocation of Premium funding and a full breakdown of spending (or prospective spending) by April 2018. This figure for reporting compliance fell to 17.5% when also considering the additional requirement introduced in 2017/18 to provide additional information on pupils' attainment in swimming. For 11.8% of sampled schools, there was no information on their websites that detailed PESP spending in any year since the inception of the funding. Reports from some schools also indicated underspending and rolling over of PESP funding between years and interviews with school staff and additional examples from spending reports demonstrated further uncertainties as to what the DfE may regard as acceptable uses of the PESP.

For those schools meeting reporting requirements, spending towards each of the five key indicators for the PE and Sport Premium and towards different types of uses was quantitatively analysed. Aligned with perspectives gained from interviews with staff from five schools, the quantitative data showed that greater proportions of spending were used to expand activities and engage all pupils in physical activity than was allocated to increase participation in competitive sport. Of all the different potential uses of the PE and Sport Premium, spending on facilities and equipment (21.2% mean proportion of allocation) was only exceeded by the proportion used to employ additional staff (30.7% mean). This finding gives rise to concerns about sustainability, particularly as both quantitative and interview data pointed to a relatively low proportion of funding being solely and directly used for staff development.

Interviewees also commonly expressed apprehension over the future of the PESP itself, and some indicated that being notified of their school's funding allocation on a year-by-year basis constrained the extent to which their PESP spending was orientated towards longer-term objectives.

Five clusters of schools that each shared similar patterns of PESP spending were also identified from quantitative analysis. In four of these clusters, PE and Sport Premium spending was concentrated on particular types of PESP usage and only in one cluster was spending more consistently allocated across different areas. Trends in the composition of these clusters, complemented by additional analysis, indicated that spending on staff development tended to be relatively high amongst those schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. These schools also spent less than others on employing additional staff, whereas this type of spending was higher in clusters where schools with weaker OFSTED reports were more commonly represented. Peak spending on equipment and facilities was found amongst small schools and in the cluster which also had the largest proportion of rural schools.

Recommendations

The research findings lead to the following recommendations being made:

1. Government should confirm the future of the PESP funding beyond 2019-20 as soon as possible. Greater clarity on the future of the PE and Sport Premium beyond annually-announced allocations is needed to enable primary schools to take a more long-term approach to planning expenditure.
2. Forthcoming updates of Department for Education guidance for the PE and Sport Premium should promote learning and good practice in terms of both how the Premium is spent and how it is accounted for. Such guidance should:
 - Include case studies from exemplar primary schools showcasing their use of the PE and Sport Premium to support more informed and balanced spending amongst the wider population of primary schools;
 - Better promote awareness and take-up of existing tools to assist schools in meeting their accountability requirements, notably the Association for Physical Education (AfPE)/Youth Sport Trust (YST) reporting template;

- Better promote awareness and understanding of the national curriculum requirements for swimming and water safety and the Swim England resources and training available to help schools meet them.¹
 - Encourage schools to link with others in their local area to enable sharing of effective practice in PESP spending.
3. Schools should be required to demonstrate their reporting of PE and Sport Premium funding both publicly on their websites and in returns of wider information to the Department for Education. This would ensure that all schools are fulfilling their accountability requirements and more consistent and comprehensive data capture would support improved understanding of PE and Sport Premium spending by central government, its agencies and the wider sports sector.
 4. Consideration should be given to moving the deadline for annual PESP reporting to September to ensure that schools have sufficient time to account properly for all spending over the preceding academic year. Such a change would also allow for a clearer assessment as to whether proportions of future funding should be withheld from those schools not fulfilling the accountability requirements.
 5. Further investigation should be undertaken on the long-term sustainability of PESP spending, and especially the extent to which employment of external coaches appropriately and effectively contributes to professional development for permanent school staff.
 6. Further consideration should be given to providing greater flexibility within the spending rules so as to improve the long-term effectiveness of the Premium. This might, for example, include:
 - Allowing schools to carry over excess PE and Sport Premium funding into subsequent years (possibly subject to limits);
 - Pooling funds with other local schools to invest in shared equipment and facilities;
 - Investing some or all of the funding into capital projects designed to improve the long-term provision and quality of PE and sport.

¹ See <https://www.swimming.org/schools/resource-pack/> and <https://www.swimming.org/schools/school-swimming-training/>

Introduction and research purpose

This report presents research examining the usage and reporting of the ringfenced allocation of PE and Sport Premium (PESP) funding that is provided to primary schools annually. The PESP was first instigated in the 2013-14 school year, with annual government funding of £160m collectively from the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (up until 2015). In the school year 2017/18, this £160m of funding was complemented by a further £160m from the proceeds of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy that came into effect in 2018. Government has committed to this doubling of the PESP for the three years from 2017/18-2019/20. The government's School Sport and Activity Plan that was published in July 2019 promised to update guidance for the PE and Sport Premium but did not provide any indication of further funding beyond 2019/20.

With the exception of independent and nursery schools, most primary schools in England receive an individual PESP allocation. All schools with more than 16 pupils receive a common baseline allocation, plus an additional amount dependent on their number of pupils. The doubling of the overall funding and allocation formulae in 2017/18 meant that each school received a baseline £16,000 with an additional payment of £10 per pupil. Schools with less than 16 pupils received £1000 per pupil. Schools received this funding in two tranches across the school year.

Primary schools are expected to spend their PESP in order to achieve improvements across the following five key indicators:

KI1: the engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity

KI2: the profile of PE and sport is raised across the school as a tool for whole-school improvement

KI3: increased confidence, knowledge and skills of all staff in teaching PE and sport

KI4: broader experience of a range of sports and activities offered to all pupils

KI5: increased participation in competitive sport

Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools>) also indicates that usage of the PESP should 'develop or add to the PE and sport activities' and should not be used to teach the minimum requirements of the national curriculum or cover preparation and assessment (PPA) arrangements. A broad, if not

necessarily exhaustive, list of exemplar uses of Premium funding is also provided in the DfE guidance, and the advice to schools also emphasises the importance of sustainability through 'build[ing] capacity and capability within the school to ensure that improvements made now will benefit pupils joining the school in future years'.

Accountability mechanisms for the PESP have been an important concern. Alterations were made to Ofsted's schools inspections handbook so that these now include assessment of the usage and impact of the PESP. All schools are also required to report the following information on their usage of the PESP on their website²:

- The amount of Premium funding received in that academic year;
- A full breakdown of how it has been spent (or will be spent);
- The impact the school has seen on pupils' PE and sport participation and attainment;
- How the improvements will be sustainable in the future.

In 2017/18 an additional requirement was added for schools to report on 'the number of pupils within their year 6 cohort that meet national curriculum swimming requirement'. This requirement responded to recommendations of the Swim Group which undertook a comprehensive review of curriculum swimming and water safety in schools³.

To aid schools in complying with these accountability requirements, a bespoke reporting template for the PESP has been developed by the Association for Physical Education (AfPE) and the Youth Sport Trust (YST) with this being available to all schools to use if they so wish⁴.

For the 2017/18 year, schools PESP reports were required to be publicly available on their websites by 4 April 2018.⁵

² In 2017/18 and preceding years, schools were required to publish their PESP spending reports by April of the school year to which they relate. The reporting date was changed to 31 July in guidance for the 2018/19 school year.

³http://www.swimming.org/assets/Swim_England_Curriculum_Swimming_and_Water_Safety_Review_Group_Report_2017.pdf

⁴ <http://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/evidencing-the-impact-guidance-template/>
<https://www.youthsporttrust.org/PE-sport-premium>

⁵<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pe-and-sport-premium-funding-allocations-for-2017-to-2018/pe-and-sport-premium-conditions-of-grant-2017-to-2018-local-authorities-and-maintained-schools>

Despite the PESP being in place since 2013, public information on the extent of compliance with accountability requirements and understanding of how the funding is being spent across the country are limited. The DfE has published findings from two sets of surveys on the use and perceived impact of the PE and Sport Premium that were each undertaken with a national sample of primary schools in 2013-15 and 2018⁶. A small number of specific studies of PESP spending in particular geographic areas have also been undertaken⁷. In February 2019, a report on the PESP was published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on a Fit and Healthy Childhood⁸ drawing on existing sources of information and a range of expert testimonies. Recommendations on strengthening schools' PESP reporting and accountability featured prominently amongst those made by the APPG, and align with those made in this report.

It remains the case, however, that there are no publicly available national studies that have analysed the data from primary schools' official and published reports of PESP spending.

To address this evidence gap, the Sport and Recreation Alliance commissioned Durham University to undertake analysis of schools' PESP reports and interviews with school staff in order to:

1. Identify, where possible, the extent of compliance with the requirements for the 2017/18 PESP in relation to spending and the provision of accountability information;
2. Identify patterns of spending of the 2017/18 PESP across primary schools;
3. Explore the reasons underpinning primary schools' PESP spending and;
4. Where possible, identify the extent to which spending is informed by available evidence and good practice.

This report reports on findings and recommendations from this research.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pe-and-sport-premium-an-investigation-in-primary-schools>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-pe-and-sport-premium-survey>

⁷ Griggs, G. (2016). Spending the primary physical education and sport premium: A West Midlands case study. *Education 3-13*, 44(5), 547-555.

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/investigation-schools-accused-of-fudging-sport-premium-funding/>

⁸ <https://royalpa.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/the-primary-pe-and-sport-premium-report-180219-2.pdf>

Research methods

The first, primary stage of quantitative research involved accessing primary schools' websites through July and August 2018 to collate data from their reports of PESP spending. Identification of primary schools for this data collection followed the approach of the earlier DfE-commissioned evaluation of the PESP. This ensured that the overall sample of 423 schools for this study was representative of all schools in England in respect of the proportions of schools in each of the following categories:

- Maintained or academy schools
- Located in urban or rural areas
- Classed as small (up to 149 pupils), medium (150 to 299 pupils), large (300+ pupils)
- In each quartile with respect to the proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals (first quartile, Q1, schools having the lowest proportions, and fourth quartile, Q4, having the highest).

The sample did not include special schools, as sampling these proportionately would not have provided a sufficient sample size for meaningful analysis.

For all schools, initial data was compiled as to whether their reporting met DfE requirements for stating their overall allocation of PESP funding and a full breakdown of spending (or prospective spending)⁹. Further data was collated for those schools for which a full breakdown of PESP was available. For the 109 schools that fully used the AfPE/YST reporting template, spending allocated to each of the five Key Indicators for the PESP was recorded. Furthermore, for those 277 schools whose reporting allowed it, spending was categorised according to the following items that were identified in DfE guidance on potential uses of the PESP¹⁰:

- Staff professional development
- Hiring additional staff and/or external coaches
- New and expanded sports, dance or other activities

⁹ Compliance with further DfE reporting requirements concerning PESP impact and sustainability would have required subjective judgements and therefore were not suitable for quantitative analysis.

¹⁰ Underlined terms represent those used to identify these categories throughout the remainder of the report.

- Increasing participation in sport competitions
- Partnerships with other schools,
- Encouraging pupils to take on leadership or volunteer roles
- Additional swimming provision,
- Equipment and facilities.

Spending that did not fit this categorisation was recorded as unclear.

Various statistical analyses were undertaken on the quantitative data collated from website reports. These analyses enabled identification of: overall trends in reporting and spending, distinct groups of schools that shared similar patterns of PESP spending, and any also any differences in spending between different types of schools¹¹.

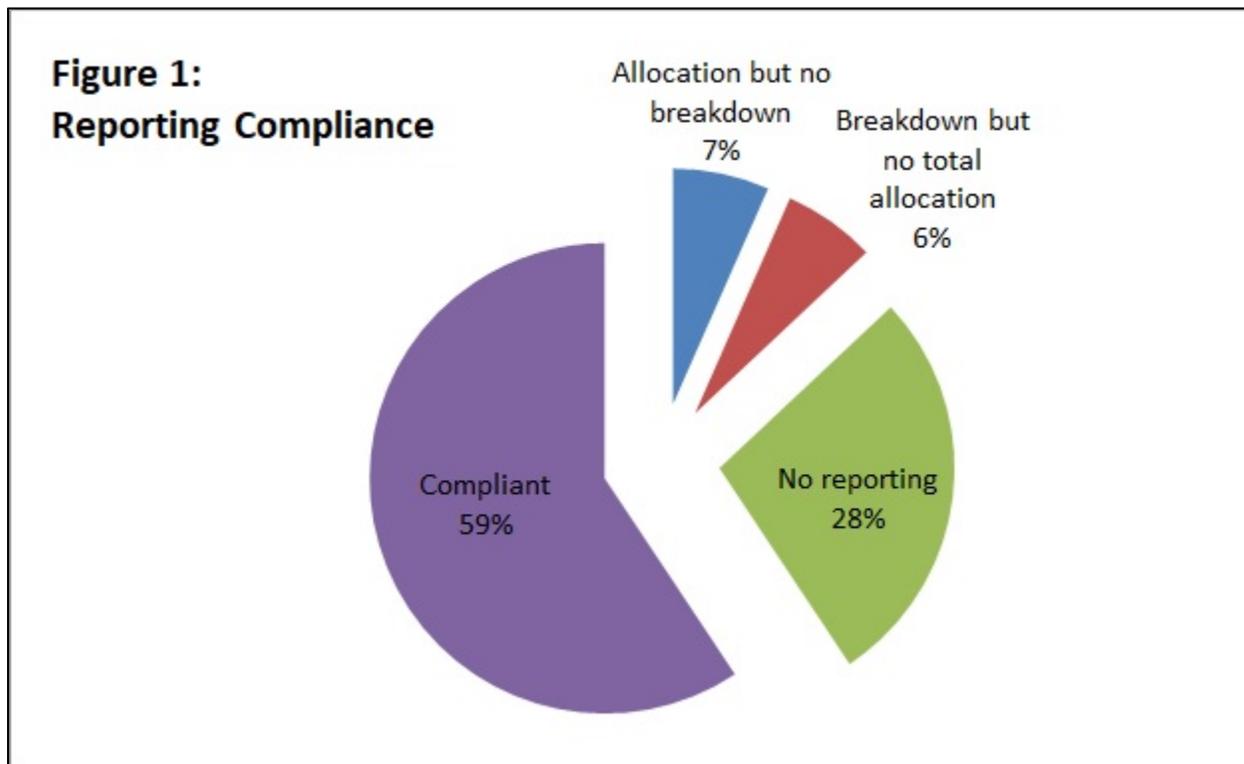
Subsequently, the second phase of qualitative research involved interviews with staff from a sample of five primary schools to gain in-depth data regarding their use of the PE and Sport Premium. The five primary schools were identified to represent each of the different school spending clusters that had been identified through analysis of quantitative data. This selection was designed to enable understanding of decision making in schools spending the PESP in different ways and to gain insights into other, wider issues identified through the quantitative analysis. These schools included both maintained and academy schools and varied according to their size, proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and urban/rural location. In each school, the interview was undertaken with either the Head Teacher or PE Lead Teacher.

¹¹ See appendices for specific details of the statistical analyses and additional results tables.

Research findings

Reporting standards and compliance

Figure 1 displays the proportions of the 423 sampled primary schools to report on their allocation and breakdown of spending of the 2017/18 PESP. There were no statistically significant differences in the types of schools that did and did not report on their PESP.



In total, 172 of the 423 sampled schools were not compliant with key reporting requirements related to PESP allocation and spending. This was broken down as follows:

- 117 schools (28% of the total sample) did not provide any reporting on the 2017/18 PESP.
- 28 schools (7% of the total sample) provided the total but no meaningful breakdown of their spending in this year
- 27 schools (6% of the total sample) provided a breakdown of spending but not their specific total allocation.

Furthermore, only 79 schools (or 18.7%) of the 423 sampled provided details on pupils meeting national curriculum swimming requirements, as was obligatory for 2017/18 reporting. More specifically, only 17.5% of the entire sample of schools met the reporting requirement for swimming and also those for providing their PESP allocation and spending breakdown.

Of the total of 145 schools that either did not report or did not provide a spending breakdown for the 2017/18 PESP, 78 had reporting documentation for the preceding academic year (2016/17) available on their website. These schools may be considered as potentially ones that would subsequently publish their 2017/18 reporting prior to the start of the next school year, but after the April 2018 DfE deadline. However, the websites of 50 schools (11.8% of the overall sample) did not include any reporting for any year of the PESP since its inception¹².

Schools identified for interview were amongst those that had provided a 2018/19 report on their website. In general, interviewees found the reporting requirements relatively easy to undertake and this was particularly the case if the school staff involved had been responsible for this reporting over multiple years and had built reporting into ongoing processes for planning and monitoring for the PESP. While interviewees felt that reporting requirements were manageable and appropriate given the ring-fencing of the PESP, they did raise concerns that reporting for the PESP was in addition to existing systems of accountability that schools' already perceived as onerous:

I don't think the [PE and] Sport Premium in itself is ... overly time consuming. The fact that we, as education professionals, are constantly having to almost prove rather than improve all the time, it's just it's a proof culture.

Analysed website reports and interview data also demonstrated varying interpretations of, and some uncertainty regarding, DfE guidelines on how PESP funding was to be used. Amongst the 278 schools in the wider sample that provided a breakdown of spending, there were a number that included items that lay outside the exemplar uses of the PESP provided in DfE guidance.

¹² Although there is no formal requirement for schools to provide or publish historical records of PESP spending for preceding school years, the absence of such reporting is presented here as an indicator that suggests longstanding issues in accountability. On the other hand, maintaining records of PESP spending over multiple years was undertaken and represented good practice in a number of schools that were compliant with website reporting requirements.

Such spending included, for example, provision to enhance nutrition or other areas of pupil health, other extra-curricular and enrichment activities, and staffing costs required for these and other purposes. The following example from one interviewed school is indicative both of uncertainty regarding types of spending that are not explicitly covered in the DfE guidance and of decision making that, as a result, gives priority to needs identified within the school:

I have put money aside for the transport [to swimming] which I know I'm not really supposed to do but as far as I'm concerned, I need to do what's right for the bigger picture of my school sometimes, and I would justify it.

In addition, there were also schools whose website reports indicated spending either greater or less than their allocated 2017/18 PESP funding. 51 schools reported on spending of more than £1,000 over their Premium allocation, with this excess being more than £50,000 in two cases. Some schools with such excess spending explained that their 2017/18 reporting included funds from either their core budget or from Premium allocations carried forward from previous years. On the other hand, unaccounted for underspends of over £1,000 were either identified or stated in 79 schools, and 11 schools' reports indicated underspending of over £10,000 from the 2017/18 Premium allocation. Such underspends may have reflected the April 2018 reporting deadline that was before the end of the school year. Nevertheless, there is not guidance on the DfE website that states whether it is allowable to carry funding between academic years in which there could be under- or over-spending and the identified trends in reporting may again be reflective of schools' uncertainty in respect of PESP funding conditions.

Schools' priorities and decision making for the PESP

Insights into the priorities and process of schools' PESP decision making were drawn from the set of interviews undertaken. While the five schools' expressed priorities for the PESP varied somewhat across health and well-being, competitive and non-competitive sport and other particular activities, a common theme across these schools was to use the PESP to 'try and get as many children involved as possible' (Cluster 2 School). Interviewees expressed concerns regarding pupils' limited opportunities and engagement in physical activity outside school and so viewed the use of PESP funding as being important to compensate for this within the school setting. Although the majority of schools interviewed saw this as a widespread issue, one school

particularly sought to utilise PESP funding in ways that 'target[ed] children that didn't do any out-of-school clubs' (Cluster 4 School).

This example represented a case of PESP decisions being influenced by the context of the particular school and its' pupils. Some generalized, quantitative trends in this regard are presented in the next section of the report, but interviewees gave further examples of how decisions on PESP funding were influenced by the factors that they recognised specifically within their own school:

- With a high proportion of their pupils qualifying for free school meals, one school (from cluster 1) utilised PESP funding to provide free after-school clubs as charging for attendance would otherwise have excluded pupils
- The rural location of another school (from cluster 2) meant that PESP spending on transport was essential to enable attendance at off-site activities
- Concerns that teachers lacked experience or confidence in delivering PE and sport, or required further support as a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), was noted by three interviewees as a factor affecting decisions about how to use their PESP funding.

Interviewees primarily identified localised forms of support and guidance as being influential in determining plans for PESP spending. Staff from local School Sport Partnerships and Country Sport Partnerships were mentioned as being able to offer guidance and information when required. Informal and formal networks with other primary schools were also identified as a key source of ideas as well as information on the availability of potential activities and providers that could be paid for through the PESP. Most interviewees were confident in their capacity to identify effective uses of the PESP funding within their school. One school also identified good practice in consulting with their school council and pupil sport ambassadors to determine PESP spending plans.

Concern about the long-term future of the PESP was a common issue across interviewees. Interviewees recognised and agreed with the aspiration that PESP funding should be spent in ways that have sustainable benefit within their school. However, DfE confirmation of PESP funding on a year-by-year basis affected some schools' longer-term planning and annual decision making. For example, interviewees from different schools (cluster 3 and 2 respectively) indicated:

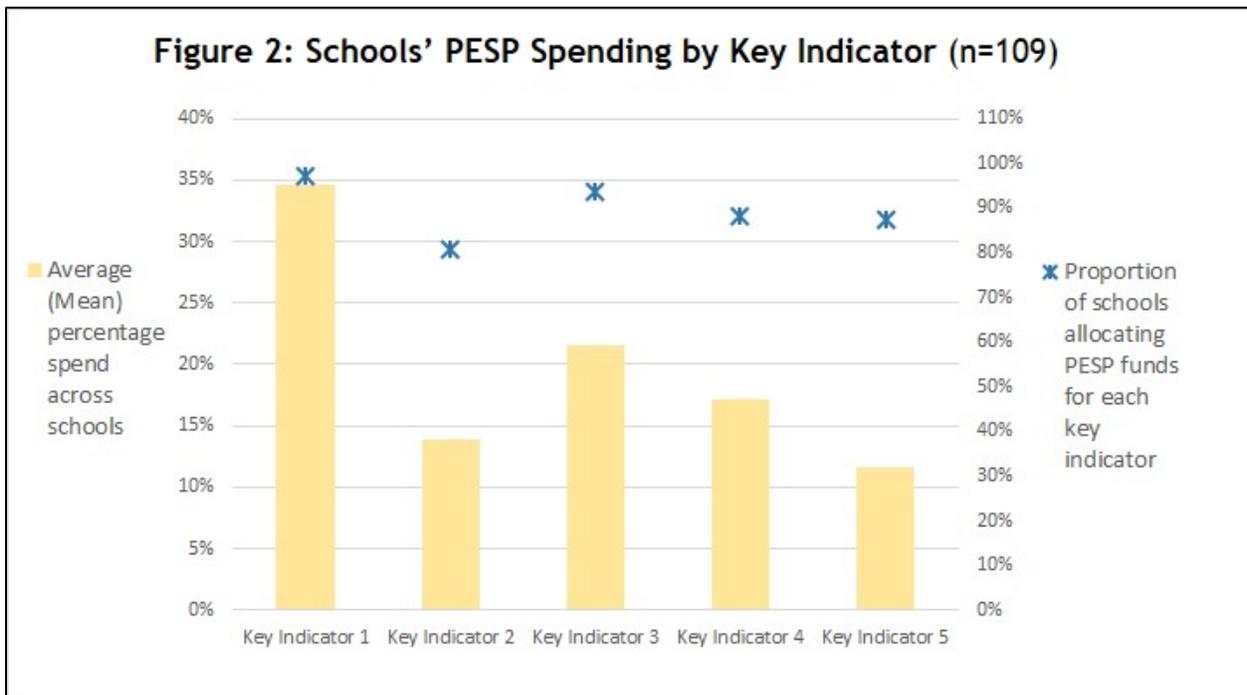
if you are aware of it over a two-, three-year period then you can plan more, the money gets spent more wisely. Whereas if you only have it year by year the sustainability ... you don't really know what's going to happen the following year.

We don't quite know how long we're going to keep getting this money for, especially the doubled sport premium, so let's spend it on giving our children some real lasting memories.

These quotes indicate difficulties for schools' in balancing PESP spending between, on the one hand, delivering activities that immediately engage pupils in beneficial ways and, on the other, uses that foster sustainable capacity for provision into the future. The significance of such difficulties is reinforced by further findings presented in the following section.

Patterns of spending amongst primary schools

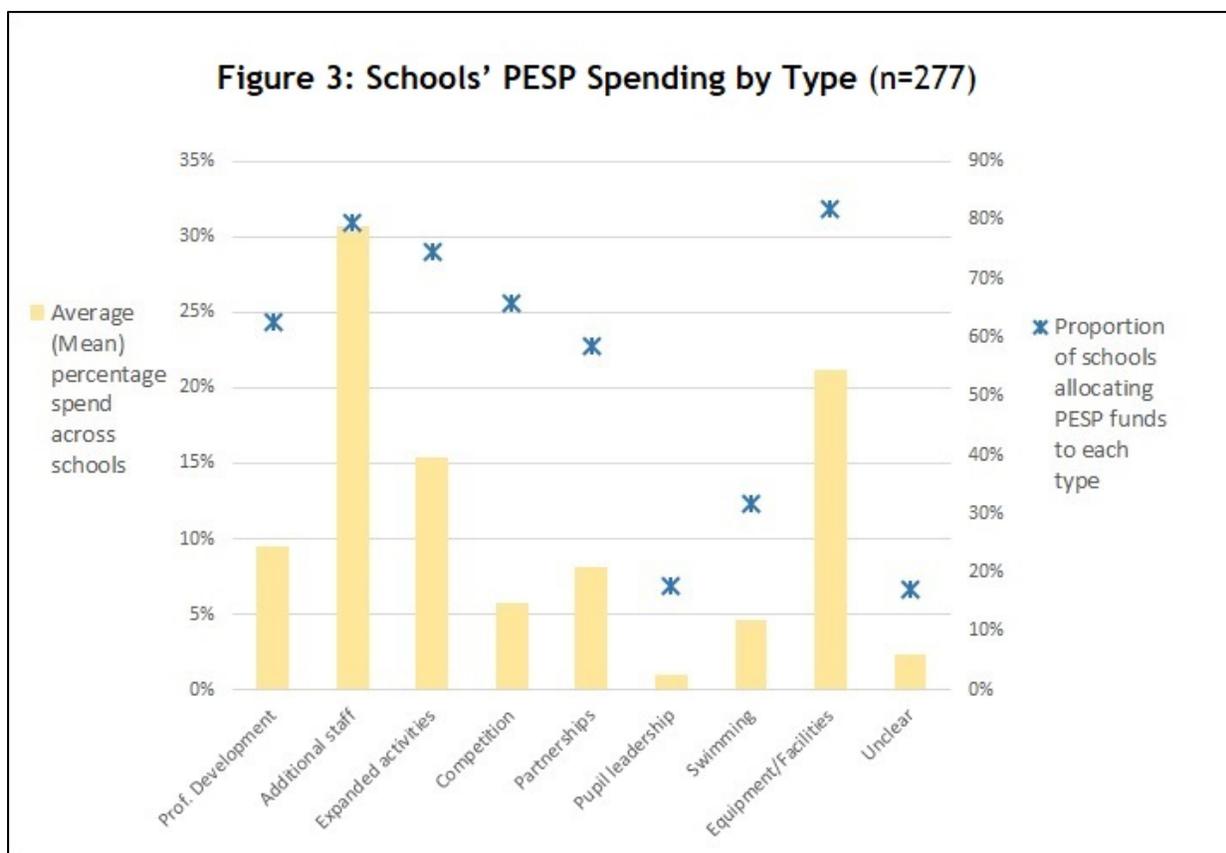
109 of the 278 schools that provided a spending breakdown for their 2017/18 PESP allocation did so using the full reporting template that has been jointly developed and provided by AfPE/YST. Through this template these schools differentiated their spending by the five key indicators set for the PESP.



The proportions of schools (shown on the right axis in Figure 2) show that the majority reported some PESP spending allocated across all key indicators. There was more variation in the average percentage of spending (left axes) allocated to each key indicator. On average, schools spent the highest proportion of their PESP funding on engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity (KI1, mean percentage spend 34.6%). Conversely, the lowest proportion of reported spending was on increased participation in competitive sport (KI5, 11.6%). While these figures may include spending on activities that addressed both of these key indicators, they do appear to indicate a prioritisation towards physical activity rather than competitive sport.

Of the remaining key indicators, schools reporting through the AfPE/YST format indicated that a relatively high average percentage of Premium funds was spent on increasing confidence, knowledge and skills of all staff in teaching PE and sport (KI3, 21.5%). While a relatively low average proportion of funds were spent on raising the profile of PE and sport across the school as a tool for whole-school improvement (KI2, 13.9%), interviewees did indicate that the overall ring-fencing of the PESP did consequentially give PE and sport a higher profile within their schools than may otherwise have been the case.

Beyond the findings solely from schools using the AfPE/YST template, a larger set of 277 schools provided reports that allowed categorization of their types of spending. The characteristics of this set of schools closely matched those in the whole sample, which suggests that they are comparable to the population of schools across the country. Figure 3 presents the proportion of these schools (measured on the right axis) that used any of their PESP on each type of spending, and the average (mean) proportion of schools' overall Premium funding that was spent on each type (left axes).



On average, schools spent 30.7% of their PESP on employing *additional staff* and only 20.6% of schools did not report any spending categorised as such. Of this kind of spending, one of the schools selected for interview had employed a secondary-qualified specialist PE teacher to enhance the quality of both targeted health-orientated activities and provision for school sport teams. Two of the schools had either employed or were considering employing a PE apprentice with PESP funds, with this considered good practice because:

I think that could support our school ethos a bit better, just in terms of having an additional person here most of the time as well and just being part of our team instead of having sort of an external coach that just comes in once a week. (Cluster 2 School)

Nevertheless, additional staff employed through the PESP funding were predominantly external sport coaches. Common debates about the use of coaches to deliver PE were represented amongst interviewees, as demonstrated by the following quotes:

Obviously our teachers have to wear many hats and have to be good at everything, and sometimes it's just not easy to be good at everything, and some of my teachers don't feel they have the expertise and confidence in teaching PE. So, I do employ, or I pay for coaches to come and teach alongside the teachers. (Cluster 2 School)

Fundamentally I have reservations about using sports coaches as like PPA cover teachers because they're not teachers ... They are very skilled, but often it's the teacher training element, so the behaviour management, the understanding each child's individual learning needs etcetera, that aren't always considered and taken care of. (Cluster 1 School)

Other than this latter school, the rest of those interviewed all spoke of external coaches working alongside teachers and other school staff in order to support professional development and build sustainable capacity for PE delivery. While this was also commonly evident through published funding reports, the average of spending specifically allocated towards *professional development* was relatively low (mean proportion spend 9.5%). 104 of the 277 schools that presented spending breakdowns did not allocate any specific funds for professional development, and only one interviewed school used the PESP to enable teachers to access particular training courses. Combined with the high spending on additional staff, these findings regarding professional development do give rise to significant concerns regarding the sustainability of impact from PESP spending.

Further debates regarding sustainability relate to the use of PESP funding for capital expenditure, which continues to be a type of spending that is subject to some uncertainty. DfE guidance changed from not mentioning capital expenditure in the 2017/18 school year covered in this research to specifically prohibiting it in 2018/19, although some flexibility appeared to remain in respect of equipment purchases if these were in line with schools' own capitalisation policy and their related accounting protocols. In 2017/18, 81.9% of schools reported spending some PESP funds on *equipment and facilities* and the average proportion of such spending (21.2%) was the second highest of all categories. Two of the interviewed schools did indicate that funding was used to replace and update equipment. Other interviewees, however, felt that upgrading facilities in their school grounds represented a particularly effective way to spend PESP funding in order to increase widespread participation on an ongoing and sustainable basis:

Things that are spent in the playground, you're getting the whole school using them continuously ... A gym trail that had to be repaired [is] used every day by everyone, and luckily, you know, it wasn't a huge amount of the budget, but it enabled us to do that and develop other things as a playground as well. (Cluster 3 School)

As with spending reported by key indicator, a greater proportion of schools' spending was on *expanded activities* that enhance the range of provision or involve the least active pupils (mean 15.4%) than was spent, on average, on entering and running *competitions* (5.7%). There was also a relatively low proportion of spending (mean 8.1%) on *partnerships with other schools* to run sports activities and clubs, although 58.5% reported some spending in this area. In practice, however, overlap between these categories is likely as one interviewee spoke of:

We're probably at a sporting event of some description every week, whether it be competitive or non-competitive, and ... any cover for that or anything else is funded through the premium as well. (Cluster 1 School)

Competitive and non-competitive events attended by other interviewed schools were also at external locations and so using PESP funding for transport was essential for their involvement.

Interviewees also described similar issues with the provision of *swimming* activities. A relatively small proportion of over PESP funding (4.6%) was spent on swimming, and less than a third of schools (30.6%) allocated any funds to such activities. However, costs such as pool hire and transport meant that swimming represents an expensive activity for primary schools and interviewees indicated their provision would not have been feasible without the PESP.

Additional, in-depth analysis of different categories of spending used specific statistical analysis to identify groups of schools that spent their PESP in similar ways. The most effective way to interpret this analysis was based on the identification of five clusters of schools. This analysis also allowed identified common characteristics of schools in each cluster, as follows:

- Cluster One was largest cluster (including 31.6% of schools sampled) and was primarily defined by having schools with the highest relative spending on *employing additional staff*. Schools in this cluster also had relatively high spending on *pupil leadership*, but relatively low spending across all other categories. Relative to proportions of schools in the whole sample,

schools in cluster one were slightly more likely to be located in urban areas and to be rated as 'requires improvement' or 'serious weaknesses' in their most recent OFSTED inspection.

- Cluster Two included 24.0% of the sampled schools. Similar to the previous cluster, this cluster also had a peak of spending in a specific category, namely *equipment and facilities*. This cluster also had relatively high spending on *partnerships* and, to a lesser degree, *hiring additional staff* – but had relatively low spending in the remaining categories. This cluster had higher proportions of rural and small schools than was the case in any of the other clusters. Relative to the whole sample, this cluster had a slightly higher proportion of maintained schools, those in the quartiles one and two with lower proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, and those in the lowest category of OFSTED ratings.
- Cluster Three was a smaller cluster, comprising of 11.6% of the sampled schools. Similar to Clusters One and Two, schools in this cluster again focused their spending in specific categories: having the highest spend of any cluster on *professional development* and second highest spending in *swimming* and *competitions* categories. Its spending in other categories, and especially those for *additional staff* and *partnerships*, was relatively low. The characteristics of schools in this cluster was quite distinctive, being the cluster with the highest proportion of maintained schools, the highest proportion of medium sized schools, and the highest proportion of schools in the first quartile that has the lowest proportions pupils eligible for free school meals. The cluster also had the lowest proportion of small schools.
- The 10.7% of schools identified in Cluster Four had spending that was the least evenly distributed of all the clusters. Spending on *partnerships* and *swimming* was higher in this cluster than all of the others. Conversely, this cluster had the lowest spending in the categories of *professional development*, *equipment and facilities*, *competitions*, and *pupil leadership*. The composition of this cluster was distinctive in being the one with the highest proportions of academy, urban and large schools. The cluster also had by far the largest proportion of schools that were in the fourth quartile with highest proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, as well as the lowest proportion of schools in the first two quartiles.
- Unlike other clusters, Cluster Five was distinguished by relatively consistent spending across all categories. This group was in the top three clusters for spending in each spending category, with the highest spending in the categories of *expanding activities*, *competitions*, and *pupil*

leadership. This cluster accounted for 22.1% of sampled schools and included greater than average proportions of academies and large primary schools. It also had more schools that OFSTED judged to be 'outstanding', and the smallest proportion of schools that OFSTED rated as 'requires improvement' or with 'serious weaknesses'.

Identification of these clusters of schools was complemented by additional analysis which sought to identify any significant differences in types of PESP spending by different types of schools. Across all types of spending and characteristics of schools, this analysis found seven statistically significant differences which were classified as being of small to medium scale in each case. Free school meal quartile accounted for four of the seven statistically significant differences found:

- Schools with the lowest proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals (quartile one) spent, on average, a higher proportion of their PESP on *professional development* (13%) than those in both quartile two and quartile three (both 8%).
- Conversely, schools in quartile one proportionately spent less (mean 24%) on *additional staff* than those in quartile two (mean 35%).
- Schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (quartile four) spent more on *swimming* (mean 7%) than those in quartile three (mean 3%).

School size accounted for two further statistically significant differences. Small schools spent a greater proportion of their PESP on *equipment and facilities* (mean 27%) than medium-sized schools (mean 19%) but, conversely, less on *expanded activities* (respective means, 12% vs 17%). Finally, those schools rated by OFSTED as outstanding spent less on average on *swimming* (mean 2%) than those schools rated as 'good' (mean 5%).

Report written by: Dr Iain Lindsey, Adam Gemar, Josie Alderman, Joe Armstrong
Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Durham University

