

Social Policy Association: 5th-7th July 2010

## Abstract

Labour's move towards joined up thinking has meant that physical education and school sport was no longer on the receiving end of educational policy but mainstream sports policy. Moreover, ideological assumptions about physical education and school sport has led to it being seen as a 'vehicle' for a wide range of broader policy objectives (Houlihan & Green, 2006), including elite sporting success, lifelong participation, health and well-being, community regeneration and educational achievement. However, these very different objectives provide an indication of the complex nature of policy making within school sport and physical education.

The main mechanisms for meeting these objectives in physical education are school sports partnerships and specialist sports colleges as introduced through the PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy (DfES, 2004). This partnership approach means that physical education teachers are having to work with partners from a wide range of sectors, including county sports partnerships, private sector sports providers and voluntary sector clubs. Indeed, the specialist sports college and school sports partnership were introduced into what could already be described as a crowded policy space (Houlihan, 2000).

The aim of this paper is to explore how New Labour's approach to education and sport has shaped physical education in England since 1997, and specifically to understand the complex, crowded policy space that physical education occupies.

## *Introduction*

The ERA (1988) has often been referred to as the most important educational legislation since the 1944 Education Act (John, 1990; Sharp and Dunford, 1990; Maclure, 1992). This importance is reflected in the volume of literature focussing on the impact of the ERA education generally and physical education specifically (Bowe et al., 1992; Evans et al., 1993; Penney and Evans, 1999; Gorad and Fitz, 2000). Whilst the significance of the ERA to education is acknowledged in this paper, it will be suggested here that for physical education the ERA had an all but negative impact on provision in the UK. It effectively reinforced the low status of physical education and this led to a period of time where physical educationalists repeatedly defined and redefined the role and remit of the subject to justify the subject's worth educationally. This situation created a unique but complex context for policy making in education. More recently the acknowledgement by New Labour of the role PE and school sport may have in terms of meeting wider social objectives has added yet another layer of complexity. It is this context which will be explored in this paper, including the introduction of partnership working by New Labour within physical education.

## *Background*

It was during the late 1980s that 'politicians, first on the Left and then the Right, turned to the organisation and content of the education system, rather than to the economy itself, to locate both the source and the solution to society's economic and social ills' (Evans et al., 1993, p.328). That is not to say that this was the first time that central government had expressed concern over the education system (John, 1990). However, during the 1970s we saw an increase in Government involvement in education. This gradual change ultimately led to an erosion of local government power and the introduction of a National Curriculum for all subjects (John, 1990; Bowe et al., 1992; Penney and Evans, 1999).

The ERA impacted not just upon the context for education and physical education but it also introduced changes to the content of educational programmes through the introduction of a statutory National Curriculum for 5-16 year olds. It was also at this time that physical education practitioners were criticised by the government and popular press for liberal approaches to physical education that 'down played' the value of 'traditional PE' and competitive team games (Evans et al, 1993). As Evans (1992) documents, physical education

'was used by the political right in Britain to illustrate much broader curricular and ideological trends in the education system and to signify all else that was wrong with state

education provision and to vilify and negate progressive elements within it. Because many people equate PE with sport and discussion on this subject was likely to have widespread popular appeal' (p.234)

Issues concerning the place and definition of physical education became central to debates over the content of the National Curriculum for physical education, and certainly raised the political profile of physical education and school sport (Houlihan and Green, 2006). However, the attention physical education was gaining from politicians and the public was not mirrored in the attention it received during the development of the National Curriculum. During the construction of the National Curriculum the government made clear the division between what were termed 'core' and 'foundation' subjects. In England core subjects included English, mathematics and science with foundation subjects including technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages, art, music and physical education. The schedule for developing and implementing the National Curriculum was organised around this division, with core subject curricula being devised and implemented before those of foundation subjects (Penney and Evans, 1999). Physical education was one of the last subjects to be developed and implemented (Penney and Evans, 1999). This created a situation whereby subjects within schools were competing for resources (Bowe et al, 1992; Evans et al, 1993; Evans and Davies, 1993). The phased process of implementation of the national curriculum meant that subjects that were 'settled in' (Evans and Davies, 1993)

first had a 'head start' in the competition over staff, time and resources (Evans et al, 1993; Evans and Davies, 1993). Moreover PE moved to a position where its development was under threat due to the limits put on time and resources (Penney and Evans, 1999).

Within the competition for space, curriculum subjects did not start out on equal terms (Evans et al, 1993). Indeed it has been suggested that the process for developing the national curriculum reflected the implicit educational hierarchy which had emerged historically (Penney and Evans, 1999; Houlihan and Green, 2006). As a result of the comparatively late development of the national curriculum for PE, the timetable for its implementation was considered by some to be unreasonable (Penney & Evans, 1999). It limited the opportunity for teachers to reflect on or appraise the implications of the new national curriculum for physical education (Evans et al, 1993). Physical education teachers were also excluded from the National Curriculum working group whose majority comprised of 'professional sportsmen, business and educationalists, clearly indicating the governments understanding of who should and should not be involved in the policy making process' (Penney and Evans, 1999). It has been argued that the composition of the working group was indicative of the government's understanding of what physical education *should be*.

In summary, despite the attack upon physical educators and physical education (Evans et al., 1993), and the attention it received from the both

public and press, the National Curriculum did little to improve the context for physical education provision. Research on the policy making process indicates that despite the promise of reform, very little changed after the passing of the ERA (1988) for physical education except the reinforcement of its low status as a subject (Penney and Evans, 1999).

Not only did the ERA create a situation where subjects were competing for space in the curriculum but also, through the introduction of local management of schools (LMS) there was competition between schools for pupils and consequentially funding. Evans et al. (1993) put this rather crudely when they said that within the ERA 'pupils enter the school system with a price tag attached. The more pupils a school attracts, supposedly the wealthier it becomes' (p.323). For schools to increase their budget they had to attract as many pupils as possible therefore resulting in schools competing with each other for the rare commodity, the pupil (Bowe et al, 1992, p.35).

### *Competition and Cooperation in Education*

The introduction of market forces intended to increase competition between schools to improve quality but the government failed to acknowledge the impact that this would have upon the nature and extent of co-operation between schools (Adnett and Davies, 2003). As several studies indicate, the ERA increased levels of competition both between schools and among subjects within schools (Foskett, 1998; Penney and Evans, 2000; Davies et

al, 2002). Indeed head teachers referred to their relationships with other schools as competitive (Balloch and Thomas, 1997). Furthermore, some authors reported that the introduction of local markets made schools more 'inward-looking' and more self-centred resulting in a decrease in cooperation between them (Ribchester and Edwards, 1998, Power et al, 1997). Taken together this evidence suggests that after the ERA (1988) schools worked independently, competing against each other as a result of embracing the concept of the competitive market. It is important to note that research investigating the impact of market forces on competition and co-operation cannot be generalised. In contrast, evidence has suggested that whilst there was a movement towards a market culture this was slow and variable and dependent upon the history and nature of the local education market (Foskett 1998; Davies et al, 2002; Adnett and Davies, 2003).

Nevertheless it is evident that the ERA did result in complex interactions between schools at a local level (Davies et al, 2002) and put schools in competition with one another for students (Edge and West, 1996). Moreover, some authors have suggested that market forces could result in segregation and separation between schools (Bowe et al, 1992; Bowe et al, 1994) in terms of their working practices. In addition the impact of formula funding and market forces had on the relationship with other educational partners (such as LEAs) has been highlighted (Bartlett, 1993). As Bartlett (1993) commented 'there is a feeling of being under siege, and a perception that their position is being undermined as more and more of their powers are being stripped away' (p.136). This notion is consistent with research into market forces within other

sections of the public sector, with market forces leaving public sector organisations inward looking and concerned with their own business (Bovaird & Tizard, 2009). What is important here is that the focus on competition through market forces has affected the working relationships and power relations between schools within a local market, especially when policies and initiatives since the ERA are examined. As the next section shows, educational policy through the 1990s promoted both competition *and* co-operation between schools (Adnett and Davies, 2003). How schools, and in particular physical education teachers, are able to respond to two conflicting governance models (competition and co-operation) is considered here, with a more direct focus upon policy making within physical education.

#### *Physical Education Policy through the 1990s: Sport Raising the Game*

Throughout the 1990's schools were subjected to a barrage of physical education and sport initiatives and policy. This was largely as a result of the benefits of sport and physical education to wider societal issues being further realised by policymakers and stakeholders (Houlihan and Green, 2006). Many initiatives and policy developments at this time aimed to 'improve' provision across all levels of sports development from grassroots to elite level. When John Major took office as Prime Minister in 1990 he clearly demonstrated his support and intentions for sport and specifically, school sport (Evans and Penney, 1995; Houlihan and Green, 2006). Newspaper reports at this time,

'suggested that in the minds of both the PM and the MfS (Minister for Sport) all was not well with PE in state schools. Children were not receiving a sufficient diet of competitive team games in the PE curriculum and 'urgent' action was needed "to revive England's fortunes" on the international sporting stage' (Evans and Penney 1995).

This issue of decline in competitive team sport was further stressed within the Conservative Government's policy statement *Sport: Raising the Game* (DNH, 1995), in which John Major, comments,

'My ambition is simply stated. It is to put sport back at the heart of weekly life in every school. To re-establish sport as one of the great pillars of education alongside the academic, the vocational and the moral' (John Major, DNH, 1995, p.2)

The language used in this excerpt suggests that the Prime Minister defined sport in schools and physical education as something entirely separate from academic, vocational or moral education. Within *Sport: Raising the Game* the role of competitive team games was emphasised and essentially reduced PE to sport (Evans and Penney, 1995). It was within this competitive sports agenda that the Conservative Government first suggested the introduction of specialist schools and specifically specialist sports colleges (DNH, 1996). Indeed it was hoped that specialist sports colleges would provide selected secondary schools with the opportunity to focus on physical education and sport (DNH, 1996). It was promised that 'standards' in physical education and

sport would be raised by strengthening links between schools and communities (DNH, 1996). The mention of links between schools and communities was the first indication of a political shift within physical education from a competitive market to one that incorporated co-operative working practices. This was primarily with clubs and community groups rather than other schools.

### *New Labour: New Approach?*

According to Houlihan (2000) the newly elected Labour Government in 1997 wished to 'outshine' the previous administration with regard to commitment to elite sport. Despite this, the Labour administration did not completely re-invent policy and provision for physical education and school sport. Instead specialist sports colleges remained and was embraced by the Labour government reflecting some continuity between the previous Conservative government's and the newly elected Labour leadership's conceptualisation of the role of sport in education (Houlihan, 2000). This emerged as a result of the Blair administrations' desire to use specialist schools to create diversity, and hopefully excellence, in education, as well as sporting excellence.

This commitment to sport in education (as opposed to physical education) was further demonstrated in the publication of *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000) whereby school sport continued to emerge as a vehicle for the governments wider societal objectives (Houlihan and Green, 2006). This was in keeping with New Labour's desire to promote joined up thinking through a

cross cutting agenda. New Labour saw the potential for sport and school sport to tackle a wide range of issues including social exclusion, community cohesion, health and obesity and crime and anti-social behaviour (Collins, 2010; Coalter, 2008). To find a rationale for this we only have to consider the history of sport and physical education, both of which have been repeatedly linked ideologically with values of health promotion, discipline, social and moral development, team building to name a few (Green, 2003). These deep seated beliefs about the potential for sport and physical education to impact positively on society and its citizens have become part of the 'common sense assumption' concerning the value of sport. Coalter (2008) suggests this is because sport has a 'mythopoeic' status. These beliefs about sport are based upon popular ideas, loosely based on history (Muscular Christianity for example) which have 'become reified and distorted and represent rather than reflect reality, standing for supposed, but largely unexamined, impacts and processes' (Coalter, 2008, p.9). Whilst these ideas about the role of sport have repeatedly been used to direct sport and physical education policy, New Labour's desire to develop joined up thinking through cross-cutting approaches magnified the role sport could play in tackling wider social issues.

### *The role of partnerships in physical education and school sport*

Whilst the introduction of market forces under the Conservatives resulted in a shift from coordination to contracts, a reduction in local government power and fragmented responsibility for services (Balloch & Taylor, 2007), under

New Labour government from 1997 we witnessed another shift, this time from a 'contract culture to a partnership culture' (Balloch & Taylor, 2007), with the use of partnership working being seen as a solution to fragmentation of power and responsibility (Balloch & Taylor, 2007).

The use of partnerships as a solution to the problems created by marketisation was evident in many areas of Labour Government policy, and it is therefore unsurprising that attempts to develop partnership culture have become central to physical education and school sport in England. Whilst specialist sports colleges have been operational in England since 1997, it was the Labour Government that gradually rolled out the school sports partnership. Together specialist sports colleges and school sports partnerships have become the key mechanism for delivering change in physical education and school sport (DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2001; DfES and DCMS, 2003; DfES and DCMS, 2004). In this context partnerships were introduced to create a range of specialist schools and share good practice, thus creating diversity and hopefully excellence. The aim of having a number of expert (specialist) schools which can share subject specific good practice and CPD across a range of schools was to improve the quality of the entire curriculum. In addition, labelling a school as 'specialist' in Information Technology or Sport was intended to allow parents to select a school that meets their child's academic strengths or career aspirations.

School sports partnerships are families of schools within a local community that work together to improve physical education and school sports provision

(DfES and DCMS, 2003). Partnerships consist of a specialist sports college, secondary schools and primary schools. Therefore, specialist sports colleges have a dual role. First, as part of a wider specialist schools programme, specialist sports colleges were intended to work to develop and improve whole school standards within and beyond their specialism (DfES and DCMS, 2004). Secondly, the specialist sports college acts as a hub school for the school sports partnership. A school sports partnership is managed by a full time partnership development manager, usually based within the specialist sports college, whose role is to lead the partnership at a strategic level, making links between schools, clubs and the community. There are several school sports co-ordinators (SSCos) within the partnerships, based in each secondary school (except the specialist sports college). The role of an SSCo is to work with an assigned family of primary schools to improve physical education and school sport. These are usually teachers within the secondary schools who are released two or three days a week. The final role within the partnership is that of the primary link teachers (PLTs). These are primary school teachers, usually the PE co-ordinators who are released from teaching for 12 days a year. The role of a PLT is to improve physical education provision within their primary school. Six sports colleges had been designated when the Labour Government came to power in 1997 (DfEE, 1997) and at present there are now 450 specialist sports colleges.

The central role of specialist sports colleges and school sports partnerships for physical education and school sport was further confirmed through the publication of the *Learning through PE and Sport: PE, School Sport and Club*

*Links Strategy* (PESSCL Strategy) (DfES and DCMS, 2003). Specialist sports colleges and school sports partnerships were two strands of the PESSCL strategy (DfES and DCMS, 2003). The overall objective of this strategy was to increase the percentage of 5-16 year olds spending a minimum of two hours a week doing high quality physical education and school sport, within and beyond the curriculum to 85% by 2008 (DfES and DCMS, 2004).

The developments outlined in *A Sporting Future for All* (2000) and the PESSCL strategy was an attempt to 'incorporate such schools (specialist sports colleges) into a planned, co-ordinated and integrated organisational and administrative model of elite sport development' (Green, 2004, p.374). This move towards 'joined up thinking' (Flintoff, 2003) using a partnership approach, involves different government departments responsible for sport (DCMS) and education (DfES) and support by other non-government agencies (Youth Sport Trust and Sport England). Furthermore with Sue Campbell (Chair of the Youth Sport Trust) being appointed as a non-political adviser to the DfES and DCMS and the formation of the School Sport Alliance (including DfES, DCMS, New Opportunities Fund and Youth Sport Trust) (Houlihan and Green, 2006), the relationship between PE and sport policy had never been stronger (Flintoff, 2003).

This move towards 'joined up thinking' through partnership working meant that physical education and school sport was not just on the receiving end of educational policy but also mainstream sports policy. As Houlihan (2000) comments 'the specialist sports colleges appear to sit uneasily at the

intersection of at least three distinct sectoral interests' (p.183). These are national governing bodies, through their interest in talent identification at grass roots level, educationalists through their interest in the promotion of lifelong learning, and finally community sports development teams in local government through their interest in community provision (Houlihan, 2000). This indicates the extent to which school sport and PE has emerged as a 'vehicle' for a range of Government broader policy objectives (Houlihan and Green, 2006). These objectives include health, elite sporting success, lifelong participation and improving educational standards.

These very different objectives are indicative of the complex nature of policy making within school sport and physical education. This is an area in which a number of agencies or sectors have a common policy interest with each attempting to assert control over policy (Houlihan, 2000). As previously discussed, this competition over control and power in education and physical education policy is not new (Bowe et al, 1992; Evans et al, 1993; Penney and Evans, 1999) but, whereas previously the state has exercised control over physical education provision, recently 'the elite development policy community has greatly strengthened its voice and influence over government policy in the last 10 years' (Houlihan, 2000, p.179). Moreover, there has been an absence of a clear and coherent lobbying from PE professionals and other sports organisations. This led to the government creating a 'set of 'insider' interest groups, in which the YST played a central role, and from which PEAUK and BAALPE were excluded from key discussions about the direction of school sport and PE policy' (Houlihan and Green, 2006, p.88).

Another reason why school sport and PE became such an important political tool and central to the elite sport agenda was the entrepreneurial skills of one individual, Sue Campbell. Campbell 'astutely positioned school sport and PE as a solution to government's policy problems relating to educational standards, learning and achievement, which created a...benefit in other salient political areas such as citizenship and health' (Houlihan and Green, 2006, p.89).

All of these developments have led to the creation of a very complex policy arena for physical education and school sport. At the ground level the centre of this is the school sports partnership. The many individuals working within these partnerships have to not only reconcile these conflicting and complex ideas about what physical education and school sport is all about (health, elite sport, etc), but they also have to work in partnership with individuals from different backgrounds, with competing priorities, to create a coherent provision that addresses both policy targets and local needs. Yet there is little evidence about the extent to which individuals and schools are able to achieve this is relatively unknown, nor how individuals and schools are coping with these pressures. It will be argued here that in order to fully understand the 'success' of school sports partnership we need to explore partnership working and power relations in school sports partnerships. The next section seeks to use ideas around partnership working theory to begin to generate a critique of partnership working in physical education and school sport.

Whilst there is only limited research which analyses collaboration or partnership working within school sports partnerships, some authors have begun to examine partnership working within sports development and leisure (Frisby et al., 2004) and within other sectors (Huxham & Vangan, 2000; Cardini, 2006; Weal & Coll, 2007). In addition Government funded research which evaluates SSPs also provides some indication of how these SSPs have been functioning.

A key part of the rationale for partnership working as a mode of governance is that partnerships have the potential to create a more cohesive approach to delivery, the pooling of resources and the sharing of knowledge, and ultimately to create a 'synergy' which is worth more than the sum of its parts (Mackintosh, 1993). However, for this to occur there needs to be some common interest between different partners and often the difficulties in bringing together different interests and different cultures is underplayed (Balloch & Taylor, 2007). When trying to understand partnerships through research, Balloch and Taylor (2007) stress the importance of adopting a critical perspective in an attempt to understand the impact of expectations and assumptions attached to partnership working.

Research into leisure and sports partnerships have found that collaborative trends are a key factor influencing partnership success. Some of the central benefits for engaging in partnerships in the first place is to pool resources (Child & Faulkner, 1998) and therefore avoid duplication of work (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002), develop innovative solutions (Frisby et al. 2004),

and pool influence (Robson, 2008). All of these benefits can be described as a 'collaborative advantage' (Huxham & Vangen, 2000) and were arguably particularly powerful to New Labour when trying to address social issues.

The concepts of inclusion and participation have also been central to New Labour's use of partnerships and have been articulated through collaborative working and theories of social capital (Cardini, 2000). However, despite partnerships being formed for collaboration does not mean that successful collaboration occurs (Sterling, 2005). Several tensions can manifest within partnerships which may hinder the potential for collaboration to occur. Moreover, as partnership sit alongside market-based approaches to governance there is potential here for conflict (Newman, 2001).

Sterling (2005) suggests that in order to examine the impacts of constraints and expectations of successful partnership working we need to consider two dimensions which influence partnerships; organisational features of the partnership and wider governance process which influence the nature of the partnership. When examining the organisational features of partnerships both contextual and internal features need to be considered (Sterling, 2005). These contextual features influence how partnerships are organised, here the availability of funding, reporting demands and governance are important factors (Sterling, 2005). Internal factors relate to staffing, processes of monitoring and evaluation, implementation style (Sterling, 2005).

### *The Collaborative Trend and School Sports Partnerships*

Whilst many of Sterling's (2005) framework is relevant to an analysis of school sports partnerships, this paper will use Sterling's (2005) concept of collaboration. Sterling (2005) argues that a key feature of partnerships is a collaborative trend. As previously identified one of the key rationales for partnership working is the need to create collaboration, often to overcome issues which have arisen from a fragmented approach. Despite acknowledging the relationship between partnerships and collaboration,

Sterling (2005) suggests that in reality the process of collaboration may only be partially realised (Sterling, 2005) as in reality there is potential for several tensions and challenges to result from partnership working. This next section will consider the extent to which these tensions are apparent within SSPs and suggest how tensions in partnerships impact on the success of SSPs.

One of the difficulties with collaboration through partnerships is that partners often have differing objectives and cultures. Research has highlighted that the compatibility of organisational objectives is an important factor in determining successful partnership working (Frisby et al., 2004). A conflict over financial input or output, social objectives or political direction can create underlying irreconcilable differences between partners (Robson, 2008). Given that SSCOs and PLTs have a role within their school and within the partnership, each SSCo and PLT could be working to two sets of objectives. There is clearly considerable potential for a conflict between objectives here. For example, Flintoff (2003) found that SSCOs focussed on establishing primary links with their feeder primary schools. This could be as a result of SSCOs

prioritising their schools objectives ahead of partnership objectives. More importantly, as schools are having to reconcile tensions through simultaneously competing and collaborating (Bell & West, 2003, Flintoff (2003), it is in the secondary schools' interest to develop strong links with their feeder primary schools, given that they are in competition for pupils. In addition, given that SSCos are also required to collaborate with sports clubs, sports partnerships and private sector partners, who have vastly different priorities the potential for conflicting organisational priorities here is magnified.

Flintoff (2003) also found that during the introduction of SSPs SSCos were working very differently to each other. The flexibility of SSPs creates an opportunity for policy slippage or to occur as well as the scope for SSCOs to work to different priorities and agendas. The relative freedom that exists in SSPs allows SSCos to shape the development of PE and school sport within their clusters, focussing development around what they considered important (Flintoff, 2003). It has been reported that between 56% and 98% of PDMs consider that the partnerships they have been able to create and sustain are 'valuable' or 'extremely valuable' (IYS, 2008). However on closer inspection, links with funding sources tended to be highly valued but links with smaller community regeneration initiatives (e.g. Positive Futures) were considered less valuable (IYS, 2008). Moreover, the value attributed to partnerships with County Sports Partnerships varied at different points in time (IYS, 2007; 2008). It can be suggested that could be as a result of the changing perception of the value of county sports partnerships by PDMs, in particular as the PDM role changed to focus on community club links.

The extent to which individual PDMs and SSCos value links will influence the direction and success of the SSP. The example given here has been that SSCos tend to concentrate on forming links with feeder primary schools, potentially as a result of the need to compete for pupils. The implications are that an SSCo may neglect primary schools that are not traditional feeder schools, resulting in an unequal level of provision and support. At the next level, PDMs tend to value links which have funding attached to it more than links with smaller community providers, and it can be argued that links with community schemes designed to improve community provision and meet wider social objectives will not be valued and therefore will not have an impact.

If at PDM and SSCo level the freedom and power available to individuals is shaping the progression and direction of SSPs, this in turn is likely to create inconsistent provision for the development of PE and school sport provision, not just across a partnership but across England. Perhaps of greater concern for policy makers and advocates of particular policies, there is the potential for some policy targets not to be realised at all.

This debate over the distribution of power in partnerships is inextricably linked to notions of empowerment and social capital. If we are to consider power as a fluid, ever changing concept which is produced and reproduced through societal structures and normalising values, then theoretically everyone working in partnership is empowered to bring about change (Healey, 1997). However, it is argued that this rather idealist view of power distribution and

empowerment does not consider existing power inequalities within partnerships and that those who have power and resources will have the power to retain control and resources (Mayo & Taylor, 2007).

### *Conclusion*

In summary, this paper aimed to firstly explain the context for policy making in physical education. It has been argued that physical education sits uneasily at the intersection of at least three distinct sectoral interests (Houlihan, 2000, p.183). In line with New Labour governance partnerships have become a key delivery mechanism in physical education. Schools are now required to work collaboratively with partners in order to deliver a range of objectives which reflect the interest of national governing bodies of sport, educationalists and sport development teams. The impact of partnerships in physical education and school sport has been reported in terms of output against measurable targets. There has however been little research into the working practices of school sports partnerships. Through exploring research into partnership working in the public sector this paper has hopefully outlined the need to understand partnership working in physical education and school sport, which have implications for governments' implementation of key policies not only in those areas, but also health, lifelong learning, crime, community development, and elite sports. Given the centrality of physical education and school sports to the successful achievement of a range of policies, there is clearly a need to explore this through empirical research, including the residual (and perhaps under the Coalition, newly reinforced) effects of market-forces on schools,

which may also impact upon schools potential to both compete and collaborate. In addition, this paper suggests that Sterling's (2005) conceptualisation of partnerships may be particularly helpful in exploring the organisational features and governance processes that shape school sports partnership. We need to increase our understanding of the context and governance of school sports partnerships so we can make visible any problems with power relations, partnership operations and the governance of physical education and school sport. Finally, given the complex history and nature of policy making in physical education and school sport, and their increasing linkage with other policy areas, it is hoped that further research in this field may help to consider the impact of prior policy on our commonsense understanding of what PE is what it realistically can achieve as a subject, and how the complex policy space in which PE sits influences the work of school sports partnerships.

## References

- Adnett, N. and Davies, P. (2003) Schooling reforms in England: from quasi-markets to co-opetition?. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(4), pp. 393-406.
- Balloch, S. and Taylor, M. (2007) *Partnership Working: Policy and Practice*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Bartlett, W. (1993) Quasi-markets and educational reforms., **In:** *Quasi-Markets and Social Policy*. Le Grand, Julian; Bartlett, William edition. Basingstoke: Macmillian.
- Bell, K. and West, A. (2003) Specialist Schools: an exploration of competition and co-operation. *Educational Studies*, 29(2), pp. 273-289.
- Bovaird, T. and Tizard, J. (2009) Partnership working in the public domain. **In:** Bovaird, T. and Loffler, E. (eds) *Public Management and Governance*. 2nd edition. Oxon: Taylor and Francis.
- Bowe, R., Gewirtz, S., and Ball, S.J. (1994) Captured by the Discourse? Issues and concerns in researching 'parental choice '. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 15(1), pp. 63-78.
- Bowe, R., Ball, S., J. and Gold, A. (1992) *Reforming education and changing schools: case studies in policy sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Cardini, A. (2006) An analysis of the rhetoric and practice of educational partnerships in the UK: an arena of complexities, tensions and power. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(4), pp. 393-415.
- Coalter, F. (2008) *A wider social role for sport*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, M. (2010) *Examining sports development*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Davies, P., Adnett, N., and Mangan, J. (2002) The diversity and dynamics of competition: evidence from two local schooling markets. *Oxford Review of Education*, 28(1), pp. 91-107.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2000) *A Sporting Future for All*. London: DCMS.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Learning through PE and sport: a guide to physical education, school sport and club links strategy*.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Strategy Unit (2002) *Game Plan: a strategy for delivering government's sport and physical activity objectives*. London: DCMS & Strategy group.
- Department for Education and Employment (1997) *Specialist Schools: Education partnerships for the 21st century*. London: DfEE.
- Department for Education and Skills (2001) *New Beacon and Specialist Schools to Deliver Excellence through Diversity*. London: DfES.

Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Learning through PE and sport; an update on the national PE, school sport and club links strategy*. Nottingham: DfES Publications.

Department of National Heritage (1995) *Sport - Raising the Game*. London: DNH.

Department of National Heritage (1996) *Sport Raising the Game: The First Year Report*. London: DNH.

HMSO (1988) *The Education Reform Act (1988)*. London: HMSO

Evans, J. (1992) A short paper about people, power and educational reform. Authority and representation in ethnographic research subjectivity, ideology and educational reform: the case for physical education. *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions*, , pp. 231-247.

Evans, J. and Davies, B. (1993) Equality, Equity and Physical Education. In: Evans, J. and Davies, B. (eds) *Equality, equity and physical education*. London: Falmer Press, pp. 11-27.

Evans, J. and Penney, D. (1995) Physical education, restoration and the politics of sport. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 3(2), pp. 183-196.

Evans, J., Penney, D., and Bryant, A. (1993) Physical Education After Era?. *BRITISH JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION*, 24(3).

Flintoff, A. (2003) The School Sport Co-ordinator Programme: Changing the Role of the Physical Education Teacher?. *Sport, Education and Society*, 8(2), pp. 231-250.

Foskett, N.H. (1998) Schools and Marketization: Cultural Challenges and Responses. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 26(2), pp. 197-210.

Frisby, W., Thibault, L., and Kikulis, L. (2004) The organizational dynamics of under-managed partnerships in leisure service departments. *Leisure Studies*, 23(2), pp. 109-126.

Gorad, S. and Fitz, J. (2000) Investigating the determinants of segregation between schools. *Research Papers in Education*, 15(2), pp. 115-132.

Green, M. (2004) Changing policy priorities for sport in England: The emergence of elite sport development as a key policy concern. *Leisure Studies*, 23(4), pp. 365-385.

Green, M. and Houlihan, B. (2006) Governmentality, Modernization, and the Disciplining of National Sporting Organizations: Athletics in Australia and the United Kingdom. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 23(1), pp. 47.

Healey, P. (1997) *Collaborative planning. Shaping places in fragmented societies..* London: Macmillian.

Houlihan, B. (2000) Sporting excellence, schools and sports development: The politics of crowded policy spaces. *European Physical Education Review*, 6(2), pp. 171.

- Houlihan, B. and Green, M. (2006) The changing status of school sport and physical education: explaining policy change. *Sport, Education and Society*, 11(1), pp. 73-92.
- Houlihan, B. and Green, M. (2006) The changing status of schol sport and physical education; explaining policy change. *Sport, Education and Society*, 11(1), pp. 73-19.
- Huxham, C. and Vangan, S. (2000) What makes partnership work?. In: Osbourne, S. (ed.) *Public-Private Partnerships*. London: Routledge.
- Institute for Youth Sport (2007) *School Sports Partnerships: Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report for 2006*. Loughborough: Institute for Youth Sport.
- Institute for Youth Sport (2008) *Annual monitoring and evaluation report for 2007: Partnership Development Manager Survey*. Loughborough: Institute for Youth Sport.
- John, P. (1990) *Recent Trends in Central-Local Government Relations*. London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Mackintosh, M. (1992) Partnership: issues of policy and negotiation. *Local Economy*, 7(3), pp. 210-224.
- Maclure, S. (1992) *Education Re-formed: a guide to the Education Reform Act*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Mayo, M. and Taylor, M. (2007) Partnerships and power in community regeneration. In: Balloch, S. and Taylor, M. (eds) *Partnership Working: policy and practice*. 3rd edition. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Newman, J. (2001) *Remaking governance*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Penney, D. and Evans, J. (2000) The National Curriculum for Physical Education: Policy, Practice and Prospects. In: Williams, A. (ed.) *Primary School Physical Education*. London: Routledge Falmer Press.
- Penney, D.1. (1999) Politics, policy, and practice in physical education / Dawn Penney and John Evans. *London : Taylor & Francis, .*
- Ribchester, C. and Edwards, W. (1998) Co-operation in the Countryside: small primary school clusters. *Educational Studies*, 24(3), pp. 281-293.
- Robson, S. (2008) Partnerships in sport. In: Hylton, K. and Bramham, P. (eds) *Sport Development: policy, process and practice.*, pp. 99-125.
- Sharp, P. and Dunford, J. (1990) *The education system in England and Wales*. London,: Longman.
- Sterling, R. (2005) Promoting democratic governance through partnerships. In: Newman, J. (ed.). London: Policy Press.

Weal, B. and Coll, R. (2007) Exploring educational partnerships: a case study of client–provider technology education partnerships in New Zealand primary schools. *Research in Science & Technological Education*, 25(1), pp. 3-36.