

Physical education within early years and primary education



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This essay will provide a rationale; an explanation of the fundamental reasons, for teaching the foundation subjects within Early Years and Primary Education, with specific reference to P. E. The Early Years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework ensures ' that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.' (Department for Education, 2012, 2 lines). The National Curriculum (NC), which is currently under a review launched by the Government, is a set of standards that schools use to ensure all children learn the same things and that make sure certain levels of attainment are achieved in each subject (GOV. UK, 2012). The National Curriculum includes core subjects and foundation subjects, and all of these are compulsory. English, Mathematics, Science and ICT are all core subjects, and the foundation subjects include Art, Design and Technology, Music, Geography, History and P. E. Religious Education is taught in addition to these subjects although it does not form part of the National Curriculum. It is, however, included in the basic curriculum and is legally bound to be taught. The National Curriculum gives a well-defined and detailed guide to learning for all children, which shows what should be taught and sets targets for learning and the attainment levels for pupils. It also includes ways in which performance will be assessed and reported (Department for Education and Qualification and Curriculum Authority, 1999). The foundation subjects and R. E. are just as important as the core subjects as they all teach an underlying skill or allow children to develop their own opinions and choices. Every foundation subject has a purpose behind it, some are less focused on <https://assignbuster.com/physical-education-within-early-years-and-primary-education/>

than others, but they all have very good reasons for being in the curriculum. Boys and Spink (2008) believe the foundation subjects and R. E. ' have the potential to be the most powerful, most meaningful and most relevant areas of learning for all learners' (p. 12), this is supported by Rose (2008) who comments that the foundation subjects stimulate children's desire to learn and widen their depth and breadth of thought, knowledge and capability. Within this essay I will debate the rationale for why we teach the foundation subjects, focusing my attention on Physical Education across the 3-11 age groups. I will be looking at P. E. in the EYFS as well as the purpose, nature and importance of P. E. in the Primary Curriculum, throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Also, justification concerning the inclusion of P. E. in the curriculum will be explored, as well as arguments for and against P. E. being taught in schools. Finally I will compare the similarities and differences between the Early Years and Primary Education, followed by a final analysis and conclusion of the arguments mentioned.

Wickstrom (1970) states that:

Where there is life there is movement; where there are children there is almost perpetual movement. Children normally run, jump, throw, catch, kick, strike, and perform a multitude of basic skills.

Physical Education involves the physical development of the whole child, right from birth to the Early Years (ages 3-7) then followed through to Primary Education (up to age 11), which then continues throughout the teenage years and into adulthood. Children learn through physical activity, whether it's counting, painting, talking, building, or climbing, swinging and

jumping. Physical activity is extremely important for children's development especially in the Early Years. Most children are very agile, strong and inventive, and by the age of 7 should be able to do all the basic movements involved with everyday life. They can then go on to develop coordination, control and balance, and learn to apply these skills throughout their lives (Manners and Carroll, 1995).

According to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012), as well as coordination, control and movement, physical development in the EYFS also involves understanding the importance of physical activities and making healthy choices in relation to food. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children should:

Move with confidence, imagination and in safety. Move with control and coordination. Travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment. Show awareness of space, of themselves and others. Recognise the importance of keeping healthy, and those things which contribute to this. Recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Use a range of small and large equipment. Handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

(Department for Education, 2012a)

Physical Education holds a unique position within the Primary school curriculum in that it promotes physical, emotional and social development through a mainly active approach. Some of its key aims are to encourage the development of healthy lifestyles and movement ability through the encouragement of positive attitudes towards activity and physical challenge. <https://assignbuster.com/physical-education-within-early-years-and-primary-education/>

The Physical Education curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 should therefore involve a wide range of exciting and challenging experiences which enable children to develop and perfect basic movement patterns within the context of an interesting and entertaining learning environment. During Key Stage 1 children focus on building their 'natural enthusiasm for movement' (DfEE and QCA, 1999, p. 130) and use this to develop their understanding about the world. By Key Stage 2 children focus more on new skills, combining actions, phrases and sequences of movement and they 'develop an understanding of how to succeed in different activities and learn how to evaluate and recognise their own success' (DfEE and QCA, 1999, p. 132). Physical Education in the National Curriculum is divided into six main areas of activity; dance activities, games activities, gymnastic activities, swimming activities and water safety, athletic activities and outdoor and adventure activities. Children must be taught five of these, with swimming being compulsory (DfEE and QCA, 1999). The main curriculum aims are to create:

Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve.

Confident individuals who are able to live a safe, healthy and fulfilling

lifestyle. Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

(Department for Education, 2012b)

Primary Physical Education is the best time for pupils to establish fundamental movement skills (FMS); basic motor skills and movements of different body parts. This stage is crucial for children to develop basic movements learned in the Early Years. Children develop fundamental movement skills within locomotor activities such as running and jumping,

<https://assignbuster.com/physical-education-within-early-years-and-primary-education/>

balance activities, and ball activities e. g. catching and throwing.

Fundamental movement skills provide the basis for complex movement with range and flexibility, whilst developing communication, emotional and logical learning opportunities (Griggs, 2012).

As well as being taught by things in the National Curriculum, children also learn from a hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum indirectly teaches skills such as behaviour, respect, punctuality and obeying rules. These things are not stated in the curriculum but are subconsciously developed throughout a child's time at school. In relation to Physical Education, children will learn how to work appropriately as a team and what is acceptable sporting behaviour. However, the hidden curriculum can also reinforce gender stereotyping in Physical Education. For example, girls who are good at or enjoy sport will sometimes be called 'tomboys'. Sport can be seen as masculine and for boys to learn how to be 'real men' (Laker, 2002).

Classroom-based subjects such as R. E., Music, Maths and English are very important components of the curriculum and offer great amounts to children's learning. However Pickup (2012) argues that certain aspects of P. E. are unique and provide significant opportunities to create 'interactive, dynamic, multi-sensory and enjoyable lessons'. Making P. E. enjoyable, exciting and relevant for pupils within the 3-11 age groups is of utmost importance. Interaction is paramount for keeping children engaged in physical activity and by creating competition or setting goals to variety of activities that allow the children to use different equipment will help to keep their learning diverse and fun.

Technology is becoming of greater use in today's society and The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) (2004) believes that the use of technology can be a productive way to enhance and enrich instruction when used suitably. For example, use of videos can add an extra dimension to demonstrations and using recording equipment can help children to observe and evaluate their own work. The Rose Report (Rose, 2009) and the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2009) both endorsed that ICT should be embedded in the teaching of all subjects, with the inclusion of Physical Education. The use of technology doesn't just stop at video equipment and ICT, the selection is vast and can include stopwatches, heart monitors and analysis software. If properly planned and used appropriately, opportunities to engage with technology can support and enhance teaching and learning by enthusing children and boosting their motivation. Ofsted (2009) claimed that effective uses of ICT had a ' positive impact on the wellbeing and personal development of pupils', as well as ' contributing significantly towards their ability to work both independently and cooperatively'.

However, we should acknowledge that there is more to the successful implementation of ICT in Physical Education lessons than just being given access to equipment. Learning must be improved by the use of these resources by expanding on existing knowledge in an in-depth, more significant, imaginative and effective way. Whilst ICT has the possibility to provide strength to learning in Physical Education there are also potential weaknesses. There are disadvantages with the use of ICT, for example it can

occasionally fail to work and teachers need to be able to adjust to the challenges this brings. (Williams and Cliffe, 2011)

According to the Health Survey for England (HSE) (2010), 31% of boys and 29% of girls aged 2 to 15 were classed as either overweight or obese (p. 23) and this has been steadily increasing since 1995. Also, only 32% of boys 24% of girls were classified as meeting the government's recommendations for physical activity in 2008 (p. 38). To enjoy a healthy, active and fulfilling lifestyle children must be taught the importance of care for the human body including diet, exercise and hygiene. It is the role of schools and teachers to make children aware of the effects that exercise has on the body, how to prepare for physical activity e. g. warming up by stretching their muscles and raising their heart rate, and the importance of cooling down after exercise (Robinson, 2000). With the increasing concern about health and inactivity in primary schools, the value of healthy lifestyles and exercise should be conveyed clearly to children throughout their time spent in school. Robinson (2000) notes that Physical Education is an important contributor to health and fitness and should be used in addition to health education to promote an overall positive approach to the knowledge and understanding of health and fitness.

Williams (1989) points out that Physical Education faces some problems with its inclusion in Primary Education. In previous decades, the status of P. E. was often considered lower than the other subjects in the curriculum and in the past teachers have been consistently criticised for their ' failure to teach the subject properly' (Physical Education Association, 1987). However, in today's society, the status of physical activity has been suggested to be at <https://assignbuster.com/physical-education-within-early-years-and-primary-education/>

an ' all-time high' with politicians becoming interested in recognising the significance of sport and the recent excitement of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games, which was the ' biggest sporting event ever to be staged in England', providing role models for the children of today (Pickup, 2008, p. 72).

To conclude, the inclusion of Physical Education within Early Years and Primary Education is extremely important. P. E. provides the foundation for the development of fundamental movement skills which builds on skills from the Early Years through to Primary Education. Use of equipment, games, competition and particularly the exploration of technology within lessons and activities has shown how P. E can be made relevant and exciting for pupils within the 3-11 age groups. Also, issues about the previous status of Physical Education have been argued by the increasing benefits that have come with recent events such as the Olympics. Physical Education helps with the concerns about childhood obesity and inactivity by teaching the value of healthy exercise and demonstrating how to live a healthy lifestyle. Overall, the fundamental reasons for teaching Physical Education in the EYFS and NC includes physical, emotional and social development, the growth of self-confidence, the development of physical skills and literacy and personal achievement within the bounds of individual difference and equal opportunity.

2, 090 words.