

New Opportunities for PE and Sport: Year Five Evaluation Summary



New Opportunities for PE and Sport Year 5 Evaluation Summary

Stock code BIG-NOPE5ES

ISSN (Print): 1744-4756

ISSN (Online): 1744-4764

Photography: Brian Morrison

Written by: Marcus Hulme

Further copies available from:

Phone: 0845 4 10 20 30

Textphone: 0845 6 02 16 59

Email: general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Our website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Accessibility

Please contact us to discuss any specific communication needs you have.

Our equality principles

Promoting accessibility; valuing cultural diversity; promoting participation; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting inclusive communities; reducing disadvantage and exclusion. Please visit our website for more information.

We care about the environment

The Big Lottery Fund seeks to minimise its negative environmental impact and only uses proper sustainable resources.

Our mission

We are committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need.

Our values

We have identified seven values that underpin our work: fairness; accessibility; strategic focus; involving people; innovation; enabling; additional to government.

The Big Lottery Fund is committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality of opportunity, both as a grantmaker and employer. The Big Lottery Fund will aim to adopt an inclusive approach to ensure grant applicants and recipients, stakeholders, job applicants and employees are treated fairly.

© Big Lottery Fund, June 2008

 Awarding funds from
The National Lottery[®]

Executive summary

This is a summary of the key findings that have emerged to date from the evaluation of the UK-wide New Opportunities in PE and Sport (NOPES) initiative. It is our interpretation of the year five evaluation report which details the progress of the programme up to February 2008.

The full report is available on our website at: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk.

The evaluators state that the NOPES programme is continuing to progress well towards achieving the six outcomes for the programme and is making a substantial contribution to the delivery of school and local authority priorities.

Key findings

Impact on participation

- ▶ The average number of community users at NOPES facilities each week has more than doubled from 127 before opening to 299 after opening.
- ▶ The percentage of pupils receiving two hours of PE and school sport has increased from 73 per cent to 80 per cent after the new facilities opened. The most significant change is at Key Stage One where the amount of pupils receiving two hours of PE and sport has trebled since the new facilities opened.
- ▶ 75 per cent of pupils agreed that there is a greater range of activities due to the new facilities and the average number of extra-curricular activities on offer at projects has increased from 13.7 before opening to 16.3 after opening.
- ▶ Case study findings indicate that the new facilities are having a positive impact on pupils who were previously less willing to participate in PE and school sport.

- ▶ 41 per cent of pupils reported that their families have used the new sports facilities at school to take part in physical activity.

Impact on wider social outcomes

- ▶ Projects are progressing well towards promoting social inclusion and achieving higher standards across schools.
- ▶ 74 per cent of pupils agreed that the new facilities have made them feel proud of their school.
- ▶ Many of the new NOPES facilities have become 'hubs' of their communities
- ▶ The programme is having a positive impact on pupils' attitude and behaviour which has helped them to become more engaged in school.
- ▶ 60 per cent of pupils agree that the new sports hall at their school has made them feel better about the area where they live.

Partnership effectiveness

- ▶ Projects have made strong links with other initiatives including the School Sport Partnership programme, Active Schools, Extended Schools and Every Child Matters.
- ▶ Effective partnership working has made a significant contribution to the development and achievement of the NOPES outcomes.
- ▶ The average number of primary schools and sports clubs using NOPES projects has doubled since the new or refurbished facilities opened.

"I really think the new facility will raise the status of PE and that will do more good than anything else."

Director of Sport, Football Foundation project

The NOPES programme

The NOPES programme was launched in November 2002. A total of £750.75 million was available for the programme across the UK. To date 2,980 facilities have been funded across the UK, ranging from outdoor activity centres to new or refurbished facilities at schools. All funding for the programme has now been committed.

The NOPES programme has six key outcomes:

- improved physical education and sport in schools
- higher standards across the whole school through PE, sport and other forms of structured activity
- better opportunities to increase the levels of physical activity among the school age population and, more generally, local communities
- improved collaboration, co-operation and partnership between schools and between schools and their communities
- promotion of social inclusion through access to, and use of, sports and outdoor adventure facilities by all groups in society
- innovation and best practice in the design and management of facilities.

The evaluation

In 2002 we commissioned the Loughborough Partnership, led by the Institute of Youth Sport at Loughborough University, to evaluate the NOPES programme. The evaluation covers the whole of the UK and will end in February 2009. Five annual reports have been published to date and are available on the BIG website at: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk



UK findings

This section details evaluation findings from across the UK and is structured around the three key dimensions of the evaluation which are examining the impact of the NOPES programme on partnership, participation and wider social outcomes.

Impact on participation

The programme is making a significant impact on participation in physical activity for pupils and the general community. Survey findings show that 80 per cent of pupils receive two hours of PE and sport, compared to 73 per cent of pupils before the new facilities opened. The most significant changes are at Key Stage One where there has been an increase from 18 per cent to 60 per cent of boys and 18 per cent to 63 per cent of girls receiving two hours of PE and sport since the new facilities opened.

The number of hours available for activities during school holidays has doubled at NOPES projects since the new facilities opened. Examples of holiday activities include pupils from primary schools being coached in different sports by secondary school pupils and football in the community schemes taking place at Football Foundation projects.

The evaluators found evidence of improved participation by pupils during the allocated PE time. The proportion of boys not taking part in curriculum PE has dropped from 6.6 per cent prior to opening to 5.2 per cent after opening. Similarly, the number of girls not taking part in PE dropped from 7.9 per cent prior to opening, compared to 6.8 per cent after opening. Pupils and staff from across the UK state that participation in PE had increased due to factors such as the increased variety of activities available during lessons, the reduced travelling time to lessons and less time spent waiting in turn to participate in activities. This evidence is enhanced by the survey of pupils which found that 67 per cent agree that they are now more active in PE lessons and 75 per cent of pupils agree that there was a greater range of activities available.

Case study Langdon Community School, Newham

Langdon Community School in Newham was awarded funding to develop a six-badminton court sports hall. The population of Newham has high levels of economic, health and social deprivation. The new sports hall has had a very positive impact on encouraging participation in PE and sport both within and beyond the curriculum. The quality of PE has been improved dramatically as a result of the new sports hall. This new facility has helped to raise staff and pupil motivation and has had a positive effect on their views of the school.

The hours of extra-curricular activities available at lunchtime at NOPES projects has increased in a typical week from three hours and 50 minutes prior to opening to five hours and 14 minutes after opening. The average number of boys attending lunchtime activities has increased from 75 to 107 per project site, while the number of girls has increased from 54 to 69. Similarly the average number of boys attending after-school activities has increased from 98 to 126 per project site while the number of girls increased from 69 to 89. Case study evidence also found that the new facilities are having a positive impact on pupils who were previously less willing to participate in PE and sport and extra-curricular activities.

The average number of extra-curricular activities on offer at projects has increased from 13.7 before opening to 16.3 after opening. The activities with the greatest increase in availability during extra-curricular time are fitness, table tennis, badminton, gymnastics and basketball. The broad range of new activities available is highly valued by staff and pupils.

UK findings

“We have more choices like table-tennis and weight-training.”

Year nine boy, multi-use dance and fitness suite project

Smaller projects such as outdoor playground facilities, playground markings and multi-use games areas are making an important contribution to improving the range of activities for pupils that are available at lunchtimes. Staff at projects benefiting from playground improvements reported a positive impact on pupils' physical activity levels. Engaging pupils during breaks and lunchtimes has had a favourable impact on reducing playground incidents and improved behaviour back in the classroom.

The new NOPES facilities have helped to reduce the number of lessons cancelled due to bad weather. The survey of pupils found that 88 per cent agreed that PE lessons did not get cancelled following the opening of the new sports facilities.

The evaluators have found evidence of improved motivation amongst staff and pupils due to the new NOPES facilities. The survey to pupils found that 70 per cent agreed that staff have become more enthusiastic since the new facilities were available. The new facilities have also helped to raise the profile and status of PE within schools.

The enhanced quality of changing facilities at NOPES facilities has helped to improve the quality of PE experiences for pupils. Case study findings found that pupils are not getting wet, dirty, cold or injured from

poor quality outdoor facilities. The cleanliness and comfort of changing areas and privacy of showers are also important factors for pupils using the facilities.

Community use at NOPES projects has doubled since the new facilities opened. The average number of community users at NOPES projects is 299 in a typical week, compared to 127 prior to opening. Projects that received a grant of over £125,000 have been more successful than smaller projects at increasing community use due to their scale. In addition, the number of different activities available to community users has risen by 70 per cent since the new facilities opened.

Case study evidence from across the UK suggests that the potential to increase community use can sometimes be dependent on the type of project and its location. Artificial pitches appear to address a substantial community demand and involving the community has been relatively easy for some projects. For example, an artificial pitch in Wales was fully booked during evenings and weekends within the first few months of opening.

Developing community use can be more challenging at sports halls or multi-use games areas. The evaluators found that there appeared to be a stronger need to market these types of facilities to increase their use by the local community.

The design of a facility can also have an impact on increasing community use. For example, one case study project was designed specifically so that both pupils and the community could access the facility at the same time in separate areas. This has helped to maximise community use.

“Pupils come in and they are tired so they just sit down and get on with it, and even before lunch they know they have to get their work done otherwise they can't go out. It's just been a great behaviour controller.” Primary school teacher

UK findings

Case study Percoed Indoor Climbing Wall, Bridgend

The NOPES grant was used to fund an indoor climbing wall located within an existing sports hall at a local college. The project is used by primary and secondary pupils and members of the local community.

The project has helped to improve the quality of curriculum PE by increasing the range of activities available and provided an introduction to outdoor adventurous activities. The wider community, including young people and their families have also accessed the wall through the evening climbing club. The project has helped young people to develop their personal and social skills through the activities on offer. Adult women and college students have also increased their confidence through participating in the project.

Impact on wider social outcomes

The NOPES programme is contributing towards the promotion of social inclusion and higher standards in PE and sport. The programme is also having a positive impact on the attitude and behaviour of some pupils which is helping them to become more engaged in school.

NOPES facilities are helping to improve standards across schools through increasing the uptake of GCSE PE. Surveys for England and Wales show a significant increase in the average number of pupils per project site achieving A* to C in GCSE PE since the new NOPES facilities were built.

The evaluators found that NOPES facilities are perceived by staff and pupils as creating an environment where pupils have more opportunities to succeed and achieve. For example, pupils benefiting from a new sports hall at a case study project have been able to take part in trampolining and handball for the first time. Several

pupils from the school are now competing as part of the England handball squad as a result of the project.

Across the UK, NOPES facilities are located at schools that previously had inadequate sporting facilities and serve communities with some level of deprivation. The evaluators found that the new NOPES facilities have improved the fabric of schools and impacted favourably on both pupil and staff motivation. This finding was supported by the pupil survey, which found that 60 per cent agree that their new facilities have made them feel better about their local area and 74 per cent said that they were now prouder of their school.

“The quality of PE has improved drastically. Lessons can be planned out...it doesn't matter about the weather.”

Head of PE, artificial turf pitch project

The increased range of activities being offered has provided new opportunities for pupils who previously did not take part in school sport. For example, two case study projects in Wales have been able to target young people who would not usually participate in extra-curricular activities. The projects stated that success in PE and physical activity for pupils would result in increased motivation, greater self-esteem and higher standards in school. Similarly, in Northern Ireland a vice principal stated that the NOPES facility had raised pupils' activity levels and improved their awareness of how physical activity impacts on health.

Fitness suites and gyms have been used to appeal to young people who were previously not engaged in physical activity. For example, pupils in Northern Ireland have used a facility based at a university and were taught by the university students. This experience has raised the aspirations of some pupils and encouraged them to feel comfortable in a university environment.

Case study South Lanarkshire Lifestyle, Scotland

South Lanarkshire Lifestyle is based on land adjacent to Trinity High School in Cambuslang, South Lanarkshire. Leisure and day-care facilities are integrated within the South Lanarkshire Leisure building. Sport and leisure facilities include a 25 metre swimming pool, a fitness suite, dance studio and six outdoor artificial turf courts. Within South Lanarkshire Lifestyle there are also meeting rooms and an ICT suite as well as day-care facilities for adults with learning disabilities. The facility provides a greater range of activities for school pupils and the local community. The location of the facility had contributed to increased levels of participation amongst young people who live nearby. Integrated use of the facility by pupils, day care centre clients and the general public has also helped to contribute to the promotion of social inclusion.

The new NOPES facilities have enabled some schools to become 'hubs' of their communities. Several facilities are viewed by project staff as being catalysts for involving the local community in school which has helped them to develop a sense of local community identity.

Employing dedicated staff to run projects has helped schools to be proactive at attracting traditionally excluded target groups. Targeting particular groups is a way in which several projects aim to promote social inclusion. The most frequently targeted groups are girls and women (88 per cent), followed by people living in an area of high deprivation (44 per cent). Community use of facilities by girls and women has almost trebled since the new facilities opened. An average of 135 girls and women use NOPES projects each week, compared to 52 before the projects opened.

Various strategies are being used by NOPES projects to address the challenges of developing community use amongst deprived communities. These include pricing strategies, tackling low self-esteem and offering a wider range of opportunities for people to participate in physical activity.

“I think that the facility is a symbol of a community moving forward.”

Head Teacher, Scotland

Case study projects identified strategies that they were using in their local community to engage disaffected young people. For example, an artificial turf pitch in Scotland was being used to engage 50 young men in football as a diversionary activity. The all-weather facility allows the group to meet for 50 weeks a year. Staff at the project stated that the sessions were more popular than any other similar activity offered in the city. Similarly, two case study projects in Northern Ireland are delivering activities for young people specifically at times when anti-social behaviour is prevalent in their communities on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Physical activity programmes were offered in the evening at these facilities to give young people something to do during periods when there were no other activities available.

The evaluators have identified innovative ways in which NOPES facilities are being used to improve health outcomes. For example, GP referral schemes have been reported at several projects across the UK. There are also examples of projects specifically targeting people the over 60 in both England and Wales through a range of approaches. These include subsidised activities and social opportunities such as 'tea and chat' sessions. Similarly, other projects have been used as health drop-in centres and organised slimming world sessions.

UK findings

Partnership effectiveness

Partnership working between organisations is making a significant contribution towards the achievement of the NOPES programme outcomes. Projects have made strong links with other initiatives such as School Sports Partnerships, Active Schools, Every Child Matters and Extended Schools. The majority of project staff stated that these initiatives are important to the success of the NOPES programme as they can help to generate capital and human resources that can be used to support the achievement of common outcomes.

Key staff are responsible for developing the NOPES facilities beyond the school day. These additional posts were often funded through a NOPES grant or other sources and have been instrumental in helping projects achieve the outcomes of the programme. The evaluators found that when existing school staff were given responsibility for managing NOPES facilities in addition to their current remit they often faced time constraints that affected the pace of development at these projects.

The financial sustainability of larger projects continues to be a concern at some schools. These schools are affected by a tension between generating enough income to make opening beyond the school day financially viable, and developing community programmes that would meet the aspirations of schools, local authorities and BIG. Concerns about financial sustainability were particularly apparent at primary schools or schools that had little experience of community use. Financial sustainability was less of an issue when local authorities were involved in the management of projects or in supporting the maintenance and operation of NOPES facilities through existing budgets. For example, in Scotland the management of two case study projects was included in existing systems for managing other local authority leisure facilities.

Improving links with community organisations has helped to develop community use at the majority of



school based NOPES projects. These projects have developed clear strategies to engage people from their local community. The evaluators found significant increases in the use of the new school facilities by sports clubs, local business and local authority sports development units. The availability of staff to run the facilities out of school hours is key to developing links with other community organisations.

UK findings



Case study Queens University, Belfast

The NOPES grant was used to build a new floodlit outdoor training facility at Queen's University physical education centre in Belfast. The facility has a third generation artificial turf surface that is used for a number of different sports. Staff at the facility are committed to developing ownership of the project by partner schools and clubs. A project partnership group has been created which is intended to allow partners to guide the development of the project. This has helped to generate community use at the facility and created new working relationships between different organisations.

The evaluators found that the average number of primary schools accessing larger NOPES projects at secondary schools has doubled since the new facilities opened. Post opening, an average of 8.5 primary schools use the NOPES facilities compared to 4.2 prior to opening.

Findings from the evaluation show that prior to the NOPES programme only 22 per cent of survey respondents rated the quality of their facilities as good or excellent compared to 74 per cent after the new facilities had opened. Similarly, 62 per cent of survey respondents rated their new NOPES facility as suitable or highly suitable to the needs of the community after opening, compared to 14 per cent prior to opening.

Partnership working between organisations has led to the development of facilities that are both innovative and effective in their design and management. Survey results show that 80 per cent of project staff view their facilities as effective and 42 per cent as innovative in some aspect of design. Examples of innovative designs in the new facilities include geothermal under-floor heating of a sports hall and photovoltaic cells on the front of a sports hall that are used to save a small amount of energy and include an energy indicator for educational purposes.

The evaluation has found considerable evidence of good, modern management practices. Several schools have received quality assurance awards such as Investors in People, the industry standard Quest and National Governing Body accreditations. Monitoring and evaluation is also being used as a management tool for developing projects.

Future work

The evaluators will continue to visit case study projects and distribute annual surveys throughout 2008. The final evaluation report will be published in March 2009. For further information please visit the evaluation website at: www.nopesevaluation.org.uk

