

# **HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 21 January 2009

Session 3

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## HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting 2009, Session 3

#### CONVENER

\*Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP)

#### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)

\*Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab)

\*Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP)

\*Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP)

\*Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

\*Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

#### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee West) (SNP)

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

\*attended

#### THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Alan Armstrong (Learning and Teaching Scotland)

Fraser Booth (School Leaders Scotland)

Suzanne Hargreaves (Association for Physical Education Scotland)

Donald Macleod (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education)

Chris Wood (Association for Physical Education Scotland)

#### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Callum Thomson

#### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Douglas Thornton

#### ASSISTANT CLERK

David Slater

#### LOCATION

Committee Room 4



## Scottish Parliament

### Health and Sport Committee

*Wednesday 21 January 2009*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:02*]

### Pathways into Sport Inquiry

**The Convener (Christine Grahame):** Good morning. I welcome everyone to the Health and Sport Committee's second meeting in 2009. I remind everyone to switch off mobile phones and BlackBerrys, please. Apologies have been received from Jackie Baillie.

Agenda item 1 is our pathways into sport inquiry. I welcome to give oral evidence Suzanne Hargreaves, who is a member, and Chris Wood, who is the secretary, of the Association for Physical Education Scotland. We also have Alan Armstrong, who is the director of education improvement at Learning and Teaching Scotland; Donald Macleod, who is an inspector with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education; and Fraser Booth, who is from School Leaders Scotland. I thank you all for your helpful submissions.

We will move straight to questions.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** My questions are for Donald Macleod. How are physical education, physical activity and the facilities for that taken into account in school inspections? We have heard different accounts of that. I have read one or two inspection reports that we as MSPs receive, in which the subject is not mentioned. How important are PE facilities, access to PE and physical activity to inspections? How are they measured?

**Donald Macleod (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education):** The new inspection approach is a proportionate one that is led initially by the headteacher's presentation of the school's self-evaluation. If the school highlights facilities as an issue that impacts on the children's learning experience, we would look to trail that further during our inspection and the issue is likely to be mentioned in the report. I stress that it is about accommodation having a negative or restrictive effect on the quality of the learning experiences that can be delivered for young people.

In the context of physical education, if we felt that facilities were not at a standard that allowed the physical education curriculum to be delivered as well as it could be, we would certainly look to highlight that and to engage in a discussion about it with staff in the school and the local authority.

**Mary Scanlon:** I was looking for something just a wee bit more robust than that. We heard yesterday from active schools co-ordinators that a gym may be excellent for physical activity, but that it can also be used for school plays, school dinners and so on. Rather than the schools highlighting shortfalls in facilities and accommodation, which many of them may or may not wish to do, does Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education have a more robust checklist, similar to those that are used for the standard of teaching, relationships between teachers and parents and so on? Do you have something a bit more robust that says, for example, "X number of students are participating, the facilities are fine, the teaching is there, they're getting their two hours or whatever a week and they're getting access to various sports"? Rather than rely on a school-led report about the lack of facilities, do you look more robustly at exactly what is available?

**Donald Macleod:** Sure. I thought that your original question was about facilities and accommodation. The quality of the learning experience would be a prime focus for us in inspection. We would engage with staff and look at the quality of the teaching and learning in a PE department from the young person's perspective.

**Mary Scanlon:** Is access to PE and to physical activity, which we know now are different things, ranked equally with the three Rs? Are the former as important in your inspections?

**Donald Macleod:** Absolutely. It is about the quality of the children's learning experience. We would evaluate that and bring it together with an evaluation of learning and teaching across the school. Where we felt that there were deficiencies in the children's PE experience in the school, we would highlight that in the report—we have done that.

**Mary Scanlon:** I hope you will forgive me, but I have looked at one or two reports. On the basis that PE is sometimes not mentioned in school reports—nursery, primary or secondary—can we assume that everything is fine in such cases? Generally, reports include comments such as satisfactory, excellent, very good, weak or whatever. What can I take from the fact that PE is sometimes not mentioned in reports?

**Donald Macleod:** In the context of the new proportionate inspection procedures, if no mention of PE is made in a report, you can take it that we are satisfied that the children's learning experiences in physical education are satisfactory. The new proportionate approach to inspection means that we report by exception, so where things are very, very good, we would look to trail that further, highlight it and share that good practice across the country; where we felt, on looking at PE in more detail, that it was lacking in

some regard, we would trail that further and highlight it in the report.

**The Convener:** Mary Scanlon has opened up an interesting area on which other members want to ask supplementary questions. That was an excellent line of questioning, Mary.

**Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP):** I was very surprised by Mr Macleod's comment that, if something is not mentioned in a report, we should take it as read that things are fine. I can give you specific examples of primary schools that do not meet the target of two hours of physical activity in the school programme per week. However, the inspection reports on those schools make no mention of the fact that the schools have not achieved the target, or of what action they might have taken to try to address the issue.

I picked up a report in the past month and a half, having had representations from parents who expressed concerns on the issue, and found that it made no mention of the target. From what you have said, I should interpret that as an indication that everything is fine, but I know from speaking to parents and to members of the school council that that is not the case. In such cases, why would inspection reports make no mention of physical activity targets not being achieved? Should I take such a report as an indication that everything is fine, despite the fact that parents and pupils are telling a completely different story?

**Donald Macleod:** My view is that if parents have highlighted the issue through questionnaires and have raised concerns, or if staff or children have raised concerns, that would have been trailed in the inspection.

You mentioned schools that did not meet the target. In that situation, I think that the managing inspector or the inspection team would have had a debate and discussion about the matter with staff. They would have looked at physical education and come to a view that the school was working towards the target. We must realise that we have become increasingly focused on schools moving towards that target; a sea change has not happened overnight. Since the publication of the PE review group report, we have gradually increased our focus, and the level of discussion that we have had in schools and with staff, on the target of two hours PE a week. However, the target is purely an input measure and we are focused on the outcomes, in respect of the quality of young people's experience. We should not presume that, because a school is delivering two hours of PE a week, that means that young people are being provided with a quality experience.

**Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD):** We are not saying that.

**Michael Matheson:** No one is suggesting that that is the case. However, I know from experience in my constituency that parents are expressing concern about the lack of physical activity that children are getting in school—mainly as a result of a lack of facilities and a shortage of personnel to deliver such activity—and yet the school's inspection report makes no mention, or little mention, of the issue. If I, as a parent, am thinking of sending my child to a school and therefore pick up the inspection report, I expect to read a thorough investigation of what is and is not being achieved there. It is all very well to suggest that schools are moving towards the target, but it has been in place for a number of years. If the target has not been achieved in a school and the parents make it clear that they have concerns about that, at the very least I would expect the matter to rank fairly high up in the detail of any inspection report.

I suspect that my experience is being replicated throughout the country. The fact that the issue is not being sufficiently recognised within the reports suggests that inspectors are not giving physical activity and PE, in primary schools in particular, as high a priority as it should be given.

**Donald Macleod:** You use the term "physical activity", but inspections are focused on the physical education aspect of the target: the move towards two hours of physical education a week. We would presume that the term "physical activity" refers also to other forms of physical activity in which young people may be involved. We are focusing—and engaging in discussion with staff—on the school's plans to put in place the two hours of physical education.

**The Convener:** I am advised that the target of a minimum of at least two hours physical activity a week is of five years' standing. I provide that information as clarification for members.

**Ross Finnie:** I regret to say that your answers—you represent HMIE on the panel, so this is not a personal issue—are causing real concern.

I cannot think of any education report in which, if no reading, writing or arithmetic were being taught, there would be complete silence on the part of the inspectors. With all due respect, it is disingenuous to suggest to the committee that silence on the matter means that you are satisfied that schools are moving towards the target, because that is not how inspectors would approach any other targets. Your answers reveal a very serious differentiation in the minds of the inspectorate on the importance that you attach to physical activity in comparison with other disciplines.

Let us not dance on the heads of pins about whether this is physical education—you know

what I mean and I know what you mean. We are very concerned that that is the case. The committee has no evidence at all before it concerning the ability of our pupils to gain physical literacy—a rather unfortunate phrase—which has become a major issue for the committee. We are anxious to know what the inspectorate is doing to follow up the obligation that has been in place for five years.

I hope that you will take the opportunity to correct everything that Mary Scanlon, Michael Matheson and I are saying if our reading of school reports is wrong. You suggest that we can be satisfied that silence on the part of the inspectors on a subject means that that subject—reading, writing, arithmetic, or anything else—is being addressed satisfactorily, and that that is how we should read inspectors' reports in the future.

10:15

**Donald Macleod:** If we had major concerns about the quality of the physical education experience for young people, we would highlight that in our reports, and we have done so where we have had major concerns about the quality of that experience. There are examples of schools in which we have highlighted that as a main point for action with regard to follow-through activity following an inspection.

**The Convener:** I think that we have unearthed a serious concern. It is up to you, Mr Macleod, but I suggest that if there are supplementary comments that you wish to make to the committee on the issue, we would be happy to receive them in writing and to conduct further investigation into the matter. Mary Scanlon has raised a serious point, which has been taken up by other members.

Before we move on, I invite our other witnesses to comment, if they wish to do so, on the evidence that we have heard so far.

**Suzanne Hargreaves (Association for Physical Education Scotland):** I hope that I will not cloud the issue. Schools and local authorities know that the target of at least two hours has been in place for the time that you have said, but there is a lack of consistency across local authorities and schools. Some schools manage the two hours well and give children good learning experiences; other schools do not. There is a responsibility on schools and local authorities to find out why, if some schools are managing that well, others are not. That is a challenge for schools and for the people who are in charge of education in local authorities. The inspections, too, should pick it up. Schools and local authorities throughout Scotland know that the target exists and should be trying to meet it.

**The Convener:** We appreciate that. The point that is being made is that we cannot know, from inspection reports, what is happening—or not—in any particular school. The other question that has been asked is whether silence on the matter means that all is well. If it does, the question is why that does not apply to other items on the school agenda. If that principle applies to physical education, it should apply across all school subjects. Thank you for your comments, but I think that we are talking about a separate issue.

**Fraser Booth (School Leaders Scotland):** This is an anecdotal response to Mr Matheson's comments. I have served on senior management teams in four secondary schools, and parents have never raised any concern about a lack of PE provision in those schools—indeed, they have often welcomed the provision. In my experience, the issue is that there has been a lack of engagement from some parents to involve their children in physical activity in schools. However, I am quite prepared to accede to your experience. The picture may be different in primary schools, where the facilities may differ. I am sure that we will come on to the subject of the facilities in secondary schools. The challenge that we face in secondary schools, especially as youngsters move into secondary 3 and secondary 4, is to engage them continuously in a meaningful physical activity that they enjoy and which they will take with them into their future adult life, so that they continue with that physical activity/physical education.

**Chris Wood (Association for Physical Education Scotland):** I want to pick up on the point about physical literacy. People have talked about physical education and physical activity, but they are not the same thing. Physical education leads to physical literacy, which then allows young children to have the confidence and skills to participate in physical activity. Physical education is the route to participation in physical activity with confidence. That is an important point.

**The Convener:** The committee understood that point from previous evidence sessions. I think that I may say on behalf of the committee that we are aware of that route.

**Chris Wood:** Mr Matheson talked about parents in his constituency who were concerned about children not having their two hours of physical activity a week. In fact, the children should have two hours of quality physical education—I emphasise the word "quality", because it is often much more important than quantity.

**Michael Matheson:** Mr Booth's point related to primary schools in particular. I understand Ms Wood's point, but the issue that we are getting at is that inspection reports are not highlighting the failure to provide two hours of physical education, quality or not.

**Mary Scanlon:** I have a separate question.

**The Convener:** May I let Richard Simpson ask his question first and let you back in after that? Rest on your laurels for a moment and let somebody else have a bite of the cherry.

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I have two questions. I am getting confused about all the organisations involved—the word “clutter” is culturally popular at the moment. Will you tell me briefly what School Leaders Scotland and the Association for Physical Education Scotland are? My other question is to everybody. If we have a system that moves through structured play to physical education and creating physical literacy, at what stage should we assess it? We have assessment for numeracy and literacy. At what stage should the inspectorate assess every primary school's outputs—should it be at seven, eight or nine years? Are we to assess children's physical literacy? What steps are we putting in place to do remedial work, as we do for numeracy and literacy?

**The Convener:** I invite the witnesses to self-nominate after Mr Booth answers.

**Fraser Booth:** School Leaders Scotland is the new name for the former Headteachers Association of Scotland. We decided on a name change to reflect the changing nature of leadership in schools, which extends from headteacher level right down to classroom teacher. The association changed its name to make it more open so that it includes promoted-post holders and, indeed, unpromoted-post holders right across the spectrum of the secondary provision sector.

**Chris Wood:** The Association for Physical Education Scotland is a branch of the Association for Physical Education, which is a United Kingdom body. It exists to promote physical education, activity and sport as a lifelong process for the benefit of children and young people. It is a young organisation. I am the secretary, but I am also an experienced physical education teacher and have worked in primary schools for the past 17 years.

**Dr Simpson:** Is it a membership organisation for PE people?

**Chris Wood:** It is a membership organisation. Currently, we have on our roll primary and secondary teachers and university lecturers. We try to have a broad spectrum of interested parties.

**Dr Simpson:** Just to clarify, is it for anyone who is interested in providing physical education, physical literacy skills and sport? They do not have to be a qualified PE teacher; it could be anyone.

**Chris Wood:** Yes.

**Dr Simpson:** Thank you; that is helpful.

**The Convener:** What size is your membership?

**Chris Wood:** We have 48 members in Scotland.

**The Convener:** Are they spread out geographically? I do not want all the details, but an idea of whether there are different issues in rural and urban areas.

**Chris Wood:** Broadly, our members are in the central belt with one or two in the north and the Borders.

**Dr Simpson:** When do we assess physical literacy? Should we do it or are we doing it?

**Chris Wood:** In primary schools, we do that all the time—it is part of the teaching and learning process. If your question is whether we assess at specific points, from my experience, we are looking for children of seven or eight to have the fundamentals in place. That is the crucial part and that is what physical education is all about. It is about the physical, but it is also about the cognitive and the social and emotional.

**Dr Simpson:** Is that in the learning plan for the individual child? Alan Armstrong might comment.

**Alan Armstrong (Learning and Teaching Scotland):** Assessment is part of good learning and teaching. Teachers observe young people and decide how well they are coping and how well they are challenged. They then use that assessment to help identify the next steps. That is part of daily, monthly and annual progress. The existing five to 14 curriculum is based on levels, which have descriptions. Teachers and schools help young people to progress through the levels. The levels are now being revised for the curriculum for excellence. However, the principle is broadly the same in that there are identified outcomes for different stages and the children work towards those appropriately.

As you might imagine, the issue in primary school is the extent to which a class teacher can be an expert in all areas of the curriculum. Naturally, the more that a teacher understands an aspect of the curriculum, the better skilled they are at identifying young people's abilities and how well they are coping. A continuing professional development issue has been picked up in the feedback on the draft experiences and outcomes for the curriculum for excellence. There is a need for continuing staff development to help teachers assess.

**The Convener:** I have a couple of supplementary questions. First, is there an entry in children's primary school report cards about physical activity or education? If so, is that mandatory? Is there a standard for report cards



throughout Scotland so that parents have an idea of what is going on?

I am not sure whether Miss Wood will be able to answer my second question, but I understand that there is a special qualification in PE for primary teachers. Do you have an idea of how many teachers in Scotland have it? We have talked about CPD, but I am asking how many teachers already have that qualification.

**Chris Wood:** You are referring to a new course that is on-going. About 600 primary school teachers are taking the course, which is split between the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow, with 16 councils having signed up with Edinburgh and the other 16 with Glasgow. The first cohort on the Edinburgh course is due to finish at about Easter.

**The Convener:** So it is completely new.

**Chris Wood:** Yes. It arose out of the recommendations of the review group on physical education, one of which was that we needed more structured CPD for primary class teachers. The PE component in ITE is very small, so—

**The Convener:** Sorry, but what is ITE?

**Chris Wood:** It is initial teacher education. Generally, class teachers do not come out of ITE with the skills, confidence and knowledge that we would want them to have to teach physical education.

**The Convener:** It would be useful if we received, from you or from someone else, more details about the new course and its aims.

My other question was about the school report card.

**Fraser Booth:** I will comment on secondary schools. Core PE, which is offered in most secondary schools to all students from S1 through to S5 and S6, involves a programme of continuous assessment. As pupils engage in physical activity and physical education, the class teacher, who is a subject specialist in PE, will offer immediate informal feedback to students as they engage in individual activities or team pursuits. The approach is about constant encouragement and rehearsal of skills in order to master them. At no time will the teacher say, for example, that a pupil can run 100m in 12 seconds, so they are top of the class. There is constant engagement with youngsters to encourage them to perform to the best of their ability.

10:30

The introduction of standard grade physical education studies and of national qualifications in the subject at intermediate and higher level from third year—and, in some schools, from second

year—onwards has led to a remarkable uptake over the past 10 years. In my school, around 50 per cent of the respective cohorts in S3 and S4 are studying standard grade PE in addition to core PE.

Within the standard grade and national qualification courses, there are formal assessments in which pupils are assessed against criteria that are laid down by the Scottish Qualifications Authority in order to attain the grade. They are graded against the criteria whether they are performing at foundation, general or credit level; or at intermediate 1, intermediate 2 or higher level.

**The Convener:** I have still not had an answer about report cards, in relation to either primary or secondary level—you are talking about exams.

**Fraser Booth:** I cannot comment on all the 400-odd secondary schools throughout Scotland, but in most of the schools in which I have worked, the annual report has included a report on the pupil's ability to engage in core PE. It addresses issues such as whether the pupil is able to participate in individual pursuits and in team sports; and whether they are good at engaging with others and working collaboratively to a good standard. In the case of standard grade and higher levels, more detailed reports are issued to parents on a formal basis.

**The Convener:** Can anybody comment further on primary schools?

**Chris Wood:** As far as I am aware, there is no consistency across the country. The formats are different.

**The Convener:** So some schools might include nothing about the child's progress in PE in the report card?

**Chris Wood:** No, that is not the case—the report will always address every area of the curriculum.

**The Convener:** So there will be a section in the report card for physical activities and physical literacy and so on, as there would be if there were concerns about numeracy? Is that the case? I do not know, so I am asking.

**Donald Macleod:** The difficulty is that for the five to 14 age group physical education has been contained within expressive arts. Some schools will report on a child's progress in relation to all the constituent elements of expressive arts: art, drama, music and physical education, for example. In other schools there will be perhaps only one comment that encompasses one or all of those things. It is best practice for schools to report on each individual element.

**The Convener:** That is helpful. I will move on.

**Mary Scanlon:** Mr Macleod will be delighted that this question is not primarily for him. I thank Mike Jess of the University of Edinburgh and Charlie Raeburn, who have submitted excellent papers on physical activity and physical education that we all found to be helpful.

Dr Ian McKee and I met with active schools co-ordinators at sportscotland yesterday. To be honest, I do not quite understand how the co-ordinators dovetail with PE teachers. Last week, John Beattie mentioned that there are no HEAT—health improvement, efficiency, access and treatment—targets for PE and, therefore, no single outcome agreements.

An article in this week's *Times Educational Supplement* states that the funding for "400 new PE teachers" is "unlikely to transpire" because of the abolition of ring fencing—I have to say that my party supported the abolition of ring fencing. Can you explain how active schools co-ordinators fit in with the PE teaching in schools? If fewer PE teachers are being employed—perhaps you could confirm whether that is the case—are the active schools co-ordinators taking over the PE teaching?

Am I right in saying—or is it perhaps a huge jump—that it is more likely that active schools co-ordinators would come under the heading of physical activity? Is it fair to say that there would be more structured learning under a PE teacher, which would come under physical education and physical literacy? Can you help me by explaining how those roles work together?

If Mr Macleod is feeling a wee bit lonely, I am also wondering whether the work that active schools co-ordinators do after school and during play time and lunch time is measured as part of the two hours of PE. I am not clear about that.

**The Convener:** I ask Mr Booth to answer that. I am galloping to your rescue, Mr Macleod, although it is not necessary.

**Fraser Booth:** Active schools co-ordinators have certainly been welcomed in the secondary sector, where we are fortunate to have trained PE specialists who may not be employed in the primary sector. Over the past year, I have increased the number of PE specialists on my staff. There will be a need to recruit even more PE specialists if we are to improve further on the two hour target. I have seven PE staff—admittedly, I have one depute and two principal teachers of pupil care and support, who have less of a teaching commitment in PE. Thus, for the size of school, I have a relatively large number of PE specialists.

The active schools co-ordinator works in tandem and in collaboration with the PE specialists in the secondary school. I give over a certain proportion

of time in the week, which equates to one day, which is distributed among my permanent PE staff. During that time, they are actively engaged in helping to promote sport across the school. At that point, they engage with the active schools co-ordinator, who has the time to go away from the school and engage with community groups and local sports clubs. Rather than have duplication of effort, we are trying to declutter the approach—I think that Christine Grahame referred to that earlier—so that we are not reinventing the wheel.

In the primary sector, we have local monthly meetings where I engage with my primary heads. The active schools co-ordinator comes along and she has an input into the meeting—I am made aware of her input into the primary sector. Given our geographical closeness, if the secondary school can help with the delivery of physical education and activity in the primary school, we do so. A prime example of that is that my swimming pool is used five days a week by the local primary schools as part of their active swimming programme. That is co-ordinated in part by the active schools co-ordinators, in conjunction with the PE staff in the secondary sector.

**Mary Scanlon:** You keep saying "my". I appreciate that you are talking about your experience, but we are looking for information on what is happening nationwide. Best practice is wonderful, but does what you have described happen in other schools?

Can I ask another question on something that came up yesterday?

**The Convener:** Can we let the other witnesses answer the first question?

**Mary Scanlon:** It is just that the witness touched on this. We heard that fewer teachers are participating as volunteers in sport.

**The Convener:** Can we please hear the other witnesses' response to the question about the interaction between active schools co-ordinators and the teachers in schools first? I will let the other witnesses come back in before I come back to you, Mr Booth. You have been itching to answer that question. I do not know who wants to go first.

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** You asked whether PE teachers will replace active schools co-ordinators. They have a different role, but best practice is that they work together. Physical education teachers have the bigger picture. Their main responsibility is learning and children's experiences. Active schools co-ordinators can come in and deliver a particular activity, but an active child is not necessarily an educated child. An active schools co-ordinator might come in and deliver six weeks of basketball and then walk away. The physical education teacher would have to look at the impact of that on a child's learning and

development. The PE teacher would use the co-ordinators' expertise to deliver a particular activity, but they have to look at the long-term development of the child. They have to use the co-ordinators as part of a joined-up approach for the benefit of the child.

Co-ordinators will not replace PE teachers. Teachers have a crucial role in the child's learning and development. Co-ordinators do not have that agenda, so they cannot replace the teachers as such. However, curriculum for excellence is very much about a co-ordinated approach, whereby co-ordinators and teachers talk to each other and fill in the gaps. If everyone works together—sports development, active schools co-ordinators and physical education departments—that is best practice. That works wonderfully well across the country in the primary sector, but it is not working as well in the secondary sector, where there are more inconsistencies. I guess that that is because, in the past, PE departments and active schools co-ordinators have worked in isolation. There is a move for more joined-up thinking and collaborative working.

**The Convener:** The clerks will be able to prepare a paper for committee members, which we can add to the valuable evidence that we are hearing from witnesses.

There seem to be two different roles, one being liaison and the other being what sounds like tasters—my abbreviation for when an active schools co-ordinator comes in and tries to get the children interested in a particular sport.

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** We have to be careful about active schools co-ordinators coming in for six weeks and then walking away.

**The Convener:** A taster would be just to get children engaged in a particular activity.

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** That can be important, but some initiatives are not long term and are not for ages three to 18.

**The Convener:** Does Chris Wood wish to comment?

**Chris Wood:** I agree with everything that Suzanne said.

**The Convener:** I—

**Chris Wood:** However—

**The Convener:** Ha ha—you saw that I was about to move on and you came in with a "However". Mary Scanlon is teaching our witnesses tricks about how to get a supplementary point in.

**Chris Wood:** My local council has taken an integrated approach to physical education, physical activity and sport. My experience in

primary schools is that I have been the specialist who works with the children during curriculum time, whereas the active primary schools co-ordinator with whom I work has engaged the children in physical activity during intervals, at lunch times and in classes after school. We have distinct roles, but the boundaries blur.

**The Convener:** I think I have detected at least three strands in the role of active schools co-ordinator, but no doubt they will be explained in the paper from our clerks.

I will move on now and—

**Fraser Booth:** Convener, may I—

**The Convener:** Oh, sorry; Mr Booth.

**Fraser Booth:** Mary Scanlon asked me a question. I am representing School Leaders Scotland. In 2005, we invited Professor David Collins to address our annual conference. David used to be a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh and, more recently, he was the United Kingdom coaching supremo at the Olympic games—I am sad that he is no longer in that post. We invited him to address us because the association—at that time we were called the Headteachers Association of Scotland—recognised the importance of sport and physical education in schools. We have considered the issue at various annual conferences and council meetings. When I say that we welcome the appointment of active schools co-ordinators in the secondary sector, I do so on behalf of School Leaders Scotland—we have 630 representatives, and I think that we have one in every secondary school in Scotland. We welcome the co-ordinators because they add to the work of qualified PE staff. That is the picture that we see across Scotland.

Sustainability has been mentioned. It would be perverse for us to give children a six-week taster course and then say at the end, "That's it, kids. We're moving on." We and active schools co-ordinators try to introduce children to sports that will be sustainable. The challenge for schools is to build in sustainability. That issue is acknowledged both in the health and wellbeing outcomes that we are currently reviewing and in the measures that we will put in place next year.

**Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab):** I have two questions, the first of which focuses on older children—those in S5 and S6. The papers that committee members have received, and the evidence that we have heard, suggest that only 7 per cent of secondary schools provided the minimum two hours of PE a week for pupils in the first four years, and that no schools met the target for older pupils. Our papers say:

"This is poor compared with England where on average, over 70 per cent of pupils under 14 and one third of pupils

aged 14 to 16 received at least two hours of physical education in 2007."

Last week we heard John Beattie talking about this issue, and the other night he was on the news speaking from a school in, I think, Fife.

How can we encourage older children to get more involved in physical activity? What more can be done?

**Fraser Booth:** I acknowledge that that is a challenge for secondary schools, but the evidence that School Leaders Scotland has collected suggests that the situation is improving. More secondary schools are now offering core physical education from S1 to S6 than was the case five years ago, but it is never enough.

The majority of students who stay on to S5 and S6 are there to try to gain as many academic qualifications as possible so that they can go on to higher or further education and, as school managers, we have to deal with that issue. The upper school curriculum is very crowded, but I am a great believer that not only all work and no play but, equally, all play and no work made Jack and Jill dull people. We have to strike the right balance and provide the youngsters in the upper school with an outlet so that they can develop their physical wellbeing as well as their academic wellbeing. I and other school leaders throughout Scotland are attempting to address that challenge.

10:45

**Helen Eadie:** I have a question about a nationwide investment strategy. The report by the Auditor General for Scotland says that there is a need for a clear link between the national strategy for sport and councils' financial investment in facilities and services throughout Scotland, while a national audit of sports facilities identified that investment of around £110 million a year for the next 25 years is needed to bring them up to an acceptable standard. What input do people such as you have into the process of assessing needs and the state of facilities? What more could be done locally? What engagement is there with planners and the people who hold the local authority purse strings?

I am reminded of a subject that is close to my heart: £544 million is needed for swimming pools throughout Scotland and only 338 schools in the country have swimming pools. Swimming is the ideal way of getting people of all ages physically active. We do not think enough about that. If there is any campaign that we should wage, I would choose that one.

**Fraser Booth:** Having read the briefing papers, I disagree with your figures for the number of school swimming pools. I thought that the figure was somewhere around 114 in the state sector

and perhaps about 128 school swimming pools in total.

**Helen Eadie:** Sorry—we are talking about public pools.

**Fraser Booth:** I can speak only from my experience in my local authority. Each year, I have to present a paper on how funds will be disbursed. The provision of PE facilities is always a standing item in my budgetary forecast. That includes the money that has to be spent on maintaining what I have and the additionality that I would like. I have recently undergone a new public-private partnership school build in my present post and had experience of a large PPP build in my previous authority, in which I was seconded as the schools development officer for a while. The provision of PE and sports facilities was high on the agenda.

I said earlier that enough is never enough. Often, the facilities that we would like to have may be available to us, but not immediately on the doorstep. Although we would all like everything to be on our doorsteps, for some schools that is physically not possible. It is impossible for some secondary schools in central Edinburgh or Glasgow to have their own sports fields because of the surrounding buildings. It takes time and money to take pupils to sports fields and they lose valuable learning and teaching time by travelling. If a school has facilities immediately on its doorstep, travel is not an issue and more quality time can be built in.

In my local authority, schools are consulted on planning and that consultation goes into the strategic thinking and planning within the authority. Presumably, local authorities feed back into the national strategy for the provision of sports facilities.

**Helen Eadie:** Thank you very much; I really appreciate that. The part of your answer in which I was most interested was your comment on additionality, which is the vision for the future. To what extent is that vision taken on board? Are there real outcomes and achievements from it? What is the view of school leaders throughout Scotland on that?

**Fraser Booth:** That is an issue that we discuss formally at council meetings and annual conferences. I said earlier that enough is never enough. Like me, I am sure that other headteachers across Scotland would like to have not one games hall but two, and that those who are already in the fortunate position of having two would like to have three. We would like to have specialist gyms and swimming pools, and dance studios that were designed for the delivery of dance, which is a growing area of the curriculum.

We would like more drama to be introduced, but there is a requirement to have proper facilities.

If the Government is serious about taking action, it must consider the use of central funding and should perhaps go back to local authorities to ring fence certain funding to ensure that the facilities are provided so that schools and other sporting bodies can deliver on the provision of quality physical education and physical activity.

**Helen Eadie:** Do you agree that there is no clear link between what is needed on the ground and a national investment strategy?

**Fraser Booth:** There is a link, but it is somewhat clouded at the moment. Given that some major sporting events will be held in Scotland in the coming decade, there will be investment in the infrastructure in certain parts of the country to support that. I hope that you can tell from my accent that I am Glaswegian. As well as being extremely proud that my city is hosting the 2014 Commonwealth games, I am hopeful that two of my son's friends will be competing for Scotland, and I want to go along to watch.

New infrastructure is being built in certain parts of Glasgow and some infrastructure has already been provided in the city, an example of which is the Crownpoint north complex, which was the subject of major investment. I was involved in the 1987 world netball championships, which received a great deal of investment, but we did not get the spin-offs, and the benefits that we thought would accrue from that did not materialise. If we are to make our dream a reality, it will be necessary to involve partners not just at school level but at local authority and national Government levels. The bottom line is that it will take money as well as people on the ground to make that vision come true.

**The Convener:** The committee held a brief inquiry on what legacy the various games could leave. We are aware that, to date, games have left an infrastructure legacy, but have not helped to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation.

I have a supplementary. Forgive me if I paraphrase what you said, but you mentioned that you—by which I take it that you meant your organisation—had gathered some written evidence that there had been an improvement in physical activity in secondary schools; I think that you said that at some point. Could you provide the committee with that evidence in written form, unless you can provide it orally now?

**Fraser Booth:** It is not written evidence; I phoned round members of council who represent the views of our local associations. If I were given the time to do so, I would be able to ascertain the view on that.

**The Convener:** It would be extremely useful if you could put that in written form for the committee. I am sorry, Helen—I thought that it would be useful to clarify the remark that Fraser Booth made in passing.

**Helen Eadie:** I noticed that the hands of another two members of the panel went up and I wondered what their views were.

**The Convener:** Given my age, I have to ask about things before I forget what I was going to say.

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** I whole-heartedly agree with the point about the importance of having a swimming pool in a school. Why is it that Falkirk Council has decided to provide a swimming pool in every new school that is built in its area, but Glasgow City Council decided against that in its new schools? Across Scotland, there is a lack of consistency in the vision for facilities, which must be addressed.

**Chris Wood:** Facilities in primary schools is a live issue. In general, a primary school has a gym, but it might be a multipurpose space—it might be the dining hall and the venue for visitors and for the holding of assemblies. Its use for those other purposes eats into the time for curriculum PE.

**The Convener:** In secondary schools, it often becomes the examination hall.

**Chris Wood:** True.

In a two-stream school—in other words, one that has two classes in every year from primary 1 to primary 7—that has one gym, providing 90 minutes of quality PE blocks out that space from Monday to Thursday, which leaves one day for all the other activities that people want to use it for. That is a significant issue in primary schools.

**Helen Eadie:** There is a big issue with swimming pools that we need to have a debate on, which is about whether a swimming pool should be provided in every school or whether, at the very least, one pool should be provided in every town of more than 10,000 people. That would mean that, in a place that had two or more schools, those schools could use the community swimming pool. Elderly people, who might need hydrotherapy for arthritis and so on, would be glad to use it, too.

**Alan Armstrong:** Part of the advice that will be provided to schools and local authorities—and, as part of that, teachers—on the curriculum for excellence will be to point out the advantages of working in partnership with community facilities. People realise that schools cannot deliver the full curriculum, the wraparound provision and all the other opportunities that we would like them to provide, on their own. There will be advice about the need, in some cases, to look beyond the

school campus or even beyond the immediate community. If that means structuring the school timetable and lesson plans differently, that should be taken into account.

**Ross Finnie:** My first question is to those who deal with physical education. Ms Wood, you said that the purpose of having quality physical education is to improve physical literacy and that a person whose level of literacy improves is more likely to participate in sport. The committee indicated that it understands that point—it is critical to the committee, our emphasis being pathways into sport. You have expressed your concern about the quality of the provision of physical education and, notwithstanding the limitations of facilities in primary schools, the two hours that are supposed to be provided. Having improved physical literacy—consequent to your improvement in the physical education provision—to what extent do you feel responsible for giving pupils access to a sporting opportunity, not necessarily provided by the education authority but in a general and generic sense?

**Chris Wood:** We try to do that at the moment. I spoke about my council's integrated approach to physical education. There is a pathway from primary school through secondary school, and there are participation and performance routes through clubs. The council has target sports—the sports that we would seek to channel children towards in the first instance. Obviously, there are children who are participating in sports with parental backing—we, too, would seek to support them.

**Ross Finnie:** I appreciate the improved links between sport in primary and sport in secondary, but I was thinking about links out into the community. Richard Simpson and I spent a valuable three or four hours at East Renfrewshire Council. Its co-ordinators are picking up the physical education provision and taking it directly out into the community. That is an interesting example, and I want to know whether that view is shared by those who are directing physical education provision from the centre or whether it is more specific to particular local authorities.

**Chris Wood:** In my experience, as far as particular sports and introductions to those sports are concerned, schools come together to have festivals. Whatever the sport—let us say netball or hockey—a cluster of schools might come together and have an inter-school competition. Is that what you mean?

**Ross Finnie:** Actually, no; I wondered whether the circumstances in East Renfrewshire can be replicated. In every local authority there are plus points that can be built on. There are lots of plus points that East Renfrewshire can build on, and we were impressed by that. The council was

seeking to provide a direct link into the community for its eight chosen sports and to improve the provision and quality of physical education. In other words, the idea was that a child would not stop at that point and think, "Why am I doing this? It's terribly interesting teaching me all this, but what's the purpose of it?" East Renfrewshire Council has developed that approach and acknowledged the difficulties of implementing it. PE teachers cannot be expected to do everything, so there is greater integration between active schools co-ordinators and others than I have encountered in many other authorities. Is that the direction that we should be taking?

11:00

**Chris Wood:** Yes, and it is what we are trying to do. The pathway might be from school to extra-curricular classes and then to local sports clubs.

**Fraser Booth:** I had the good fortune to be involved with East Renfrewshire Council at the time of the public-private-partnership building programme. I worked in Williamwood high school, which committee members no doubt visited. East Renfrewshire is in a unique and fortunate position, in that it covers a relatively small geographical area. Its seven secondary schools are no more than five miles apart, so it is easy to engage with the community.

From my experience of working in the authority, I can say that East Renfrewshire schools have proactive parental bodies that support extra-curricular sport as well as school sport and acknowledge the need for sustainability. Several of the papers for today's meeting mention volunteers. I have worked in six other local authorities in Scotland and in my experience East Renfrewshire has a higher percentage of volunteers, whose willingness to get involved makes it possible to take sport out of school and into the community.

**Ross Finnie:** The school that we visited yesterday is in Barrhead. We are aware of the situation that you describe, which is interesting, but yesterday we were considering the authority's efforts in more deprived parts of the community, where people are less well-off and there are fewer volunteers.

I am interested in learning what training and development HM inspectors receive in relation to physical education. Mr Macleod, what courses must inspectors undertake to enable them properly to assess the quality of PE provision and outcomes and deficiencies in that regard? Only 5 per cent of primary schools provide two hours of PE a week; can inspectors spot the schools in which the two hours are not being delivered? Michael Matheson appears to have had to grapple

with reports that were not as full as they might have been.

**Donald Macleod:** First, good learning and teaching is good learning and teaching, regardless of where it takes place. We expect certain principles and fundamentals of good learning to be in place for young people, regardless of the curricular area that we are inspecting. The principles apply even in the unique environment that PE presents.

There is a programme of staff development, through which good practice is shared among colleagues. The inspectorate has a team of national specialists who are ready to advise colleagues who have questions about PE. There is a briefing paper on the subject, which all colleagues follow. Our portrait of good practice in PE, which covers the three to 18 curriculum, is on our website, and all inspectors avail themselves of that information so that they are aware of current good practice in PE throughout the country.

**Ross Finnie:** I want to press you a little on the matter. The committee's difficulty is that the picture that the inspectorate is presenting appears—I stress “appears”—to be rather different from the picture that has been presented by almost all our other witnesses. Every other witness has indicated that the culture, facilities, parental support and willingness of pupils to engage in physical activity at a young age might have changed over time. It might not have changed, but the evidence is that we have a problem with the levels of physical activity among young people.

You seem to be telling us that the learning and teaching experiences are completely the same and that there is nothing special about that, and the fact that only 5 per cent of primary schools provide the required two hours a week of physical education does not appear to be a problem. You do not seem to be picking up any difficulties, although you mentioned that some reports expressly state that there are some.

You are conveying to us a much better picture than we have gained from almost any other person who is seeking to engage in the problem of inculcating in young people a good sense of physical education, the consequences of which are the poor state of physical literacy and the declining level of active participation in sport. That is the evidence that has been supported by every other witness but it does not appear to be the view of inspectors, who do not see a problem or think that physical education is so well understood and inculcated into our system that it does not present a problem.

**Donald Macleod:** I do not think that that is the perspective that we are giving you. I ask you to look at our report that was published early in 2008

in which we looked at how well the four capacities in the curriculum for excellence were being developed in relation to primary physical education. That report is on our website. It was based on inspections that took place between May 2006 and June 2007. We highlight in the report areas of key strengths, which I will share with you. Among them were

“pupils’ attainment in games skills ... positive attitudes and willingness to learn”.

Pupils showed responsible attitudes in their

“understanding of how to keep fit”

and they showed positive levels of participation and an

“ability to cope with winning and losing”.

We also highlighted key areas for improvement that the primary sector needed to address, which included a need for greater time; greater planning for differentiation in meeting young people's needs; there was insufficient use of the outdoors; there should be greater partnership working; there should be fewer active homework tasks; and lengthy warm-ups and changing times that reduce the opportunities for active experiential learning should be reduced. I do not think that that is consistent with a picture that conveys the sense that we are content with the quality and level of physical education provision.

**Ross Finnie:** We will look at that report.

**The Convener:** This is not a rebuke, Mr Macleod, but it always helps the committee if we have written evidence. If we had had the written evidence from which you quoted, we would have been able to direct our questions differently. I find it useful when witnesses provide to us and our clerks such written evidence in advance when circumstances permit. Although I hear what you say, it is not reflected in the school reports that we have seen.

**Dr Simpson:** I have a supplementary question about the links that have been mentioned. We have established that basic PE has to be of a quality to establish good physical literacy before there is a move into practising sport. At that point, the active schools co-ordinators should engage with the community to establish strong links, rather than just offer a taster.

We found it interesting that, in the well-off areas of East Renfrewshire, clubs already exist and it is feasible for schools to be linked to them—the clubs go into schools and pupils go to the clubs—but in Barrhead, which is an area of deprivation, there is only one, moribund, tennis club, in which six adults are involved. The local authority is therefore starting from scratch to develop the necessary community club structures that witnesses have said are important for continuity

and feed through. Incidentally, we were told that clubs cannot get money to support them until they have been operating for one year, so starting clubs from scratch is difficult for the community and for local authorities. Does any of the witnesses have any comments on how we might deal with that?

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** We need to look at how the bright stars are managing to break down barriers. You mentioned the set-up in Barrhead, which, as you say, is an area of deprivation. I do not want to repeat points that have been made in submissions that the committee has received but, as others have made clear, the civil service has sometimes created barriers and finance has been a problem.

The joined-up thinking in some authorities and school clusters is delivering well for pupils; there are great participation rates and performance pathways. We simply need to identify those organisations and share that good practice across Scotland to ensure that there is more consistency. At the moment, children's experience of sport is inconsistent. You might be doing a great job in physical education, bringing children into sport and improving their performance but, if they then join a club and have a bad experience, they will not remain engaged. As children will engage and remain engaged for the rest of their lives only if they have a good experience of sport and other physical activity, we have to ensure that the quality of their experience throughout is consistent. If people in Scotland are doing a good job, that practice needs to be shared.

**The Convener:** Some of us had it with sport for life after a bad experience on ice-cold hockey pitches.

**Alan Armstrong:** With regard to the developing curriculum, I should say that we have just received the University of Glasgow's feedback report. All the feedback has been analysed, and the report shows that, in PE—indeed across health and wellbeing, which is the curriculum area in which physical education will fall—respondents noted a strong need for support, advice and professional development on how to work better across sectors, how to share with communities the skills of practitioners and how to build on the ideas that some local authorities are putting into place. We are pulling all this information together and will present it along with the draft curriculum to the curriculum for excellence management board early next month.

**Dr Simpson:** It might be helpful to see some of that analysis, if we felt it to be relevant to our inquiry.

**The Convener:** Indeed. We have received written evidence from the Convention of Scottish

Local Authorities and were hoping that it might send someone along to give evidence. After all, given the linkages that have been highlighted, it is terribly important that local authorities are represented. We shall endeavour to hear from witnesses from COSLA and local authorities before we conclude our evidence taking. I hope that members agree that that will be helpful.

**Fraser Booth:** As others have indicated, it is important that good practice is showcased. The papers for today's meeting, for example, showcase the work in Glen Urquhart high school as something that should be replicated. We must take into account local environments and specialisms. We should commend the development of shinty in Glen Urquhart, but I wonder whether in Barrhead there would be the same uptake for that sport as there has been for tennis. We should not understate the importance of role models in society. Andy Murray's rising star will no doubt increase interest in tennis and, I hope, lead to more young people becoming actively involved in that sport.

**The Convener:** The evidence that we received from witnesses who are senior athletes and gold medallists—Liz McColgan, Rhona Martin from the world of curling and Shirley Robertson, for example—suggested that unless everything is in place in advance nothing will happen but, if anything, club involvement has fallen off.

**Fraser Booth:** I acknowledge that. Liz McColgan is one of my constituents. We try to involve local personalities in developing sport but, as others have pointed out, we cannot expect to deliver the quality provision that we all want if the facilities do not exist.

**The Convener:** I see that Michael Matheson, Ian McKee and Helen Eadie have questions. I hope to finish by 11:30 because, by then, the witnesses will have been giving evidence for an hour and a half. However, before the committee rebukes me, I should add that there is no time bar.

11:15

**Michael Matheson:** With regard to the various pathways, particularly that from school to community clubs, I accept the point that in certain parts of the country there is an issue with the infrastructure of clubs that should have been addressed a long time ago and that it compromises the development of the pathways.

We have already touched on the general issue of the training of new PE teachers and discussed the situation of those who are at the moment training for PE qualifications in PE schools. That training might well be happening, but is there any scope for doing more? Are we, for example, bringing coaches from community sports clubs into



our schools to deliver some of the PE agenda and associated physical activities and using their talents and skills to develop links between the school and the club? Might such an approach have benefits?

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** That does happen, but we need to be cautious. It would be fantastic if a rugby development officer, for example, came to my school to teach rugby, because I am sure that he or she would give our children a good experience of the practical aspects of playing the sport, but we have to ensure that, as far as the physical education agenda is concerned, we focus on the child's learning experience and on meeting their needs in that respect. A rugby development officer is an expert in rugby, not an educationist, and although a PE teacher can use that expertise in the community, they have to consider the bigger picture. This is where we need joined-up thinking. A PE teacher has to consider how six weeks of coaching by a rugby development officer would impact on the long-term cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children from three to 18—or, in my case, from 11 to 18.

**Michael Matheson:** I fully accept that. As witnesses to the inquiry have already made clear, we need to ensure that any coaches who are brought into schools are properly qualified.

You said that the kind of coaching I described is happening. To what extent is it happening and how effective has it been across the board? Is it happening in all Scottish local authorities or in individual schools? Is it happening because, say, one teacher might have an aptitude for developing this kind of programme?

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** I cannot answer for the whole of Scotland; all I have is anecdotal evidence that some authorities—Clackmannanshire, I think, for one—have established good links under the active schools programme. The coaches who are brought in do not deliver a PE programme by themselves; rather, they work with PE specialists in curriculum time because, as I have pointed out, teachers look at the big picture. I have heard that the approach has worked well—and I believe that it can work well if there is joined-up thinking.

It is becoming clear that, as a result of the programme of improvement that was introduced three or four years ago, people in the world of PE, physical activity and sport are beginning to join up their thinking and to take a more long-term, strategic and sustainable approach to this issue. After all, the approach can work only if it can be sustained in a school cluster. There is no point in someone coming along for six weeks and then disappearing. As I have said, we need joined-up thinking and to look at the child's experience of physical education.

**Fraser Booth:** I must stress the importance of the national governing bodies for the various sports in this matter. Anecdotal experience suggests that the quality of coaching and coach education has improved. For example, my wife was until recently the netball coach development officer for Scotland but, as a full-time teacher, she had to carry out that work part-time. Thankfully, funding has now allowed Netball Scotland to appoint a full-time coach development officer.

I doubt that, if sufficient coaches were available, there would be a school leader who would say no to someone with some expertise coming in to work alongside physical education practitioners. After all, PE teachers cannot be masters of all sports; instead, they have a technical knowledge of delivering a learning programme. I have two members of staff who, because they happen to be interested in the sport, have become qualified rugby coaches. I would never have dreamed of giving school rugby a role unless I had suitably qualified staff, particularly because it is such a contact sport. In fact, I believe that rugby coaches need to have at least UK coaching certificate level 2 before they can teach rugby in secondary schools; other sports require only UK CC level 1.

The national governing bodies for sports have to look at how they are addressing the provision of coach education. We would welcome any form of partnership if it was going to improve the delivery of quality provision in secondary schools.

**Michael Matheson:** Rugby is a good example. The committee took evidence at Murrayfield from the Scottish Rugby Union, which is one of the more progressive national governing bodies when it comes to working with community coaches.

My second point, which has been touched on to a degree, is about trying to establish sports clubs and helping clubs to gain access to the school estate outwith normal school use. I still hear that the problem is getting the janny to open up the school so that clubs can access its lovely swimming pool and gymnasiums. Should more be done not just to open up the school estate but to base some community clubs in the school, outwith normal school time? That way, if someone wants to go along to the local athletics club and asks where it is based, they find that it is based at X school. I understand that that happens much more in places such as Scandinavia. There seems to be a limitation on our ability to develop that kind of thing. Such an approach would help develop much more effective partnerships between clubs and schools.

**Chris Wood:** I will talk about athletics and cross-country running. My experience is that if the children are interested in taking part—we would encourage them to do so—there is an extra-curricular club. The intermediate stage is to have a

run-jump-throw club, for example—we have one that is based in one of the high schools; it is run outwith school time. You can encourage children to go to those clubs, but they need support and they need their parents to be willing to take them. From that intermediate stage, they move on to the athletics club proper—I am trying to explain the pathway.

**Michael Matheson:** Do the clubs go into schools to provide the run-jump-throw club in the school? Do they use the school estate to provide that facility?

**Chris Wood:** Yes, but the club is run after school time.

**Michael Matheson:** I understand that. The pathway would then lead on to the athletics club, which I presume continues to be based at the school.

**Chris Wood:** Yes, and elsewhere.

**The Convener:** Are headteachers at all precious about the use of their schools after hours? In my experience, that was sometimes the case.

**Fraser Booth:** In most schools, particularly PPP schools, it is built into the contract that the school has priority use of the school facilities up to, say, 6 o'clock but, thereafter, it becomes a community resource. Even in non-PPP schools, local authorities make school facilities available.

You asked whether we are precious about our facilities. I would say that we are not precious, but there are always exceptions. Provided that facilities are left the way they are found, there is no issue with clubs using them. There would be issues if allowing a club to use the facility outwith school time prevented it from being used during school hours for the provision of education. It is a pity that COSLA is not represented on the panel, because it would be better placed to answer your question.

Are more schools community schools? We have a yellow manual that lists all the schools in Scotland. If you looked at the schools in that manual 20 years ago, you would find that most were called high schools or academies. Now, an increasing number are listed as community schools, such as Lochend community school in Glasgow—I was on the phone to it yesterday—Currie community high school and Inveralmond community school. A growing number of schools now see themselves as an integral part of the community. Although my school has not changed its name—it is still Carnoustie high school—it is an integral part of the community. The school facilities are accessed by a number of community groups, not just sporting bodies. The anecdotal evidence is that that is reflected throughout Scotland.

Finance could be a barrier. Dr Simpson said that clubs need to be going for a year before they can get money. School lets are a cost. COSLA representatives might be able to address that point.

**The Convener:** We will ask about that. I hope that you concede that it might be difficult for rural and remote areas to function in the way you describe. I think you said that, in your area, many of the secondary schools are close together.

**Fraser Booth:** There are rural schools too. Webster's high school in Kirriemuir is in a rural setting, as are Brechin high school and Forfar academy. There are provisions to make those school buildings available after school hours.

**Alan Armstrong:** I will pick up on the point about what we might call lets of school-based accommodation. The extent to which the community has access varies. The costs and timings of lets can vary, and I have heard that they can sometimes be a barrier to parents who want to hold evening meetings or community groups that wish to use school premises for nightclasses, for example. Access exists but, because PPP contracts vary, the costs can be prohibitive, particularly to new-start groups.

**Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP):** Hello.

**The Convener:** That was a friendly hello.

**Ian McKee:** As always, I hope, convener.

I have listened with a great deal of interest and learned a lot from the witnesses' responses to the questions. As they will know, at the end of our evidence taking we will produce a report that will go to the Government, the Parliament and Scotland. It will describe steps that we believe should be taken to improve pathways into sport. We are well aware of the need for enormous investment in facilities—there has been underinvestment in facilities for about 20 years—and that that will be an enormous problem. Setting that aside, I ask each witness to give us bullet points of the sort of proposals that we should include in our report to advance the cause of improving our children's pathways into sport.

**Suzanne Hargreaves:** Mr Matheson made a point about the need to break down barriers with janitorial staff. That requires finance. We need to welcome the community to work with schools. Ensuring that the resources in a school are available to all, not only for school use, would go a long way to building good partnerships so that everyone works together for the benefit of the children in that school or cluster. It is about joined-up thinking. We are working towards that.

**Chris Wood:** We need more specialist teachers in primary schools and generous access to them.

**Alan Armstrong:** The new curriculum will set out clear roles for physical education, physical activity and sport in developing the whole child. The experiences and outcomes are planned so that bringing them together should establish a pattern of daily life that involves activity. Research has shown that that leads to children undertaking such physical activity throughout their lives.

**Donald Macleod:** I was interested in the degree to which physical activity was on the agenda in previous meetings of the committee. That is coming at things from the wrong angle; if quality physical education and quality links into sport in the community for young people are established, supported and enhanced, the physical activity agenda will take care of itself.

It would be wrong for physical literacy to be the only focus in physical education: physical education has many other benefits to give young people. We should not underestimate the importance of physical education. It is the only way we can provide a quality experience for all our young people. The main route into physical activity for them is through physical education when they are at school. If we train a child in the way that they should go, we will direct them in the proper paths.

**Fraser Booth:** I will be brief. Ian McKee asked for priorities. Resourcing is the priority—but there is no one-size-fits-all answer. We must consider the physical resources and the human resources—the number of qualified staff, the number of coaches in the community and, last but by no means least, janitors, who are crucial—that we provide to our schools and communities. We must develop good working partnerships with our janitors and ensure that they feel included. The most important man in my school is my janitor—without him the school could not function.

11:30

**The Convener:** I was a secondary school teacher many moons ago. The two most important people in the school were not the headmaster and deputy head but the janitor and the cleaner.

Members are indicating that they want to ask short supplementary questions. I hope that the questions are necessary, because Mr Booth has neatly summarised the situation.

**Ian McKee:** Mr Booth commented on the importance of integration with the community as far as sport is concerned. Does that approach extend to allowing members of the community to participate in lessons?

**Fraser Booth:** Yes. Of course, like all headteachers, I have to be aware of the health and safety implications. Visitors to the school must

meet certain criteria. We have not mentioned Disclosure Scotland checks, which have often presented a barrier to people who want to volunteer in schools.

Provided that health and safety checks have been carried out and I am satisfied that the people whom we bring into school are working in a safe environment and are supported by appropriate and qualified staff, I have no issue with people coming into school. I have yet to come across a colleague who has a different view on the matter.

**Helen Eadie:** How do you bring synergy to the issue? How do you work collectively to promote and develop sport and secure the outcomes that we all want? The Association for Physical Education Scotland said in its submission that it would welcome the chance to work collectively, but I assumed that it was already doing so. Was that naive of me? What happens on the ground?

Will you also talk about what happens internationally? In your submission you mentioned examples of good practice in curriculum development in Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.

**Chris Wood:** When you asked how we work collectively, what did you mean?

**Helen Eadie:** In your submission you said:

“afPE Scotland would welcome the opportunity to work with key partners including HMIE, Learning & Teaching Scotland, Higher Education institutions, sportscotland and National Governing Bodies of Sport”.

I assumed that that was already happening.

**Chris Wood:** Ours is a new body, which was constituted only last October. We want to make links with stakeholders.

**Helen Eadie:** Do other bodies work collectively?

**Donald Macleod:** HMIE has shared best practice with Learning and Teaching Scotland—

**Helen Eadie:** What about School Leaders Scotland and other stakeholders?

**Fraser Booth:** There is collaborative working. School Leaders Scotland has been going for more than 70 years, in one form or another. We work proactively with inspectors when they come into school. Inspectors are a rich source of information about good practice—

**Helen Eadie:** That is not quite what I meant. I want to know whether there is a process whereby people in Scotland who are interested in promoting sport in schools get together to address the issues.

**The Convener:** I should write a definition of “short supplementary question”. We are opening up a whole new inquiry. Helen Eadie has asked important questions, but I am mindful that we have

been taking evidence for an hour and a half. Perhaps the witnesses could write to us about good practice abroad. We will be able to peruse the additional written evidence. I hope that Helen Eadie will be content with that.

I thank the witnesses. Your evidence has been useful. You will have the opportunity to read the *Official Report* of the meeting in just under a week's time. You might then want to add something to your evidence. Feel free to do so. It can be difficult to answer questions on the spot and you might wish that you had made additional points. The clerks tell me that they can advise you of the additional written evidence that we have called for—they can do that before the *Official Report* is published.

**Fraser Booth:** Is that the time limit for providing additional information?

**The Convener:** No. I am trying to be helpful and to give you time to gather up anecdotal evidence, for example. The clerks will write to you. I thank all the witnesses.

*Meeting closed at 11:34.*

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