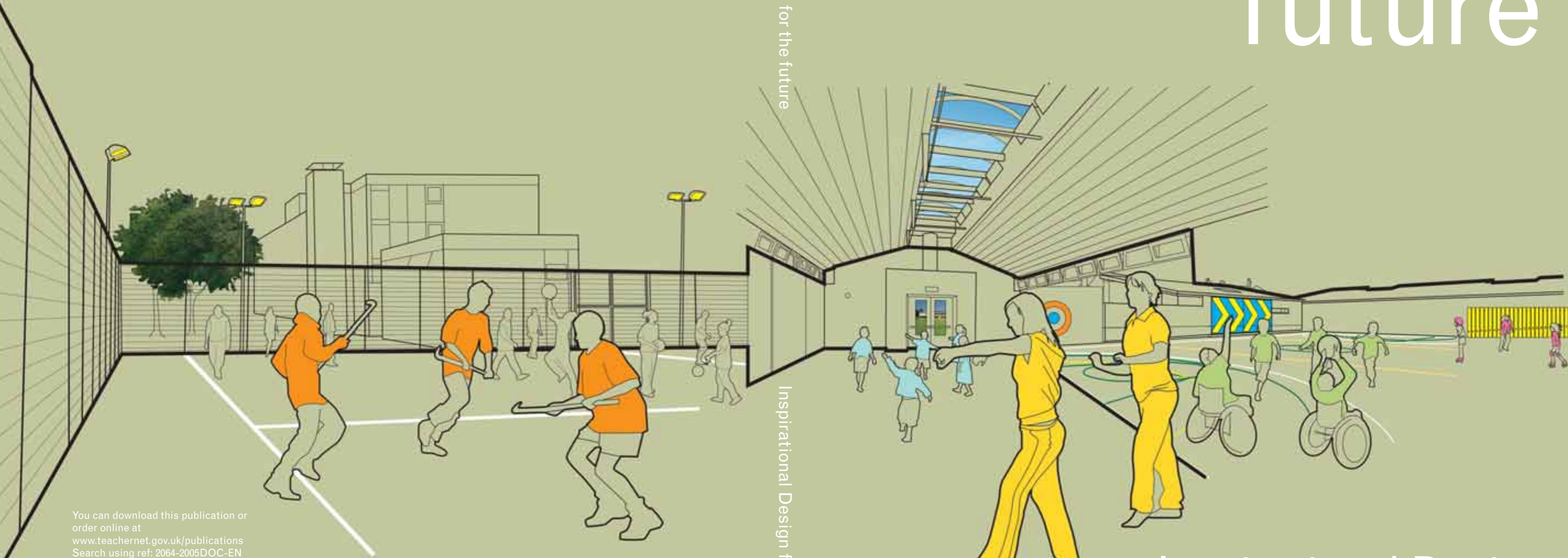




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Inspirational Design for PE & Sport Spaces

Inspirational Design for PE & Sport Spaces

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creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

schools for the
future

Inspirational Design for PE & Sport Spaces

Foreword



“Winning the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games for London is a great

opportunity for British sport. I am determined that we use this chance to inspire the nation to get involved in sport. At the heart of London’s bid was Britain’s passion for sport, and the sporting legacy we will leave for young people. Emotionally the Games can deliver so much. Just to represent your country at the Games is a dream that young people can now work towards. A new generation of young athletes will be inspired to become the champions of tomorrow.

Today’s children live in a world of boundless possibilities and competing distractions. Sport and physical activity has not always been an obvious choice for our young people but I believe that the inspiration of winning the Games will begin to change that.

People who take part in physical activity for fitness and for fun have their first experience of sport at school. My interest in athletics began

at school when my physical education teacher returned to school with the bronze medal for the 400 metres hurdles from the 1968 Mexico Olympics. To ensure the experience of school sport is a positive one you need good teachers and good facilities to allow young people to find a sport they can enjoy in a safe and appropriate environment. This document will help to ensure that we have school facilities to meet young people’s expectations and support a new generation of sports participants and Olympic champions.”

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which reads "Sebastian Coe". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Sebastian Coe
Chairman of London 2012



“When London hosts the Olympics in 2012, many of those taking part will have had their first experience of sport when they were still at school. But PE and sport is not just about nurturing the top sports people, it’s about enabling all young people to experience a range of activities, increase their confidence and competence and to develop a strong base for lifelong participation in physical activity.

The Government is committed to improving PE and sport in school. In the five years up to 2008, Government investment in PE and school sport, including Lottery funding, will have totalled over £1.5 billion. Key to this investment is the delivery of the Government’s PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy. The strategy includes all maintained schools in England and seeks to ensure that, by 2006, at least 75% of 5-16 year olds will be doing at least two hours each week of high quality PE and school sport. By 2008, we want to increase this to 85% of all pupils. The long term aim is that, by 2010, all children will be offered at least

4 hours of sport every week. This will comprise at least 2 hours of high quality PE and sport at school and, in addition, the opportunity for at least a further 2-3 hours beyond the school day, delivered by a range of school, community and club providers.

Good teachers have a key role to play in ensuring that children and young people reach their full potential in PE and sport, but excellent buildings and grounds also play a vital role. The best PE and sport facilities are not just functional, they are attractive, inspiring places that make a strong contribution to an enjoyable teaching and learning experience. Some of these are in specialist sports colleges that are centres of excellence for neighbouring schools and the wider community.

This book shows by design guidance and real school examples how well-designed PE and sport facilities can support creative teaching and increase participation by the school and its community. This is particularly important at a time when capital investment in schools is at an all-time high. The Building Schools for

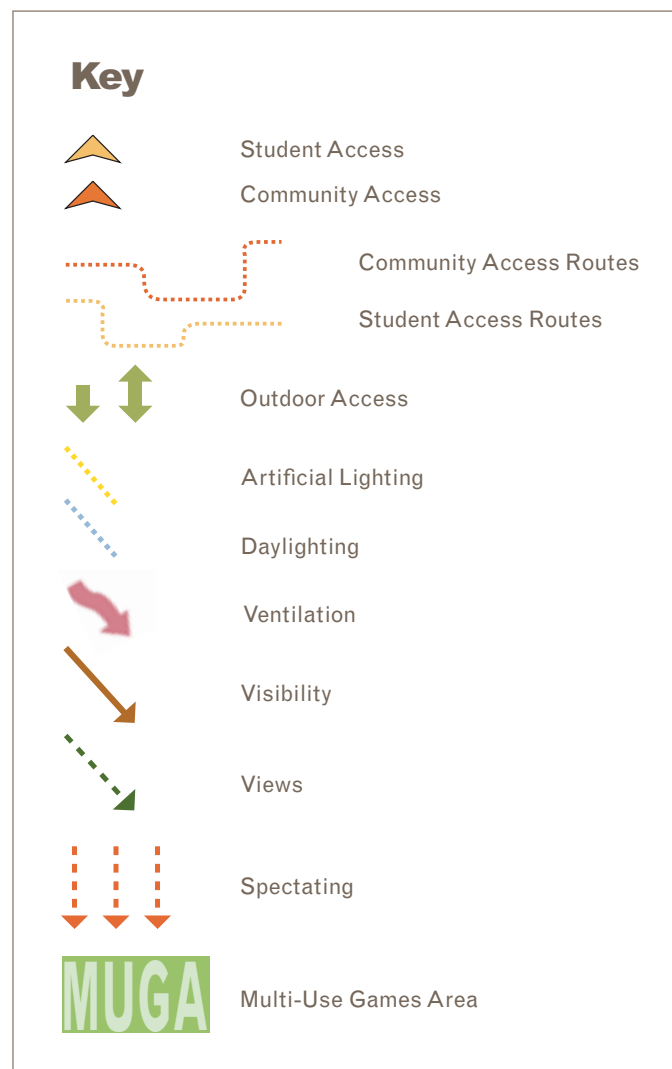
the Future programme, which aims to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school to 21st century standards over the next 10-15 years, and the primary school investment programme starting in 2008 both provide wonderful opportunities to provide imaginative PE and sport facilities that will help to bring out the best in children and young people, a few of whom will reach Olympian standard.”

*Andrew Adonis
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools
Department for Education and Skills*

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Introduction

This book has been designed to help all those involved in the delivery of spaces for Physical Education and School Sport (PESS).

The opportunity to create really inspiring spaces, through the Building Schools for the Future programme, is reinforced by the current rapid evolution in thinking about how to deliver PE and school sport in a way which will gather in all ranges and levels of ability and promote lifelong habits of healthy living.

The book is structured in four parts:

Part 1, **Vision**, sets out the current policy drivers which are setting the standard for new PESS provision and emphasises how good design can contribute to successful realisation.

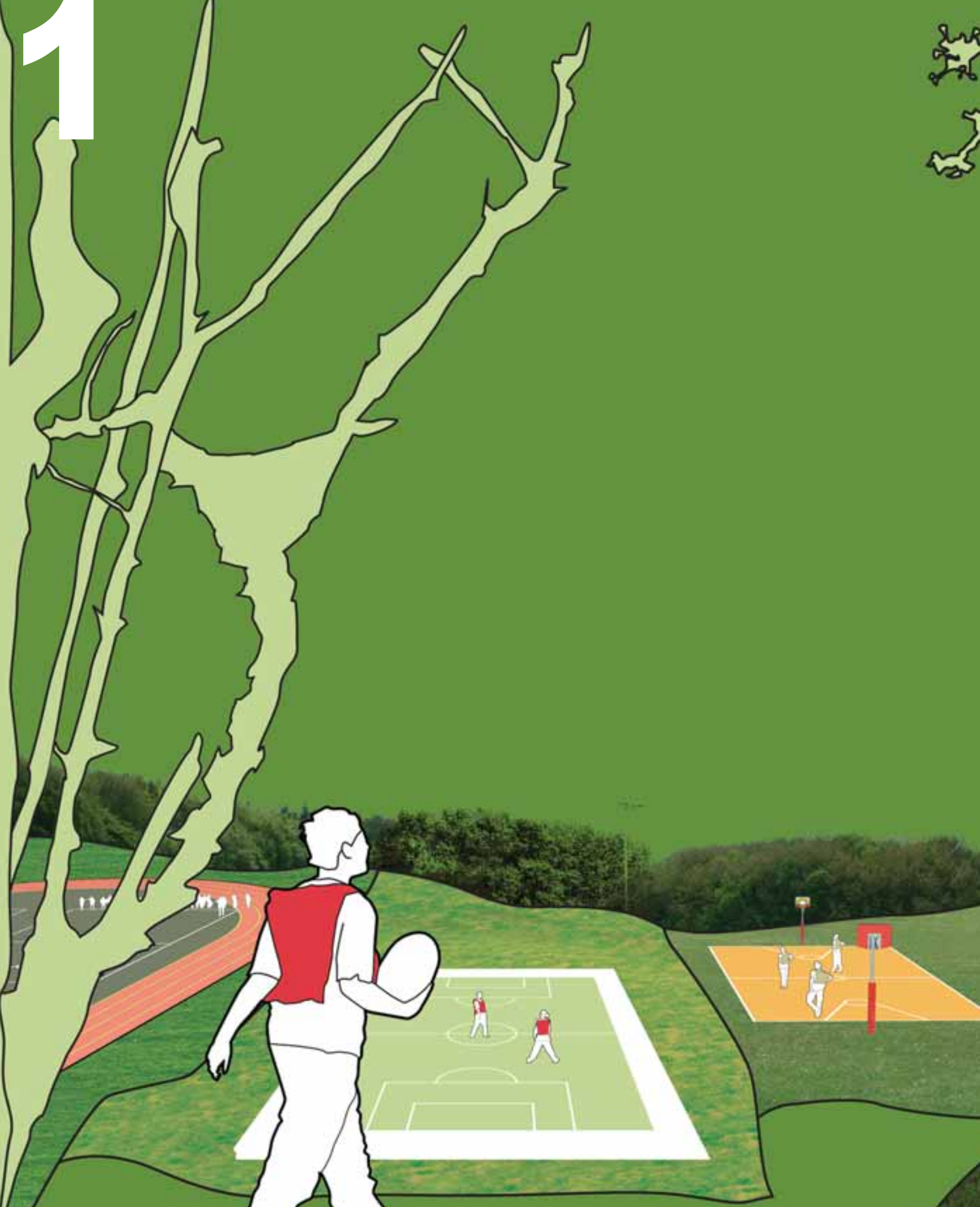
Part 2, **Design Principles**, summarises the key issues that should be addressed to enable successful realisation of a project. This section is written primarily for the client team and non-building professionals, to ensure that the main issues are understood by all stakeholders.



Part 3, **Design Realisation**, gives detailed information about the key issues involved in the delivery of high quality PESS. This section is illustrated by relevant case studies and should be both useful and inspiring for design teams.

Part 4, **Technical Detail**, reinforces Part 3 with general technical information that design teams should find useful.

1



Vision





PE & Sport Contribution

The Government is committed to improving the quality of physical education and sport in our schools.

In the five years up to 2008, Government investment in physical education and school sport (PESS), including Lottery funding, will have totalled over £1.5 billion. Central to this investment is the delivery of the Government's PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy. The overall objective of the strategy, a joint DfES and DCMS Public Service Agreement target, is to ensure that, by 2006, at least 75% of 5-16 year olds will be doing at least two hours each week of high quality PESS. By 2008 the Government wants to increase this to 85% of all pupils. The long term aim is that, by 2010, all children will be offered at least four hours of sport every week. This will comprise at least two hours of high quality PESS and, in addition, the opportunity for at least a further



2-3 hours beyond the school day, delivered by a range of school, community and club providers. The strategy is being delivered through eight separate, but interlinked, work strands. Two of these work strands deliver a network of at least 400 specialist sports colleges as hubs of school sport partnerships. The remaining work strands are the tools that teachers and coaches can use to enhance provision for PESS. Every maintained school in England will be within a school sport partnership by September 2006. All schools will need access to high-quality facilities for PE and sport in order to deliver sufficient high-quality provision for their pupils. Further details of the PESSCL strategy can be found at www.teachernet.gov.uk/pe.

Benefits of PE & Sport

Engaging in physical education and sport at school should provide children with a positive starting point for a physically active lifetime.

Encouraging young people to develop lifelong habits of regular exercise is a key part of addressing the predicted chronic health issues faced by the youngest third of the UK's population. Linking school facilities with broader community programmes and adult participation can encourage pupils to consider PE/S as the start of a lifetime of activity, rather than something which is purely school-based.

Physical education and school sport activities involve pupils in socially challenging situations, where they learn to cooperate with, trust and rely on each other. All sports - both team sports and more individual- require a high degree of interaction with other pupils and



staff. The cultivation of this social development is mainly dependent on the structure of the curriculum and the teaching on the ground. However, the physical design of the facilities can also have a significant effect.

A positive experience of sport at school is a key part of a pupil's overall educational experience and development. Good physical education and school sport can improve all markers of personal development such as confidence, body image, and communication skills. Where some pupils feel less confident about engaging in physical activity, offering a range of activities in a secure, comfortable and welcoming environment can help to create a positive attitude to participating in physical

education and school sport. Once increased confidence has begun to emerge, the benefits of this can be transferred to other areas of life and the school curriculum. Some pupils who lack confidence in other parts of the school curriculum may find PESS a place where they can really shine. Appropriate teaching and learning facilities at school can be the foundation of a career as elite sports people. For many, a positive experience will encourage a lifelong habit of enjoying physical activity.



Educational Ambition

Educational ambition is the aspiration to deliver the best possible physical education and school sport for all pupils.

Within physical education, the educational ambition of a school will primarily be based on meeting the four core aspects of the National Curriculum for PE, but should also take into account the specific needs and desires of its pupils and wider community. A clearly formulated educational ambition will help to ensure that the physical education and school sport facilities are designed to meet the school's particular needs and aspirations. It should recognise that physical education and school sport facilities provide the context for the acquisition of skills for life not just skills for sport.

The National Curriculum for PE is made up of four aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding. These are:

- acquiring and developing skills (for example, learning how to balance, developing fine manipulative and motor skills)
- selecting and applying tactics (deploying skills in PESS activities with increasing competence in real contexts)



- evaluating and improving performance (developing the ability to analyse performance, identify strengths and weaknesses and decide on action to improve its quality and effectiveness)
- knowledge and understanding of fitness and health (developing an understanding of healthy use of physical education and school sport activities for lifelong benefit)

As with other areas of the curriculum, ICT has a major role to play in the development of pupils' PESS skills and tactics. How ICT will be used, and what equipment is necessary, should be considered as part of the educational ambition.

The current educational ambition for physical education and school sport is usefully summarised by the documents *High Quality PE and Sport for Young People*¹ and *Learning through PE and Sport*.²

“When schools and sports clubs are providing high quality PE and/or sport, they see young people who:

- 1 are **committed** to PE and sport and make them a central part of their lives both in and out of school
- 2 know and **understand** what they are trying to achieve and how to go about doing it
- 3 understand that PE and sport are an important part of a **healthy, active lifestyle**
- 4 have the **confidence** to get involved in PE and sport
- 5 have the **skills** and control that they need to take part in PE and sport
- 6 willingly take part in a **range of competitive, creative and challenge-type activities**, both as individuals and part of a team or group
- 7 **think** about what they are doing and make appropriate **decisions** for themselves
- 8 **show a desire to improve** and achieve in relation to their own abilities
- 9 have the **stamina, suppleness and strength** to keep going
- 10 **enjoy** PE, school and community sport.”

This book looks at how the design of physical education and school sport facilities can assist in delivering these aims.

¹ *High Quality PE and Sport for Young People. A guide to recognising and achieving high quality PE and sport in schools and clubs* DfES 2004

(download address; www.qca.org.uk/pess)

² *Learning through PE and Sport* DfES

(download address: www.teachernet.gov.uk)

“We set a project for the pupils to design the new PE kit to celebrate the opening of the new Sports Hall. They chose relatively loose-fitting track bottoms, and a loose-fitting top, with a print of the schools logo. Since this has been introduced we have seen a real increase in the participation rate for PE. The pupils actually want to bring their kit in and wear it.”

Head of PE Waverley School

The Importance of Design

High quality, well-designed sports facilities can increase and encourage participation in PE and school sport, which is an essential part of improving the health of school-age children and the wider community.

Physical education and school sport (PESS) plays a vital role in allowing young people to test many different and important life skills through playing games. The provision of good facilities allows physical education and school sport to be 'played' and enjoyed by the maximum number of pupils, and to begin a habit of exercise that will last throughout their lives.

In a workshop addressing the question of participation, Heads of PE identified a number of key points to assist in maximising pupil participation:

- Get the pupils involved in planning and running the physical education and school sport curriculum



- Ensure that there is a social space near to the sport facilities, so that pupils can observe, or 'try before they buy'
- Make sure that activities on offer are attractive to the pupils: let the activities drive the curriculum, not the curriculum drive the activities.
- Get the pupils involved in selecting and designing the sports kit.

Many of the points refer specifically to the way in which the curriculum is delivered, but there are also strong implications for the way that spaces are designed. Overall, the design of physical education and school sport facilities should encourage participation, enthusiasm, and fun.



How Design Contributes

Good design of PESS facilities will encourage pupils to take pride in their environment and engender a positive attitude to PE and sport.

Pupils will have a positive attitude to PESS where they have pride in the physical environment in which it takes place. If the facility is of a high enough standard to attract members of the general public, for example, pupils will be keener to participate. It will also give them the opportunity to observe sport as a whole-life, whole-community phenomenon, and not just a curriculum or school-based event. The broader 'Healthy Living Agenda' is increasingly linking PESS with healthy eating. Providing eating areas and healthy vending near to PE and sport facilities can reinforce these links, enhancing the overall sense of well-being and enjoyment associated with sport.

The realisation of Point 4 of the document *High Quality PE and Sport for Young People* ("have the confidence to get involved in PE and Sport") is frequently hampered by poor quality environments in which physical education and school sport are taught. Ensuring that the facilities are designed in the best possible way will help to maximise the educational experience.



Well-designed PESS facilities can make a significant contribution to children's health by helping to make PESS an attractive and welcoming activity for all pupils, however 'unsporty' they consider themselves. Spaces that can accommodate a wide and changing range of activities will also enable the best current and future teaching practice to be delivered.

Current work on ensuring the broadest possible inclusion of all groups in PESS activities shows that new and different types of activities are helping to attract previously resistant pupils to take part. These include:

- Dance (including less traditional forms such as street dance)
- Trampoline
- Fitness studio
- Climbing walls
- Short tennis
- Frisbee
- Boarding and board simulators

Primary school children spend up to a quarter of their school day in the playground.

Making best use of play times can help tackle inactivity, boredom and poor behaviour that can intimidate children and affect lessons. Improving the play-time environment can have a significant impact on school life. In addition, well-laid-out play areas will encourage a positive attitude to PESS. Incorporating formal and informal spaces, as well as social spaces like eating and sitting areas, will allow skills to be transferred from the timetabled curriculum to informal play times. This enhances pupils' social development by beginning a lifelong habit of sociable, physical activity.

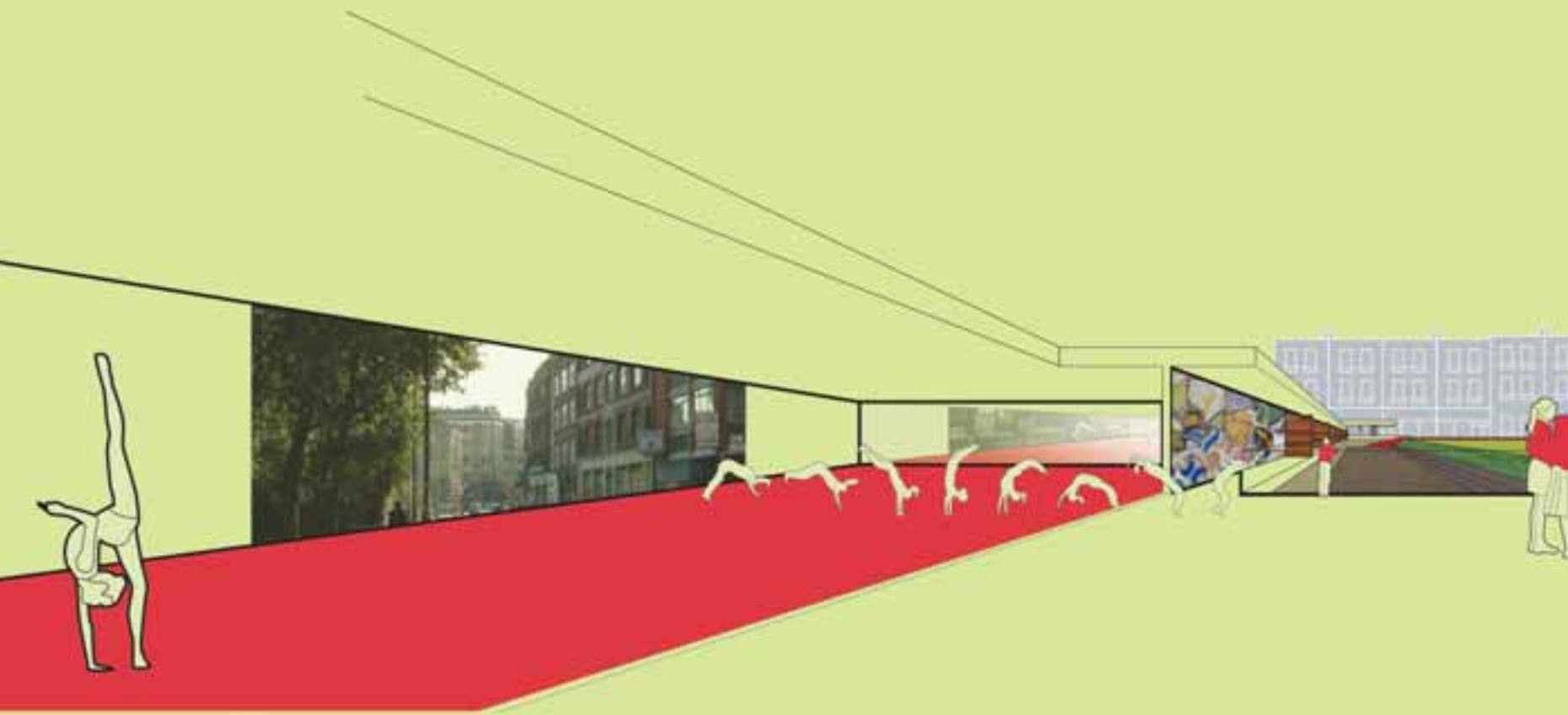
Easily accessible and secure facilities should form part of the main hub of the school, integrating PESS into the overall school community. Approachable spaces that you can see into will encourage participation, allowing less confident students to see before they try. Areas for observation located near formally-marked-out sports areas allow space for pupils to watch casually, building up confidence to participate more fully at a later time. High-quality spaces with good natural lighting, good-quality materials and finishes and good

maintenance create a sense of optimism and a feeling that these places are well used and cared for.



Charter School, Photo: David Cole

2





Design Principles

Creative Solutions



Photo: Tim Soar



Notley Green Primary School

Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Architects

Located at the centre of the school, the main hall is highly visible wherever you are. Opening up the sliding doors around the perimeter of the hall enables full views in, whilst porthole windows allow glimpses (at children or adult height) of the activities going on inside.

New approaches to teaching and learning in physical education and school sport mean that the design of PESS facilities needs to be approached in new ways. Now is the time for 'default' solutions to be challenged and more creative and specific solutions for each individual school to be developed.

PESS facilities should be exciting and inspiring places to be. They should provide an interesting and high-quality backdrop to pupils' performance of PESS, complementing the dynamic movement and activity that takes place within them. In order to achieve this, the space available for formal and informal physical activity needs to be used as creatively as possible. This means not only careful planning of the site and building but, just as importantly, using a range of different resources to make each space special.

Using natural daylight creates spaces for sport which are pleasant places to be and reinforces the connection of physical activity and well-being with the natural world. Creating different degrees of transparency – where light travels through a building – and viewing will give a dynamic and interesting feel to the school, as well as making pupils more aware of the PESS activities that are taking place. Imaginative use of materials can bring spaces to life, particularly where there are large floor and wall areas. Colour can help to define territories for different sports areas and games, as well as enlivening the often drab surfaces of urban play areas. Care should be taken with specifying colour, in relation to pupils with SEN.¹ School grounds and buildings have the potential to become rich educational resources in themselves. The landscape design of the external areas of the school should be considered as part of the whole school design, and approached as imaginatively as possible.



Photo: Sall Cullinan And Buck Architects Ltd



Brecknock Primary School

Sall Cullinan And Buck Architects Ltd

Jumbo desert camouflage nets are used to shade Brecknock Primary School's large rooftop playground. As well as providing an imaginative and inexpensive solution to the problem of shading, this also creates an exciting new place for pupils.



Photo: Martine Hamilton Knight



Hampden Gurney C.E. Primary School

Building Design Partnership

In Hampden Gurney Primary School, which is located on a tight site in Paddington, outdoor play decks were created on every level of a five-storey school giving every class the opportunity to access outdoor activities and play.

¹ See the SEN and Disabilities page of www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolbuildings

Strategic Planning

Thinking strategically is vital at the early stages of planning new PESS facilities. It is important to take a regional overview of the type, quality and quantity of sports facilities available to schools locally. The Government's PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy supports the development of specialist sports colleges as hubs of school sport partnerships. Developing partnerships with other primary and secondary schools and sports clubs will ensure that any new facilities will be used and enjoyed by the maximum number of people.

Good strategic planning, and enough input at the right time can help schools to achieve excellent physical education and school sport facilities. Good buildings are created by good clients working closely with good designers. To achieve the best possible outcome from any building project requires time, careful planning and sustained effort.



Access

School sport facilities should be designed to be accessible to all potential users from the school and wider community including those with disabilities. Ensuring that all PESS facilities are accessible means considering carefully how someone would get to and from each indoor and outdoor space, and how they would use each area in a full and exciting way, and on an equal basis with other users.

Careful site planning is a key part of making facilities accessible. The relative positioning of internal and external facilities and support spaces such as changing rooms will have a fundamental impact on the ability of the school to successfully deliver the curriculum. Entrances to facilities, and observation and waiting spaces, are important. They should send the right message of welcome and inclusion, particularly to groups who are less obviously 'sporty', whether the users are from the home school, partner schools or the wider community.

Accessibility is a key design issue for ensuring a successful interface between the school and wider community. This requires a complete design approach, which encompasses access, transport,

location, quality of built form, materials, finishes and careful attention to circulation that works for the school and the community.

It is important to remember that good accessibility has to be balanced by good security. Security for teachers and pupils and wider accessibility for the community can create conflicting demands. Understanding and rehearsing right from the start of the design process, how the facilities are used, by whom and at what times of day will ensure that they are appropriately and accessibly designed for all users.



Exemplar Primary School

Marks Barfield Architects

A clear and intelligent site layout ensures that the sports field and sports hall are directly accessible from the entrance forecourt. This means that facilities can be used by the community outside school hours without needing to go into the school, reducing any security risks.

Suitability: Primary

Primary schools should provide facilities to encourage activity for all their pupils. Enthusiasm for activity and sport developed at this early stage provide the basis for developing skills and healthy life habits.

The principal PE and sport space for any primary school is the main hall. Larger schools normally also have one or more small halls or studios. Facilities in primary schools are heavily programmed. The primary school's main hall is frequently used for PE, sport, arts and community use. This presents a complex design challenge. The technical requirements for PE, sport, social gatherings and performance are very different, and careful briefing is needed to ensure that the hall can meet these different demands. As one of the key spaces in the school, it should be of appropriate size, light and inspiring. It is worth considering whether it is feasible to create a more

dedicated sports area, if the community and other funding sources are factored in. Larger primary schools may well need to build a small hall or studio in order to provide sufficient area for their pupil numbers.

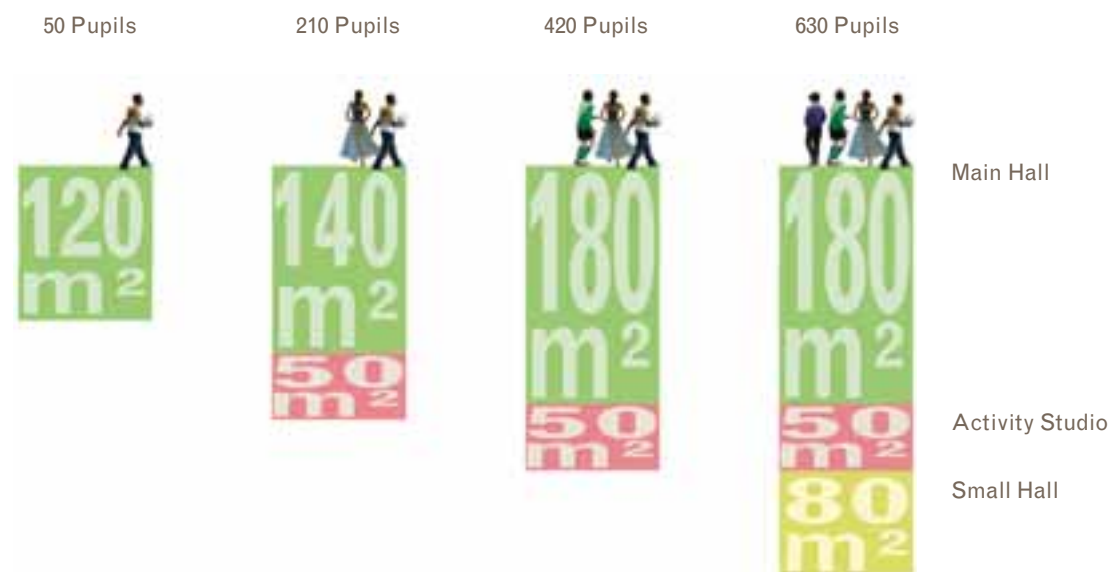
Outdoor spaces are particularly important, and playgrounds should be designed to maximise the available space for outdoor physical education and school sport. The provision of outdoor sports areas, as well as more informal spaces that can be used for PESS, will enhance teaching and learning in both the formal and informal curriculum. In particular, an outside multi-use games area (MUGA) can greatly extend the opportunities for participation in sports activities.



Photo: Peter Durant

Kings Avenue School
Shepherd Epstein Hunter
Located on a small site in a dense urban area, the landscape areas of this school have been imaginatively designed for maximum play opportunity. The space is carefully divided, with different games marked out for different age groups. Wall surfaces are imaginatively incorporated, and there is a rich use of colour.

Guidelines for Primary School Hall
Spaces and Size



Suitability: Secondary

Sports facilities in secondary schools are usually more wide ranging than in primary schools with more dedicated, as opposed to multi-use, spaces. Whilst there is a base level of common provision that most secondary schools will share, each school will have particular needs driven by differences in curriculum emphasis, tradition and geography. It is important to be clear about the PESS ambitions of the school, and how the design team might deliver these in an imaginative way.

Large spaces in secondary schools still need to cater for a number of functions. A modern, light, attractive design, both internally and externally, will send out a signal that this is a place where you want to go and take part. Creative and lateral thinking by the design team, in addition to full client briefing on the activities to take place, will ensure that a hall appropriate to specific school need is designed.

Smaller halls are frequently used for activities to encourage participation in physical education and school sport, such as dance and yoga. Many schools are finding that providing an attractive dance studio has been a helpful factor in encouraging wider participation, and in particular has been instrumental in attracting pupils who are not interested in more traditional activities. Some schools will include specialist areas such as fitness suites, gymnasia, swimming pools and weight rooms.

Inclement weather can be a major inhibitor to the physical education and school sport programme. In order to meet the new targets for increased provision, schools are likely to need to plan for a higher proportion of all-weather surfaces, which can be used far more of the time than traditional grass pitches, especially if floodlit.

As in all areas of the curriculum, physical education and school sport activities are benefiting from the explosion of ICT applications, including video recording and analysis to assess performance.



Charter School

Penoyre & Prasad LLP

In this tight site, the use of courtyard spaces between buildings to provide all-weather surfaces has allowed the school to maximise the available space for play surfaces. Internal circulation areas and covered walkways give views over the play areas, helping to generate an exciting and dynamic feel that is in keeping with the optimistic, modern look of the school.



Guidelines for Secondary School Hall

Spaces and Size



Photo: Killian O'Sullivan



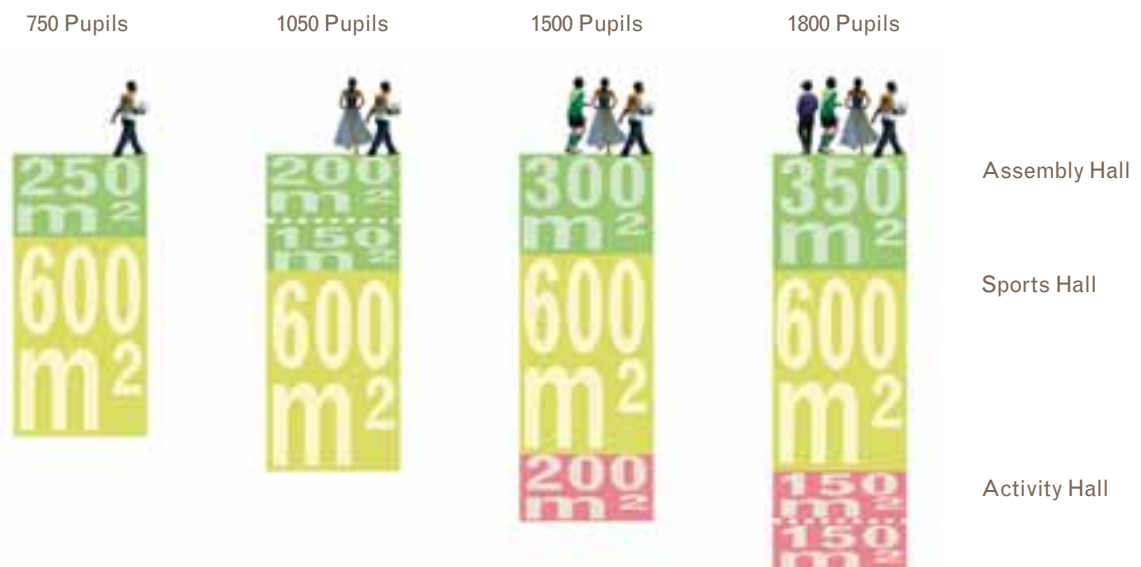
Photo: Nigel Young, Foster and Partners



Capital City Academy

Foster and Partners

The design, material selection and finishes of this hall give a crisp clean and hardwearing feel. The hall has good daylighting, a sprung floor and natural ventilation, creating a pleasant environment for a range of activities.



2

Design Principles

Flexibility

Both primary and secondary school halls will be used intensively by a range of users and for a wide variety of different activities. Careful discussion at the briefing stage about the requirements for flexibility will help ensure maximum value. For example, linking a large hall to an external space will increase the opportunity for flexible and imaginative programming. Where a hall has to fulfil several different functions, things like type of floor surface, moveable partitions and controllable lighting should be considered. There should also be sufficient storage to cater for the wide range of activities.

Sharing facilities with other schools and wider communities can help to justify higher-quality sports facilities or more specialist facilities such as swimming pools and gymnasia. Establishing links with existing local sports facilities and clubs can be a good way to access resources that may not be included on the school's site.

Adventure activities such as climbing take place off-site, and will frequently be geographically specific. Considering issues such as storage of specialist equipment and vehicle access will allow these activities to take place efficiently.



Photo: Jonathan Moore



Langford Sports Centre, Jersey College

Architecture plb

The centre, which includes a sports hall, gym, swimming pool and dance facilities, is for shared use by Jersey College for Girls and Victoria College for Boys, and is also available for community use. The spaces are well-designed and have good daylight.



Ivybridge Community College:

Local Indoor Tennis Club, accessed by the school since it is on a steeply sloping site. By accessing local clubs (football, cricket, rugby and indoor tennis) in the town, the school is able to offer high standards in all of these areas. By careful timetabling, the benefits to both clubs and school are that facilities have a better spread of use across the week, and useful links are built up within the local sporting community. Former pupils of the school are now coaching in the tennis club, for example. The diagram shows the network of clubs linked to the school. An important consideration for this kind of shared provision is that transport to and from the outlying locations needs to be carefully planned: changing rooms and sports equipment storage should be located near to the pick-up point for transport.

Support Spaces

Physical education and school sport activities are equipment-intensive. As the curriculum changes and different activities become the focus of attention, specific storage requirements will change, but it will always be necessary to have a large storage provision.

Clean, bright, well-designed changing rooms can make a very positive difference to pupils' experience of physical education and school sport. Including some individual changing cubicles, ensuring that shower cubicles have curtains, and providing robust, bright and well-designed changing rooms will help to give encouraging signals. The amount of changing space required should be discussed and agreed with the school to ensure that there is adequate provision to meet their needs.

As with changing rooms, toilets should be clean, bright, well-designed and there should be enough of them. Where the public is to be admitted, as spectators for sports events, separate provision should be made for visitors and calculated to accommodate peak audience or visitor capacities.

Ensure that there is sufficient storage allowance for equipment needed for community use. This is best accommodated in a separate store.



Photo: Peter Lathey



Ballifield Primary School

Prue Chiles Architects

These toilets are well-designed, giving a welcoming signal to both the school and the wider community.



Marriotts School

Widdup/Amer Architects

The changing rooms are equipped to a good standard. They are sensibly located to allow direct access to the outside (for the sports fields) or to the halls. There is also a clever planning inclusion of a 'buffer' space which can be annexed by either the male or female changing areas, to accommodate additional requirements (for example for competitions). The walls and floors are covered in ceramic tiles. Shower cubicles are robust and have curtains to give privacy. Benching is made from durable beech. All materials are of high quality.

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