

ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
23 JANUARY 2001

“DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS” – PILOT PROJECT
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report draws attention to a pilot project carried out in partnership with **sportScotland** and outlines proposals for a national launch in Angus.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (a) notes the terms of this report
- (b) notes the progress to date in relation to the Daily Physical Activity in Primary Schools project
- (c) notes that it is proposed that Angus Council and **sportScotland** make joint arrangements to hold a national launch of the programme in Angus in late February/early March 2001

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Medical research and prominent health campaigns indicate that a major contributory factor to good health is regular exercise. There have been growing concerns among health experts over recent years about declining levels of fitness among young people.
- 2.2 The Health Board for Scotland (HEBS) recommends 30 minutes of physical activity per day of a moderate intensity. However, recent research indicates that “50% of girls and 38% of boys take little, if any sustained vigorous activity”. [Armstrong et al 1991]
- 2.3 It is against this disturbing background that **sportScotland** developed a proposal in September 1999 to develop a daily physical activity programme which would aim to redress the effects of an increasingly inactive lifestyle among children and young people. I was approached by **sportScotland** with a view to developing a physical activity programme for primary school pupils which would offer children a challenging but enjoyable daily routine of physical activity in school. Agreement was reached to mount a pilot project to be managed by a seconded teacher whose costs would be met in the main through a grant from **sportScotland**.
- 2.4 Arrangements were made in January 2000 to second a Visiting Teacher (Physical Education) to take forward the “Daily Physical Activity in Primary Schools” project in Angus.

3 “DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL” PILOT PROJECT: MAIN FEATURES AND ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- 3.1 The following arrangements were made at the outset:
 - a Daily Physical Activity Programme involving P4 to P7 pupils was launched initially in 17 Angus Primary Schools
 - the programme was designed to supplement current physical education programmes which are delivered by classroom teachers and supported by visiting PE specialists

- the programme would comprise a variety of easy to organise activities – lasting 20 minutes - to be delivered each day by teachers, classroom assistants, other school staff, parents or in certain instances, pupils themselves
 - there would be flexibility when physical activities could take place – during class time, interval time, lunchtime or at the end of the school day
 - on days when a PE lesson was timetabled there would be no need to undertake an activity from the programme
 - there would be flexibility about the location where the activities could take place – gym, classroom, corridor, playground, playing fields, so that any size of school might feasibly be involved in the project
 - there would be no requirement for PE kit to be used for many of the activities recommended by the programme; in this way, it was hoped that regular pupil involvement in physical activities could occur with minimal disturbance to normal classroom routines
 - physical activities to be carried out by children should be as varied as possible
- 3.2 The seconded teacher has developed a user-friendly “off the shelf pack” which contains a wide range of ideas appropriate for physical activities during a daily “20 minute slot”. The pack which includes a supporting musical CD will shortly be made available to P4-P7 classes in all Angus primary schools.
- 3.3 To date the programme has been piloted in approximately 100 classes across 17 primary schools some of which, because of the nature of the school, have tried out activities with pupils younger than P4. The response from schools has been very positive and is seen to provide notable benefits for children’s learning and attitudes. There is clear research evidence that daily physical activity leads to increased pupil attainment. Time, therefore, which might be seen to compete with time allocated to standard “learning” activities should, therefore, be viewed as a sound investment in support of children’s overall learning.
- 3.4 A range of research studies have shown that daily involvement in the type of physical activity promoted by the programme brings benefits to pupils which include:
- improved performance of the cardiovascular system, thus reducing risk of disease
 - enhanced growth and development
 - improved posture, hand/eye co-ordination and balance
 - better weight control
 - improved sleep
 - increased motivation for school activities
 - improved self-esteem
 - enhanced values of co-operation, teamwork, fair play, fun

4 FUTURE ACTION

- 4.1 In addition to the arrangements described in 3.1 above to extend the initiative to all Angus Primary Schools, arrangements will now be made in partnership with **sportScotland** to make the Daily Physical Activity Programme available to all education authorities in Scotland.
- 4.2 The involvement of Angus Council will be recognised in the final nationally distributed programme.
- 4.3 Given **sportScotland**’s national locus in promoting sport and health related activities, arrangements are being made for a national launch of the programme in Angus. It is anticipated that the launch will take place in late February/early March when it is hoped that there will be appropriate ministerial representation. Detailed arrangements for this event are currently being made by officers of Angus Council Education Department and **sportScotland**.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project costs relate in the main to replacement costs for the teacher seconded to lead the pilot project in Angus Primary Schools. These costs covering the period January 1999 – March 2001 have been met through a significant grant from **sportScotland** (£22,500) sponsorship from Glaxo Wellcome of £2,050 and a grant from Angus Health for All of £1,000, with the balance of costs being met by the Education Department’s revenue budget.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct human rights implications arising from this report.

7 CONCLUSION

The very favourable response to the pilot Daily Physical Activity Programme in the 17 schools which have trialled the programme is most encouraging. Concerns about the decline in fitness and indeed increasing obesity among young people have attracted considerable media attention in recent months. It is hoped that the introduction of routine physical activity for Angus primary school pupils through this programme will make a measurable contribution to healthier and fitter lifestyles as well as to improvements in learning and pupil attainment.

8 CONSULTATION

In accordance with the standing orders of the Council this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance.

JIM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

NL/AR