

Curriculum Overview – Physical Education

Principles and Purpose of the Physical Education Curriculum

The purpose of the United Learning Physical Education and Health curriculum is to provide a knowledge-rich curriculum that develops pupils' physical, mental, and social health, and ensures that being active forms part of their life-long identity. The curriculum is driven by the three themes: performance, leadership, and health. These themes form a framework which is designed to progressively improve pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, whilst building their character and leadership skills, and provide opportunities to show their creative flair. The curriculum framework sets out the learning to be undertaken by pupils; each school then designs their own, unique curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils and reflect their local context.

The following principles have informed the planning of the United Learning curriculum across all subjects:

- **Entitlement:** All pupils have the right to learn what is in the United Learning curriculum, and schools have a duty to ensure that all pupils are taught the whole of it.
- **Coherence:** Taking the National Curriculum as its starting point, our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that powerful knowledge builds term by term and year by year. We make meaningful connections within subjects and between subjects.
- **Mastery:** We ensure that foundational knowledge, skills, and concepts are secure before moving on. Pupils revisit prior learning and apply their understanding in new contexts.
- **Adaptability:** The core content – the 'what' – of the curriculum is stable, but schools will bring it to life in their own local context, and teachers will adapt lessons – the 'how' – to meet the needs of their own classes.
- **Representation:** All pupils see themselves in our curriculum, and our curriculum takes all pupils beyond their immediate experience.
- **Education with character:** Our curriculum - which includes the taught subject timetable as well as spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, our co-curricular provision and the ethos and 'hidden curriculum' of the school – is intended to spark curiosity and to nourish both the head and the heart.

Here we explore these principles in the context of the PE curriculum:

- **Entitlement:** The curriculum allows pupils to develop the confidence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, through PE, school sport and physical activity. The provision of each school will be accessible and equitable for all pupils. It will actively seek to overcome any barriers to participation which young people may face because of their race, gender identity or any aspect of SEND.
- **Coherence:** In addition to the National Curriculum, our curriculum seeks to build aspects of pupils' character including resilience and empathy, as well as skills in leadership, decision-making and problem-solving.
- **Mastery:** Through the curriculum pupils become physically skilful young people with the knowledge and understanding in the areas of performance, leadership, and health, to succeed at Key Stage 3 and transition to Key Stage 4 study. These skills will develop year on year and will transfer into their academic life and endure into adulthood.
- **Adaptability:** The curriculum framework allows each school to reflect their distinctive identity in the activities they offer pupils. The curriculum also enables pupils to be independently active outside of school through digital resources, virtual challenges and competitions, weekly physical activity timetables and links to other online providers.
- **Representation:** The curriculum is supported by our Diversity and Inclusion pledge. The aim is for the provision in schools to be as inclusive as possible. This includes ensuring there is diverse representation throughout.

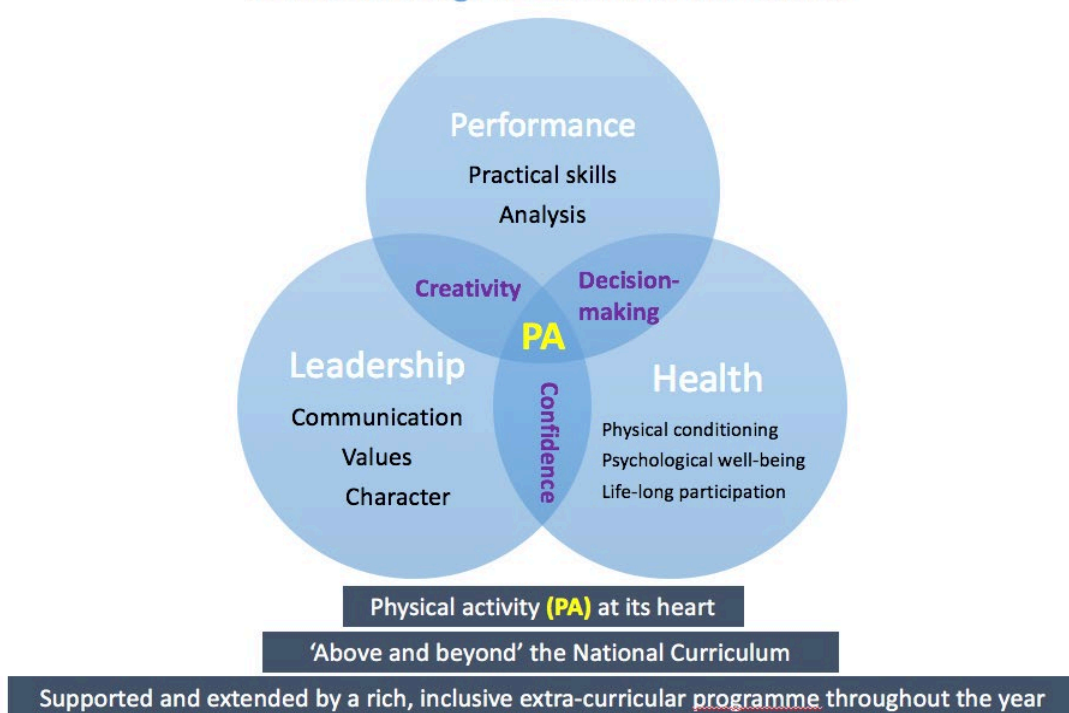


- **Education with character:** The curriculum seeks to develop aspects of character, such as resilience, the spirit of fair play, empathy, and the confidence to perform under pressure. A pupil's experience of physical education in school should increase their self-confidence and their ability to trust in others.

Curriculum Content – Physical Education Curriculum

This [diagram](#) below sets out the three themes that underpin our curriculum. The [table](#) sets out the skills and knowledge pupils should acquire over the course of their secondary education. Physical Education is compulsory for all pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, whilst some pupils will go onto study for an academic qualification at Key Stage 4 and beyond.

United Learning PE and Health Curriculum



National Curriculum

Pupils should build on and embed the physical development and skills learned in Key Stages 1 and 2, become more competent, confident, and expert in their techniques, and apply them across different sports and physical activities. They should understand what makes a performance effective and how to apply these principles to their own and others' work. They should develop the confidence and interest to get involved in exercise, sports and activities outside of school and in later life and understand and apply the long-term health benefits of physical activity.

Pupils should be taught to:

- use a range of tactics and strategies to overcome opponents in direct competition through team and individual games [e.g., badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders, rugby, and tennis]
- develop their technique and improve their performance in other competitive sports [e.g., athletics and gymnastics]
- perform dances using advanced dance techniques within a range of dance styles and forms
- take part in outdoor and adventurous activities which present intellectual and physical challenges and be encouraged to work in a team, building on trust and developing skills to solve problems, either individually or as a group
- analyse their performances compared to previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best
- take part in competitive sports and activities outside school through community links or sports clubs

Performance

Use progressively **challenging and competitive** situations through which students can:

- demonstrate a high level of physical competence, knowledge, technical skills, tactical understanding, and decision-making
- create and choreograph routines in aesthetic activities
- devise tactics and set plays in modified games
- apply knowledge of rules and regulations



Where appropriate, include elements of choice of and within activity. The former enables students to deepen learning and select activities relevant to their identity with physical activity; the latter gives students some autonomy in and ownership of their learning.

Progressively increase the use of performance analysis, enabling students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of both technical and tactical aspects of performance. In doing so, support whole-school discipline-specific literacy through having high expectations of oracy skills and ensuring that knowledge of subject-specific terminology is embedded in long-term memory.

These would typically be achieved through the following genres of sports, with at least one individual activity and one team game being studied in more depth:

- **Games** (e.g., invasion; net/wall; striking and fielding; target)
- **Aesthetic activities** (e.g., gymnastics; trampolining; dance)
- **Athletic activities** (e.g., track and field athletics; orienteering)
- **Adventurous activities** (e.g., climbing; mountain-biking; team-building activities; scooting/boarding)
- **Aquatic activities** (e.g., swimming; artistic swimming; lifesaving; water sports)
- **Paralympic/adapted sports** (e.g., goalball; sitting volleyball; boccia)
- **Multi-skills/fundamental movement skills**

Leadership

The curriculum should provide students with opportunities to:

- learn and practice the knowledge and organisational skills required to lead small group warm-ups and cool downs
- learn and practice the knowledge and skills required to lead small practices for peers or younger pupils independently or in small groups
- learn how to confidently undertake officiating roles in lessons
- learn, practice, and demonstrate the communication skills and leadership competencies required to achieve the 'Fit to Lead' bronze, silver, and gold awards

Each department must decide whether to embed leadership in activities or to teach it as a discrete unit.

Health and Wellbeing

Students should be taught how to improve and sustain their physical, mental, and social wellbeing through PE.

The curriculum should:

- contribute to the CMO's recommendation of an hour a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide students with the knowledge of how they can do this independently on non-PE days
- incorporate activities whereby students learn trust and cooperation (i.e., climbing, lifesaving, paired/group work in aesthetic activities)
- enable students to learn and apply age-appropriate knowledge of aspects of the body systems and the principles and methods of training
- provide specific opportunities for students to develop/strengthen aspects of their character such as confidence and resilience and opportunities which develop empathy for others through PE

Intra-school competitions can occur within the curriculum as a means of teaching respect and teamwork as well as developing the confidence to perform under pressure in a safe environment.

Teaching Physical Education

Consideration in curriculum planning:

- Curriculum planning in each school will reflect that school's distinctive identity. PE departments will make the best decisions for their students, with consideration for the schools sporting culture, facilities, and staffing.
- Pupils have clearly expressed their preference for greater variety choice and gender equality. The department consider their offer carefully and robustly monitor the success of their curriculum in the delivery of this aim.
- An ambitious PE curriculum should be "a complex and intertwined web of knowledge" (Ofsted PE Lead, Hanna Miller to the PE subject leader conference 2021)
- This said, PE departments will still need to carefully judge where their curriculum will sit along the breadth/depth continuum. Too broad and mastery of any one activity will be difficult to secure; too deep there is a risk of disengagement and demotivation among students.
- PE departments should explore how physical education is ideally placed to reinforce aspects of the PSHE and health curriculum. Teachers can actively highlight and promote positive mental and physical well-being.
- Physical education remains compulsory to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 – it is essential that a high quality, relevant and appropriate core curriculum remains in place for all students in Key Stage 4. To this end, it is crucial to ensure that sufficient Key Stage 4 core practical PE time is both provided and



protected. Successful Key Stage 4 core PE curriculum models often provide pathways for students and greater choice.

- For those pupils that go onto study GCSE PE (12-14% of a year group). It is important they have the knowledge and skills from Key Stage 3 to engage in the academic and physical rigour of qualification.
- In Key Stage 4, PE departments should:
 - GCSE – ensure that there is a high focus on AO2 and AO3 and that the related command words are securely understood.
 - GCSE – capture 15 performances on video from 40% of activities.
 - For GCSE and BTEC classes, ensure that all moderation/NEA procedures/protocols are being strictly adhered to.
 - BTEC – bank internal learner assessments once completed.
 - BTEC – ensure you are following the latest ‘Adaptation to Delivery’ guidance notes.

Assessing the Physical Education Curriculum

As a practical subject, just as teaching and learning take place in the practical domain, so too should assessment. The expectation is that assessment of students’ learning and progression within this PE and Health curriculum will predominantly be undertaken in a practical setting.

The national Physical Education Expert Group produced guidance on the purpose and practice of assessment in PE. It highlights the key assessment principles outlined in the publication *Assessment Principles* (DfE, 2014). The full, seven page guidance and helpful departmental self-reflection tool can be found [here](#).

Contained therein is the following statement which sets the context: *‘Effective assessment in physical education engages, supports and motivates pupils to become competent, confident, creative and reflective movers. It can support and encourage young people to work together in order to excel in physically demanding and competitive activities.’* The guidance continues:

‘Approaches to assessment must be meaningful and embedded throughout a high-quality physical education curriculum; which enables learners to make progress and improve their attainment. Although locally determined and child-centred, physical education must be situated within a whole school approach to assessment and support a child’s development across the whole curriculum.’

Whilst most of the assessment takes place through observation and the constant use of teacher and peer feedback, PE teachers are aware of the need to gather evidence. As the Expert Group guidance suggests:

‘Teachers and schools must be able to evidence and demonstrate the ongoing progress that a child makes through a range of recordable measures. These might include, for example, recording through use of mobile technology, pupil journals, peer written reflections, photographic evidence, practical performance and teacher observations.’

As the Ofsted lead for PE articulated, “it is vital to honour the subject; honour the discipline” and ensure that assessment practices are relevant to the subject and meaningful to the students. The PE and Health curriculum has a series of KPIs for each year group which support with assessment. PE departments are encouraged to undertake assessment activities that will include:

- a) **Formative assessment** of pupils as an ongoing part of the teaching and learning process, using observation, and questioning to provide regular feedback which enables students to progress.
- b) **Overlaying the KPIs onto their curriculum maps**, so that whilst all KPIs are always open for students to be able to get recognition for success, each unit of work will have KPIs which will be a particular focus.
- c) **Share and use the KPIs** (or adaptations thereof in student-friendly language) when discussing progress with students and parents/carers so that assessment is meaningful and specific.



- d) Using a **range of evidence** to determine whether students in Years 7 to 9 have achieved the nine Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across at least one team and one individual activity.
- e) **Moderate** across the department (using the exemplars on The United Hub if helpful) so that standards and judgements can be consistent and secure across all teachers.
- f) Remember that the assessment is of a **child's achievement in Physical Education** as opposed to sport.

KPIs for Key Stage 3 Physical Education

		Fit to Perform		Fit to Lead		Fit for Life
To be achieved across at least one individual sport and one (different) team sport						
Year	KPI		KPI		KPI	
7	1	Effectively performs a range of actions, skills, and techniques with control, combining them appropriately both in isolation and small group settings.	4	Successfully leads a partner in a simple activity showing respect, empathy, and good cooperation skills in doing so.	7	Demonstrates appropriate strength, stamina, and suppleness across activities, including being able to complete short periods of sustained exercise.
	2	Successfully employs simple tactics or creative processes in practical settings.	5	Understands simple tactics or creative ideas and can communicate those effectively using good verbal and non-verbal skills.	8	Effectively conducts their own safe and well-designed warm-up/cool-down and can describe the purpose and benefits of each.
	3	Accurately describes their own and others' performances, using appropriate vocabulary and concepts to identify main strengths and areas for improvement.	6	Leads by example in lessons through their enthusiasm and determination to achieve their best and overcome challenges.	9	Knows and can explain how physical activity contributes to a balanced, healthy lifestyle.
8	1	Selects, combines, and performs skills with technical proficiency and fluency in response to changing and more complex situations, both in isolation and when put under pressure.	4	Leads and motivates others in pairs or team/small group situations demonstrating confidence and good organisational skills.	7	Sustains stamina for longer periods in specific activities and uses different components of fitness to improve their health and well-being.
	2	Successfully employs a range of more complex tactics or creative processes and adapts them to changing environments.	5	Understands more complex tactics or creative ideas and can communicate those effectively using good verbal and non-verbal skills.	8	Demonstrates good functional knowledge of basic anatomical structures.
	3	Accurately explains and evaluates the effectiveness of their own and/or others' performances and suggests appropriate improvements.	6	Accurately reflects on progress towards ambitious personal challenges and/or goals in PE and/or leadership.	9	Accurately explains the importance of nutrition and hydration for either success in sport or general physical and mental well-being.
9	1	Shows imagination when performing more advanced skills with control, accuracy and fluency in a game situation or performance setting.	4	Confidently undertakes leadership and officiating roles showing a good knowledge and application of appropriate rules/laws and effective communication skills.	7	Consistently meets the strenuous exercise demands required for specific activities, combining strength, stamina, suppleness, and speed to excellent effect.
	2	Successfully employs advanced decision-making skills in a competitive game situation or to create dynamic routines/sequences.	5	Sensitively adapts activities (using the STEP principle) when leading peers of different abilities and backgrounds so that they are included and supported to succeed.	8	Successfully applies a good understanding of the principles of safe and effective training to improve their health and performance.



	3	Accurately analyses and evaluates the effectiveness of their own and/or others' team/group performances and implements appropriate improvements.	6	Proves to be an effective role model by applying themselves fully in a range of contexts and showing resilience to overcome setbacks.	9	Knows and can explain the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle in the promotion of mental, social and physical well-being
Exceeds Year 9 Age Related Expectations		Performs and applies advanced skills and tactics to positively influence a competitive team/group performance and accurately reflects on their contribution.		Fulfils leadership roles in their own time that support the PE department in improving the provision for other students.		Uses knowledge of health and fitness to plan, implement and monitor a physical activity programme for themselves and/or others.

Progression in the Physical Education Curriculum

Primary to Secondary:

- We expect students to arrive from Key Stage 2 with a secure grasp of core, fundamental skills as per the National Curriculum. We expect them to be familiar with individual activities and team games, showing how they can use skills in combination and use attacking and defending skills and tactics. They should know the basics of preparing for and recovering from physical activity and how exercise affects the body in the short term.
- We expect students to have met the three swimming and water safety targets from Key Stage 2.
- Pupils arriving from a United Learning primary school may be familiar with the three stands of Fit to Perform, Fit to Lead and Fit for Life.
- Many secondary schools undertake some assessment of students through a multi-skills module in Year 7. These are not tests, but multi-skills units which enable the teachers to determine the needs of the cohort, sub-groups and individual students. From this base, teaching groups and curriculum provision can be determined, with students being supported to 'catch-up and keep up' as appropriate.

Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4:

- The United Learning Key Stage 3 PE and Health curriculum is applied differently to meet the needs of each school's unique context. However, the practical nature of the Key Stage 3 curriculum should prepare students well with the confidence and competence for succeeding in a meaningful, relevant, and challenging core PE provision in Key Stage 4.
- The United Learning Key Stage 3 PE and Health curriculum will also prepare students well for further study in PE at Key Stage 4. Practical skills will have been practiced in isolation and applied to pressure situations such as performances or games. Tactics will have increased in complexity through Key Stage 3 enabling students to demonstrate a high level of understanding. Through the Fit for Life strand, some aspects of the methods and principles of training will provide invaluable knowledge for students progressing to Key Stage 4 courses in PE (academic) or sport (vocational).
- In terms of leadership, the Key Stage 3 Fit to Lead strand (bronze, silver and gold awards) has been designed with Sports Leaders to ensure a smooth transition into Level 1 and 2 qualifications.
- There is a vast range of courses open for schools to select for their students at Key Stage 4. Most popular routes include GCSE PE, BTEC Sport and the Cambridge National Sport Studies or Sport Science courses. There are numerous similar courses available in dance, health and fitness and other related fields.

Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5:

- Due to the broad range of subjects and routes available for schools to choose from means that there is no single progression route in PE.
- However, GCSE PE leads into A Level PE; BTEC L2 has several progression routes into a suite of options at Key Stage 5; and similarly, the Cambridge Nationals progress to Level 3 qualifications.
- It is worth checking which of the L3 vocational courses will be accepted by universities. They do not all have equal credibility depending on the university which students are interested in. Therefore, whilst that



might seem like a way off, a mistake in progressing from Key Stage 4 to 5 and picking a course which your university of choice does not accept could prove problematic. Worth bearing this in mind at this stage.

Key Stage 5 to University:

- There is a wide range of PE/sport/fitness/dance courses at university. Some lead into specific professions such as teaching; others are more generic which on the one hand keeps your options open, but on the other hand can leave graduates with a degree but no clearer on their future career.
- UCAS list the sport courses [here](#)
- UCAS list the teaching courses [here](#)
- UCAS list the dance courses [here](#)
- UCAS list the fitness/health and other courses [here](#)
- The National Careers Service provides some potential careers in sport [here](#)

The Physical Education Curriculum Website

Our resources are designed to put teachers in the driving seat. We have a range of resources shared by our schools as well as resources for Key Stage 4 pupils. We have tried to be clear about the purpose of each resource, ultimately, once a teacher downloads and adapts a resource, it becomes their lesson.

All resources can be found on the [United Learning Curriculum Website](#).

