# Cardiff School of Sport

**DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT PROFORMA:**

**Empirical**

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<td><strong>Programme:</strong></td>
<td>Sports Development</td>
<td><strong>Dissertation title:</strong></td>
<td>An identification and critical analysis of head teachers’ attitudes towards physical education in primary schools</td>
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<td><strong>Supervisor:</strong></td>
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### Comments | Section
---|---
| **Title and Abstract** | Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken. |
| **Introduction and literature review** | To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable). |
| **Methods and Research Design** | To include: details of the research design and justification for the methods applied; participant details; comprehensive replicable protocol. |
| **Results and Analysis** | To include: description and justification of data treatment/data analysis procedures; appropriate presentation of analysed data within text and in tables or figures; description of critical findings. |
| **Discussion and Conclusions** | To include: collation of information and ideas and evaluation of those ideas relative to the extant literature/concept/theory and research question/problem; adoption of a personal position on the study by linking and combining different elements of the data reported; discussion of the real-life impact of your research findings for coaches and/or practitioners (i.e. practical implications); discussion of the limitations and a critical reflection of the approach/process adopted; and indication of potential improvements and future developments building on the study; and a conclusion which summarises the relationship between the research question and the major findings. |

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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (HONOURS)

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

AN IDENTIFICATION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HEAD TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Dissertation submitted under the discipline of MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Chris Jennings for his constant support and encouragement throughout the year.

I would also like to show my gratitude to the participants who took part in the study, without their consent this dissertation would not have been possible.

I am grateful to my family and friends for providing constant support throughout the year.
Abstract

Background: Physical education provides children with numerous benefits and Head teachers have a considerable bearing on the on physical education in primary schools but it is unclear to what extent their attitudes effect the delivery, content and training.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to establish and analyse the attitudes and opinions of head teacher’s perspectives surrounding the delivery of physical education and teacher training in primary schools.

Participants: 4 Head Teachers from the 4 regions across Wales agreed to participate in the study through informed consent. The size of the schools involved in the study varied from 225 pupils to 420 pupils. Head Teachers involved in the study teaching experience ranged from 16 years to 24 years.

Research Design: A qualitative approach using semi-structured interview was used to gather data from participants, recorded on an application similar to that of a dictaphone.

Data Collection: Interviews were arranged in advance and were conducted at each of the Head’s schools, they consisted of two sections. Question flexibility was ensured to acquire in depth responses from participants and a pilot study was undertaken to ensure study reliability.

Data Analysis: The data was transcribed and interview quotations categorised in to themes, enabling common categories to be established.

Findings: Head Teachers understand the benefits PE can potentially provide; however curriculum pressures from various organisations are evident, creating time constraints on the school timetable. Participants acknowledged newly qualified teachers are unprepared to teach physical education and PE inset and teacher training provided by schools is not sufficient. A greater flexibility was evident in the school curriculum and outdoor pursuits appear to be an activity valued by Head Teach
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
1.0. **Overview**

This section will provide a study overview. The aims, process and importance of the study will be established.

1.1. **The Purpose of The Study**

“Although there is a primary link teacher based in every primary school, who aims to improve the quantity and quality of PE and sport, it appears that Head Teachers in primary schools often have a considerable bearing on the delivery of PE and sport, and how local authority funding is spent”

Baroness Sue Campbell – Chairman of UK Sport (2009)

The purpose of this study is to identify and critically analyse Head Teachers’ attitudes towards physical education in primary schools. There is a lack of research available regarding the influence Head Teachers’ have on physical education in their respective schools. The study will aim to discover Head Teachers’ perspectives on the benefits PE provides (Janssen and LeBlanc, 2010; Ciccamascolo and Sullivan, 2011; Griggs, 2012), identify the position of the subject within the school curriculum and explore the way PE is delivered in primary schools. The study will increase knowledge surrounding physical education in primary schools that may be useful to schools in Wales, local authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government.

1.2. **The Process of The Study**

A qualitative research approach was used in the form of semi-structured interviews. The sample used for the study was taken from the 4 regions across Wales; Rural North, Rural Heartland, Metropolitan Wales and The Valleys (Sport Wales, 2010). One school from each region was selected at random. The duration of the interviews was approximately 20 minutes and participants answered two sections of questions relating to physical education
in their school. When data collection had been completed the interviews were transcribed, themed and categorised before conclusions were established.

1.3.   The Importance of The Study

Physical education has received a significant amount of Government investment over the last decade with the realisation that more and more children are becoming obese. It is recognised that physical education provides the opportunity to improve numerous health benefits however the subject is still considered a foundation subject apposed to a core subject. The research will provide an insight into how Head Teachers influence PE in primary schools across Wales, and whether their opinions and attitudes towards the subject affect its delivery.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Overview

This section of the study will examine current literature and information relevant to the chosen topic. PE in primary schools, teacher training and inset development, and the historical changes of the PE curriculum are the areas that the literature review will investigate. Themes and questions for the primary research will be identified using the secondary research findings.

2.2. Physical Education in Primary Schools

Ornstein et al (2010, p62) describes the purpose of education “Is to maintain a harmonious society in which everybody clearly knows her or his status, duties, responsibilities and the proper way of behaving towards others.” Physical education is compulsory in Wales for children between the ages of 5-16 years (The Education Act, 1994) and schools continue to seek to provide 2 hours of PE for their pupils. National Curriculum subjects in Wales were revised and restructured in 2008 to “Ensure relevance to the twenty first century and manageability for learners and teachers” (The Welsh Assembly Government, 2012). The National Curriculum is divided in to two categories of subjects, core and foundation. Core subjects are considered to have priority over foundation subjects, and include; Welsh, English, Maths and Science. Physical Education is categorised in the foundation subjects. Schools in Wales are assessed and measured by the Welsh Assembly Government on the results children achieve in the core subjects (The Welsh Assembly Government, 2013).

The post-war period witnessed the emergence of health education, a school subject in its own right, known now as Physical Education. Physical training exercises for males included standing exercises that sought to be systematically exercise each part of the body through flexions and extensions, and for females included health related exercise - aerobics (Kirk, 1992). The need for physical training was primarily discovered after World War I due to the poor physical condition of troops (Hoffman, 2009). Army training was branded as physical training, with the purpose of preparing soldiers for any
emergency situation (Hussain, 2012). In 1992, shortly after the implementation of the ‘new’ curriculum, the government created requirements to enable them to ascertain a more manageable whole curriculum. Penny (2002) recognises that the Government acknowledged to have failed to adequately alleviate previous issues in the primary school curriculum and in 1998 primary schools were no longer required to teach full programmes of study in foundation subjects and the only element of the activity that remained statutory was swimming. In 1998 schools were advised by the Government specifically to retain games, dance and gymnastics activities in Key Stage 1 (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). It could be argued that at Key Stage 2 the Government gave schools contradictory advice when advising schools to retain the 6 areas of activity however give priority to some areas. For example, teach swimming (as a statutory requirement) and give priority to teaching dance, games and gymnastics but teach fewer areas of activity, whilst retaining games, dance and gymnastics but omitting outdoors and adventurous activities. Current curriculum documents and guidelines allow for much greater flexibility regarding the delivery of physical education in primary schools, The Welsh Assembly Government (2008) highlight that pupils at Key Stage 2 should be taught a programme that offers 4 key learning skills, they include; health, fitness and well-being activities, creative activities, adventurous activities and competitive activities. The recent change in attitudes taken by the government support the views of Griggs (2012) who suggests that it is clear when structured effectively with quality learning experiences, primary physical education can have a remarkable impact on the lives of all children and young people. The latest Sport Wales research statistics relating to physical education provision in primary schools (Sport Wales, 2010) indicate there has been a positive increase in the amount of time allocated to physical education in Welsh primary schools. In 2000-2001 the amount of hours at Key Stage 2 was 86 minutes. This however rose to 104 minutes in 2008-2009, an increasing by 21% over an 8-9 year period.

Since 2001 the Welsh Assembly Government have invested over £20.7 million in the Physical Education in School Sport Initiative (PESS). The scheme was founded in 2001 and initially was managed by the Sports Council
for Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government with the aim to improve the standards of physical education in primary schools. In 2011 PESS restructured. The initiative moved away from a local authority delivery, to a consortium based approach. The initiative has seemingly had a positive impact in schools with 73% of primary pupils enjoying PE “a lot” (Sport Wales, 2012). A report commissioned by Sport Wales in 2010 also highlighted the positive impact PESS has had on primary schools. These include; increased teacher knowledge and confidence, improved quality of teaching and an increase of provision, quality resources and training. The Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales – Ann Keane (Cited in: Wales Online, 2012) suggests that because of PESS, children have more creative and adventurous opportunities in comparison with when she was at school. She goes on further to say “Now primary school pupils take part in a wider range of PE activities with an enthusiasm that equals that of boys. Girls achieve equivalent levels of success while engaging in the same PE lessons”. Some sports include; swimming, rounders, athletics, dance, cricket and tennis. Ann Keane reiterates the importance of PE in schools and describes PE as “An integral part of school life and contributes to pupils’ overall well being”. The Sports Council for Wales (2010) suggests PE is valued and is now held in equal status with other subjects, and The Welsh Assembly Government (2012) currently acknowledges in their programme that they want to see physical literacy being as important as reading and writing as they “Hope to create a generation of children with the competence, confidence and motivation to sustain a life long participation in sport”. They feel that teachers and schools are in the best position to determine how the curriculum should be delivered but understand that all pupils with all levels of ability should be given every opportunity to achieve through participation. Further research findings from Sport Wales (2012) suggest that the culture of sport within the school can be a major enabler/barrier to a pupils’ lifelong enjoyment and involvement in sport. Specifically, for Key Stage 2 pupils, in 2000 (aged 7-11) a scheme called Dragon Sports was initiated. Dragon Sport provides alternative forms of sports, simplified for children. Williams (2012) understands that it is important for children to participate in different exercise to adults because they respond differently and Dragon Sport provides this
opportunity. The initiative is promoted and delivered through Dragon Sport Co-ordinators in school, some activities include; quick cricket, netball, and tag rugby.

It is evident that there are currently a wide variety of sports and physical activities within the primary school setting available for children in Wales. The variety contrasts significantly when health education was originally developed. Despite the recognised importance of physical education (The Welsh Assembly Government, 2010., Griggs, 2012., Sport Wales, 2012., Williams, 2012) Janssen and Leblanc (2010) recommend a child should accumulate and average of at least 60 minutes of exercise per day, questioning the weekly target set by the Government of schools to provide 2 hours of PE per week (Sport Wales, 2012) are sufficient for a child’s development in the primary setting. Physical education in primary schools may not provide the opportunity for 60 minutes of exercise per day, however physical education has the potential to educate children to continue physical activity in their own time. Notably physical activity is not the sole responsibility of the school, and pupil’s parents are responsible to create time for their child to achieve the amount of recommended time. Parents engaging their children with local clubs or other physical activities outside of school can achieve this.

2.3. Teacher Training & Inset Development

Previous research studies (Grabber et al., 2008; Kirk. 2005) highlight that physical education programmes that are designed and delivered by primary school teachers are generally of poor quality. Research (Ashy and Humphries, 2000; Rink and Hall, 2008; Sloan, 2010) suggests this could be a result of teacher confidence issues and inadequate content knowledge and therefore teachers do not feel confident teaching PE. Kirk (2005) understands that the way in which physical education is taught can affect students, having the potential to miseducate. Conclusive research undertaken by Petrie (2010), in New Zealand also recognised that having sound general pedagogical knowledge and skills alone are not enough to ensure effective learning in physical education and that a teacher’s ability to fully effectively
incorporate general pedagogical approaches are hindered by limited physical education content knowledge. Research (Tsangaridou, 2008; Kirk, 2005; Petrie, 2010) signifies the need for primary school teachers to gain a comprehensive knowledge of physical education before teaching the subject to eliminate the possibility of miseducating pupils, allowing them to enjoy their physical education studies.

In the United Kingdom, The British Olympic Chairman, Lord Moynihan, (Cited in: The Guardian, 2012) commented about the issue of primary teachers receiving as little as 6 hours training in sport at university or college, calling for a review of the “Initial training for specialist physical education teachers”. The former Chief Executive of The Youth Sport Trust (Cited in: The Guardian, 2012) highlights some of the options available to the Government of addressing primary school physical education. He suggests that the “ideal scenario” would be for primary schools to have a dedicated PE specialist. Suggesting the other options available are; to continue funding an expanded teacher release scheme, that will allow secondary school physical education specialists to support primary school teachers or to designate 6-8 days a year where every primary school teacher is given specialist training and support in the delivery of PE.

The Sports Council for Wales (2007) describes ‘PE Specialists’ as teachers who have received significant amount of their formal training relating specifically to PE – during their initial teacher training. The Sport Council for Wales define a ‘PE Specialist’ as teachers “Who had received a significant amount of their training specifically relating to PE, during their initial teacher training. Non-specialists are defined as “All other teachers”. The definition fails to elaborate and explain to what extent a ‘significant’ amount of training is therefore it is unclear the actual amount of training a teacher needs to fall in the category of a “PE Specialist”. The Sport Council for Wales research suggests that there is only a minority of teachers involved with PE that are regarded as PE specialists – 1.01 per school compared to 5.56 teachers who are regarded as ‘non-specialists’. This compares to 1.0 ‘specialists’ and 6.15 ‘non-specialists’ per school in 2002/2003 – arguably an insignificant increase
of 0.01. The Sports Council (2007) also highlight that teaching assistants are involved in the delivery of PE. Although teaching assistants boost teachers’ productivity, they do not boost pupils’ progress (Institute of Education, 2009) therefore, the quality of PE they are potentially delivering is questionable.

To increase effective teaching in literacy, numeracy, reducing the impact of poverty attainment, additional learning needs, behaviour management and reflective practice in Wales, the Government implement a compulsory measure called ‘Induction’ (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012). Induction is a measure funded by the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) to provide newly qualified teachers with a bridge from initial teacher education and training, to effective professional practice. The Welsh Government makes it clear that they do not fund other personal development activities that fall outside of the focus areas, seemingly doing little to increase the teacher training quality in Welsh primary school physical education. Highlighted above (Petrie, 2010), confidence and a lack of content knowledge surrounding PE, affect its delivery, therefore the Welsh Government need to address this issue. Including physical education in the ‘Induction’ scheme may improve delivery over a period of time. The most recent Sport Council for Wales (2007) figures regarding PE provision in primary schools, indicate there is uncertainty to what action is best suited to solve the issue. The figures show that in 2005, only 40% of teachers had engaged in Continuous Professional Development (CPD). These figures suggest that CDP is under funded because it is not seen as a priority by schools. Therefore, arguably, schools do not see CDP as a suitable tool to up skill PE teachers.

It is evident from previous research (Tsangaridou, 2008; Kirk, 2005; Petrie, 2010) there is an issue surrounding primary physical education in regards to its content and delivery. There is sufficient evidence to justify the need for further teacher physical education in primary schools, however it is unclear to what option would be most effective.
2.4. Historical Development of Physical Education in the Primary Curriculum

Physical education provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of physical activity with regards to health, and also allows time within the school curriculum to exercise through sport and physical activity. Research findings (Janssen and LeBlanc, 2010) suggest physical activity is associated with numerous health benefits. They indicate that the more physical activity that is performed by the individual, the greater the health benefit. Engaging in physical activity on a regular basis prevents several chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis (Sport and Development, no date). During primary years, physical education also provides a consistent outlet for children to develop fundamental movement skills along with building social, affective and cognitive learning opportunities (Griggs, 2012). Improving social skills is an important aspect of PE; it enables children to feel good about themselves (Ciccamascolo and Sullivan, 2011). The increase of knowledge surrounding the numerous benefits of physical education over the last decade has promoted amplified Government interest. Previously physical educationalists have justified the educational worth of PE through the contribution that it is said to have towards intellectual dimensions of education (Green, 2008). However, evidence (Janssen and LeBlanc, 2010; Ciccamascolo and Sullivan, 2011; Griggs, 2012) suggests it is a subject that is rich in benefits regarding both health and personal development. Hardman and Green (2011) suggest parents share the opinion that PE is a significant subject within the curriculum and parents recognise the value to their children’s future.

A recent report from The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), ‘Beyond 2012 – outstanding physical for all’ identifies some common weaknesses in physical education. Sir Michael Wilshaw (Cited in: BBC, 2013), The Ofsted Chief Inspector commented on the findings recent Ofsted report, suggesting, “There wasn’t enough physical, strenuous activity in PE lessons” and in weaker lessons “Children were not
challenged to warm up vigorously or build stamina and strength by participating in sustained periods of physical activity”. Given that physical activity provides health benefits, evidence suggests that children in schools are not benefiting from the content of physical education being delivered.

Despite the benefits that PE offers, school PE lessons in England are providing little physical strenuous activity, having little effect on children’s fitness and health, raising questions of PE content and its delivery. Previously mentioned in ‘2.2.’, PE originated from health education, provided to increase physical fitness of soldiers (Hoffman, 2009). It appears physical education has moved too far away from this, providing children with PE content that provides little physical fitness benefits.

2.5. Key Themes Identified for Primary Research

The aims of the primary research are to:

- Identify and explore primary school Head Teachers’ perspectives on the potential benefits of PE and how they view the position of PE in their school curriculum

- Establish the thoughts of Head Teachers surrounding PE teacher training and inset development

- Explore the way in which PE is delivered within schools across Wales
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY
3.1. **Overview**

The methodology will identify what research is and the best suited research method for the chosen study. A precise description of the research process will be provided.

3.2. **What is Research?**

Thomas and Nelson (2006, p3) describe research as “A careful understanding means of problem solving.” However, Gratton and Jones (2010) suggest that “Knowledge is never absolute and it is only through continual research that our understanding is maintained and enhanced.” Kumar (2011, pp2-3) state the purpose of research is “To find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered so far. Despite numerous definitions, it is clear that research is important because it discovers new information that increases knowledge surrounding different issues/matters. Previous research has changed our conceptions of both the physical and psychological world. Similarly, educational research can be expected to lead to more fruitful ways to think about schooling (Wallen and Fraenkel, 2011).

3.3. **Options Available**

There are two main methods of research, quantitative and qualitative. Undertaking quantitative research involves collecting numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon (Muijs, 2010), and is based on the measurement of quality or amount (Kumar, 2011). Types of quantitative research include; face-to-face interviews, telephone interviewing, web surveys and mail surveys (Mooi and Sarstedt, 2011). These methods can be combined, this is known as a mixed mode. The alternative approach to quantitative research is qualitative research. Lapan et al (2012) suggests qualitative research examines social settings from insiders’ perspectives. This differs from a quantitative approach because rather than applying numbers to derive meaning, qualitative research generates descriptions and
analyses contexts. Research data collection of a qualitative nature includes interviews, focus groups, field observation and case studies.

The most appropriate research method for the nature of the study is to adopt a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is best suited because the thoughts and feelings of people are difficult to quantify and the phenomenon cannot be measured numerically. The research findings are also concerned with each individual’s views and, due to the need to capture the thoughts and opinions of experienced Head Teachers in primary schools across Wales.

3.4. Research Design

The participants for the study are from four primary school Head Teachers from the 4 regions across Wales; Metropolitan Wales, Rural North, Rural Heartland and The Valleys (Sport Wales, 2010). The region classification table categorises each region with counties from across Wales.

Table 1.0. Region Classification

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<tr>
<td>Rural Heartland</td>
<td>Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Heartland</td>
<td>Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Monmouthshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Wales</td>
<td>Wrexham, Flintshire, Newport, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend, Swansea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Valleys</td>
<td>Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent</td>
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Head Teachers are specialists within education and by using a qualitative, inductive research approach will allow for detailed responses based on the experiences of the head teachers throughout their career. Inductive research begins with observations and searches for patterns in what has been observed (Babbie, 2010). The sample is a convenient sample and is shaped by the fact the study is being undertaken by an undergraduate with limited time and money. The sample is selected from each region in Wales and
therefore, despite the limited time and money, does reflect potential variants based on locations of schools and facilities available. Data will be collected in the form of a semi-structured interview to provide overall structure and direction to the interview but also allow flexibility that will allow unstructured questioning (Hair, 2011). The semi-structured interviews will be produced using secondary research findings from the literature review. Once the questions are produced, a pilot study will be undertaken. Kin (2011) reiterates the importance of pilot studies, suggesting it provides another opportunity to adjust and refine research questions. A pilot study was undertaken for the study in a school in Wales. This helped to familiarize the interviewer with the questions and the way in which to ask them, grasp an idea of what an interview situation is like, and also to ensure full competence with the recording equipment. During the pilot study there was an issue with the recording equipment. The iPad (recording equipment used) was placed too far away from the interviewee, only recording 5 minutes of the 20-25 minute interview. The experience provided the researcher with a valuable lesson and throughout the 4 interviews; the recording equipment was placed in a position that ensured the full recording of each interview providing a more reliable and valid research results.

Due to the hectic schedule of a Head Teacher’s day, it is understandable that each participant will only be available to interview for the intended duration. For interviews to take place, a letter and information sheet must be sent to each Head Teacher from each school explaining the project title and the process of the interview. Providing each participant agrees to go ahead with the interview, a date and time must be arranged. The interviews will be undertaken in each of the Head Teacher’s schools. Providing a familiar setting ensures that participants are comfortable, consequently allowing participants to engage fully and answer questions in detail (Smith, 2010). Murchison (2010) emphasises the importance of recording interview conversations and highlights the issue of writing or typing as fast as people talk. To eradicate this issue, interviews will be recorded using an iPad application that is similar to a dictaphone called ‘Dictamus’. Using digital equipment to record each interview will produce excellent recording quality,
allowing for easier transcription (King and Horrocks, 2010). The researcher will transcribe interviews as soon as each interview has finished using Microsoft Word. Ashmore and Reid (2000) emphasis that a better understanding and knowledge of participant responses can be achieved if interviews are transcribed by the researcher. Following transcription, themes can be established. Houser and Oman (2010) outline that the identification of themes is not an orderly process and iteration is almost always necessary. When a theme is established in any of the interview transcripts, the ‘Comment’s’ box on Microsoft Work will be used to highlight this. It will be done so by colour coding each theme, by selecting the relevant words and changing the colour of the ‘Comment’s’ box accordingly, this will allow for easier analysis. Once each theme has been established, the data can be displayed. Data display enables conclusions to be drawn from the mass data (Gratton and Jones, 2010), this will be done using a table on Microsoft Word. The table will categorise each theme into; raw data themes, first order themes, second order themes and general dimensions. Gratton and Jones (2010) highlight the importance of the identification of patterns and regularities that occur along with words and phrases such as ‘because’, ‘despite’ and ‘otherwise’. They suggest doing this will help make sense of the data through interpretation of the meaning and values that interviewees assign to the phenomenon. Relationships and linkages from the data will be established providing a suitable, conclusion examining the relevance of the outcomes of the research in relation to the research question.

3.5. Reliability & Validity

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from the research (Gratton and Jones, 2010). There are a number of forms of reliability however Gratton and Jones (2010) suggest that three in particular are most important, they are inter-observer reliability, test-retest reliability and internal consistency reliability. Inter-observer reliability is a measure of consistency within an individual (Pellegrini et al, 2012). This reiterates the importance of the interviewer keeping questions open consistently throughout all four interviews for the study, allowing interviewees to talk about the subject within their own
frames of reference (May, 2011). The study involves only one researcher, making inter observer reliability less of a factor in comparison with a study that involved more people in collecting the data. Test-retest reliability refers to the extent to which research would provide the same measurements if repeated at a different time (Gratton and Jones, 2010). A test-reliability test and internal consistency reliability is not relevant to a research study that requires a qualitative approach, and therefore has little or no meaning for the study (Freshwater and Rolfe, 2012). Gratton and Jones (2010) suggest qualitative reliability refers more to the consistency of methods by which the data is collected. They also highlight the importance for the need for sufficient detail — enabling others to repeat the study even if the findings could not be replicated exactly.

Unlike quantitative research, the concept of validity does not deal with measurement and is understood differently (Daymon and Holloway, 2010). Johnson and Christensen (2010) emphasize there are three types of validity that are specific to qualitative research and to increase the study validity they must be achieved. They are descriptive validity, interpretive validity and theoretical validity. Descriptive validity must be achieved when undertaking research and the importance of accurately reporting descriptive information is a key objective in qualitative research (Daymon and Holloway, 2010). Interviewees’ opinions must be listened to during the interview and the results of the research must be believable (Holly et al, 201). In order to enhance the study’s interpretive validity a self-reflection by the researcher will be undertaken on the potential biases, preconceptions, assumptions and reference frameworks (Hannes et al, 2010). Achieving theoretical validity will establish whether the study’s literature review links with the primary research data and if it is abstract enough to extend theory beyond description (Waltz et al 2010).
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS & DISCUSSION
4.1 Overview

This section of study will analyse and discuss the results found from the primary research. The findings are displayed under the relevant headings. Background information can be found for each Subject in table 2.0.

Table 2.0. Participant Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject A</th>
<th>Subject B</th>
<th>Subject C</th>
<th>Subject D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of School:</td>
<td>233 pupils</td>
<td>225 pupils</td>
<td>420 pupils</td>
<td>230 pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching For:</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>23 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teacher For:</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Views of Physical Education

When participants were asked for their opinions regarding physical education benefits, responses varied however, all Subjects agreed that physical education does provide children with numerous benefits. Some of the benefits mentioned included; health, social well-being and recognition that the subject can improve children’s personal development. Specifically teamwork, leadership, problem solving and self-esteem benefits were identified by participants. Subject A and Subject B provided strong responses using the words, “Clearly” and “Definitely” to describe the extent that physical education provides life skills. Noticeably Subject B and Subject D thought that physical education is not only beneficial for children’s health and personal development, but they also felt it was an opportunity for children who don’t necessarily achieve academically. All responses provided by the participants suggest that the sample is aware of the numerous health benefits PE provide, seemingly concurring with Griggs (2012), Ciccamascolo and Sullivan (2011) and Janssen and LeBlanc (2010). Subject A, B and D agreed that children’s parents do value the subject. Subject B described the subject value to parents as “Undeniable”. Subject C however disagreed, expressed the opinion that parents do not value the subject elaborating:
“In terms of children wearing school uniform, our children come to school 99.9% wearing uniform. When it comes to PE kit, parents don’t show the same level of care for their children and send them to school in sometimes inadequate clothing, inadequate footwear. I don’t think they see the benefits of PE fully, some do but some don’t.”

The response given by Subject C when asked why this was the case was:

“Probably because of their own experience that they’ve had in primary school or maybe because they don’t feel PE is an interactive part of the curriculum. They may see it as an add-on because of their own experiences in school or because of the lack of sporting prowess.”

This response demonstrates that Subject C believes parents’ own experiences in PE have an influence on their attitudes towards the subject. The Welsh Assembly Government in 2008, state that pupils at KS2 should be taught a programme that offers 4 key learning skills; health, fitness and well being activities, creative activities, adventurous activities and competitive activities. Therefore there is a lot more variety in the PE curriculum in comparison when children’s parents were in school. Ann Keane – The Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (Cited in: Wales Online, 2012), stated that there are more adventurous and creative opportunities in PE in comparison with when she was at school. Suggestively, the lack of variety within the physical education curriculum, when children’s parents were in education, may have had a negative influence on their views of physical education, which Subject C feels is evident today.

Responses provided by the sample indicated that they feel physical education can be used as a tool to deliver other subjects in the school curriculum. Subject A provided an example of this, explaining a lesson provided by a teacher:
“He was looking at the heart and the heart in the body. He got all the children out in the yard as if they were running around the yard, as if they were carrying the oxygen, taking the carbon dioxide… so it suddenly became an active lesson. He suddenly made a science lesson in to a PE lesson.”

Arguably, if children’s parents had an increased knowledge and understanding of the importance of physical education similar to that of the study sample – in relation to its benefits and how it is often used as a tool to deliver other subjects they consider more valuable, for example maths, and English then their attitudes and opinions of the subject may change.

There were positive responses from Subject A and Subject B with regards to the position of PE in their school’s primary curriculum. Subject B responded when asked about his views on physical education in the schools curriculum, “It’s always been given a high profile. Apart from numeracy and maths, probably to me, PE is one of the central points to the school.” Subject B and Subject D responses indicated their school does constantly provide physical education however, admitted there is pressure from other subjects in the curriculum. Subject D described the curriculum as being “Squeezed” and identified the pressures were from various organisations for standards in literacy and numeracy. Despite The Welsh Assembly Government (2012) identifying in their programme that they want to see physical literacy being as important as reading and writing, Head Teachers identified the Welsh Assembly Government as being one of the organisations that is “squeezing” the curriculum. Evidence suggests Head Teachers are struggling to manage the school timetable, because of the pressures from different areas. Subject A admitted “It’s a shame, PE is very often the subject that teachers will push to the side” illustrating the extent to which PE can suffer due to curriculum pressures.

Arguably for physical literacy to be held in equal status with reading and writing something has to give. A possible option would be for the Government to extend the hours in the school day, this would relieve pressure from the timetable and allow Head Teachers to manage the curriculum more
effectively. Although physical education is compulsory in schools across Wales (The Education Act, 1994), and schools seek to provide 2 hours of PE a week for their pupils, the school is not assessed and measured by the Government on this (The Welsh Assembly Government, 2013). Schools are measured on their performances in the core subjects and until the Welsh Assembly Government extends their assessments of schools to include physical education, the subject will remain a constant but not necessarily a priority in Welsh schools.

4.3. Physical Education Content

The latest Sport Wales research statistics relating to physical education provision in primary schools (Sport Wales, 2010) indicate there was an increase in time allocated to physical education in Welsh primary schools at KS2. There was an increase of 21% between the years of 2000/2001 to 2008/2009. It was apparent from the research results that in the case of Subject A, Subject C the time allocated to physical education in their respective schools had increased over the past 4 years. Subject D identified that the amount of time allocated to physical education in school had not increased - it had stayed the same, accepting “Some schools have actually cut back on their physical education”. Subject B admitted, “I think to be truthful, in the last 4 years, probably there has been a slight drop back”. Evidence suggests although it appeared schools increased their time allocation of PE during 2000/2001-2008/2009 (Sport Wales, 2010), it was not necessarily the case between 2009/2010 and 2011/2012.

It is evident from the research results that outdoor pursuits are a prominent activity offered to children in schools. Subject A acknowledged, “Our children are now getting more able and talented opportunities.” It is apparent from participants’ responses there are a wide variety of outdoor pursuits available to children ranging from white water rafting to orienteering. It was also evident from participants’ responses that competitive sports are popular; football, hockey, netball and rugby were all identified among the responses. PE content variety was evident throughout the responses from the Head
Teachers, indicating they recognise the greater content flexibility provided, as a result of the 4 key learning skills (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). Dragon Sports, PESS, local fixtures and liaising with local sports clubs were among the initiatives highlighted by participants. PESS was a visible initiative in all schools; A, C and D.

It was evident from Subject C’s response, there was involvement from the school however suggested the school offered “Far more in terms of PESS and other things”. He commented, “The school has done PESS to a degree to a degree or lesser degree, it really depends on whether you like PESS and what they do”. The sample for the study was taken from 4 different authorities across Wales. The mixed responses with regards to PESS indicate different education authorities influence the way PESS is introduced and supported.

Subject B provided a significant response when asked about the initiative in the respective school:

“We kind of got on board with that (PESS) and went to some of the early planning meetings, but something went awry and the project fell apart. I think somebody was sick and so the project hasn’t continued.”

The use of the words “Kind of” used by the participant in his response indicates that the school was not fully committed to the initiative. Perhaps more significantly, this response also indicates that the school does not engage with PESS. A report in 2010 commissioned by Sport Wales, indicated the extent to which PESS had in primary schools across Wales. The benefits included; increased teacher knowledge and confidence, improved quality of teaching and an increase in provision, quality resources and training. If a school is not engaging with the initiative inevitably it will not gain any of the benefit highlighted in the Sport Wales’ (2010) report findings.
4.4. Physical Education Delivery

Petrie (2010) recognises that a teacher’s ability to fully, effectively incorporate general pedagogical approaches are hindered by limited physical content knowledge – evidence from the primary research supports this. To tackle this issue schools are delivering PE through PE specialists in the anticipation of better quality physical education. The research indicates there is 1 PE co-ordinator in each school involved in the study. Lord Moynihan (Cited in: The Guardian, 2012) suggests that having a dedicated school specialist for PE is the “Ideal scenario” however, concerns were identified by both Subject A and Subject C with PE being delivery solely through PE specialists. Both Subjects were well aware that if specialists were to deliver PE exclusively in primary schools, it would effectively de-skill teachers. Arguably teacher training and continuous professional development in physical education for primary school teachers needs to be included in the Welsh Government’s ‘Induction’ programme.

4.5. Teacher Training & Inset Development

Participants involved in the study did not express any positivity when asked how prepared newly qualified teachers are to teach physical education. Strong comments included, “They’re not” (prepared) and they’re “ill prepared”. This suggests PGCE students are not receiving sufficient training and the hours dedicated to physical education within the PGCE qualification needs to be increased to improve this. Despite the acknowledgements made by the participants that newly qualified teachers are unprepared, the inset training and continuous personal development available to teachers was arguably insufficient. Understandably, if Head Teachers feel teachers are unprepared to teach physical education, teacher training and inset development should be considered as an appropriate tool in addressing the issue however this was not apparent from the research results. Subject A and Subject C’s responses indicated that there was insufficient training. Subject C admitted, “They’ve received 2 days; 2 days inset training – physical education. Just 2 days over the last 3 years”. The use of the word “Just” by Subject C indicates that, the
personal opinion of the Head is that the amount teachers have received is not enough.

It was evident from participant responses that all PE training teachers receive is subsidised by the school budget. Notably The Welsh Assembly Government does provide and fund a compulsory scheme called ‘Induction’ for newly qualified teachers, providing a bridge from initial teacher education to effective professional practice. However, physical education is a subject that falls outside the focus area of the scheme and therefore it is not funded. Furthermore, if the Government were to provide funding and included physical education in their compulsory scheme, then arguably the quality of PE teacher training would improve significantly. Subject D identified an internal professional development scheme that was functioning in the respective school. As well as giving the opportunities to go on external courses similar to that of Subject A, Subject B and Subject C, the participant highlighted:

“All the staff have an opportunity once a year during the spring term to highlight the area of the curriculum they would like support with. For the last 5 years it’s been part of a team teaching situation where the PE specialist would team up with a colleague in another class and would observe and teach an aspect of the curriculum that has been identified by that class teacher. It’s quiet interesting for her (the PE co ordinator) not only to work with a colleague in a different class but also within the foundation phase to see how the scheme of work is being introduced and developed, it’s CPD for both people, the PE specialist and the non-specialist.”

This is a particularly effective method of continuous personal development of CPD and one of minimum cost to the school. If Head Teacher’s adopted a similar approach to their schools PE teacher training, training would be more accessible and more frequent for teachers, in turn improving the delivery of physical education in schools across Wales.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION & RECCOMENDATIONS
5.1. Overview

This section of the study will conclude the findings found in the results and discussion section, linking back to the primary research objectives. Appropriate recommendations will also be made in answer to the issues highlighted.

5.2. Primary Research Aims

The aims of the primary research were to:

- Identify and explore primary school Head Teacher's perspectives on the potential benefits of PE and how they view the position of PE in their curriculum
- Establish the thoughts of Head Teachers surrounding PE teacher training and inset development
- Explore the way in which PE is delivered within schools across Wales

5.2. Conclusions & Recommendations

It is evident from the research results; Head Teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the benefits physical education has the potential to provide. It is apparent Head Teachers are subjected to pressures from various organisations – including the Welsh Assembly Government, to improve standards for literacy and numeracy. This creates time constraints on the school timetable, perhaps providing children with limited PE experiences and lesson time. To resolve this issue, something within the timetable has to give. An extension of the school day would provide more time to accommodate PE in the school curriculum. Another option would be to narrow the curriculum subjects creating more time within the schools current timetable. It is apparent Head Teachers’ can influence physical education in their respective schools significantly, however the Welsh Assembly Government is the only organisation capable of relieving curriculum pressures from other subject areas. Until the Welsh Assembly Government measure primary schools in
Wales on physical education content and delivery, the subject will continue to be a constant but not necessarily a priority subject in Welsh schools.

Head Teachers’ responses indicated newly qualified teachers are not prepared to deliver physical education in primary schools. To improve this, the hours taught of PE within the PGCE qualification across the country need to be increased. Results indicated the amount of teacher training being provided by schools for their teachers is insufficient, and is subsidised through the school budget. The Welsh Assembly Government should look to include physical education in their ‘Induction’ scheme. Understandably this would be costly therefore a better suited solution perhaps would be for Head Teachers to adopt an internal monitoring and training scheme similar to the that of Subject D. This would also provide a cost effective alternative to funding external courses.

There is a greater flexibility with regards to physical education content in primary schools. Outdoor pursuits appear to be a valued activity available to children. PESS was an initiative identified by participants however it was evident the amount of involvement varied from school to school, this suggests different education authorities influence the way the initiatives are introduced and delivered in schools. Teachers and PE specialists were identified by participants as people that deliver physical education in schools. A concern highlighted regarding the delivery of PE exclusively through PE specialists in primary schools was evident. Head Teachers are conscious that if physical education is delivered exclusively through PE specialists in the future as proposed, teachers will effectively become de-skilled. Primary schools need PE specialists who have a thorough understanding and knowledge of the subject. Internal monitoring schemes similar to that of Subject D need to be instigated in schools to allow teachers to learn from the specialist, leading to the delivery of better quality physical education.
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