

Physical Education and Sport in Primary Schools

Final Report

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The participation of all of the schools visited in this research, and the time given by school principals, teachers, other staff and Year 6 students, is greatly appreciated. Their involvement has enabled a range of views to be reflected in the report and provided rich insights to inform discussions about future provision of physical education and sport in Aotearoa New Zealand Schools. We similarly thank the representatives of various stakeholders who gave their time to participate in interviews and speak to the issues we were investigating from valuable external perspectives. Finally, we thank Sport New Zealand (formally SPARC) for funding this research project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was designed as a scoping study focusing on the provision of physical education, sport and recreation opportunities within and beyond the curriculum in the primary school sector. Provision ‘within and beyond the curriculum’ incorporates physical education, sport and recreation opportunities occurring within the formal curriculum, in co-curricular activities, and outside of school hours. The project examined:

1. The types of opportunities that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum.
2. Which students current provision is being directed towards and ‘connecting with’—as reflected in reported participation and in the perceived appeal of opportunities.
3. The key factors influencing current provision.
4. Ways in which current provision may be enhanced, from the perspective of students, teachers and other stakeholders.

The study adopted a qualitative-interpretive approach and multiple case study design, utilising two schools in each of three regional locations to provide demographic and institutional variations. Data collection occurred in Term 2, 2011 and involved documentary sources; individual interviews with senior school staff, lead teachers/co-ordinators for physical education and/or school sport and other staff as appropriate to the individual school context; focus group interviews with Year 6 students, and field-notes from school visits. 18 stakeholder representatives from a range of organisations and agencies variously involved in provision of physical education and sport in primary schools were also interviewed. Analysis of data was undertaken in three stages: (i) at a school level (ii) at a regional level and (iii) across the three regional case studies. Reporting reflects the culmination of the staged analysis, with collated data and individual case study summaries presented to capture commonalities and diversity across school contexts.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Types of opportunities that are being provided within and beyond the school curriculum

- The extent and quality of physical education and sport opportunities being provided to students is strongly framed by situation and locality and reflects significant variation between schools.
- Provision of physical education and sport for primary aged children is invariably premised on and framed by an adult model of organised sport.
- Curriculum programmes are generally seasonally oriented and reflect a multi-activity model of physical education curriculum and historical patterns of provision.
- Co-curricular opportunities typically comprise (i) opportunities for student-led informal play/physical activity at lunch and recess times; (ii) selection-based opportunities to participate in competitive school sport and associated practices/training; (iii) occasional days for all students within a year group or syndicate to participate in particular sports; and (iii) occasional activities such as field-trips or visits to local sporting facilities.
- A wide range of opportunities for young people to participate in physical activity and sport are reported as available within communities and localities. These include organised sport and activity provision and opportunities presented by local environments. The nature and variety of out-of-school provision varies with locality.

2. Who current provision is being directed towards and 'connecting with'

- Physical education and sport is highly valued by primary age school children, as a chance to be active, improve their skills in a range of sports, and participate in a wide variety of games and sports with their peers.
- The way in which physical education and sport is delivered is critical to maintaining engagement and sustaining participation. Current pedagogy does not always achieve this for all students.
- In co-curricular sport provision extended learning and participation opportunities are often provided for *some*, rather than all students, with opportunity particularly determined by ability.
- The relative appeal of particular activities, and thus, students' participation interests and preferences also reflects the locations, communities and situations within which young people are growing up.

3. Key factors influencing current provision

- The dominance of traditional, adult, and elite-oriented models of sport provision as the foundation for curriculum and co-curricular provision of physical education and sport in primary schools.
- Staff expertise; ongoing inadequacies in teacher knowledge of physical education and availability of external input and support.
- Support from school leadership.
- The low status often accorded to physical education at a school level and nationally, amidst pressures on schools to resource and prioritise national standards, literacy and numeracy, and a lack of investment in physical education from the Ministry of Education.
- Long-standing resource issues within schools relating to provision of physical education and sport, including the nature and quality of facilities, the influence of weather, and equipment available.
- Locality and situation.

4. Ways in which current provision may be enhanced

From a student perspective enhancement equates to increasing the number, quality and range of opportunities within and beyond curriculum physical education. This will require

- Significant investment in school-based and contextually relevant professional learning for teachers, addressing both the content and pedagogy of physical education.
- Investment to enhance initial teacher education.
- Enhanced links between primary schools and local secondary schools, and similarly, better linkages between the school sector and junior sport sector.
- Enhanced links and pathways for all children to extend their learning and participation, through developmentally appropriate and inclusive co-curricular, club and community sport opportunities that focus on fun, variety, and participation with friends.
- Pragmatic measures to enhance facilities, equipment, and to dedicate more time to provision of physical education and sport.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- i As a small-scale scoping project, this research indicated that current provision of physical education and sport both within and beyond the curriculum for primary age children across

Aotearoa New Zealand is characterised by variation in range and quality of opportunities. The variation raises concerns from an equity perspective.

- ii Long-term strategic planning and development is needed if current shortcomings in provision of physical education and sport for primary age children are to be meaningfully addressed. It is recommended that this includes exploration of cluster and partnership based models of provision linking groups of primary schools with local secondary schools and clubs with the aim of enhancing the extent, quality and coherency of opportunities across sectors/contexts.
- iii Significant investment in professional learning for teachers is recommended to address major shortcomings in teacher professional knowledge relating to Health and Physical Education. Enhancing knowledge of curriculum and pedagogical models, and inclusive models of co-curricular physical education and sport is urged.
- iv Primary principals with recognised commitment to provision of quality physical education and sport within and beyond the curriculum should be approached to advise on and advocate for systemic improvements in provision in primary schools.
- v Ways of enhancing initial teacher education knowledge, skills and understandings of the Health and Physical Education learning area should be explored to prevent an ongoing problem of inadequacies in teacher professional knowledge.
- vi In looking to future planning, investment and initiatives across primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, ‘one size’ solutions are unlikely to fit anyone’s contextually specific and varied needs.
- vii Further research is recommended that builds on this project and is directly linked to new initiatives and developments in schools. Partnership based models of research and development that enable researchers to work directly alongside teachers and other stakeholders, for the betterment of physical education and sport for primary age students across Aotearoa New Zealand, are thus recommended.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This project was designed as a scoping study focusing on the provision of physical education, sport and recreation opportunities within and beyond the curriculum in the primary school sector. Provision ‘*within and beyond the curriculum*’ is defined as encompassing physical education, sport and recreation opportunities occurring within the formal curriculum, in co-curricular activities, and outside of school hours. Building upon national and international research and literature, the project sought to enhance knowledge and understanding of:

1. *The types of opportunities* that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum.
2. *Which students* current provision is being directed towards and ‘connecting with’—as reflected in reported participation and in the perceived appeal of opportunities.
3. *The key factors* influencing current provision.
4. *Ways in which current provision may be enhanced*, from the perspective of students, teachers and other stakeholders.

The study adopted a qualitative-interpretive approach and multiple case study design, utilising two schools in each of three regional locations to provide demographic and institutional variations. Data collection occurred in Term 2 2011 and involved documentary sources; individual interviews with senior school staff, lead teachers/co-ordinators for physical education and/or school sport and other staff as appropriate to the individual school context; focus group interviews with Year 6 students, and field-notes from school visits. At the regional level data collection involved interviews with a total of 18 stakeholder representatives, recruited in each of the three regions and representing a range of organisations and agencies variously involved in provision of physical education and sport in primary schools. Analysis of data was undertaken in three stages: (i) at a school level (ii) at a regional level and (iii) across the three regional case studies. Reporting reflects the culmination of the staged analysis, with collated data and individual case study summaries presented to capture commonalities and diversity across school contexts.

The six school case studies reflected the individuality of schools and the significance of this individuality in considering both current and prospective future provision. The case studies also revealed commonalities in relation to the issues associated with provision of physical education and sport within the curriculum and beyond it, in co-curricular contexts and outside of school, with the perspectives of school leaders, teachers, students and external stakeholders being captured. The findings section of this report endeavours to balance representation of common issues with insight into the ways in which these issues apply and are experienced differently in individual school contexts.

Presentation of findings is followed by a discussion section that revisits what is known from literature pertinent to this study and explores the further insights that have been generated by the project. This section also discusses limitations of this study. The implications of the findings are considered and recommendations made relating to future investment in physical education and sport for primary age children, and future research in this area.

2. BACKGROUND LITERATURE AND RELATED RESEARCH

2.1 INTRODUCTION: SCHOOLS AS SITES FOR MOVEMENT-BASED ACTIVITIES

Aotearoa New Zealand has just over 1040 full primary and 780 contributing primary schools scattered around the country. They are staffed by more than 17,500 teachers and a further 5800 middle, senior management personnel and Principals. Most primary schools serve students from Year 0 to Year 6 although derivations involving other years do exist. All State Primary Schools are required to deliver The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) (Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2007) consisting of eight learning areas, one of which is Health and Physical Education (HPE). The HPE learning area “encompasses three different but related subjects: health education, physical education, and home economics” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 22). In the main, HPE within the NZC in primary schools is taught by generalist classroom teachers. This approach to teaching HPE and/or physical education is common to education settings throughout the Commonwealth (Petrie, 2009). By contrast, many primary or elementary students in the USA are taught physical education by specialists who are either based at their school or as itinerants working within a designated school district (Graber, Locke, Lambdin, & Solmon, 2008).

In addition formal curriculum provision of physical education, schools also offer activities that are termed co-curricular and/or extra-curricular (with some international variation in use of terms). Such activities can include sporting and cultural activities, clubs and school performances. Many of these activities are offered to all students beyond the normal school day hours with the most common occurrences being lunchtimes and after school. Like curriculum activities, extra-curricular activities can contribute in vital ways to young people’s development (Bailey, 2006; Bailey et al., 2009; Berk, 1992).

In recent years there has been growing interest in the promotion of physical activity within schools. Schools have been acknowledged as the primary institution with responsibility for promoting activity in young people and more specifically, Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) has been recognised as having a crucial role to play in this endeavour (Cale & Harris, 2006). The endorsement of schools as sites for the promotion and enactment of educationally sound movement-based activities is seen as a way to address “the present day lifestyles and habits of many young people [that] are self-destructive in respect to the long-term viability of the skeleton” (Bailey, 2000, p. 348). Physical activity requires a place within the school day, time that must be allocated from a limited pool and resourcing that must compete with multiple demands that are placed on a schools finances and resources (Gillespie, 2004).

While there are numerous terms used to describe learning activities affiliated to movement, for the purpose of this background commentary the term PESS is selected as an inclusive term, encompassing physical activity, physical fitness, health, play, recreation and leisure activities.

2.2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LEGITIMACY

David Kirk (2006) has argued that “physical education, in the United States of America, United Kingdom, and Australia, at least, has consisted of little else but sport in teachers’ practices since the 1950’s” (p. 256). Kirk’s appraisals of the tentative status and legitimacy of physical education as a school subject have aligned with similar perspectives expressed in Aotearoa New Zealand (Stothart, 1974, 1992). Stothart (2005) warned that unless pertinent issues are addressed, the place of physical education in the curriculum may become increasingly irrelevant and vulnerable to the whims of future curriculum planners. Internationally, the curriculum position of physical education is recognised as fragile, with diminishing curriculum time accorded to physical education particularly posited as an international issue (Hardman & Marshall, 2000). In a world-wide survey of physical education in schools it was evident that although there were pockets of good practice the overwhelming perspective was that school physical education was subject to decreasing curriculum time, inadequate resources and low subject status. Hardman and Marshall (2000) concluded that “at best it seems to occupy a tenuous place in the school curriculum: in many countries, it is not accepted on par with academic

subjects concerned with developing a child's intellect" (p. 233). Physical education in New Zealand primary schools seems to reflect these sentiments, with a similar decline over time to that identified in other countries (Cowley, Hamlin, & Grimley, 2011).

An international reality check on the contemporary situation regarding physical education reaffirms the following as recurring themes

- insufficient challenge in lessons;
- an over-concentration on performance;
- the delivery of an imbalanced curriculum (dominated by games); and
- poor assessment and recording (Griggs, 2007).

Arguments have been posed that effective teaching of physical education in primary schools is often inhibited by inadequate training, insufficient facilities and equipment, low levels of teaching knowledge, expertise and confidence (Morgan & Hansen, 2007). Thus, the many positive initiatives in policy and documentation that many countries have created and the rhetoric that has accompanied such documentation has been contrasted with inadequate implementation and support for teachers charged with provision.

2.3 SPORT WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

Sport is arguably a pervasive characteristic of everyday life for many young people. More important, it forms a significant part of school life. Provision of sport in schools is variously directed towards

- personal and social development;
- the development of skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin participation and performance in physical activity and sport; and
- encouraging and enabling young people to pursue healthy lifestyles, and engaging them in learning.

Many events and experiences presented to students are exclusive in nature. Schools are ideal sites for young people to have access and opportunity (Marsden & Weston, 2007), including sport. The presence of sport in education settings is often justified by the argument that school-based activities provide a unique set of socialisation experiences that enhances identification with school values (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Therefore the challenge for schools to ensure the educational tenets of sport are both explored and prescribed. For sport to be educative it must be inclusive, yet such a worthy tenet has not always been followed. As Kirk (2005) argues

Early learning experiences are crucial to continuing involvement in physical activity but currently only particular sections of the population are in a position to access quality experiences in schools and sports clubs. In particular, young people from lower socioeconomic groups, girls and young disabled people in greater numbers miss out on quality early experiences compared to children from higher socioeconomic groups, boys and the able-bodied. (p. 240)

Kirk's concerns endorse the assertion that invariably the way in which many activities are delivered to students under the guise of sport merely reinforce 'traditional' and stereotypical perspectives about who can and cannot participate in and achieve in physical education and sport and reminder of the powerful messages sent to young people through the transmission of such practices (Penney & Evans, 2013; Penney & Harris, 1997). Concerns have consistently been raised about the privileging of competitive team games within physical education, often at the expense of providing a more inclusive and balanced education for all children (Evans, 2004; Fairclough, Stratton, & Baldwin, 2002; Penney 1998; Penney & Chandler, 2000; Penney & Jess, 2004; Penney & Lisahunter, 2006; Tinning, 2000). Internationally, it has been highlighted that there is a need for a broadening of the skills, knowledge and understanding encompassed within curricula, and for a lifelong curriculum to be realised and accepted as the collective responsibility of organisations and individuals within and beyond existing formal education structures (Penney & Jess, 2004).

2.4 DECLINING PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

Although there is no available census on primary school sport participation, data generated by The New Zealand Secondary Schools Sports Council (NZSSSC) points to a worrying trend over the past decade of declining levels of involvement in *secondary* school sport amongst young people in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to changing patterns of participation (New Zealand Secondary School Sports Council, 2010). The declining rates of participation became a Government concern leading to the implementation of *Kiwisport* in 2010. This fund was implemented to provide enhanced access and opportunities to sport for school-aged children in Aotearoa New Zealand. Between 2010–2014, \$82 million dollars has been budgeted for sport for school-aged children. For primary schools a direct allocation of \$13 per student (\$6 million) per year is supplemented by indirect funding that has been allocated through 17 Regional Sports Trust (RSTs) to promote and establish partnerships between community groups, schools, clubs and other sporting providers. It can be assumed that such a financial investment will need to demonstrate recognisable gains either through the expressed objectives or the operational systems that have been established to achieve workable ends.

This initiative has arrived on the education landscape without notice or conventional Government documentation. However, because it is a state initiative with a significant budget, there has been some monitoring and review of the implementation and reception of *Kiwisport*. The recently published *Kiwisport in Schools* report (Education Review Office, 2010) highlighted that schools welcomed increased autonomy in relation to funding decisions and thus, local provision. It is, however, too soon to gauge the sustained impact of this initiative on provision and participation.

2.5 TEACHER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Internationally teacher education for pre-service generalist teachers is identified as inadequate (Iisahunter, 2006). This issue is recognised and detailed by The International Council of Sport Sciences and Physical Education (ICSSPE).

Too often physical education teachers in primary or elementary schools are untrained for the subject and some conduct physical education lessons as unsupervised play. Physical education is taught by the classroom teacher who usually has had little or no training in physical education. (ICSSPE, 1999, p. 119)

This issue of training has been further exacerbated throughout Aotearoa New Zealand with repeated cuts in time allocated to HPE in primary school ITE programmes (Petrie, 2008). Petrie and Iisahunter (2011) recently highlighted that “primary teachers face a daunting task of effectively navigating, comprehending, negotiating and translating into practice a curriculum for PE amidst this complex, shifting and ambiguous set of policies and initiatives” (p. 232). Amidst this situation, the enactment of the NZC by teachers appears to have had minimal effect on what actually takes place in many New Zealand schools (Petrie, 2008, 2009).

Teachers often work under severe time constraints and an already crowded curriculum (Morgan & Hansen, 2007). For primary teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand this equates to delivering all eight learning areas of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. And while there is widespread acknowledgement that such a task cannot be fully completed without sufficient support, teacher access to professional development and support appears meagre. The historical and contemporary reality is that teachers have received little support and leadership to implement new curriculums or indeed to clarify what is meant by the term physical education (Culpan, 1997). An understandable response has been to look beyond the school for support, leadership and investment for physical education.

The subscription to external services and resources by schools is an international trend (Williams, Hay, & Macdonald, 2011), with the propensity of schools adopting the practice of outsourcing aspects of curriculum and/or co-curricular provision, escalating in recent years (Kirk, 2010). Amidst increasing community and commercial influence within schools, concerns expressed by physical education commentators and researchers centre on the disruption that outsourcing such practices can have on both teacher development and student learning (Williams, Hay, & Macdonald, 2011). Many of the resources and programmes delivered by outside organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand have been identified as often simplistic and not necessarily well aligned with the intent of the curriculum

(Burrows & Wright, 2004, 2007; Petrie, 2008; Petrie, Jones, & McKim, 2007). As Kirk (2010) infers, the presence of these programmes and organisations can have a significant influence on the construction of physical education. The presence of programmes such as Jump Jam, Project Energise, Kelly Sports and The Millennium Institute programmes (among others) thus needs to be acknowledged as effectively redefining the nature and meaning of physical education in many schools.

In parallel with these developments there has been an increase in parental support from 25% in 1999 to 40% in 2007 (Wylie, 2007), but an appreciation that the much-needed support for teachers is offset by the role that many of those parents will assume in those settings. The nature of support offered to schools can be restricted by parents' level of knowledge and or experience (Abrams, 2002). It is thus essential that parents are supported to promote physical education and sport as a learning opportunity for their children, learned at their pace, and by their means.

2.6 CONCLUSION: THE STATE OF PLAY

Internationally, research evidence indicates that well focused, well resourced programmes of physical education and sport in schools that are delivered by effective and well supported staff, can achieve a great deal in relation to young people's current and future lives (Bailey, 2006; Bailey et al., 2009; Penney, 2010). The intended and claimed benefits of provision encompass personal and social development; the development of skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin participation and performance in physical activity and sport; encouraging and enabling young people to pursue healthy lifestyles, and engaging them in learning. Yet as Penney (2011, p. 273) has emphasised, "we know all too little about both 'the who' and 'the how' of PESS amidst contemporary policy developments and the new structures and networks of providers that they have generated."

Research is currently lacking that provides a clear picture of (i) what opportunities are being provided, for whom, across diverse school and social contexts; (ii) what factors are enabling or constraining current provision; and (iii) ways in which provision can be enhanced to move towards a situation of *all* young New Zealanders having the opportunities that will inspire and enable them to continue participation at many and varied levels and in diverse sport and recreation contexts. This project acknowledged and sought to address this critical gap in current research knowledge in Aotearoa New Zealand and in so doing, takes on board key findings from international research. It also endeavoured to respond to previous work highlighting the need for research informed development of physical education, physical activity and sport in schools (Gillespie, 2004). This is a situation that is recognised by professionals in both arenas as meaning that the potential in terms of what can be achieved in and through physical education and sport in schools, is currently not being realised.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This project adopted a qualitative-interpretive approach and multiple case study design. The scope of the project, in terms of the number and geographical spread of case study schools, and the extent of data collection, reflected that the project was intended as small-scale and was confined to a short time-frame. The intention was that the project would provide an initial and necessarily cautionary commentary on important issues pertaining to the provision of physical education and sport in primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand.

3.1 SCHOOL SELECTION

The project utilised a purposefully selected sample of schools in three regional case study locations: Auckland, Waikato and Taranaki; selected to provide demographic contrasts. In each regional location the intention was to recruit two primary schools that would feature further demographic and institutional contrasts pertinent to provision of physical education, sport and recreation (total case study schools = 6). Selection of schools in each location was informed in the first instance by consultation with a project reference group comprising local and national stakeholders. Principals of schools identified through this consultation were telephoned and subsequently e-mailed to outline the research and seek willingness to participate. In the main, principals approached were receptive to involvement in the project. Confirmation of participation was gained during June 2011 for all schools. In accordance with ethics approval¹, no schools are named in project reporting. Characteristics of participating schools are outlined in the methodology overview presented in Table 1 below. Details are necessarily limited in order to retain anonymity.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

For each school the research utilised:

- i Documentary data gathered directly from schools and via Internet sources.
- ii Semi-structured individual interviews with senior management staff and teachers.
- iii Focus-group interviews with Year 6 students. Year 6 students were selected to enable both reflective and forward-looking perspectives to be explored, with the focus group interviews therefore addressing experiences of physical education and sport during their primary schooling to date, and students' views about future provision within and beyond the school.

Data collection was undertaken in three stages. Initially background information relating to the school population, school curriculum, student achievement, co-curricular activities and staffing was sourced from the internet. Principals and lead teachers were also asked to provide background information on provision of physical education and sport in the school if possible. Documentary data collected from the Internet and directly from schools was catalogued by school and is summarised in Table 1 below.

A single day fieldwork visit for interviews and focus groups was then conducted in each school, towards the end of Term 2 in the 2011 school year. This timing was set at the request of Sport New Zealand in order to avoid data collection coinciding with the Rugby World Cup. This request recognised the potential for curriculum provision to be influenced by the Rugby World Cup and a desire for the study to capture as 'typical' a situation as possible in the participating schools. Following initial telephone and e-mail correspondence with school principals, formal project information was sent to both principals and the lead teacher for the proposed fieldwork visit, together with consent forms for all participants. Schools were asked to indicate preferred dates for visits during the two designated fieldwork weeks (27 June–8 July inclusive). Two researchers were present at all school visits and both made field notes from the visits. All focus group interviews and all individual interviews were audio-recorded.

¹ Approval was attained through the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.

Additional individual interviews were also undertaken to gain a range of stakeholder perspectives on the issues being addressed in the research. These were scheduled during August and September 2011, to build upon the data collection in schools. Members of the project reference group were approached for suggested interviewees for the stakeholder interviews and some members were also asked to participate directly as interviewees. Leads arising from the fieldwork visits to schools were also pursued in seeking participants for this aspect of the project. Sampling and recruitment thus reflected a 'snowball' approach, with each contact being regarded as potentially opening up further leads. The 18 interviews conducted included representatives from each of the three project regions and encompassed the following stakeholders: primary school principal (other than case study schools), Regional Sports Trust representatives, Physical Education New Zealand, New Zealand Secondary School Sports Council, a number of external providers operating in primary physical education curriculum and/or co-curricular sport contexts, parent, and a secondary school head of physical education who was also a *Kiwisport* project leader. All stakeholder interviews were audio-recorded.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Partial transcription was undertaken with interview data gathered from schools and stakeholders. Partial transcription is a process designed to facilitate reporting, by enabling researchers to note key points and selectively record exact quotations, rather than produce full verbatim transcripts of interviews. The research questions established for the project were the point of reference throughout partial transcription. Transcribed interview data, field notes and documents were content analysed for individual threads that were in turn clustered into themes that were evident in multiple data sources. Qualitative data analysis software was used to support thematic analysis focusing on the research questions. Each theme was compared back to the original questions that drove this project. This process was undertaken in three stages: (i) at a school level; (ii) at a regional level and (iii) across the three regional case studies, and enacted collaboratively between research team members to allow meta-findings to be established. Validation of analysis and checking of accuracy of content was sought from all participating schools and teachers, via the Principal.

Table 1: Overview of project methodology

	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C	SCHOOL D	SCHOOL E	SCHOOL F
Location	Waikato	Waikato	Taranaki	Taranaki	Auckland	Auckland
School information	Years 1-6; 450+ students, co-ed, urban, decile: High	Years 1-8; 150+ students, co-ed, rural, decile: Med.	Years 1-8; 150+ students, co-ed, small town, decile : Low	Years 1-8; 100+ students, co- ed, rural and city intake, decile: High	Year levels 1-8; 150+ students, co-ed, rural, decile: High.	Year levels 1-8; 450+ students, co-ed, urban, decile: High.
Documents analysed	Education Review Office Report School website School Charter and Policy Document HPE planning and programming documents	Education Review Office Report School website School Charter and Policy Document	Education Review Office Report School website HPE planning and programming documents	Education Review Office Report School website Draft School Strategic Plan HPE planning and programming documents Cluster sports programme	Education Review Office Report School website Written overview re PE and sport provided by Principal	Education Review Office Report x 2 School website Principal blog
Staff interviewed	Principal Staff Focus Group involving Dep Principal, HPE coordinator, 3 classroom teachers	Acting Principal (ordinarily Dep. Principal) Lead teacher for HPE	Principal Teacher/Curriculum writer for HPE Teacher/Sports coordinator	Principal Coordinating Teacher HPE/Sport	Principal Deputy Principal Lead teacher for PE School Sport Coordinator	Principal PE specialist teacher Parent / volunteer coach
Student focus groups	Two focus groups Year 6 girls (n = 7) Year 6 boys (n= 4)	Two focus groups -Year 6 girls (n = 5) -Year 6 boys (n= 5)	Two focus groups Year 6 girls (n = 5) Year 6 boys (n= 3)	Two focus groups Year 6 girls (n = 6) Year 6 boys (n= 7)	Two focus groups Year 6 girls (n = 9) Year 6 boys (n= 6)	Two focus groups Year 6 girls (n = 7) Year 6 boys (n= 5)
Regional stakeholders	Regional Sports Trust Staff Kiwisport (n=3) Private Provider 1 (n=2) Private Provider 2 (n=1) Parent/Commercial provider (n=1) Parent / Teacher Educator (n=1) Primary Principal (n=1)		National Association rep based in region (n=1) Regional Sports Trust (n=1) Primary Principal / Kiwisport Committee (n=1) Private Provider 2 (n=1)		Community Sports Trust Staff Kiwisport (n=3) Secondary HPE teacher/ Kiwisport project leader (n=1)	
	National Association Rep not specifically linked to any of the regions (n=1)					

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings of the research are reported in relation to each of the four focus issues addressed in the study, namely (1) Types and Patterns of Provision; (2) Who is being provided for? (3) Key Factors Influencing Provision; and (4) Ways of Enhancing Provision.

4.1 TYPES AND PATTERNS OF PROVISION WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

The schools incorporated in this study generated a varied picture of physical education and school sport in primary schools. The multiple factors variously impacting provision and thus, giving rise to the variation, are considered in section 4.3 below.

In considering types of provision it is critical to firstly acknowledge that there was a pronounced and consistent blurring of meanings in relation to ‘physical education and sport’ in schools. The various terminology (‘sport’, ‘physical education’, ‘Health and Physical Education’, ‘physical activity’ and ‘fitness’) being substituted, exchanged or united by Principals, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders reflected that there is a notable absence of clarity about what physical education means and how it relates to the HPE learning area, physical activity, and sport.

4.1.1 Curriculum Provision

Reporting findings relating to curriculum provision within schools needs to recognise that physical education is identified as a subject area within the learning area of Health and Physical Education (HPE) in the NZC (MoE, 2007). The learning area is characterised by breadth of content and a holistic orientation towards health and wellbeing. In this research the extent to which this breadth and orientation was reflected in programmes of physical education, was limited. Rather, physical education in the curriculum typically comprised seasonally oriented units of work and a multi-activity model of physical education curriculum, aligned with historical patterns of provision. Many units of work are sport based, centre on skill related activities, and/or sport-specific game experiences. Provision within the curriculum typically relates to patterns of co-curricular provision within schools and inter-school sport programmes of competitions and events, which in turn reflect traditional seasonal sport beyond schools. Primarily, activities and sport, rather than the HPE learning area as articulated in the NZC thus appeared to be the dominant frame for curriculum provision in relation to both programme content and pedagogy. As we discuss later in this report (Section 6), the situation is far from new and nor is it unique to Aotearoa New Zealand.

While the multi-activity programme model was thus prominent, the study provided some evidence of ‘alternative’ models of curriculum provision (including aspects of Teaching Games for Understanding and the Sport Education model) for physical education being reflected in programme content and/or pedagogy.

Curriculum provision in several schools also encompassed ‘fitness time or activities’ that were timetabled in addition to, and distinct from physical education lessons. The activities reported in relation to this aspect of provision were varied and also aligned with seasonal co-curricular sport foci. Thus, at the time of the study, running activities were being provided and related to preparation for participation in cross-country competitions within and/or between schools. Creative approaches to fitness activities to enhance cross-curricular links and create added meaning for children were reflected in challenge activities linked to localities identifiable for students. For example, students in one school were participating in a running challenge that required them to log the distance that they ran each day and relate this to a journey to a distant coastal (holiday) location.

In addition to regular timetabled fitness time, some time for physical activity was reported as being provided in curriculum time as a short break from classroom based activities.

4.1.2 Co-curricular provision

Co-curricular provision in the schools visited typically comprised (i) opportunities for student-led informal play/physical activity at lunch and recess times; (ii) selection-based opportunities to participate in competitive school sport and associated practices/training; (iii) occasional days for all students within a year group or syndicate to participate in particular sports; and (iv) occasional activities such as field-trips or visits to local sporting facilities.

The ‘informal’ component to co-curricular activities is a significant aspect of provision of opportunities for students to participate in physical activity and sport related activities at school. Activities at break and lunchtimes overwhelmingly reflect children’s creativity in creating and adapting games and rules, and their ability to collectively negotiate these to enhance their own enjoyment of the activity. This type of provision typically involves a passive staff presence. Students are often given autonomy to choose and conduct games and sports, and as discussed below, they valued and enjoyed this.

To facilitate activity at recess and lunchtimes there was widespread availability of equipment, often supervised and dispersed by students. Activity opportunities vary according to the spaces available at schools and are subject to the influence of the weather.

Co-curricular provision of organised sport opportunities was shown to be strongly influenced by seasonal patterns of sport beyond schools, and oriented to interschool competition often based on cluster, zone and in some cases, a regional or ‘champion of champions’ tier. As each ‘major’ sport appears on the calendar it will receive due attention within each school and at a cross-school level. Hence each school will hold their own athletics or cross-country events. The sports codes are mostly traditional and feature athletics, swimming, cross country and several mainstream team sports. The project revealed that while some schools have attempted to explore less traditional sports and competition formats, there is a strong historical influence and, in some schools, parental /community pressure felt to maintain the status quo in relation to the activities that are offered as a co-curricular sport programme.

Provision relating to many of the sports encompassed in co-curricular programmes centres on one-off tournaments or events that are restricted to one team per school due to the size of school clusters or zones, or because resourcing for greater numbers of participants is problematic. Thus, the organised competitive sport component of co-curricular programmes is overwhelmingly selective, providing opportunities for sometimes, relatively few students. Schools are aware that in many instances competitive/selective nature of co-curricular sport will provide limited participation opportunities for students who are not the most physically able in the sports offered. In some instances, schools are responding by developing more inclusive selection and/or competition formats. As discussed below, some tensions are evident amidst these endeavours and efforts to provide opportunities for more students are also inevitably limited by human and physical resources available.

‘Syndicate days’ or similar events that involve all students within particular year groups were also reported as providing occasional opportunities for all students to participate in a particular sport or a selection of sport activities on a given day.

Several schools had also utilised lunchtimes and after-school periods to host ‘taster sessions’ run by community or private providers. These sessions were often resourced by the Government *Kiwisport* fund, although in one region a user-pay operation offered activities to students. Irrespective of the funding source, this type of provision was portrayed as open to all students who wish to participate, within the limits of space and equipment available.

The final element of co-curricular provision identified was occasional activities such as field-trips or visits to local sporting facilities. These were whole school, syndicate or year-group based and were one-off events in the schools year, such as a full-day tramping excursion in a local reserve.

4.1.3 Outside of school provision

The study pointed to wide-ranging and varied smorgasbord of physical activity and sporting opportunities being available to students outside of school, with location playing a major part in determining the types of activities available. There was a quite distinct contrast between rural and urban case studies in the type and range of out of school activities reported. In urban settings structured sports or recreation were the main focus of students' participation outside of school, with an extensive range of sporting activities identified by students, teachers and stakeholders as existing in the community. While some of the rural contexts were also characterised by clear strength in community sport provision, the rural students also identified strongly with lifestyle oriented activities and informal patterns of participation, with friends, siblings or other family members. Horse-riding, swimming at beaches or rivers, kayaking and bike riding were prominent choices. Many students participated in club sports, dominated by rugby, soccer, cricket and netball. There was also widespread interest in martial arts.

In some instances provision of sport outside of school represented direct collaboration between the school and community. Examples included netball and soccer clubs that were located at the school site but run by the community. Such clubs were reported as very popular with students and parents.

More frequently, activities outside of school were distinct from school provision, with awareness amongst teachers of various opportunities available locally, but no direct links between school and community based provision.

4.2 WHICH STUDENTS IS PROVISION DIRECT TOWARDS, AND WHO DOES PROVISION APPEAL TO?

4.2.1 Curriculum physical education

Because physical education is a compulsory subject within the NZC, all students participate in timetabled classes. Timetabled provision of physical education clearly does not necessarily equate to quality experiences for all students. This research drew attention to multiple factors impacting provision (see below) and highlighted teachers' varied, and often limited confidence and competence in relation to teaching physical education. While recognising limits in their personal expertise and/or the contexts in which they are working, teachers are striving to do their best to provide enjoyable learning experiences for all children through curriculum physical education programmes.

A consistently strong message coming through in this research was that primary age children value and generally enjoy physical education lessons. The majority of students interviewed were positive and enthusiastic about 'PE'. They associated physical education with a chance to be active, improve their skills in sports, participate in a variety of games and sports with their peers, and improve their fitness.

Some students also recognised instances in which they found physical education lessons boring. This related primarily to a perceived lack of variety in activities or experiences.

Principals and teachers also acknowledged that there are some children who are less enthusiastic about the subject. There was an accompanying recognition that achieving engagement amongst all students in physical education and/or sport in schools is pedagogically challenging.

4.2.2 Co-curricular provision

As indicated above, school break and lunchtimes are valued by students as a chance to be active and all efforts directed towards enabling and resourcing this appeared to be endorsed by students. They appreciate opportunities that they are given to be creative in designing and organising their own games, and to select and drive sport options. Their main request is for activities to be well resourced and for school rules to enable them the freedom to utilise school grounds for activity. The only role required of adults is to ensure such activities were accessible, safe and sanctioned.

Organised sport provision beyond the curriculum in the main relates to competitive and often exclusive sport structures that inherently limit which children will enjoy the further participation opportunities that co-curricular sport can provide. Existing co-curricular sport structures within primary schools and across cluster groups of schools are generally not designed for mass participation and cannot cope with high levels of demand for participation opportunities. As a consequence, sport is understood by many students to be discriminatory, and something that you can only participate further in if you are 'good enough'.

As indicated above, schools have developed some inclusive alternative initiatives to enable and promote extended learning and participation opportunities for all students. Syndicate sports, whole school sport days and single code days have been implemented within many schools with the support and endorsement of parents and many students. Some external stakeholders have also played an active role in developing such events. The growth in 'taster sessions' open to all students was welcomed by staff and reported as being popular with students.

4.2.3 Out of school provision

Provision of sporting opportunities for young people in communities was reported as wide-ranging in many instances. Further research focused specifically on community-based provision is needed to give clearer insight into which young people, in terms of gender, age, ability, ethnicity and social class, this provision is attracting to sport, or in contrast, excluding.

Data from this research pointed towards provision reaffirming gendered patterns of participation in traditional sports, but as also enabling diversification in participation through other activities such as martial arts. It was also very evident that uptake is heavily dependent upon family circumstances with for example, a need for transport precluding some students from participating in activities that hold appeal for them. The resources that parents can provide will often limit or determine what students can or cannot do. Membership to sports clubs will often require a significant financial outlay along with a sustained time commitment, thereby restricting the options that students can select.

In rural contexts particularly, it was clear that the natural environment is valued and recognised as an important resource, enabling varied opportunities for activity and enjoyment with friends and family. Students appeared resourceful in creating their own fun through activities within the possibilities and constraints of their local settings.

4.3 KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING PROVISION

4.3.1 Curriculum physical education

The ways in which many students, teachers and principals talk about physical education and sport in schools often reflects a *substitution* model (see Pope, 2011), with the terms interchanged and distinctions blurred. Sport, and more specifically, established models and structures associated with competitive elite sport, has a pronounced influence on curriculum physical education in primary schools. To a great extent it appears that external sport structures frame co-curricular sport in schools, which in turn drives the design and content of curriculum provision.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the persistence of sport-based, seasonally oriented curriculum programmes in physical education is neither new nor unique to Aotearoa New Zealand. The factors contributing to this situation are multiple and inter-related. This research indicated that

- Teachers' (and principals') current knowledge and understandings of physical education are invariably limited and centre on the substitution model. Limited knowledge and understandings were acknowledged as framing current programmes and pedagogy. This was in turn associated with inadequacies in both initial teacher education and professional development opportunities for teachers. As discussed below, there was widespread concern that knowledge of content and of pedagogy is deficient in physical education in many school settings.

- Amidst situations of limited teaching expertise within schools, the availability of external expertise and input has a significant influence on programme content. External input is recognised as enabling enhanced breadth of provision in relation to the activities incorporated in curriculum physical education. This input appears to largely reaffirm the substitution model.
- Investment in time and/or professional development to develop physical education curriculum programmes and/or extend pedagogical knowledge and skills in physical education is currently not a priority for most schools. Pressures are evident to focus instead on literacy, numeracy and National Standards.
- In individual schools physical education curriculum programmes remain strongly framed by the physical resources (facilities and equipment) available. The range and quality of facilities and equipment varies significantly. Poor condition (such as drainage problems on fields) and the influence of weather can render facilities useless for physical education. External support is acknowledged as invaluable in extending the equipment available to schools. Again, this typically aligns with the substitution model.

More broadly, other key influences on curriculum provision were highlighted:

- Leadership. Principals and other members of school leadership teams are key in determining the status, focus and resourcing of curriculum physical education. Various, senior management support and leadership will limit or extend possibilities for developing curriculum programmes in any individual school.
- Curriculum time for physical is often compromised in the light of other curriculum areas or aspects of school life taking priority. The time allocation to physical education in the curriculum represents a fundamental limitation in relation to the learning opportunities that can be provided and the outcomes that can be achieved. Frequency as well as duration of lessons are recognised as both influential in this regard.
- Bad weather often meant students were precluded from physical education because no suitable indoor facility was available or the school grounds were unusable. In the absence of a designated indoor space, bad weather can thus mean that physical education lessons are cancelled. Access to nearby community hall facilities can help to alleviate the impact of weather on physical education classes, although the ways in which such facilities can be utilised may be limited (due for example, to an absence of line markings or location of the community facility).

4.3.2 Co-curricular programmes

As indicated above, co-curricular provision in the schools visited typically comprised (i) opportunities for student-led informal play/physical activity at lunch and recess times; (ii) selection-based opportunities to participate in competitive school sport and associated practices/training; (iii) occasional days for all students within a year group or syndicate to participate in particular sports; and (iv) occasional activities such as field-trips or visits to local sporting facilities.

An over-riding influence on activity at break and lunch-times is the imagination and resourcefulness of children to create and manage their own games. This capacity and enthusiasm was very evident in focus group discussions. The scope for students to create activity opportunities for themselves is influenced by grounds, equipment available and weather. Both teachers and students talked of equipment being lost, with arrangements for use and action taken in instances of non-return of equipment varying across schools. Students recognise that continued provision relied upon equipment being returned and accepted procedures to enable them access to equipment for self-organised games.

As discussed above, external and historical models of competitive sport provision, that are seasonal and selective, frame much of the organised sport provision. The specific activities offered and the numbers of children that the activity is made available to reflect the seasonal nature of the programme, and combined influence of specific staff expertise and/or availability of external support (primarily from regional Sport Trusts and often resourced via the *Kiwisport* funding initiative, or support from

parents), facilities and equipment available. Inevitably, therefore, the nature and range of activities offered by any individual school will vary.

Choice and participation is, from a student perspective, limited by the activities provided and then, invariably, by selection based upon ability. The overarching orientation towards competition for a limited number of students is thus highly influential in shaping provision and determining participation opportunities.

External support, from either agencies or parents, is important in enabling diversification or expansion of offerings. Sustaining provision and/or extending it to enable opportunities for greater numbers of children (and all abilities) is, however, reliant upon ongoing support and resourcing. Sufficient parent support was repeatedly highlighted as difficult for schools to secure. Attention was also drawn to an absence of club personnel in schools, often because club coaches and representatives are not available in school hours.

Locality and the facilities within easy reach of schools influence the nature of occasional activities offered by any school. Provision of occasional days of activity for year groups or syndicates, or for field-trips or visits to particular facilities, is then reliant upon allocation of time and the availability and willingness of staff to organise activities. Older students assigned to leadership roles can also facilitate activities for younger year groups.

4.3.3 Out of school provision

Situation has a fundamental bearing upon the out of school provision in any particular locality. Teachers and others stakeholders drew attention to the strength of local club and community structures and diversity of activities that were available beyond schools. This provision was acknowledged as reliant upon the commitment of volunteers, whose capacity to make direct links with schools is limited. Out of school provision for primary aged children thus appeared to be framed by established local club/community structures that are in the main, distinct from school structures. In some instances, provision reflected an element of collaboration between school and community, with for example, the school established as the venue for a community-run soccer or netball club for students. Where these links had been established, clubs based at schools appeared to be thriving.

As indicated above, the natural environment also constitutes a significant resource for participation in physical activity, particularly in rural settings.

4.4 WAYS IN WHICH PROVISION CAN BE ENHANCED

4.4.1 Curriculum physical education

From a student perspective enhancing provision equates to increasing the number, quality and range of opportunities that are provided both within and beyond curriculum physical education. A challenge for schools is to provide experiences that will connect with diverse activity preferences and varied abilities amongst primary age children, and align with their desire for activities that are characterised by fun. Meeting this challenge will require investment to extend teachers' knowledge of physical education curriculum models and pedagogy.

Principals, teachers and stakeholders all consistently highlighted the need to support teachers to advance their content knowledge, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical knowledge relevant to physical education. Stakeholders were quick to point out that this cannot happen overnight (or via one-off provision of sessions) but rather, that there must be a sustained and incremental professional development process, that enables teachers to work alongside more experienced individuals to gain knowledge, skills and confidence. Above all, models of professional learning need to be sustainable and accessible.

Stakeholders recognise that enhancing current initial teacher education for physical education teachers is critical for sustained long-term improvement in curriculum and co-curricular provision. The calls were for more time to be allocated to physical education within teacher education courses, greater

breadth and depth of content within courses, and for training courses to specifically prepare teachers to also confidently take lead roles in co-curricular provision.

School leaders and teachers acknowledge that collaboration between teachers within a primary school can assist in building capacity and confidence amongst staff around teaching physical education, and shared knowledge and understanding of the physical education curriculum. This is in contrast to a situation in which knowledge of, and responsibility for curriculum physical education rests with only one teacher, or where teachers take turns to deliver fitness sessions while colleagues attend to other work. The consensus among many school leaders was that physical education required a 'strength in numbers' approach across the whole school.

The need for physical education to be a whole school priority in order to secure time and resources to facilitate quality provision in schools was also widely recognised. The many issues and concerns that pertain to provision of physical education in primary schools are recognised by principals. While their intentions regarding physical education are genuine, they are placed under considerable pressure to prioritise other areas of the curriculum, and particularly, focus attention on National Standards in literacy and numeracy.

In addition to human factors such as teacher knowledge, as reported in section 4.3, physical resources (time, facilities and equipment) and weather impact upon provision of curriculum physical education. Having a quality indoor space enables provision to be assured irrespective of weather. Addressing the condition, suitability for purpose and maintenance of facilities are important considerations for enhancing provision and ensuring that it is sustainable.

4.4.2 Co-curricular programmes

Co-curricular programmes have a central role to play in relation to links and pathways for all children to extend their learning and participation in physical education and sport. There is a pressing need for principals and teachers to explore and implement alternative models for co-curricular provision sport in primary schools that emphasise developmentally appropriate and inclusive sport opportunities that focus on fun, variety, and participation with friends. Examples of programmes of provision that contrast to traditional, competitive sport-based, selective models, need to be shared across schools to help build professional knowledge and extend professional communities.

Coordination, leadership and greater sharing of knowledge and resources across networks (including between secondary and primary schools) was recognised as an important strategy for enhanced provision. Several stakeholders cited networking models and initiatives developed overseas (particularly in the UK) as worthy of attention in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Pedagogy is also an important issue in relation to co-curricular and external sport provision. Students' interest in and enthusiasm for sport as something that can provide fun, has not always been realised or captured by adults. The organisation and pedagogy of practices, sessions and games needs to acknowledge this as the key ingredient for young people.

4.4.3 Outside of school provision

Many of the issues mentioned in relation to co-curricular provision are also pertinent to consider in looking at provision outside of schools. While in many instances teachers, principals and other stakeholders pointed to the existence of a wide range of community and club-based provision, they also recognised the scope for links between the school and junior sport sector to be enhanced, such that opportunities are coordinated and aligned from the young person's perspective. As indicated above, this will require investment in coordination and network development, and a focus on developmentally appropriate and inclusive programmes and pedagogy. Investment to enable representatives of club and community sport (who are typically volunteers who also hold full time jobs) the time to work directly with schools, was seen as necessary to address current communication / coordination difficulties.

Findings from this research also highlighted that young people's 'choices' in relation to participation in sport and physical activities outside of schools are often determined by costs and the availability of

transport. Many primary aged children are clearly reliant on parents or another adult to facilitate access to opportunities provided in the community. Issues of travel and ease of access with minimal cost thus needs to be at the fore of thinking about enhancement in club/community based sport and recreation for primary age children.

Table 2: TYPES of provision for primary aged children within and beyond the curriculum

Key Insight	Comments from participants	Stakeholder
<p>Typically, external, adult sport structures, models and values frame provision of physical education and sport for primary children.</p>	<p>I believe it's right through with the parents and the ones coaching other kids, they have way too high expectations. You know, they're only ranging from like 9 to 10 years old to 12 to 13 and they're really there, because ... most of them just want to do it because they're mates are doing it and they want to enjoy it. You know, it's a fun thing it just happens to be there. If it's run well and it's ... every one's laughing and having fun you get, you know they want to turn up again. As parents you tend to lose the sight of that and you tend to put way too high expectations on the kids to perform and I think that's an issue that really needs to be addressed.</p> <p>... depending on the time of year obviously you're wanting to promote certain activities just before that season starts so if they're interested in cricket, we'll have the cricket people coming in and then some of them might think ohhh, this game's quite cool, I'll join the cricket team this year...</p> <p>[For this Principal results in inter-school sport were a key measure of the success of physical education]: I think the fact that kids win so much is testament to the way that the programme operates.</p>	<p>Parent/Coach F</p> <p>Principal D</p> <p>Principal F</p>
<p>Curriculum programmes are generally seasonally oriented and reflect a multi-activity model of physical education curriculum and historical patterns of provision.</p>	<p>In the first term we have, we take the class, the classes all the children from Year 4 up go to the swimming pool, the local swimming pool, we bus them down because we don't have a pool and they get approximately 10, 12 afternoon sessions", with the children grouped by ability. "Second term I do small balls, and I actually start that at the end of Term 1 depending on when the season sort of breaks from swimming. Third term it will be large balls ...also cross country, cross country training and cross country and again that goes to [cluster name] group, the zone and the [regional] champion of champions and the same with athletics.</p> <p>[We do] swimming so that's the main focus for term one or fitness, if you can get out on Thursday afternoons. Term 2... is your ball skills rotating round between large and small. Third terms definitely cross country season so normally we're focussing on that ... we do the beep tests and actually do more, you know, proper training for it when we monitor heart rates and we graph it all and ... lots of different styles of running to sprinting to actually your endurance and bits and pieces and then fourth term is very athletics based. That's been quite restrictive because of the equipment we've got...</p> <p>... what I generally do is have my year plan and I base it around types of games. So we do invasion games, striking games, net-wall games and ... target, yep. First, fourth term's more athletics so it's kind of track and field sort of stuff so we don't ... it's kind of a bit different. So that's what I base it around, so they're learning the skill for that.... They do fitness based around what I'm doing so at the moment they're all doing cross country running because cross country's coming up. Which is why they're all saying they hate it because it's like, they're probably sick to death of it! And then next term they'll do jump jam....</p> <p>In Term 1 we'll have the swimming pool going ... then ... soccer season ... large ball skills sort of goes into there and then with our cluster we've got ourselves, [names other schools] as the cluster schools and so we have a gymnastics sort of competition at the end of Term 2 so ... we go large ball skills and then we move into gymnastics ... then we've got the cross country which is held...with that cluster of schools as well ... then in Term 4 we move into athletics....</p>	<p>Year 6 teacher E</p> <p>Teacher Coordinator C</p> <p>Specialist PE Teacher F</p> <p>Coordinating Teacher D</p>

	<p>Large ball skills, basketball, soccer, gymnastics using vaults and trampolines ... skipping, jump rope for heart ... play soccer games using ball skills learnt ... we play two games that our teacher knows and they are called rocket and jail that teachers taught us ... badminton with an outside man that comes in for 6 weeks ½ hour once a week ... patter tennis, skipping ... athletics, swimming in the summer ... sometimes going for a run around the field for a couple of laps.</p>	Year 6 girls D
<p>Opportunities for student-led informal play/physical activity at lunch and recess times are an important aspect of provision.</p>	<p>Sometimes we play a made-up game like mushroom, I'm not exactly sure why we called it mushroom ... a game like zombie, actually its nothing like zombie, you run around and grab onto people for five secs and then they are the mushroom and then they run around and grab people.</p> <p>... we put out the equipment, just like we've got two or three big trolleys of sports equipment and we don't worry about issuing that sort of stuff because it just wastes too much time...if it's not bought back then it get's locked away for another day. Lose or use it sort of thing ... that's sort of us teaching them to look after our stuff as well.</p> <p>We make different handball games ... not many people do soccer-tennis, which is when you got to kick it in a handball square ... sometimes we can play 6 square.</p> <p>Normally play poison or 4 square ... netball or handball with my friends.... Like practice shooting and passing and running around to get the ball.... Handball, sometimes, 4 Square and poison, like being king and in top square and running around in these games...</p> <p>Ambassadors organise games for example duck, duck, goose for the juniors or only soccer for the seniors</p>	<p>Year 6 boy E</p> <p>Specialist PE teacher F</p> <p>Year 6 boys F</p> <p>Year 6 girls C</p> <p>Year 6 girls D</p>
<p>Competitive, selective, inter-school sport is a major focus of co-curricular provision</p>	<p>[We] play against other schools in soccer, basketball, netball, cricket, large ball skills, gymnastics, athletics, hockey and touch last year....</p> <p>Next term is the junior fun run so that's called fun, the other's called cross-country. So it's stepping up from full participation to doing the best that I can be, to being the elite group who go to interschool....</p> <p>... there's interschool running, interschool T-ball, interschool swimming. There's interschool rugby competitions and we'd take rugby and netball....</p>	<p>Year 6 boys D</p> <p>Teacher A</p> <p>Teacher A</p>
<p>Intra-school sport and taster sessions or events are directed towards extending provision and widening participation.</p>	<p>...we'll just sometimes do a sport afternoon and we'll do a rotation so there's four games and we mix all of them into four teams, or eight teams, whatever, and they just rotate between the teachers...</p> <p>I've organised school triathlons, we had one, that's also a big focus in Term 1, while the pool's open. So we do a school triathlon or biathlon, they're allowed bikes or scooters (laughs) just trying to get everybody involved as well as our own school cross country, school athletics days..</p> <p>We've had tennis tasters come out, regional tennis and all sorts.... It was absolute chaos but the kids had a great time, there were balls going everywhere but at least they were willing to give it a go in the limited space that we had. So a lot of it too, it just who's able to fit in to what we've got because we don't have, you know, the facilities like a lot of the big schools in town do have....</p>	<p>Teacher B</p> <p>Teacher Coordinator C</p> <p>Teacher Coordinator C</p>
<p>Occasional fieldtrips and off-site activities enhance provision.</p>	<p>... once a year go down to the beach to do beach ed for a day learning safety, dangers etc. (as part of PE time).</p>	Year 6 boys D

<p>Outside of school, there are a wide range of opportunities for young people to participate in physical activity and sport. The nature and variety of out-of-school provision varies with locality.</p>	<p>Well at my house we play bat down played at home down the road ... played in someone's tree house and tag ... when dad comes out and plays touch and cricket with us ... playing on the road [they said its safe] ... kicks on the lawn with a rugby ball ... tennis ball tag ... if we have got a hard game in league or touch, mainly touch then dad will come out teach us some skills, at a grassy area at a church, we make our own boundaries and we take the ball around there and play bulrush, league and touch and rugby and 123 home....</p> <p>When we go on holidays we do a lot of swimming.... We go hiking.... We go camping, fishing and walking and stuff ... [we go to] a camp ... super sporty, flying kiwi, zip lines, kayaking, the three wire bridge....</p> <p>... there are quite a few clubs starting up [locally]. I know a lot of our children are involved during wintertime, the soccer, the rugby, the netball although the school does also support netball and basketball during the winter.</p> <p>We are fortunate that in [town name] we have clubs that cater for large numbers- these include soccer and rugby. These are autonomous of the school and we do not have school teams as such. On any given Saturday morning playing fields and the Netball Courts are packed with players and supporters. We also have a number of students involved in hockey, martial arts, motor cross, pony club, BMX, dance and drama, gymnastics, keep fit, guiding and there is bound to be some others. In the summer we have a sizeable group who also participate in swimming (both for [town name] and beyond), surf lifesaving, athletics, cricket, and we have three school touch rugby teams currently.</p>	<p>Year 6 boys C</p> <p>Year 6 boys D</p> <p>Acting Principal B</p> <p>Principal E</p>
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Table 3: WHO current provision is being directed towards and ‘connecting with’

Key Insight	Comments from participants	Stakeholder
<p>Physical education and sport is valued by primary age school children, as a chance to be active, improve their skills in a range of sports, and participate in a wide variety of games and sports with their peers.</p>	<p>I’ve enjoyed learning new games and becoming more active in a new way everyday ... its awesome! I would like to do loads more PE than being stuffed inside a stupid classroom and do work.</p> <p>... having fun instead of stuck in classroom doing work ... it’s a break from work ... learning new ball skills ... learning new games like passing and catching (drills), getting fit like running around ... learning more skills to use on the soccer field and other sports ... helps with football and basketball and netball....</p> <p>... teacher is fun, she makes everything really fun and she teaches really good stuff for us to know and I really like PE its my favourite subject ... the skills that we learn we can use outside of school for a different team.</p> <p>I like it because it’s like good and fun and you’re not like doing writing and stuff and you’re stuck in a classroom where it’s all hot....</p> <p>Mum said I had to do some kind of sport to keep fit and stuff, but I really, really enjoy netball and stuff and I like doing lots of sports cause ... yeah its just fun....</p> <p>... maybe a couple of kids who every week have got a sore ankle or they forgot their uniform. There’s always a couple.... It’s girls. And it’s ethnic based it seems to be ... the ones who don’t, the majority are Indian girls and I wonder whether that’s a cultural thing ... but then we have Indian girls who love it!</p>	<p>Year 6 students A</p> <p>Year 6 students E</p> <p>Year 6 students F</p> <p>Year 6 student B</p> <p>Year 6 girl F</p> <p>Specialist PE Teacher F</p>
<p>The way in which physical education and sport is delivered is critical to maintaining engagement and sustaining participation.</p>	<p>I like the timetable that she uses like going for a run to get warmed up, then the recap which is really helpful to us and then she just teaches us skill by skill and she doesn’t push us like my previous PE teacher, she makes it really fun by using the skills we have just learnt....</p> <p>... when we keep on doing the same thing over and over, it gets boring ... chest passing with competitions ... we do that every time and it gets boring....</p> <p>We get really sad when it’s [physical education] cancelled ... its also annoying when our teacher gives us a speech about PE and only gives us five minutes to play.... When we start talking she just stops and gets angry and she sometimes makes us go for runs...it wastes time.</p> <p>If you do something time after time after time it gets really boring, but if you try something new each time you’re learning something new....</p> <p>I see a lot of time where a team will lose and the coaches just, you know, giving them a hiding and I just think that’s just not what you should be doing. You should be highlighting the good things they’ve done and say ‘let’s just move on we’ll look forward to practice and we’ll work on things that why we lost’. But you’ve got to encourage them you know.</p> <p>... we had streamed during our sports afternoons.... So the top sporty kids go together and the children who are not so competitive or sporty are in, sort of siphoned out of the bottom because they find it very intimidating to be with these really sporty kids and the sporty kids get really fed up with them because they can’t keep up or they wreck the game or you know...and the top group is always the hardest to manage because they’re the ones who are going to argue with the umpire and they’re fiercely competitive.. That idea of streaming for has been something that’s been embedded in the school for many years and it’s sort of came about by the top end kids getting frustrated and the</p>	<p>Year 6 student F</p> <p>Year 6 students E</p> <p>Year 6 students E</p> <p>Year 6 student A</p> <p>Parent / Coach F</p> <p>Teacher A</p>

	bottom end kids getting really upset and worried and anxious and then you've got all these kids in the middle so...	
Competitive/Selective forms of co-curricular sport, including inter-school sport and associated practice or training, often offers extended learning and participation opportunities for only some, rather than all students.	<p>... you can only take as many who are in the team and it often is the same kids definitely. Like for example today, just looking at who I've picked for the Year 5/6 girls team, there's like four girls here who've never represented us before so to me that's really good, four out of seven are new. The one thing I've noticed is as the longer I've been here, the more kids we're getting turn up to trials ... I'm thinking that fact that they're turning up to trials shows me that they've got confidence and that they believe they can do it so that's making me think that it [physical education lessons] must be working.... We had a badminton trial last year, we've never done badminton in our lives, we did it first time last year and we had 60 kids turn up to trial, 60 out of 80 kids turned up to trial.... I was just so stoked that they thought they were good enough that they you know, were going to give it a go. But yeah, it's hard because then you do have to cut it down and then, what I generally do is take two teams, one that I'll take to the tournament and one that I'll use as a training team against them, just so more kids get ... more kids get exposed to it as well.</p> <p>I think they should just say well that next tier down should be given the opportunity to play that.... Like there's different levels of ripper rugby there's touch and basketball and stuff ... I do believe it's a tough call ... but I do believe there's a lot of kids that miss out and don't get the opportunity to participate in sport because you're always putting the number one kids up there all the time.</p> <p>... generally it's the sporty kids who go, so the same kids are in the rugby team, the basketball team, the whatever team ... so there's an awful lot of kids who are not getting to experience competition at any level.</p> <p>... they've started putting limits on the amount of kids playing. So the kids that you want to say, play a game of soccer, you may need to leave some kids behind....</p> <p>... there's conflict, do you go and take the ones that have already played the sport or do you give it to the ones that don't, you know, how competitive are your parents going to be? Are they wanting to get the kids who are really good so to showcase the school or whatnot?</p> <p>... if anybody from external groups do come out, it's always from Year 5 up and there's nothing for the little ones....</p>	<p>Specialist PE teacher F</p> <p>Parent/Coach F</p> <p>Stakeholder (Auckland region)</p> <p>Principal F</p> <p>School Sport Coordinator F</p> <p>Teacher Coordinator C</p>
Students' participation interests and preferences also reflect the locations, communities and situations within which they are growing up.	<p>A lot of our children are very sporty but its very netball or rugby based, you know your stock standard for New Zealand....</p> <p>... heaps of them do martial arts' [teacher] and so 'the karate we've got two lots of ... we've got two lots of karate type activities already offered so we look then at what we do in our community time and also our website links....</p> <p>... my brother likes cricket, and we have a long back yard so I don't play if my dad is not playing as my dad is really good at cricket and fun to play with, cos you can't play cricket if you only have two people to play with.</p> <p>He loves skateboarding surfing, kayaking, biking even just going for walks ... when they live so close to the sea it is important to know how the environment changes with the weather and.... To judge the weather and to know your personal limits ... so they are going to get challenged and they are going to come back and know their limitations as well</p>	<p>Teacher Coordinator C</p> <p>Teacher A</p> <p>Year 6 student A</p> <p>Parent (Waikato region)</p>

Table 4: KEY FACTORS influencing current provision

Key Insight	Comments from participants	Stakeholder
<p>Sport beyond schools underpins and shapes curriculum and co-curricular provision.</p>	<p>... because next term's quite short and because of the rugby and all that kind of thing, our big thing is region's cross country champs are on next term and they have not moved their date to juggle around the rugby and so the term's very squashed and now their champs is I think it works out be about week six, normally it's a little bit later so we're getting the children to cross country training now in preparation to get straight into our one so I've got my little squad set up and ready to go for the [region name] champs....</p> <p>... we had, for example we had ripper rugby tournament in [town name] and so we thought the first section of this term will be training up and doing ball handling skills and ripper rugby games and things like that, large ball skills pretty much because we knew the opportunities that were popping up this term were more the large ball type sports.</p> <p>... we contact the school and ask what sort of sports they would like their kids to be involved with—petanque, basketball, touch, hockey ... and actively trying to find develop minority sports, ultimate Frisbee, lawn bowls ... so the intention is to support both traditional sports that typically feature in inter-school sport and also introduce new sport opportunities—with handball popular currently.</p>	<p>Teacher coordinator C</p> <p>School Sport Coordinator E</p> <p>Stakeholder (Auckland region)</p>
<p>Staff expertise; ongoing inadequacies in teacher knowledge of physical education and availability of external input and support are key influences on the scope and quality of provision.</p>	<p>... the thing with gymnastics is because we're not trained, it is not very safe and its almost ... it's a bit simple because we don't want to expose ... well we don't want to have activities that teachers can do and they're not comfortable teaching and they teach bad technique and kids can get hurt.</p> <p>I think it comes down to teacher's strengths and enthusiasm. For instance we've been going to orienteering for the last couple of years because there was ... a couple of teachers that were really quite keen on it.</p> <p>When CRT, the classroom release time, came out we structured our classroom release time around having each class have a formal PE lesson rather than teachers getting release time and going off and doing whatever they like because I think phys ed. is a bit like music, if a teacher doesn't have the skills themselves then they can't teach the kids well. And so having the phys ed. teacher doing that CRT gives the teachers what they need as far as release goes and also gives the kids a really good dip of quality teaching rather than just games and then that sort of trickles down into everything else that we do.</p> <p>Because I am the PE/sports coordinator, the rest don't buy in as much, they think someone else is doing that job so they don't do the up-skilling, they don't go to the courses that are offered, it's a little bit frustrating. I'm slowly starting to change it.</p> <p>We get parents that come in and do some of it ... if you got one of those really good parents who wants to run a netball team or something ... our jump jam instructor. She's an ex-aerobics instructor... Badminton, we brought in an outside person to run the badminton program. He came and took badminton for four weeks I think it was, for all the classes so that's really cool....</p> <p>... when you can't get parents to managed team sport, that decreases the opportunities for the kids to go. You can't send a group of kids off without a manager for the teams ... so there's been many, many time where we've had to have late night phone calls you know, begging parents 'can you please come to this sporting event because otherwise one of our teams isn't going to be able to go.... I've got to almost take that into consideration now if I you know, have to organise any sporting event, I've got to be realistic with the fact that I'm not going to have anybody</p>	<p>Teacher A</p> <p>Principal E</p> <p>Principal F</p> <p>Specilaist PE Teacher F</p> <p>Coordinating teacher D</p> <p>School Sport Coordinator E</p>

	<p>jumping up to be volunteering.</p> <p>... they've [the Regional Sports Trust staff] been really good but that's only just come into our area. Last year the principals association negotiated an agreement that they would come in and provide for the schools. But there's 36 schools in our area so it's pretty thin on the ground for two or three people to be doing it. But it's neat when they come.</p>	Principal F
Support from school leadership is critical in enabling and shaping provision.	<p>My initial thoughts are, it's all about the people, and who heads it up....</p> <p>Our school has very much stated that yes numeracy and literacy are important for student learning but they're not going to dominate our curriculum here...other learning areas are essential learning ... to our teaching learning programme here..</p> <p>... we're really clear in our minds that we shouldn't be controlled by inter-school events in terms of physical education, teaching and learning.</p> <p>I think it's one of the central planks so in our curriculum it's described as going right through the curriculum. So it's got a separate identity but it's integrated right the way through.</p> <p>[Sport is] a very strong feature of our school I would say, you know, it's one of our major ... we have literacy, numeracy very major and also sport, physical education and physical activity for our students is high up there on our list of priorities.... We make it a big focus of the week for each class ... for physical activity to be involved. We spend quite a lot of money on getting really good equipment for the students to use, a variety of equipment. We spend a lot of budget on employing specialists when we need to....</p> <p>I think it's vitally important and that is one reason why next year we're probably looking at that as our major focus. Unfortunately we've been a caught up in this sort of reading, literacy, maths type thing and things like sports and PE have perhaps taken second place.</p>	<p>Stakeholder – (Taranaki Region)</p> <p>Acting Principal B</p> <p>Acting Principal B</p> <p>Principal A</p> <p>Principal D</p> <p>Principal E</p>
National education policy priorities— Pressure on schools to prioritise national standards, literacy and numeracy.	<p>I think schools have got so wound up with the reading, writing and arithmetic, which is a necessity, however, the focus then gets lost on the other areas such as the sciences, technology and PE's....</p> <p>I find the timetable just sometimes just too crowded to you know, and suddenly you know, it's national standards and you've got to have this done and this done and you know. You run out of time.... Either the physical activity, the arts those sort of things tend to [get cut] ... when you focus on literacy and mathematics.</p> <p>I think the senior management know that PE is important and believe PE is important but they still, they find it difficult to argue for PE as opposed to literacy and numeracy, because literacy and numeracy are the things that the government and everyone else picks up on....</p>	<p>Deputy Principal E</p> <p>Teacher Coordinator E</p> <p>Stakeholder (Auckland Region)</p>
Long-standing resource issues including the nature and quality of facilities, the influence of weather, and equipment	<p>When it's pouring down with rain our back field turns into the original swap it used to be ... when it is wet, we can't, there's not enough concrete out there for all of us to be out there....</p> <p>I've spent again, a lot of fundraising money as well, on just getting new balls for them. Last year they were just, a lot our equipment that we had, it was dead, it was useless so I've bought new kit for sport time and I've also bought new kit for just break time and the kids are loving it out there. Just bouncing basketballs and things now, they weren't doing a lot of that last year.</p>	<p>Teacher Coordinator C</p> <p>Teacher Coordinator C</p>

<p>available, all continue to shape provision in primary schools.</p>	<p>They go down to the [centre name] rec. centre which is right over the other side of town ... by the time they leave here, get organised, get down there, get the gear on, do some swimming, get back out, get dressed get back to school it's an hour and a half and they've probably swum for 20–25 minutes if they're lucky.</p> <p>... we have budgeted a lot of money over the last four years to build up the resources so you know, afford enough to buy one crash pad a year and the rest of it's sort of consumable items that just disappear.... Resourcing the programme has been huge.</p> <p>... I really want to do handball with the kids but again it's just trying to find money in my budget to purchase new equipment when I'm trying to replace the old stuff ... it's just constant ... it's finding enough room because they were trying to do karate while I was trying to do basketball practice. So basketball practice won over. So it's just trying to find the facilities to have it all happening at the one time.</p> <p>... bussing the children down to [town name] takes such a long ... they get quarter of an hour for lunch and the rest of the afternoon and lunchtime is taken getting them there, lessons and coming back again...</p> <p>...the fields are just so wet ... I've got a pretend track that goes round, all round the school and round the fields but it's just sodden, it's mud. So again, environment...</p> <p>We really focus on Term 1 and Term 4 because the weather is better...</p>	<p>Principal F</p> <p>Principal F</p> <p>Specilaist PE Teacher F</p> <p>Teacher E</p> <p>Teacher E</p> <p>Stakeholder (Auckland Region)</p>
<p>Locality and situation influence provision and 'opportunity'.</p>	<p>[As a low decile school] we get more money in operations ... our kids get a hell of a lot ... we get fruit in school.... I think the low deciles get some fantastic initiatives, and some fantastic things, and the high decile often have that opportunity financially to explore their interests more than the low decile people you know.</p> <p>... about 40% of students would have swimming lessons out of school ... it would be mainly Indian and Asian children missing out....</p> <p>... [we] do have issues in terms of budgetary constraints in terms of purchasing equipment to support the programmes that the teachers are developing but like all good teachers they're innovative, resourceful and really do provide a good range of experiences for the young people who come here using ... mainly school facilities but also exploring what is available in the local community as well.</p> <p>We have our own pool. So every class has a lesson every day and our senior students who are Year 7 & 8 go to the pool in town twice a week for advanced lesson and we employ a teacher specialist ability in life saving. We also got the funding from [Regional Sport Trust name] to have a dedicated swim tutor come to school and take some special abilities students and we also had some special needs students taken by the teacher who we employed to go.... We ended up this season with nearly all our students confident in the water and performing really well and swimming really well. So we put a big emphasis on that.... Our senior students do a lifesaving certificate so they get their level one life saving certificate at the end, so they go to the beach and we get the lifesaving people to run them through the certificate one, so they all belong to the life-club and do that so it's quite a major thing for us at the beginning of the year.</p> <p>... because it is a country community there's quite steep traditional stuff than you find or maybe is different in cities....</p>	<p>Stakeholder (Taranaki Region)</p> <p>Principal E</p> <p>Acting Principal B</p> <p>Principal D</p> <p>Acting Principal B</p>

	<p>... it's like "well I did that cross country track and my grandfather did that cross country track and so my kids going to do the cross country track' seriously! ...our hard court day that we've just been doing, it's been the same games, my husband played them, you know ... he's 30, it hasn't changed and that's why I'm like, you know ... it's been a while and yes they're still playing the exact same game at the exact same place.</p> <p>... [an external provider] rang me today about doing inline skating said 'yep, love too!' but we don't have a hall" [meaning that the invitation then was to travel into town for the activity]—"we'd love to come into town if you're going to pay 200 bucks for the bus!"</p> <p>Mum has to work so can't get to sport on time.... I'm one of four kids and my dad is blind and my mum has to take us places...so we kind of have to limit what we do.</p> <p>Being (too) busy ... having lots on ... I want to do] gymnastics and rock climbing, but always busy and haven't got around to organising it yet ... Mum made me pick between horse riding and cricket, I'd like to do horse riding but don't have a horse, because we don't have a paddock.... [Another girl similarly wanted to do horse riding] but I'm already doing soccer and piano and it costs too much.... Me and my mum go trekking three times a month [and that they would like to go more often] but it takes a couple of hours to do.</p> <p>I play rugby for [local town] and I used to play rugby league for [town 30 kms away], [but I] left because it was too expensive on petrol, we had a V8 car.... I wanna play basketball too but we're not rich enough ... we don't have enough money.</p> <p>In [the city] I've struggled as they get offered so many things, they are spoilt for choice, whereas the rural schools, they grab it as they don't get so much.</p>	<p>Teacher B</p> <p>Teacher Coordinator C</p> <p>Year 6 students F</p> <p>Year 6 students D</p> <p>Year 6 students B</p> <p>Stakeholder (Waikato Region)</p>
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Table 5: Ways in which current provision may be enhanced

Key Insight	Comments from participants...	Stakeholder
<p>From a student perspective enhancement equates to increasing the number, quality and range of opportunities within and beyond curriculum physical education.</p>	<p>[D is] a pretty sporty school so wouldn't change too much ... everything is good at the moment for me... More swimming even though it happens every day in the summer. I don't think that there is anything else that we would want to do because we have a lot of activities for PE.... [I suggest a] longer season of gymnastics ... only get about 4 weeks....</p> <p>[we would like...] a tree climbing club...inline hockey all year...more sports in a week...play some more games...more cricket..., hockey...more tennis... do PE every day...more ball activities like basketball activities, dodgeball, ...introduce more PE activities in school time...</p> <p>... there is a need ... and what I hear more and more is it's not about mainstream sports like cricket, rugby, netball and hockey, it's about you know learning to surf, its about learning to do all oddball things and its quite exciting....</p>	<p>Year 6 students D</p> <p>Stakeholder (Taranaki Region)</p>
<p>Significant investment in school-based and contextually relevant professional learning for teachers is needed.</p>	<p>... from my observations with swimming there are some teachers that are confident in teaching but then there are others that just sort of leave, like the PP2 people to do it and then they'll just sort of stand by and do the assessing and things like that so....</p> <p>... [need to recognise that] teachers going out for a day to learn to teach a new sport was not effective ... [instead the need to] get in there and work alongside teachers ... working at the school, with the teachers, in their context because that is vital to success....</p> <p>... I can come in and we can team teach a few sessions and at the end of that if you want me to come in and give you some feedback ... and where we do that in schools, schools will find the time....</p> <p>... [private provider named] are not working with the teachers and actually, don't want the teachers involved because then [private provider named] won't have the role they are paid for so its a non-sustainable model....</p>	<p>Teacher A</p> <p>Stakeholder (Auckland Region)</p> <p>Stakeholder (Auckland Region)</p> <p>Stakeholder (Waikato Region)</p>
<p>Investment is needed to enhance initial teacher education.</p>	<p>... it's critical that teachers get better training in terms of ideas, confidence, resources....</p> <p>... expertise is important. I think teacher enthusiasm is equally important you know ... if the teachers are keen and see the benefit of it....</p> <p>Perhaps more time at Teachers' College on physical education, physical activity, and I don't think the way it has been done in the past is the way to do it. Talking to young teachers who come out of Teachers' College, [University Teacher Education] they have very little practical knowledge ... of games that you can play or of anything you can actually do.</p>	<p>Stakeholder (Auckland Region)</p> <p>Stakeholder (Waikato Region)</p> <p>Stakeholder (Waikato Region)</p>
<p>Enhanced links and coherency in provision is needed between primary schools and local secondary schools, and between the school sector and</p>	<p>Extending the development of sports leaders, and using leaders to enhance participation opportunities for younger students, was another area acknowledged by the Principal as offering potential. "It's an area I'd like to develop. I think we're not doing that as good as we could be, using student leaders more.</p> <p>I think clubs don't do enough to encourage parents to coach, it's a time consuming thing ... but I do think it's they don't feel confident enough to actually do it. And that's an area that needs to be addressed, is to encourage parents to be involved.</p>	<p>Principal F</p> <p>Parent/Coach F</p>

<p>junior sport sector.</p>	<p>I think the government grant, inter-school operation funds, something that was shifted a little bit down from the secondary into the primary has got potential that's not fully realised yet.</p> <p>... [senior students potentially playing a key role in enhancing the links] and then you start to build a community of people ... it's not all about a reliance on teachers in the models we should be looking at and saying how do we combine resources for the betterment of the children?</p> <p>Given that the Ministry's model has been stripped down and physical education advisers are defunct I think there's a real opportunity to work with the specialists we already have in secondary schools.</p> <p>The areas that we struggled with were the ones where they had no links. So for me what used to be the old advisory service maybe that did the connections, what are the new connections? Where do we look for connections and what's the shape of that connection?</p> <p>You need clubs in primary schools and sometimes I don't think that happens very successfully....</p>	<p>Principal A</p> <p>Stakeholder (Taranaki Region)</p> <p>National Stakeholder</p> <p>Teacher A</p> <p>Stakeholder (Taranaki Region)</p>
<p>Improving facilities, equipment, and dedicating more time to provision of physical education and sport, will enable provision to be enhanced.</p>	<p>If you haven't got that large covered facility then it makes life a little bit more difficult in terms of what to do.... If you've got that facility it just gives you so much more flexibility to do what you want to do.</p> <p>Swimming. I would love to offer swimming I think it's a really valuable...and gymnastics as well. I think especially for the juniors, I think gymnastics is a great ... for Year 1 and 2s but again we just don't have the facilities, we don't have the money to buy the equipment and we could go, there's a really good gym sport up here in [centre name] but again it's the money, it's the bus, it's the same problems as swimming. They're the two. Gymnastics and swimming I think would just be fantastic to offer to the kids because the skills encompass everything.</p> <p>... the biggest hurdle we've actually got, we've got a big ... hall across the road but it's not our hall it's a community hall ... they don't want to put markings and what have you down ... it's been fairly frustrating because there's this big space ... I guess our next challenge is to try and make that hall a bit more user friendly so we can get things like basketball and badminton and all these other things going there. Because in the winter you know, you're limited to what you can do.</p> <p>If I had more time (laughs) more time with the kids that would be the biggest one. Forty-five minutes just isn't long enough to achieve what I want to achieve. [Interviewer] Would that be more times per week or a longer block? More times per week ... Then that way you can consolidate the skills as opposed to having a one off. I think ideally two 45-minute sessions would be great.</p>	<p>Stakeholder (Taranaki Region)</p> <p>Specialist PE teacher F</p> <p>Principal E</p> <p>Specialist PE teacher F</p>

5. CASE STUDY SCHOOL SUMMARIES

The project findings highlighted the individuality of any school context and the prospective limitations of commentaries on provision that seek to talk across diverse contexts. The following summaries of each of the case study schools are intended to draw attention to the significance of individual contexts in shaping current provision and in relation to enhancing that provision.

5.1 SCHOOL A

School A is a high decile co-educational contributing primary school with a roll of over 450 that spans New Entrants to Year 6. The roll has continued to grow in recent years and comprises a majority New Zealand/Pakeha, sizable Asian representation and small representation of New Zealand Māori 6% and other 5%. It is an urban city school that serves children from surrounding suburbs. The school has a leadership team that includes a teacher in charge of physical education and school sport.

The school has expansive grounds and all-purpose hall. There is a large hard court area, several grass sports fields an outdoor swimming pool that is covered in the off-season and a general purpose/community hall.

Findings Summary

The types of opportunities that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum:

- The terminology of physical activity, physical education and sport were often interchanged or substituted, and distinctions between components of provision often blurred.
- The school-wide curriculum plan follows four connected themes; Belonging, Creating, Challenge and Celebrating.
- Physical activity focusing on fitness, games associated with movement skills, and skill-oriented activities are incorporated in curriculum provision.
- The Pupils as Leaders in School (PALS) scheme that operates at the school is popular with staff and students and effective as a strategy to enhance provision and participation.
- Outside providers are used to augment content and organisation.
- A range of inter-school sports is provided.

Which students is current provision being directed towards and also ‘connecting with’?

- Physical education was very clearly enjoyed and valued by students at the school. Their responses also highlighted that variety in provision and engaging pedagogies are critical to maintaining student interest and participation.
- Staff are careful to scrutinise outside support and alignment with school ethos to support student learning and participation.
- There was student acknowledgement of the inclusive nature of games within and beyond PE.
- Students enjoy the opportunities to choose and lead activities but also express frustration about some aspects of pedagogy.

The key factors influencing current provision within and beyond the school curriculum:

- There is a strong staffing structure to support development of physical education, physical activity and sport within and beyond the curriculum, with robust leadership initiatives to assist with the delivery of physical education, physical activity and sport. There is a designated staff member who coordinates HPE and school sport across all year cohorts.
- All classroom teachers are responsible for the delivery of physical education. Most teachers endeavour to support the provision of daily physical activity.

- Staff and students acknowledged the lack of male teachers at the school as pertinent to provision of physical education and sport, and more specifically, the learning opportunities and experiences of male students.

Ways in which current provision may be enhanced:

- Opportunities to extend and enhance teacher knowledge and expertise in relation to content and pedagogy of physical education and sport was recognised as having the potential to benefit many teachers and enhance provision.
- Continued exploration of relationship building with parents, outside groups and sports clubs.
- Addressing the cultural, social and financial diversity of students and their associated needs.

5.2 SCHOOL B

School B is a mid-decile rated rural primary school with over 150 students across Years 1 to 8. The school has robust community links marked by attendance by members of succeeding generations. The catchment incorporates a large geographical area meaning a majority of students travel to school each day by bus. The school is situated 10kms from a small rural, service town on the New Zealand coastline. The school's landscape is marked by a blend of old and new buildings, nine classrooms, a multi-purpose room, staff room, library, storage and administrative areas. The school is sited on a generous allocation of grounds marked by fields, hard court area, play areas and adventure ground facility. The school is bounded by farmland and rolling hills. A community hall is situated across the road from the school.

Findings Summary

The types of opportunities that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum:

- The school has a progressive and sequential physical education programme based on the NZC. Creativity on the part of teachers to provide physical learning opportunities is encouraged.
- The curriculum physical education programme is a 'needs based' model within seasonal and resource limitations. Seasonally based activities are designed to link to skill development and various dimensions of health and wellbeing.
- Co-curricular provision encompasses school membership in local zone interschool competition, an Intra-school house system adopted for games afternoons, and tabloid activities for junior students facilitated by senior students.
- Regional sports trust provider offers 'taster' sessions for students and availability of sports has recently been enhanced with utilisation of *Kiwisport* funding.
- Provision outside of school centres on clubs within the local small town and through utilisation of the local coastal environment.

Which students is current provision being directed towards and also 'connecting with'?

- There was widespread student approval of physical education experiences:
- Students value access to lunchtime equipment.
- Provision acknowledges that there are a high number of students reliant upon bus transport. Attention is therefore focused on opportunities during school hours.
- The school leadership and staff recognised the need for external provision to align with students' learning interests and needs.

The key factors influencing current provision within and beyond the school curriculum:

- Teacher autonomy, innovation and decision making is encouraged.
- Physical education is not a curriculum priority but is supported and recognised within the whole curriculum.

- School facilities for physical education are well utilised.
- There is a strong historical and traditional community influence on sport provision and structure.
- *Kiwisport* funding and external input enables provision to be expanded.
- Student access to outside activities is often determined by family interest and resourcing, with distance required to travel to activities a barrier (by virtue of cost and time) to participation.

Ways in which current provision may be enhanced:

- Continued leadership and support for alternative pedagogies and activity selection. There was an expressed need for teacher support to develop content knowledge and pedagogical associated with physical education.
- Continued scrutinising of and liaising with outside providers to ensure compatibility of input with the school ethos.
- Continued exploration of alternative participation models for students.
- Bringing further activities to the school offers a means to ameliorate the issue of transport as a major restriction on participation.

5.3 SCHOOL C

School C is a coeducation primary school with over 150 students in Years 1–8. It has a low decile rating and is located in a small town. The school’s integrated curriculum spans across a cycle of several years; is underpinned by an ethos of ‘5 R’s’, namely respect, responsibility, reconciliation, resilience, and relationships; driven by important themes from the community, and is tapping into local resources. The school is located in a swamp area that had implications for HPE, physical activity and sport. These wetlands became an area for play, exploration, classes and recreation activities.

Findings Summary

The types of opportunities that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum:

- HPE is articulated as part of integrated cross-curricular themes determined by curriculum leaders. Physical education and sport are seen as valuable contributors to the wider school ethos. Curriculum provision features physical education and health lessons linked to the curriculum themes.
- Provision is extended via sessions from external sport and health specialists.
- A term-based sport programme is provided that is quite diverse, encompassing a range of traditional sports and more recreational opportunities for students such as walking and cycling.
- Morning and lunchtime breaks are dominated by participation in students’ own games like ‘poison’ or four square. Equipment is provided for student use during breaks.
- Club based provision beyond the school was reported as including both mainstream sports and other activities including Tea Kwon Do and Celtic dancing.
- The local environment was also identified with opportunities for recreational activities including duck-shooting, riding and fishing.

Which students is current provision being directed towards and also ‘connecting with’?

- Staff endeavour to offer multiple forms of activity due to limited access beyond the school for many students.
- The school recognises that many students participate in traditional sports and is trying to promote more recreational opportunities for students.

- Equipment is made available for all students at break and lunchtimes. Resourcing stretches opportunities for participation.
- Several sports are offered at both intra and interschool level to promote participation.
- Geographic location and dominance of bus transport restricts sport participation to club level for many students.
- Some junior school students expressed the view that they were sometimes left out of sporting activities.

The key factors influencing current provision within and beyond the school curriculum:

- Strong leadership and planning is seen as a significant resource.
- A lack of all-weather facilities for physical activity acts as a significant barrier to implementation of intentions.
- Staff tenacity and energy to overcome limited facilities and equipment is acknowledged.
- There are varied levels of competence and confidence amongst staff to teach full and varied programme.
- External providers are called on to supplement staff and school resourcing. Robust relationships with parents and Sports Trust personnel support and supplement provision of student experiences.
- Situation, with the number of students reliant upon bus transport between home and school largely restricts provision to school hours.

Ways in which current provision may be enhanced:

- Extending the allocation of time for HPE lessons, with professional development, and investment in facility development would all prospectively enable extension and enhancement of current provision within and beyond the curriculum.
- The school continues to affirm relationships with community networks to provide young people's participation and engagement. Continued relationship building is essential to creation of opportunities for student participation.
- Long term planning and allocation of funds need to be directed towards further development of sustainable and relevant programmes that contribute to capacity building.

5.4 SCHOOL D

School D is a full primary school, integrated and spanning Years 1–8. It has a population of over 100 students comprising a majority New Zealand Pakeha and a small representation of New Zealand Māori and 'other'. It is a high decile school, geographically situated in a semi-rural location close to the coast. An increasing number of families have two or more members employed outside the local area. Families are established, historically located in the area for several generations.

Facilities at the school include a swimming pool, changing rooms and toilets, a community hall that the school has access to during school hours, grassed sports fields, relatively new hard courts, and a large adjacent native reserve. The school prides itself on its involvement and link with its community described as a 'relatively strong social network', particularly in relation to sport.

Findings Summary

The types of opportunities that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum:

- The school has a wealth of physical and social resources that are accessed for a rich and varied set of potential experiences for its students within and beyond the curriculum.
- Curriculum provision centres on a historically conservative seasonal sports driven Health and Physical Education programme.

- Fitness and sport studies time was allocated within the school week. Activities across the terms included fitness oriented physical activities and outdoor education activities.
- Co-curricular activities include a variety of inter-school sport competitions and support for students to encourage use of the natural grounds for activity.
- Provision both within and beyond the curriculum is extended via input from parents and external providers.
- Provision outside of school appeared wide in range, encompassing traditional sports and other activities including inline hockey, surf club and pony club.

Which students is current provision being directed towards and also ‘connecting with’?

- The school’s ethos supports participation in physical activity and sport for physical health but also personal development including student responsibility and leadership. There is a strong ‘participation for all’ emphasis across the school.
- Students are seeking further adult engagement in the form of facilitation and increased time to be made available for physical activity.
- There is a high level of student involvement in sport activities beyond the school.

The key factors influencing current provision within and beyond the school curriculum:

- The school is well resourced in relation to facilities, including a pool that allows each student access to swimming lessons.
- Strong parental and community support for transport, coaching and management is key to curriculum and co-curricular provision. A professional swimming coach is hired to assist with aquatic programme.
- Physical education is restricted by weather or other curriculum priorities.
- Students play an active and important part in provision, with roles associated with equipment and facilitation.

Ways in which current provision may be enhanced:

- The most substantial issues lie in revisiting the curriculum for reflection and development of HPE, while still acknowledging the priority of national standards and particularly numeracy and literacy.

5.5 SCHOOL E

School E is a co-educational full primary, providing for Years 1–8. It is classified as a high decile school with a roll of over 150 students. The school is in a rural location and attracts students from outside of the immediate locality as a school of choice. The principal explained, ‘even though we’re a rural school, only 30% of our population are actually rural’, with 70% of the school population coming from the nearest small town.

Findings Summary

The types of opportunities that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum:

- At present provision of physical education reflects a traditional, seasonal sport-based model and varied teacher confidence and competence across the school. The curriculum programme for physical education is influenced directly by the interschool sports calendar.
- There is a major focus on swimming start and end of the year but students must be transported by bus to venue, with time and cost implications arising.
- Within the curriculum there is a major focus on ball skills across most age groups. Junior primary classes focus on skill development and utilise *Kiwisport and Kiwidex* resources.

- The school's syndicate sport activities are providing educational value and an important participation opportunity for all students.
- The local community and club context offers a rich range of locally based participation options for students.

Which students is current provision being directed towards and also 'connecting with'?

- Student experiences of physical education within the curriculum varied depending upon individual teachers across the school.
- Inter-school cluster-based sport currently presents a dilemma for the school, in terms of which students will have the opportunity to be involved.

The key factors influencing current provision within and beyond the school curriculum:

- Teachers and the principal identified the small size of the field and its poor condition in wet weather, as limiting provision of physical education and sport at the school.
- The community hall across the road from the school is often utilised but has no court markings for sport activities and is the only facility suitable to use in wet weather and/or when the field is not fit for use after prolonged periods of wet weather.
- The teachers respectively coordinating physical education and in charge of school sport acknowledged the inadequacy of their training for these roles.
- Other curriculum priorities were acknowledged as impacting upon the attention given to physical education at a whole school and individual class/teacher level.
- The town and particularly, vibrant community clubs are key to provision of sport and recreation opportunities outside of school hours for children attending the school.
- The school has good community relations that offer an ideal foundation for further development of school-club-community sport links.

Ways in which current provision may be enhanced:

- Raising the status of teaching and learning in physical education seems the most significant change needed in order to enhance provision and learning opportunities.
- Support from the school senior leadership and whole school professional learning is needed in order to develop Health and Physical Education as articulated in the NZC as a valued learning area in the school curriculum.
- Support and resourcing is needed for those teachers designated as in charge of physical education and sport.
- The need for internal and external discussions and developments directed towards ensuring that inter-school events are inclusive rather than exclusive is evident.
- External investment in models of provision that centre on maximising the potential of links between school and club/community.

5.6 SCHOOL F

School F is a coeducational full primary school catering for students from Year 1–8. It is located in an urban area and stands out as a high decile school amidst many surrounding schools that are by contrast, low decile. Since opening the school roll has grown to over 450 students and become increasingly multicultural. The multi-cultural school population includes New Zealand European/Pākehā, Māori, Indian, Chinese, Samoan, African and other Asian students, who are all drawn primarily from the school's enrolment area.

Findings Summary

The types of opportunities that are provided within and beyond the school curriculum:

- Curriculum physical education is largely sport-based and physical education is seen as a skill learning foundation for inter-school sport. Sporting achievements are in turn seen as a gauge for the efficacy of PE.
- In addition to physical education lessons, three 15-minute fitness sessions are provided to all students during the week.
- Inter school competitive sport dominates co-curricular provision.
- The school has a number of ‘one-off’ activities such as a ‘circus challenge’ or a ‘Have a Go’ days, facilitated by external providers.
- Club-based provision of netball and touch is associated with the school. Other community-based clubs and facilities extend the breadth of traditional sport provision and to include recreational activities such as skateboarding.

Which students is current provision being directed towards and also ‘connecting with’?

- The majority of students enjoy physical education. Students vary in the appeal that fitness activities hold for them.
- Extending the breadth of activities offered is seen as necessary to attract some students for whom current curriculum and/or co-curricular activities do not appeal.
- Inter school as opposed to intra school sport dominates co-curricular provision and therefore restricts student participation in relation to the number of students participating and the ability levels that co-curricular sport caters for.
- The school is looking at alternative sport competition formats to extend participation.
- School and community provision and resourcing is struggling to keep up with student demand for participation.

The key factors influencing current provision within and beyond the school curriculum:

- The school is recognised as being in quite privileged position for provision of physical education and sport, particularly with regard to indoor space and in having a specialist physical education teacher.
- There are limitations to facilities that impact upon provision possible—particularly poor quality field and the lack of a pool.
- Appointment of a specialist teacher by school leadership has enhanced programme. The specialist teacher has built the skill base of students across the school, but has limited support for physical education from other staff.
- The allocation of one 45-minute session for HPE per week limits scope and extent of student learning opportunities.
- As indicated above, the focus on inter-school sport frames and simultaneously limits co-curricular provision. This can be at least in part related to parent/community pressure for results-based competition.
- Socio-economic circumstances may allow financial access to out of school provision but this is off set by time and logistical impediments.
- Student interest or participation in different sporting activities is often restricted by other commitments or family activities.

Ways in which current provision may be enhanced:

- Enhanced support for physical education across the school and time from other teachers within the school.
- Extended school based opportunities to allow greater opportunities for more students. Provision of developmentally appropriate activities and inclusive structures for so-curricular sport.
- Exploration of ways in which more opportunities can be extended for all students that match their abilities and interests.
- Improvements to the school grounds.

6. DISCUSSION

The points covered in this section seek to highlight the connection between key research findings and an international body of research and literature that is pertinent to consider in looking at current provision of physical education and sport in the primary school sector, and prospective developments. The commentary arising from this research needs to be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the small-scale ‘snap-shot’ nature of the study. The ‘snap-shot’ has, however, generated rich insights and brought issues to the fore that have relevance beyond the schools that this research centred on.

6.1 A VARIED PICTURE OF PROVISION

The six schools spanning three regions of Aotearoa New Zealand presented a varied picture of physical education and school sport. The extent and quality of physical education and sport opportunities being provided to students was strongly framed by situation and locality. The research highlighted that multiple factors, variously associated with national, regional and local contexts, collectively influence provision in any school. Furthermore, the current policy context associated with education, physical education and sport, regional and local infrastructure, human and physical resources within schools and communities, all play a part in shaping current provision. This research clearly illustrated that the respective influence of particular factors varies with situation. In this sense, each school setting needs to be recognised as unique, such that the support and investment that is needed to enhance provision in any setting will also vary.

Socio-economic situation should not be overlooked as an important consideration and ongoing influence in relation to the opportunities to participate in physical education and sport that many children can access. Data from this research highlighted, however, the need for the complexities of disadvantage in any setting to be explored. It is inappropriate to make simplistic judgements about either provision or opportunity solely on the basis of indicators such as school decile.

Amidst a picture of variation and complexity, the school case studies and accompanying regional stakeholder data served to highlight issues that are undoubtedly relevant to national level discussions about current and prospective future provision of physical education and sport in primary schools. Many of the issues will be recognisable to the physical education professional community nationally and internationally as longstanding concerns.

6.2 POLICIES AND PRIORITIES

Physical education is currently not an educational priority in national arenas. Amidst national standards, primary school principals and teachers are feeling pressure to focus attention on literacy and numeracy. In this situation, curriculum time for physical education can be compromised, and other curriculum areas may similarly be prioritised for investment in professional development. The low status and marginality of physical education in national education policy arenas and in many schools, and recognition that this position has resource implications, is a situation that has long been acknowledged as problematic by physical educationalists internationally. The fact that it is a recognisable and to some extent, not surprising situation, should not mean that it is deemed acceptable. Importantly, this research identified that there are exceptions to this situation, with some principals according physical education and sport a central position in whole curriculum and whole curriculum planning, with resourcing to match.

The NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) incorporated Health and Physical Education as a learning area and arguably presented a valuable opportunity for curriculum review and renewal in physical education. Little evidence arose from this research that indicated that curriculum provision of physical education in primary schools has been influenced in any notable way by the content of Health and Physical Education as articulated in the NZC. As discussed below, models of provision are invariably historical and characterised by a central focus on seasonal sport. Limited teacher knowledge in relation to both content and pedagogy, and an absence of systemic provision of professional development for physical education, are seen as major contributors to this scenario.

The physical education professional community identifies an acute lack of policy leadership and investment nationally from the Ministry of Education, reflected most notably in an absence of national advisors for physical education, and initiatives arising from other departments and agencies becoming the prime reference point for provision (see also Petrie & Lisahunter, 2011). Current initiatives and investment directed towards enhancing provision of physical education and sport in schools (such as *Kiwisport*) are welcomed at all levels—national, regional, and school. External support in the form of initiatives that provide the staff and equipment to extend the breadth of provision of physical education and sport valued by principals, teachers and students. The investment and developments appear, however, largely re-active to a situation of widespread resource and development need that calls for long-term strategic planning and development. Current investment is interventionist by design and as such, is maintaining rather than systematically addressing a situation of varied quality and scope of provision across primary schools. Investment of a different order is required for sustained improvement in provision across all schools.

6.3 MIXED MEANINGS AND MIXED MESSAGES

This research repeatedly revealed an absence of clarity about what physical education means and how it is practiced, and a frequent interchange the terms physical education, physical activity, fitness and sport. In numerous instances physical education is enacted ‘as sport’ and a *substitution model* prevails (see section 2 and Pope 2011). HPE in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) is characterised by breadth of content and a holistic orientation towards health and wellbeing. While sport and physical activity are acknowledged as integral to the learning area in terms of both content and pedagogy, current curriculum provision of physical education appears to accord traditional forms of sport a privileged position. Many units of work are sport based, skill related activities are couched within sport terminology and have co-curricular and/or external sport provision as a prime point of reference. Thus, physical education invariably appears to be framed by ‘top-down’ influences, whereby competitive elite sport is driving co-curricular sport that in turn is driving curriculum provision. It would seem that what is typically occurring within many primary school settings aligns with David Kirk’s (2006) appraisal that physical education programmes in countries such as United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia are little more than sport. This is despite recent curriculums that have espoused holistic, critical and ecological approaches to learning within this subject area. While scholars such as Peter Arnold (1979, 1997) have explored the wider moral, ethical and conceptual opportunities that sport can provide as an educational tool, it would appear that these are not being explored amidst an invariable focus on the dominant traits of skill execution and performance.

With HPE established as a designated learning area within the NZC, there is an official curriculum commitment nationally to physical education learning experiences and opportunities for all students. This is reflected in timetabled ‘HPE’ or ‘PE’ lessons for all classes. Co-curricular provision contrasts to this in that while some aspects of provision may be directed towards all students, competitive sport-oriented co-curricular programmes in particular often only provide opportunities for some primary school children. With inter-school rather than intra-school competition the main focus for provision, and the number of students who can be accommodated within traditional completion formats limited, opportunities for those children who are not amongst those deemed ‘most able’ and/or ‘talented’, are limited. This echoes Penney and Harris’ (1997) observations internationally over a decade ago, and concerns voiced more recently by Flintoff (2008) that despite unprecedented investment in physical education and school sport in England, longstanding inequities in participation opportunities still prevail.

The question probably needs to be asked of how sport can be educational if it is exclusive. Limiting student access and opportunity at such an early age would seem counter to an educational ethos. Further, this research pointed to a need to critically review both co-curricular and community-based sport provision for primary aged children in relation to an apparent tension between structures that expect and require selective patterns of participation, and students’ strong desire for variety in participation.

Importantly, this research revealed the presence of some inclusive alternative initiatives to traditional sport structures and formats, including syndicate sports, whole school sport days and single code days.

It also provided examples of schools and external providers seeking to diversify the range of activities within co-curricular programmes, and reporting the popularity of a number of ‘new’ sports being offered, such as Handball, Ultimate Frisbee, and Aussie Rules. Yet, it is clear that provision that contrasts in either focus or format to traditional sport provision is still widely conceived of as ‘alternative’ rather than an established, core aspect of co-curricular provision and wider infrastructure to support young people’s participation in sport.

Initiating and sustaining provision of any activity in co-curricular programmes was also highlighted as invariably dependent on a single parent, staff member, or the injection of other external support made possible through resourcing arising from *Kiwisport* or other funding. It was very evident from this research that sustaining and/or enabling further diversification of provision to support increased participation requires that the current fragile basis of provision be addressed. Those currently at the fore of initiatives and seeing momentum developing in terms of participation are acutely aware of this fragility.

Provision within school break and lunchtimes that is informal and invariably student-led is also characterised by choice, variety and inclusion. Students’ participation centres on fun and friendships and they design games to reflect this. There are arguably important messages amidst playground activity for school and community sport provision directed towards primary aged children.

Undoubtedly any evaluation of co-curricular sport should not adopt a zero sum approach where one option is endorsed at the expense of the other. Rather it is a matter of achieving an appropriate balance in types of provision that can cater for children’s varied interests and abilities. Data from this research indicates that currently some but not all prospective interest in participation is being fostered, and not all children are enjoying opportunities to extend their learning in and through sport.

6.4 COHERENCE AND CONNECTIONS

Findings from this research frequently pointed to the vibrancy of community sport. In parallel, the impression was that there is a lack of sound systemic connections between community and school provision. ‘Pockets’ of sound ideas and initiatives within and/or beyond schools were cited—but are typically seen as isolated. Provision across curriculum, co-curricular and out-of-school contexts appears more often fragmented rather than inter-linked from a student learning and/or participation perspective.

The growth in external providers offering curriculum and/or co-curricular sport sessions to schools has extended access to sporting opportunities for some students, and ‘taster sessions’ directed to all students have received an enthusiastic response from staff, students and parents. Providing avenues and structures for sustained participation beyond schools is however, clearly more challenging. The lack of presence of club personnel in schools, often because club coaches and representatives are not available in school hours, contributes to an ongoing ‘disconnect’. Several stakeholders recognise this as a systemic problem and see value in the exploration of new models for school-club-community collaboration in provision of physical education and sport for young people.

Developing new partnership links between secondary and primary schools to enable the sharing of teacher knowledge across sectors and to facilitate student leadership in provision, are also seen as offering notable potential. International models of network development, such as the Specialist Sports College and School Sport Coordinator networks in England, provide examples of models that might usefully be drawn upon in Aotearoa New Zealand. They also provide an indication of the significant level of investment that is required for systemic and sustainable development nationally.

In encompassing rural and urban schools, this research illustrated that distance to facilities and organised sport provision, and the time, logistics and costs that are then involved in accessing ‘opportunities’, can significantly contribute to the disconnect between school and external sport. It is thus essential that any initiatives directed towards enhanced linkages need to recognise and respond to local variations in needs and opportunities, and consider ways in which to overcome barriers to many children accessing ‘opportunities’ that were very evident in this research—centring on family resources, the location of provision, travel and time associated with location, and limited flexibility in relation to opportunities to commence a new activity and/or the sustained commitment expected.

6.5 STAFFING, SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

This research echoed national and international research in pointing to limited teacher confidence and competence to teach physical education as a significant constraining factor on provision in relation to both curriculum and co-curricular programmes. Teachers, principals and the range of stakeholders interviewed across the regions consistently acknowledged limited teacher knowledge of content and pedagogy of physical education. This is a characteristic associated with both long established and new teachers. It points very clearly to parallel inadequacies and needs in (i) initial teacher education and (ii) professional development and support for teachers. Further, it is widely acknowledged that external support, from a range of agencies and organisations, and from parents, is fundamental to maintaining current provision of physical education and sport provision in schools, both within and beyond the curriculum.

The question should perhaps be asked of whether this situation of systemic inadequacies in staffing would be deemed acceptable if it related to any other learning area? Within and beyond schools there is a recognised need for urgent investment to address the situation. With respect to initial teacher education, several stakeholders drew attention to the reduced and in their view, inadequate hours dedicated to Health and Physical Education in initial teacher education courses currently, with the result that beginning teachers are entering schools with an immediate and ongoing professional learning need in this area. This situation seems untenable.

Amidst a situation in which there is no Ministry of Education supported national advisory service for physical education, external support is welcomed by schools and teachers. Some external providers are operating in ways that are contributing to the development of teacher knowledge and staff capacity within primary schools. There is, however, currently no assurance that this approach is always adopted and in some instances, external provision can therefore, align more with a replacement model, which fails to address sustained inadequacies in teacher knowledge and confidence. Several stakeholders stressed the need for models of external input and professional development that involved teachers being supported in progressively advancing their skills, knowledge and confidence over time, within the context in which they work. It was recognised that one-off inputs and/or off-site courses were ineffective in supporting teacher learning. Developing real capacity amongst primary school teachers thus requires the exploration of models of support that are founded on a commitment to sustained partnerships.

This research also pointed to principals as pivotal figures in countering the marginality of physical education and sport in education. Principals who are advocates for physical education and sport, and who recognise the range of learning that it can facilitate, openly counter the marginal status of the learning area and the political and public pressures to disproportionately prioritise literacy and numeracy. Arguably, they represent critical advocates for physical education and sport on regional and national platforms.

6.6 PHYSICAL RESOURCES: FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, TIME AND TRANSPORT

Physical resources are routinely recognised as influencing the provision for physical education and sport that will be possible in any given context, and that the particular facilities accessible to any school will frame decisions about the content of curriculum and co-curricular provision. It is therefore not surprising that this research drew attention to the difference that type and quality facilities for physical education and sport can make in a school. Most obviously, it is clear that where quality space for all-year round teaching of physical education, whatever the weather, does not exist, the extent and quality of learning opportunities provided is openly compromised, as are extended learning and participation opportunities in the form of co-curricular activities. Teachers and students are immensely resourceful, but in some schools, the nature or condition of facilities limits learning and participation opportunities.

Off-site facilities present both possibilities and additional challenges for schools seeking to enhance the breadth of opportunities in physical education and sport beyond the limits of the provision that they can offer on-site. This research reaffirmed that the complexities associated with school use of off-site facilities should not be under-estimated and can mean that even facilities that appear readily

accessible, may in fact hold notably limited potential for use. Travel time always needs to be factored into decisions about use of an off-site facility, and both travel and use of the facility typically come with a cost. Any of these issues may mean that it is not feasible to use the facility or that use will be restricted to a limited number of visits. Learning opportunities are correspondingly restricted.

Further, this research illustrated that even if an off-site facility does not require travel, access may still be problematic, and that facilities designed for the wider community will not always be entirely suitable for educational, developmentally appropriate activities for primary aged children. This reaffirms the need for consultation and coordination across sectors and agencies in any planning developments with an intention of shared use.

Similarly, inadequacies in equipment were identified as a limitation in some schools. While external providers are currently playing a key role in alleviating this situation, if equipment is only available when an external provider is at a particular school, opportunities for learning and participation are limited to that time, and ongoing provision is reliant upon ongoing input from the external provider.

Assured time, for curriculum and/or co-curricular physical education and sport, has long been at the fore of international efforts to ensure that all children have access to the many benefits associated with physical education (see Bailey, 2006; Bailey et al., 2009; Penney, 2010). This research reaffirmed that dedicated time for physical education within the curriculum varies and that learning opportunities therefore continue to be variously enabled or constrained by curriculum planning decisions and priorities. As indicated above, current political priorities for education mean that principals and teachers will struggle to justify dedicating more time to physical education and on occasions, will compromise allocation of time because of perceived pressures to focus on literacy and numeracy in particular.

Each of the case study schools illustrated that the specific physical resource issues impacting upon provision, and enabling or constraining the opportunities for physical education and sport that a school is offering and can look to develop, will vary. Stakeholders affirmed that this varied provision and potential was acknowledged as the 'state of play' across regions. The picture is again, one of complexity, with the recognition that multiple factors rather than a single issue ultimately combine to determine the nature and quality of provision and opportunities arising in any particular school. In addition, however, the picture is clearly one of disparity and inequity in provision and opportunity across primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. Once again, questions can be posed about the acceptability of this situation, with the accompanying emphasis that stakeholders see this disparity as ongoing amidst current investment initiatives.

7. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A significant and consistent finding arising from this research is that physical education and sport is enjoyed and valued by primary age school children. Initiatives to extend and diversify provision are welcomed and there is currently unmet demand for more, and more varied, participation opportunities, particularly in co-curricular provision.
2. The over-riding impression from the project is that the extent and quality of physical education and sport opportunities being provided within and beyond the curriculum varies significantly between schools. Multiple factors give rise to this situation. The current variation in provision of physical education and sport, and in the learning and participation opportunities that students in different schools across Aotearoa New Zealand are able to enjoy is a situation that can be questioned from an equity perspective. Locality and situation also play a key part in shaping the out of school sport opportunities available for primary aged children. This arguably adds strength to the case for assured quality provision within schools.
3. Much current provision of physical education and sport for primary aged children appears premised on and framed by an adult model of competitive, organised sport, and an established infrastructure associated with this format of sport. This influences the content and pedagogy of provision within and beyond the curriculum in primary schools. It creates particular opportunities and at the same time limits the exposure that primary age students have to sport in its various guises. There is thus arguably a need for a greater focus on developments that have as their basis alternative, inclusive, developmentally appropriate conceptions of sport and physical activity.
4. This research repeatedly pointed to current and potentially ongoing inadequacies in teacher knowledge in physical education. These are acknowledged as likely to be ongoing if action and investment is not directed towards (i) structured, co-ordinated professional learning and support for primary teachers that is school-based and contextually relevant; (ii) enhancement of current initial teacher education in relation to knowledge, skills and understandings pertaining to the Health and Physical Education learning area; and (iii) training to provide beginning teachers with the confidence and competence to also actively contribute to co-curricular sport and physical activity provision. To address immediate staff development needs there is a case for investing in dedicated positions to enable well qualified, experienced educational professionals to work across and with a cluster of primary schools to enhance teacher knowledge, competence and confidence in developing quality curriculum and co-curricular programmes that meet the needs and interests of all of their students.
5. Vision and leadership within schools and potentially across clusters of primary schools, is highly influential in relation to the nature and quality of provision of physical education and sport within and beyond the curriculum. Strong support from school leadership can be instrumental in ensuring the resourcing that will enable development. Currently, such support is present in some schools but by no means assured in all primary schools. Enhanced support from school leaders is also difficult to achieve in the current political climate, with physical education and sport not an educational priority nationally. There is an urgent need to foster support from principals for physical education and sport in schools, and for such support to be utilised in political arenas through strategic advocacy.
6. Long-standing and familiar physical resource issues including the nature and quality of facilities, the influence of weather, the curriculum time dedicated to physical education, and equipment available, remain familiar factors shaping learning and participation opportunities in primary schools. Future planning needs to consider ways in which to address the physical resources that can be regarded as a fundamental basis for quality provision of physical education and sport in schools. Specifically, there is a need for a quality space for all-year round teaching of physical education, whatever the weather, adequate developmentally appropriate equipment, and assured allocation of time within the curriculum.
7. Current provision within and beyond schools has been identified as lacking coordination and coherence, particularly from the perspective of young people themselves. This contrasts to the

notion of curriculum, co-curricular and out-of-school provision collectively delivering linked, seamless learning and participation opportunities, that are developmentally appropriate and inclusive. Attention should therefore be directed towards enhancing cross-sector and multi-agency developments that have young people's needs and interests as the prime focus. The potential merits of investment in both enhanced links between primary schools and local secondary schools, and similarly, better linkages between the school sector and junior sport sector, were very evident in this research. As several stakeholders recognised, Aotearoa New Zealand appears to be lagging behind developments internationally in this regard.

8. This project is acknowledged as a small-scale scoping project that was designed to provide a snapshot of provision across a small number of schools at a particular point in time. Findings necessarily need to be treated with appropriate caution. Nevertheless, the project provided indications that there are a number of issues associated with current provision of physical education and sport within and beyond the curriculum for primary age children in Aotearoa New Zealand that require urgent attention. Current initiatives and investment have been highlighted as invaluable yet at the same time, inadequate as a basis for sustained and comprehensive enhancement of provision of physical education and sport for all primary aged children. Future development and investment thus needs to be directed towards strong, coherent and sustainable networks of provision that signal a response to a situation of provision that currently features elements of fragility, inadequacy and inequity.
9. In looking to future investment and initiatives, this research also clearly demonstrated that far from 'one size fits all', the reality in looking across primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, is that 'one size' solutions are unlikely to fit anyone's contextually specific and varied needs. There are clear and consistently applicable issues that arise in looking at ways in which current provision of physical education and sport in primary schools can be enhanced, and this report communicates those. It also emphasised however, that the particular combination of factors influencing both provision and need is always unique. Future planning must acknowledge and respond to this reality.
10. This project has not only pointed to an urgent and undeniable need for investment in developments directed towards enhancing the provision of physical education and sport in primary schools, but also, to a parallel need for investment in research that is directly linked to new initiatives and developments in schools. Such research, based on action-research models and potentially adopting similar principles to those central to the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), have a crucial role to play in enabling ongoing developments to be evidence-informed. Partnership-based models of research and development that enable researchers to work directly alongside teachers and other stakeholders, for the betterment of physical education and sport for primary age students across Aotearoa New Zealand, are thus recommended.

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