Physical Education in Ireland

Board Meeting 27th Feb. - 1st March 2015
Edinburgh / Scotland UK
Outline

• Physical Education Curriculum
• What is happening in schools?
• Challenges
• 2 Case Studies
Physical Education Curriculum

- Revised Government of Ireland (1999)
- 60 minutes a week
- 6 strands: aquatics, games, dance, gymnastics, athletics and outdoor and adventure activities;
- Generalist primary teachers teaches PE
Supports

• PSSI lesson plans online resource

• CARA work on Inclusion

Active School Flag Initiative (DES)

Irish Primary PE Association
What is happening in schools?

- **Time allocation** (Broderick & Shiel, 2000; Cosgrave, 2006; Deenihan, 2007; Houses of the Oireachtas 2005; Fahey et al., 2005; Murphy, 2007; Woods et al., 2010)

- **Games dominated** (Coulter, 2010; McGuinness and Shelley, 1995; Murphy, 2007; Woods et al., 2010)

- **Facilities** (Darmody et al., 2010; Deenihan, 2007; Fahey et al., 2005; INTO, 2007)

- **Equipment** DES Grants are not annual; Supermarkets points system!

- **Government Policy on literacy and numeracy**

- **Children’s perspectives on physical education** (Broderick & Shiel, 2000; Darmody et al., 2010; Coulter & Woods, 2011; Travers et al., 2010)

- **Who teaches physical education?** (Carney & Howells, 2008; Houses of Oireachtas, 2005; Hunter, 2006; Mackenzie, 1999; Roche et al., 2009; Talbot, 2008)

- **External providers**

- **Programmes and packs** e.g. Fit4School, Fundamental Fun...€€€

Confusing Messages: What is PE?
Professional Development for Teachers

- Certificate
- Diploma
- Thesis
- Masters
- Thesis
- Communities of Practice
- Summer Courses
Recent Development: 4 year BED PE at St. Patricks College, Dublin

- 430 BED 1 2014-2015 CORE PE
- BED 1 24 hours PE
- BEd 2 24 Hours

BED 2
- Specialisation for 3 years
- 25 students study PE (due to staffing restrictions)

BED 2
- 24hours +24+24= Total 72 hours contact time

BEd 3
- 48 Hours contact time in PE

BED 4
- 48 hours contact time in PE (27 Credits)
PE in 2 Schools
Case Study 1 – Burrow NS

- 220 pupils in classes from Junior Infants to 6th.
Sutton

- 12km from Dublin city centre
- 12km from Dublin airport
Physical Education in the Burrow

- **PE** - 1 hour timetabled PE per week
- PE programme = 5 strands

School practice to use “Discretionary Time” to promote physical activity and it’s highly valued.

Teachers are encouraged to use the local beach as much as possible for educational trips and physical activity (Ultimate frisbee, relays, volleyball ... )
In our school ...

**Strengths**

- The Board of Management value a sports co-ordinator position – physical education & after school sports
- Enthusiastic teachers who value PE
- Very strong games, athletics and dance as many teachers have completed professional development in their own time

**Weaknesses**

- Gymnastics (lack of equipment, lack of teacher confidence)
- Restricted space both indoor and outdoor (pic)
- Curriculum overload
- Restricted budget for PE
Case Study 2
St. Declan’s N.S., Ashbourne, Co. Meath.

• **2005-2015:** 12-33 teachers.
• **2015** = 648 pupils (mixed).
• **PE:** Two 30 minute classes timetabled weekly.
• **PE Policy:** All strands including Aquatics.
• **Recreation:** 10 mins & 30 mins.
Ashbourne Co. Meath

- 20 km from Dublin City Centre
- 22km from Dublin Airport
- Population 2015: 14,000+ (doubled since 2005)
- Commuter town to Dublin.

Apartments/Housing=
Few green areas.
One playground.
## In Our School....

### Strengths
- **Indoor PE:** Common area (20m x 11m)
- **Outdoor PE:** School yards and residential green.
- **Recreation until Nov 2014:** Ample yard space for play.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities:** Gaelic Football, Basketball, Camogie, Hurling, Athletics, Rounders
- **Equipment**
- **School PE Policy**
- **Teachers enthusiastic**

### Weaknesses
- **Indoor PE:** Christmas stage performances restrict indoor PE from early November and December.
- **Recreation Nov 2014 onwards:** Building works reduced play area yards to three.
- **Curriculum overload**
- **Strands:** Imbalance still occurs.
- **External Providers**
- **Aquatics:** Costly for parents.
Indoor and Outdoor Activity Spaces
• IPPEA founded in 2002
• Voluntary organisation
• 190 members
• 10 euros membership fee
• Supported by PDST and Dublin West Education Centre
The IPPEA aims to:

• Represent and support the needs of primary teachers involved in Physical Education
• Support the promotion of Physical Education and healthy lifestyles in primary school
• Hold, organise and participate in conferences and workshops for the purpose of promoting PE at primary level
• Keep members up to date on the latest issues and developments in PE and related areas
• Liaise with other organisations involved in the promotion of PE, Physical Activity and Sport
IPPEA Activities

Main Activities:

• Annual Conference
• Community of Practice Workshops for teachers
• Position Statements and Guidelines
• Website information and reports on PE
• Twitter and Facebook
Thank You
Go Raibh Maith Agaibh