

Sport Wales

PESS and PLPS Case Study

The Practitioner's Journey

***The physical literacy journey
of Lisa***

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Key Points

- *The Practitioner's Journey captures the design, implementation and assessment of a physical literacy based initiative aimed at improving the writing skills of a group of targeted children and tracks the experiences of Lisa, a Learning Support Assistant.*
- *With training and support from staff and a PESS mentor, Lisa delivered a bespoke, child-centred physical literacy initiative that enhanced communication skills and confidence, significantly improving the writing skills of targeted children.*
- *This case study highlights how training and support can develop an exceptional, confident, motivated practitioner who endorses the principles of the Physical Literacy Framework and is able to positively influence the development of the 'whole' child.*

The Practitioner's Journey

Context

Physical literacy is a holistic concept which can be described as the 'motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.' (Whitehead, 2014). A growing body of evidence strongly suggests that physical literacy not only allows children and young people to fulfil their physical potential, but also improves attention, concentration, engagement and on-task behaviour. This ensures children and young people are 'available to learn' and have the potential to achieve better outcomes through physical, cognitive and affective development. Physical literacy is unique to each individual and considered fundamental for a child and young person's health and wellbeing as well as playing a key role in facilitating academic achievement.

In 2000 a Welsh task force outlined a number of key actions required to improve standards of PE across Wales. As a result the PE and School Sport (PESS) Programme was set up and managed by Sport Wales (funded by the Welsh Government in 2001) and continued until 2014. The primary aim for the programme was to ensure that 'every young person is challenged and supported in PE and school sport'. PESS focused on up skilling the practitioners. High quality provision across curricular, extracurricular and community activity helps to engage children and young people, providing them with positive activity experiences and the skills, confidence and motivation to be 'hooked on sport' for life. The PESS project has developed a suite of professional development courses and resources to support practitioners working with 3 to 19-year-olds (Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 and above).

Delivery was managed and supported by expert regional consortia teams with an understanding of physical literacy and the ways in which it can be achieved and improved through the curriculum and the wider community. PESS interventions investigated the potential value of using the physical to create and enhance meaningful learning and improve academic achievement through movement. This approach allowed for the creation and development of bespoke, holistic and child-centred interventions driven by need (as opposed to a 'one-size fits all' approach). Dragon Multi-Skills and Play to Learn developed wide reaching and extensive activities which were used as facilitative vehicles, accepting that the stage of development was more important than age.

The bespoke evolutionary nature of PESS has provided an excellent foundation for the new Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS). The primary focus of PLPS is to create engaging opportunities that meet the needs of every child, helping them to fulfil their full potential.



The Practitioner's Journey

Context (Cont.....)

In conjunction with the PLPS a newly developed Physical Literacy Framework (PLF) will provide practitioners with clear expectations that will help track the progress of every child along their physical literacy journey. The implementation of the PLF across Wales will raise the importance of developing a physically literate nation. However, the need to independently collate, review, analyse and evaluate the PESS evidence base and the introductory phase of the PLPS in raising standards across physical literacy, academic achievement and whole school outcomes is paramount.

SPEAR

In October 2014, the Centre for Sport, Physical Education and Activity Research (SPEAR) at Canterbury Christ Church University was commissioned by Sport Wales to independently review the evidence base for the Physical Education and School Sport Programme (PESS), the Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS) and the Physical Literacy Framework (PLF). Part of this independent review involves the collation, review, selection, secondary analysis and innovative presentation of case studies evidencing and sharing a range of best practice across PESS and PLPS initiatives. As such, the narrative and analysis of this case study has been conducted by SPEAR with the resources provided by Sport Wales. Consent to identify children, adults and organisations within this case study has been granted.

SPEAR is a cross school and cross faculty research centre at Canterbury Christ Church University established to bring together expertise across and outside the university and to facilitate collaborative working. In particular, SPEAR brings together expertise in Sport and Exercise Science, Physical Education, Education, Health and Tourism and Leisure. SPEAR's research has helped guide and inform public policy to increase physical activity and sport participation among young people by identifying the processes most successful in increasing participation. It has provided a rationale for government investment, contributed to the wider evidence base used by policy makers, and steered programme improvements that enhance physical activity opportunities and experiences.

More details on SPEAR and its work can be found at:

www.canterbury.ac.uk/SPEAR



The Practitioner's Journey

The physical literacy journey of Lisa

Profile

A growing number of educational professionals recognise the importance and impact of physical literacy on the development of learners. An appreciation that the concepts and principles of physical literacy can offer an innovative approach to planning, developing and assessing curricular activities across all Key Stages is increasingly evident. The principle of physical literacy as a curriculum development tool was embraced through the PESS programme, has since evolved into the PLPS and is a key aim of the Physical Literacy Framework. However, for the Physical Literacy Framework to be successfully embedded within schools, educational professionals must be trained and supported by high quality tutors and mentors to become physical literacy practitioners that continuously grow and share their knowledge and understanding.

Creating an environment in which children can value full-bodied, wholehearted, spontaneous movement play and respond to challenges in life are important aspects of learning. Physical literacy practitioners allow and enable children to organise their own movement play. A physical literacy practitioner may be a teacher, a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), a Teaching Assistant (TA), a parent/carer, a coach or sports development professional. They understand the developmental significance of the movements children choose and are able to use this information to adapt the learning environment, resources and experiences available to extend the potential for children's learning and development. However, the practitioner who aims to develop physical literacy in every child and achieve wider school outcomes has a challenging task. A practitioner must have good knowledge of curricular requirements, be competent and confident delivering educational activities in a practical setting and have strong communication skills (including non-verbal skills). A practitioner must be an experienced organiser with excellent group management skills. They must understand the importance of the interactions they have with children, expressing sensitivity, empathy, patience, appreciation of effort and an encouraging and enthusiastic approach to work. Importantly practitioners should embrace the principle of lifelong physical activity and endorse the vision for children to be 'hooked on sport' for life.

The Practitioner's Journey

Profile (Cont....)

Those new to the holistic concept of physical literacy sometimes lack a full understanding of what physical literacy could look like for their learners and school (especially within cross curricular activities). They may also feel anxious, under confident and unsure of their abilities to deliver meaningful sessions (sometimes due to their own negative experiences of PE and sport), worried about the perceptions of parents ('they do not want their children rolling around') and uncertain of the impact and results such an innovative teaching and learning approach might yield. Lisa Bailey, a LSA from Cyfarthfa Park Primary School (formally Brecon Road Infants School), wanted to explore the potential impact of using Play to Learn activities to improve the writing skills of learners who found traditional learning environments challenging and less motivating than the physical environment. Lisa's journey was particularly interesting as, like many adults, she had had negative experiences of PE and sport from an early age. This case study follows Lisa through her physical literacy journey to becoming a confident and competent physical literacy

The Challenge: What was the problem?

Cyfarthfa Park Primary School sought to investigate *"to what extent can high quality physical literacy impact on confidence and writing skills in year 1 children?"* Lisa wanted to be *"empowered to facilitate high quality Play to Learn sessions to a group of 10 year 1 children who were underachieving in their skills and were not expected to make the target outcome attainment (outcome 4) by July 2014."* Lisa lacked confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to plan and deliver physical development sessions (Play to Learn) with cross curricular links aimed at improving literacy standards and writing skills. Lisa also faced an additional challenge; her negative experiences of PE and lack of confidence in her sporting abilities associated with early experiences meant that Lisa herself had a number of barriers to overcome;

"speaking personally I hated sports in school. It was either hockey or netball and if you weren't any good at it then tough luck!.....So really in school I never really enjoyed PE!"



Lisa's thoughts on PE and Sport when she was at school
(Click on the picture to play video)

The Practitioner's Journey

The Intervention: What did they do?

A team of six staff from Cyfarthfa Park Primary School were involved throughout the intervention. The team used the learning context of 10 children from the year 1 group (coupled with well-known stories) to design and create a bespoke, child-centred and meaningful Play to Learn intervention with a focus on improving literacy (in particular writing skills) over a 10 week period. A control group of 9 children not receiving the Play to Learn sessions from the same year group was also tracked. Baseline writing assessments were carried out for both groups by the PE subject lead and were recorded and tracked through INCERTS (a secure online tool for teachers to record learner progress). The Dragon Tracker App was also used to monitor physical competencies and skills.



Meet the intervention team

Jane, the lead Play to Learn mentor, delivered theme focused sessions for children on a Monday. Lisa and her fellow LSAs then delivered follow-up sessions for 15 minutes twice a day between Tuesdays and Thursdays to develop gross and fine motor skills (derived from the technical skills manual linked to the hierarchy of gross motor skills.) Friday saw a focus on classroom activities allowing children to explicitly explore writing skills and new words the children had learnt throughout the week.



Lisa explains the intervention (click picture to play video)

In order for the intervention to be implemented effectively, Lisa and the team attended a Play to Learn training session delivered by Jane, the PESS mentor. Jane and the PE subject lead continued to mentor and support Lisa and the team allowing for continuous development and sharing of good practice. Post intervention both the control and intervention group were tested to establish whether:

1. The intervention group had improved their writing level by three or more sub-levels
2. The intervention group increased by more than the control group



A sample of Play to Learn activities

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Impact: What changed for Lisa?

Lisa has developed an enthusiasm and passion for lifelong physical literacy, not just for her learners, but also for herself and her family who are now firmly 'hooked on sport'. Lisa's confidence and understanding in the development and application of the physical literacy concepts and components within a bespoke Play to Learn intervention linked to the Physical Literacy Framework has shown significantly improved results in relation to both teaching and learning. With Jane's support, Lisa now believes she can make a profound and lasting difference to the lives of learners using physical literacy as a vehicle to heighten engagement and improve cross curricular and whole school outcomes.



What changed for Lisa? (click picture to play video)

"Lisa has literally gone from hating PE to now believing that the physical engages pupils in their learning. Lisa now owns a pair of trainers and has also transformed her own family where they are more active on a regular basis"
Jane Anthony (PESS Mentor)



Lisa's views on working with the children (click picture to play video)

Impact: What changed for the children?

The bespoke physical literacy intervention heightened the engagement of the learners, enabling children to achieve better outcomes. This was true for academic achievement, physical health and mental wellbeing. Every single learner within the intervention group achieved the required outcome in writing commensurate with their age as shown by the INCERTS data. According to this data, the intervention group developed and improved their writing skills by 0.8 marks more than the control group (see table on the next page). The children in the intervention group have also developed their communication skills as a result of being more confident and 'available to learn'. Teachers have commented on the vast improvement observed in the intervention group during sessions.

The Practitioner's Journey

Impact: What changed for the children?

Percentage of children in the intervention group achieving age related expectations for writing pre and post intervention

Intervention Children	% at Age Related Expectations	% Below Age Related Expectations
November 2013	60	40
April 2014	100	0

Summative writing INCERTS scores pre and post intervention within and between the intervention and control group

	Intervention group (pre)	Control group (pre)	Intervention group (post)	Control group (post)
Related expectations for writing	34.2	33.1	40.6	38.7
Progress difference within groups			6.4	5.6
Progress difference between groups				0.8



Final thoughts from Lisa
(click picture to play video)

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Impact: What changed for Cyfarthfa Park Primary School?

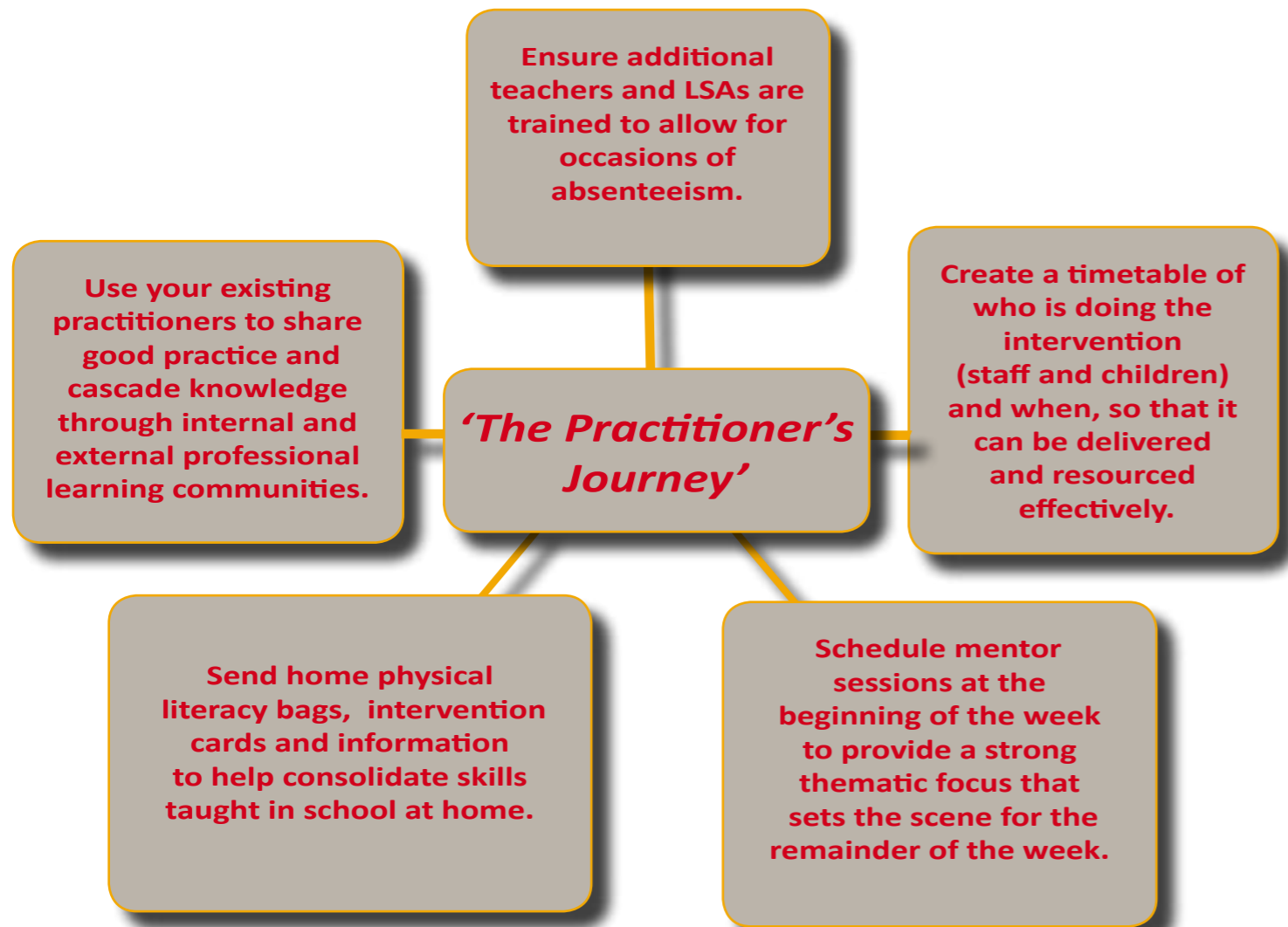
The school have utilised and embedded the physical literacy intervention as an innovative curriculum planning tool into their School Improvement Plan. The intervention has been expanded into reception and year 2 classes, with established and experienced physical literacy practitioners cascading their knowledge and understanding to other educational professionals within the school. Cyfarthfa Park Primary School have prepared physical literacy bags linked to the Play to Learn intervention to be sent home to parents, consolidating skills taught within school at



Final thoughts from Cyfarthfa Park School
(click picture to play video)

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Recommendations: Advice for schools and practitioners



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