

HOUSE OF COMMONS
ORAL EVIDENCE
TAKEN BEFORE THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SCHOOL SPORTS FOLLOWING LONDON 2012

TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2013

MR EDWARD TIMPSON MP

Evidence heard in Public

Questions 197-275

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Oral Evidence

Taken before the Education Committee

on Tuesday 11 June 2013

Members present:

Mr Graham Stuart (Chair)
Neil Carmichael
Alex Cunningham
Pat Glass
Chris Skidmore
Mr David Ward
Craig Whittaker

Examination of Witness

Witness: Mr Edward Timpson MP, Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, gave evidence.

Q197 Chair: Good morning, Minister, and welcome to this session of the Education Committee. It is a pleasure to have you before us again. As you know, we are discussing today school sports following London 2012. Can I ask you why sport seems to be a political football that gets any attention or funding only when there is a little bit of political pressure, and then there is a short-term fix? School sports partnerships under the last Government were temporary; they were not guaranteed long-term funding so they could not embed good practice. Now you have come up with the primary sports premium, which is for two years and again offers impossibly little chance of developing long-term strategy as a result. Can you explain that, and tell us whether you might do something to change this?

Mr Timpson: First, thank you for the opportunity to let the Committee have some more details about how we are building on the Olympic legacy around school sports. I think you will have seen the written ministerial statement from my colleague Hugh Robertson in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on 21 May, which sets out that legacy as an update.

Q198 Chair: He did not seem very keen to appear before us alongside you.

Mr Timpson: I cannot speak for Hugh. What I do know is that he has helped deliver a fantastic Olympic Games on behalf of the whole nation and he continues to be extremely dedicated to the cause.

Q199 Chair: Yes, he does, but Culture, Media and Sport, as a Department, has been keen on embedding sport for the long-term and probably takes rather a dim view of DfE's rather occasional interest in the matter.

Mr Timpson: That certainly has not been my experience in my close working with both DCMS and the Department of Health.

Q200 Chair: Hugh has been full of praise for DfE's approach to sport, has he? I am surprised he has not rushed here to tell us how absolutely fantastic he thinks DfE has been on sport, if that were true.

Mr Timpson: If you look at his written ministerial statement, you will see how he sets out the very closely-co-ordinated response to school sports through the sports premium, which has, for the first time, brought together three major Government Departments in a joint approach, not only in terms of the funding but also the implementation. Rather than us all going off on our own agendas and delivering for our individual Departments, we have looked at this very closely collectively, having also listened very carefully to all those on the outside who are in the know—teachers, parents, pupils, national governing bodies, the Youth Sport Trust and others—so that when we came up with this package it genuinely reflected where people believe there needs to be the most effort put in, which is at the primary-school level.

To answer your question about whether this is a political football, there are many areas in my own brief where I am grateful that they are not political footballs. I would hope this would be another area where we are all seeking to achieve the same outcome or objective, which is to get children active and interested in sport at the earliest possible age, so that it becomes a habit for life rather than something they dip into and are, on too many occasions, put off by their experience during their early years. There was a strong consensus that primary school was precisely the right focus. We have listened to that and we have acted on it.

As you know, we have wonderful things called spending reviews that come round every so often and every Government has to take those into account. This Government is no different, particularly given the more constrained financial circumstances in which we find ourselves. I am confident, though, that, as Andy Reed from the Sport and Recreation Alliance said, this money will go a long way, and potentially further than the old system and the money that was provided for that. We need to build on that and I am very happy, as ever, to talk to politicians from all parties to see how we can make sure that this is a legacy that is durable.

Q201 Chair: It does not seem to me that that is all that likely, really. You have got primaries that lack the sporting investment over the years we have seen in secondary schools, and it is for just two years, with high levels of accountability. Heads will be in a rush to spend the money in order to justify themselves when Ofsted come knocking. The likelihood that over two years they are going to be able to do something with long-term positive effect is rather slight, is it not?

Mr Timpson: As I said, I would like to be in a position to look beyond the spending review, and there will come a point when decisions can be made about where future money could come from.

Q202 Chair: You do not treat maths like that. When you do an initiative on maths, you do not say, “We are going to do it for five minutes”, do you? You change the system and then you put policy into place for the long-term. Why are you saying that primary is the most important area to focus on in sport, yet all the permanent spending is embedded in secondary schools? You are doing nothing to unpick that and move it to primary. Instead you have found a few hundred million over two years to throw at this because you are under pressure following the Olympics.

Mr Timpson: I would not accept that premise. When I took on this role back in September, one of the first things I did was sit down with some of the best heads in the country to understand how they make sport work in their schools and what “good” really looks like. Lord Coe has been very closely involved with this, advising us on what he understands from the huge amount of experience he has and making sure we are focusing on the right areas. Baroness Sue Campbell, who gave evidence to this Committee, has also been heavily involved in this process.

This is not something that has been conjured up overnight; it is a very carefully thought-out package. The reaction to it has been broadly positive. That has certainly been my experience when I have gone out and visited schools, both mainstream and special, to understand how they are thinking of spending this money.

The legitimate point that you make is: "What happens next?" I think that is really the basis of the few questions you have put to me, and it is a fair challenge.

Q203 Chair: If I may interrupt, Minister, if head teachers and people with an interest in sport in primary know that this investment is going to continue, their behaviour and their treatment and use of that money may be very different from if they think it is a two-year one-off. Have you got a message for them today?

Mr Timpson: The message is that this is a huge investment being made by this Government in very straitened times, and is testament to how important we believe sport and physical education are to our nation of children. We have seen obesity levels continue to rise. A third of children at reception age are still either overweight or obese; that doubles by the time they get to Year 6. We need to do something about it. That is why the Department of Health, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and my Department have come together, where we have programmes that we know work, to try to embed them closer to schools and to the community. We have also listened to others about what we can do better, so that we build on where things have been successful.

Q204 Chair: One thing you can do better is do it for the long-term. That is the message I am looking for. We all know there is a serious problem; we all know there is recognition that something needs to be done in primary. It just seems that this could be described as tokenism, rather than a fundamental re-working of both sports investment and Government policy for the long-term to support such a change.

Mr Timpson: This is £300 million of extra money over two years, and that in itself is a strong indication of the importance we place on improving sport in schools.

Q205 Chair: What is your message about the long-term? How high a priority is this? We will see what happens after an election, but if you say that the aim is that that sort of investment should be sustained in the long-term and that is a high priority for this set of Ministers, this Committee can be talking to others and trying to make sure that there is a consensus on that investment over the long-term. What we would not want to see is £300 million spent in a hurry because schools felt the pressure to do so and there was not the sustainable long-term benefit one would hope from £300 million of public expenditure.

Mr Timpson: Chair, you know as well as I do that the constraints of the spending review mean that I cannot commit without—

Q206 Chair: You can tell me whether it is a high priority. You can tell me whether you really want it to continue.

Mr Timpson: As part of that spending review process and looking forward, I would first be batting very hard on behalf of school sports to make sure that the £300 million continues to be built upon in the future, but, more importantly, that the progress that that will help bring about does not start to weaken because of the lack of perceived sustainability going into the future. From my point of view, I am clear that I see this as a high priority. The Prime Minister sees this as a high priority.

Q207 Chair: Continuation of investment following the £300 million?

Mr Timpson: The Prime Minister sees improvement in school sports as a high priority. This is why this is ring-fenced. This is the only money going to schools that is ring-fenced for a specific purpose, and that in itself is a clear way of describing the importance we place on it.

Q208 Chair: Should I, as a head teacher of a primary school, act on the basis that the £150 million a year is going to keep going and the £9,000—or whatever it is—per primary school will keep coming to my school and invest on that assumption, or am I doing it on the basis that I have got 18 grand over the next two years and that is it? Which assumption should I make? I have got to make one or the other.

Mr Timpson: I want all primary school head teachers to embed sport in their schools. We are providing them with additional money, guidance and support to do that. We have made it clear that it is a high priority.

Q209 Chair: You are not answering my question. You are doing a very good job of not answering my question, Minister.

Mr Timpson: As I have explained, I am not in the position to commit beyond the current spending review—

Q210 Chair: No, okay, but if you were a head, what would you do?

Mr Timpson: But I have given a strong steer that I, as the Minister responsible for school sports, see this as a high priority, not only as part of our Olympic legacy but for the health of our nation's children.

Q211 Chair: You see it as a high priority not just for the next two years but in the years following?

Mr Timpson: It should always be a high priority.

Q212 Mr Ward: If there are any staffing implications or benefits coming from the additional funding, would your advice be to ensure that those are on a temporary basis, pending the outcome of further funding discussions? In a school, you have got to make decisions to recruit staff; you have got to offer them something. Can it really only be done on a short-term, temporary basis?

Mr Timpson: One of the reasons we are giving money directly to primary schools is that we believe that teachers and head teachers are best placed to meet the needs of their individual children.

As a Member of this Committee in its previous incarnation—as the Children, Schools and Families Committee—when the Chair was an illustrious Member, I remember a report on schools entitled, if I recall, “Trusting Teachers”. That is the basis on which this money is going to them: because we believe that they are best placed to make those decisions. I am not going to dictate from the centre how schools should or should not spend this money.

Q213 Mr Ward: In a sense you are, because, having sat on governing bodies for 30 years looking at budgets, we are usually trying to plan over a three, four or five-year period. If we wanted to develop something in maths or ICT, we would have a long-term plan. For this part of the budget, the development of sport using this funding, the governing body when it is sat there is saying, “Well, we can do something for a couple of years and then we will just have to see what comes along”.

Mr Timpson: This is additional money. PE has been on the curriculum and will continue to be on the curriculum as a core element of it. The funding that is going to schools through the Dedicated Schools Grant is also money—albeit not ring-fenced—that is available

for sports provision. The sports premium is not the only money that is there to meet that objective.

It is also important to remember that each school does not have to do this in isolation. For example, I am aware of four primary schools—two in my constituency and two just over the border—that have looked at the various options of how to spend their sports premium and decided that they will pool their four sports premium budgets to buy in a full-time PE specialist, who will spend a day in each primary school each week and the fifth day as a flexi day to make sure that those children who are falling behind are able to catch up.

Q214 Mr Ward: Is that a temporary contract?

Mr Timpson: I do not know whether they have reached that level of detail and I do not know what their contractual arrangements are, but that demonstrates to me that this approach provides much more innovative ways in which they can bring in that high-quality PE teaching that we all want to see at a cost to them that they can meet with their sports premium.

Q215 Mr Ward: In terms of cross-departmental co-ordination, can we have a better understanding of the actual process that takes place there? Health, for instance, is contributing 40% of the money to the pot, so £140 million over two years. Is that formalised? Do you have regular meetings? Do they have their own specific targets that they want to achieve from their chunk of the money? Similarly with DCMS and yourselves, do you each have things that you want to get out of this that you will assess that level of funding against?

Mr Timpson: There are a number of aspects to this. There is the sports premium, which you have alluded to. You are right in saying that each Department has made a significant contribution: £60 million from the Department of Health each year; £80 million from my Department; and £10 million from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Over and above that, we have the £1 billion Youth and Community Sport Strategy coming out of DCMS. We also have £22.5 million from the Department of Health towards the School Games organisers. They also have their Change4Life programme, which I think is about £8.4 million, to help bring about 13,500 clubs by 2015. There are already 7,000 to date; about 750,000 children will be taking part in that.

In terms of how we measure the impact of all of those elements, you will be aware from previous evidence you have heard, and written evidence as well, that there will be, within the Ofsted inspection handbook, a new measure, effectively, as to how well schools are using the new sports funding to improve the quality and breadth of the PE and sport in their schools. That will include participation, healthy lifestyles—which is the Department of Health’s measure, in effect—as well as what I would term “personal best” but is their level of performance, to make sure that they are improving against it.

Q216 Mr Ward: What about health outcomes?

Mr Timpson: We have the National Child Measurement Programme, which continues. That is the Department of Health’s prerogative. We also have the “Taking Part” survey, which comes out of DCMS, which measures the level of participation. The good news on that is that the latest survey shows that in the six months either side of the Olympics we saw a significant increase in participation. We also have the “Active People” survey, which is the Sport England survey. The most recent survey, in December 2012, showed that the number of people participating in sport at least once a week had gone up to 15.5 million, which was an increase of 750,000 from the previous year.

There are some good ways of measuring success, not just in schools but in the wider community. We also get feedback from national governing bodies, from the Youth Sport Trust and from Sport England through these various methods, so we have a full and rounded

view of progress. Over and above that, Ofsted are going to do a “one year on” survey into the impact of the sports premium to see where in the first year, which is often the most difficult year, that impact has been greatest and where we still need to go further. I am sure this Committee will be interested in looking at that when it comes out.

Chair: Very.

Q217 Chris Skidmore: Last summer, everyone got very excited about what the legacy of the Olympics and Paralympics should be as the ‘Legacy Games’. What is your vision for an Olympic and Paralympic legacy? How would you define it?

Mr Timpson: I have alluded to the written ministerial statement from Hugh Robertson from just a few weeks ago. That sets out in some detail the enormous progress that has been made right across the board in delivering the legacy. There is the physical legacy: whether all the venues have now found a proper, long-term future. You only need to travel to Athens or Barcelona to see where that can go horribly wrong. We have secured all major venues with a long-term future, in large part testament to the work of the Mayor of London. That is an important legacy.

Over and above that, as you said, it is how we capture the spirit of the Olympics and Paralympics. Through the youth sport strategy, there are a number of strands. For example, the Get Set programme was very successful last year and is going to run over a longer period of time, and, in disabled sport, we have the continuation and growth of the School Games, through which about 10,000 schools are including children with disabilities in competitive sport. We have also, through the Project Ability programme, got 50 schools that are pioneering disabled sport. I had the opportunity last week to visit Marjorie McClure Specialist School in Chislehurst, where, you will be pleased to hear, I managed to beat John Steele from Sport England in a wheelchair race.

Chair: I should have been there.

Mr Timpson: You should have been there. I think it has been captured on video for posterity. I saw there that they were using the Paralympic values as the basis for their embedding of sport and trying to widen participation and competitive sport in that school. In many ways, that is the most important legacy: that the next generation who are coming through, rather than seeing sport as an adjunct of their lives or something that they just watch on telly, get out there and get the opportunity, in both their schools and their communities, to broaden their horizons and embed it in their own lives.

Q218 Chris Skidmore: That is great rhetoric, but how do we specifically define discrete outcomes for a legacy? You have talked about the £300 million, which is going to run out after two years, but, if you do not have set outcomes where you can say, “Yes, we have achieved this”, people will always doubt your ability to have delivered a legacy. To protect yourself against that, you must have outcomes that you feel represent the legacy you want to achieve, how you are going to go about it and, by the end of the two years, what you want to present to the nation and say, “Look, we have delivered the legacy”. What would be your specific discrete outcomes, rather than anecdotal evidence?

Mr Timpson: I have given you some figures for increased participation, and so on. I think it would be wrong to say, “We are going to set targets for the number of people we want to be able to do this, that or the other”.

Q219 Chris Skidmore: Not targets, because they are not outputs; they are outcomes. In Health, for instance, Andrew Lansley has long talked about long-term strategies where you arrive at a figure. It would surely make sense that that would be the same for school sports; it

is not necessarily a specific target, but within five years or two years, you want to aim for something, otherwise how are you going to justify the money being spent?

Mr Timpson: Perhaps it is obvious for me to say this, but we want the trajectory that the Olympics has helped spark to be a continuing trajectory. One of the reasons we moved away from the compulsory nature of the school sports partnerships is that, despite £2.4 billion being spent over seven years, it was not bringing about high enough levels of participation. Only two in five were playing competitive sport against other schools, for example. We want to see greater levels of participation and greater levels of competitive sport. We are seeing that through the School Games, which is also measured in the impact that it is having by the Government. We will, of course, now have the feedback from Ofsted inspections as well. If we are going to have outstanding schools across the board, they are going to have to be outstanding in their delivery of school sports. That will be a strong measure in determining whether we have made sufficient progress.

Q220 Chris Skidmore: We have already heard faint warning bells from some people who have given evidence to the Committee that, while there was an upsurge in interest and participation immediately after the Games, that has not really translated into people turning up at sports clubs, for instance. How will you monitor the evidence of translation into increased participation, apart from through the Ofsted survey? Will you just leave it a year, or will you continually look at it, in case you think, “Hang on a minute. Something is not happening here. We are not getting the early results we need”?

Mr Timpson: We will need to look at the “one year on” survey from Ofsted. That will be a key indicator of whether it has had the impact that everybody, in the conversations we have had, has been telling us is the likely outcome of the targeting of this money directly at primary schools. I mentioned the “Taking Part” and “Active People” surveys as well. I have in the back of my mind another survey, which showed that the number of people who were engaging in local community sports clubs has risen, but I am not going to hold myself to that because I cannot recollect the precise details of that as we speak.

What we can be sure about is that the opportunities for people—and particularly for children—to participate in sport are growing. The School Games will continue to grow; the Change4Life programme will continue to grow. We also have Sportivate, which is a Sport England programme where, for six weeks, young people up to the age of 25—it used to be 14 to 25 but we have now got agreement to lower that to 11, because I was worried about the transition from primary to secondary—get an opportunity to try out sports in their community. That is delivered with the support of Sport England. That has had around £56 million of funding put into it and about 250,000 children have had the opportunity to take part. A lot of activity is going on; because we do not read about it in the national newspapers does not mean it is not happening. In fact, it is, and that is another demonstration of it.

Q221 Chris Skidmore: One of the more shameful aspects of the 2012 Olympics legacy and the medal tally is that, when you look at the Team GB medal winners, over half went to private schools, like Millfield, for instance, which has its own 50-metre swimming pool. What do we do on the aspect of the legacy in terms of raising participation for elite athletes who come from state schools, particularly in inner-city areas and academies? Academies have been built in the past five years that do not even have a playground. What can the Government do to make sure that those pupils in schools that do not have the facilities that wealthier independent schools have will get access to school sports in the same way?

Mr Timpson: We do, of course, have the elite funding, which has now been settled, I believe. That is something that Hugh Robertson has been driving forward. You are right to look at and question why it is that in 2012 a hugely disproportionate number of our athletes

went to public school. On any stretch of the imagination, it cannot be the case that there happen to be much more people who are good at sport at independent schools than there are in state schools. We need to try to harness sporting excellence that has not been given the opportunity to flourish and give it the chance to do so.

One of the problems has been the lack of PE specialism at the primary-school level. We are seeking to address that so that children who show promise at an early age get the opportunity to develop their skills. I think there is more that independent schools can do themselves. One part of this package has been to engage much more closely with independent schools and ask the question of them: “What are you doing to support schools surrounding you? You have got some fantastic facilities; you have an Olympic-size swimming pool. How many of the schools surrounding you have been able to use it?”

Q222 Chair: There are precious few of those and there are very many state schools with limited facilities. The answer is not to be found in getting Eton to allow even more people to come on to their rowing lake than they do at the moment.

Mr Timpson: The answer is for independent schools to work more closely with other schools. For instance, King Edward’s in Birmingham does a huge amount of work with surrounding schools.

Q223 Chair: My point was more about the limited scale of the independent sector as opposed to the large scale of the maintained sector. Notwithstanding that maximising the use of the independent school to support the surrounding area is a good thing, it is not the answer. The answer is that we need to have a policy to make sure those facilities are available, as Chris says, for those who attend most maintained schools.

Mr Timpson: A large part of the £1 billion youth sport strategy has been to refurbish and upgrade facilities right across the country. I think over 1,000 have already been through that process. That is, quite rightly, an area that needs to improve.

One of the other areas where the sports premium can be of assistance to schools—again, without telling them how to spend it but providing them with the best possible information—is in working with independent schools, who may have full-time PE specialists, some of whose time they would be able to buy so they could benefit from their expertise without bearing the full cost of employing them. Others, particularly in rural areas, which may be far from facilities, have the opportunity to use this money to help with their transport so that they can access those facilities more readily than they would otherwise be able to. Providing that flexibility opens up so many other opportunities that would not have been there without the premium.

Q224 Chris Skidmore: Swimming is particularly important because it is on the national curriculum that every child should be able to swim 25 metres. Even with those opportunities, it is just simply not the case in vast areas of the country, both in the rural areas you touched on and in inner-city areas. We spoke to someone from Lewisham, for instance, who said he simply could not get access to a swimming pool. There are not enough swimming pools in this country to achieve the requirements of the national curriculum. You simply cannot get pupils into the swimming pools. How do we get round that problem?

Mr Timpson: There are a number of aspects to this. Yes, there is the question of whether we have sufficient facilities.

Chair: That is the question.

Mr Timpson: The answer is no, we do not have enough facilities.

Q225 Chair: His next question was: “What are you going to do about it?”

Mr Timpson: Yes. If I could continue my train of thought, otherwise it is difficult to try to get some coherence. I have talked about the Places People Play programme from Sport England, which is part of their youth sport strategy to upgrade community facilities and refurbish them so that they can have a greater level of use.

We also need to recognise that there are areas of the country where there are a number of different primary schools that have highly different levels of participation in swimming, some of which are meeting the 25 metres compulsory element of the curriculum by the end of Key Stage 2. I have seen some areas where one primary school has a 100% record of achieving that, whereas another has a zero record of doing that, yet they have access to the same facilities.

Yes, it is about the facilities, and the Sport England programme is helping to address that, and we need also to work with national governing bodies to see what more they can do to help schools access facilities, but it is also about the leadership within the school and how much they recognise the importance of that as part of that school's ethos, as well as delivering the curriculum. Some heads place higher priority on it and they achieve that objective handsomely; others do not seem to be doing it. With it being clear that that will still be part of the curriculum in the future, and with the Ofsted inspection providing a much closer level of scrutiny on their performance around swimming, I hope more heads will realise that they need to up their game.

Q226 Pat Glass: Minister, swimming pools are closing down all over this country at the moment. In my constituency, Glenholme swimming pool was closed down and demolished because the County Council could no longer afford to run it. That affected at least three secondary schools and numerous primary schools. That is happening right across the country. Is anybody aware of this in Government and joining this up? Is anybody doing anything about it?

Mr Timpson: If local councils are making decisions to close swimming pools that they have the ownership of and the responsibility for running, that is their decision. It has to be set against a backdrop of what they deem to be their priorities. They should know, as the deliverers of much of the school provision within their area, that the ability of a child, by Key Stage 2, to swim 25 metres unaided is clearly a part of the curriculum.

Chair: If being in the curriculum does not lead to the provision of the facility to allow the school to deliver it, surely that is a failure of Government. You say, "They should know". Is that because you are at their door knocking away? Are you mapping this? That is the point Pat is making. Are you going out there saying, "My God, you have got to make sure this facility is continued"? If you are not, we have got nothing but paper that says that kids should all swim 25 metres when in fact they cannot wet their feet.

Q227 Pat Glass: To be fair to them, Minister, it is not their responsibility. All the schools in my area are now academies; it is not the local authority's responsibility. This appears to be a mad situation in which facilities are disappearing, Government is not mapping it and nobody is doing anything about it.

Mr Timpson: Local authorities have the new responsibilities around public health and health and wellbeing boards are now being set up. I would be amazed if they were not looking at provision in their local area to help improve the health of their local communities by virtue of the facilities they have available.

In my constituency, they are in the process of developing a new Olympic-size swimming pool to replace a very old and outdated swimming pool, albeit much loved and in a beautiful building. There are local authorities that are making informed decisions about what

is best for their local community, and all other local authorities should be doing exactly the same.

Q228 Chris Skidmore: Coming back to leadership in schools, it is clear from Ofsted's recent report "Beyond 2012: outstanding physical education for all" that in one in three primary schools, the most gifted and talented pupils are not being pushed to achieve what they are expected to achieve. How do you deal with that challenge? What is your plan for ensuring that gifted and talented pupils in particular are given the opportunities that they deserve?

Mr Timpson: As you have already alluded to, Mr Skidmore, it is about better leadership in the school. It is also about having a stronger specialism at primary-school level. We know particularly girls are put off sport at too young an age because of the lack of engagement at primary-school level. Some of those undoubtedly will have had gifts and talents that never got the opportunity to be developed as a consequence. We need to improve what is sometimes termed "physical literacy" in our primary schools, have strong leadership on it, and recognise the benefit it has in terms not just of physical health but of a child's self-confidence and their ability to learn; it has a wider benefit to that child and to the school. The sports premium is part of that way of trying to generate a stronger focus on the benefits of sport, and it is head teachers, with the best possible information and guidance that we can give them, who need to make the decisions that are right for those children. I do not think I am best placed to make those decisions; I believe they are.

Q229 Chris Skidmore: When it comes to interface between schools—particularly secondary schools—and sports clubs, in January 2012 DCMS announced that Sport England would be funding a so-called "multi-sport satellite club" in every secondary school in partnership with the national governing bodies of sports. DfE supported this as a means of enhancing sport provision at secondary level. We are 18 months down the road, so you must have clear evidence of the impact of those multi-sport satellite clubs. We have heard evidence from Sport England, which has described these school-club links as sometimes being little more than a poster on a school noticeboard. Can you counter that comment from Mike Diaper at Sport England about the evidence of the impact that these clubs are having in secondary schools?

Mr Timpson: The ambition is, as you say, to have a multi-sport satellite club in every secondary school by 2015. From memory, the latest figures—I may have to come back and correct this, Chair; I am doing my best, rather than flick through bits of paper, to try to address the Committee directly—are around 500. In terms of the veracity of those clubs, I am happy to write to the Committee and provide some more detail. I know that Sport England and the national governing bodies are working much more closely than ever before and have been an integral part of the work that we have done. Over and above that, we have county sports partnerships, which help bring about links between primary schools and local sports clubs. There is about £1.5 million going into them from Sport England as well.

Q230 Chair: To stick to Chris's question, have you made any evaluation of these multi-sport satellite clubs in secondary schools? Are they working or not?

Mr Timpson: I will find out.

Q231 Craig Whittaker: Minister, good morning. For the record, one of the last things that we did when I was in the cabinet in Calderdale was start the building of two brand-new swimming pools, which are now fully opened and being enjoyed. We also have a

local community group that is building a swimming pool. There are some local authorities with those priorities still ongoing around the country.

You have mentioned lots of things: obesity and health; participation; briefly, talent identification; and, latterly, a few minutes ago, character-building. Can we really have a sports provision in schools that delivers all those things?

Mr Timpson: I do not think sport should ever be seen in suspended animation, away from the rest of school life. One of the reasons we have put such an emphasis on primary schools is because there are still too many primary schools where sport has not been given enough of an accentuated level of support, partly because teachers will say that there is so much to deliver elsewhere in the curriculum—that is why we are trying to pin it back to a more manageable level and provide them with the space to be more flexible and innovative in how they work in their schools. Sport should transcend all that; it should not just be an hour and a half on a Wednesday afternoon and not happen again during the week. There are ways that you can bring it to life within the curriculum. Where you recognise that a child has a particular talent—something we were touching on before—you can use that to boost their confidence in other aspects of their work at school. The answer is that we cannot rely on sport to do everything, but I think we can get it to do more than it has.

Chair: We have got limited time, Minister. Could I ask my colleagues to keep their questions nice and short, and could we have even more succinct and pointed answers than we have been getting already, excellent as they have been?

Q232 Craig Whittaker: You mentioned the negative effect sport can have, in particular for girls and them dropping out. In particular, competition has that negative effect. However, in the programme under the new draft national curriculum on PE, there is a much bigger emphasis on competition. Do you think that is the right way to go?

Mr Timpson: I am not sure I accept that competition somehow puts off girls playing sport. I have seen some pretty full-on hockey matches being played by some fairly young girls who seemed to be revelling in that activity. Where we need to be vigilant is that there will be some girls and boys who will be put off if it is solely about competitive sport. That is why we need to increase the range of sport that is available, so that some of it is team sport but some of it is a chance to develop one's skills individually. Things like dance and gymnastics—we are working closely with those governing bodies as well in developing this—are other ways that girls can feel engaged in sport and benefit hugely from it.

Q233 Pat Glass: Accepting that nothing is perfect and cannot be improved, we have heard some pretty overwhelming evidence that the school sport partnerships were a world-class system for delivering school sport. In retrospect, does the Government regret that it allowed the network to crumble?

Mr Timpson: No, we do not regret making the decision no longer to make school sports partnerships compulsory. It is not that they have been abolished; they are just no longer a requirement. Yes, there were some excellent school sports partnerships. I know, for instance, there were particularly good school sports partnerships in Harrogate in North Yorkshire. Many continue into the future, where they have chosen to do so.

There was a huge investment made, of £2.4 billion over seven years. I am not criticising the investment in itself; it is the impact. Only one in five children were doing regular competitive sport against other schools, to correct the figure I gave earlier, and there was a very disappointing drop-off at the age of 16, where things seemed to get worse rather than better. There will always be those—including those who were the creators of school sports partnerships—who will defend them until their dying days, and there will be others who will always have views on what is the correct approach.

In providing the school sports premium, we are not dictating to schools how they spend that money. I already know of a number of areas where schools have collectively decided, both at secondary and primary-school level, “Our school sports partnership works really well for us. We have looked at all the other options that are available—we have looked at enhancing our Change4Life programme and at bringing in specialist PE teachers—but we think this is the best deal for our children.” They are free to continue to do that. School sports partnerships will live on where people choose for them to do so. They have been excellent in some areas, but the amount of difference that they made to participation, and the drop-off at 16, were disappointing. That is why we decided to move in the direction that we have.

Q234 Pat Glass: Nevertheless, they provided something that simply is not there now. The evidence that we have heard is that the administrative parts of school sports partnerships were crucial: booking buses; informing parents; and organising coaches. All that kind of thing was what made it successful. Do you believe that the Government was fair in its criticisms of the bureaucracy? Why did it not just tackle the bureaucracy instead of taking away the funding and effectively demolishing the network?

Mr Timpson: As I say, there were some areas where it worked well and others where it did not work as well. We made a decision, rather than abolishing school sports partnerships, no longer to make them a requirement. I would not accept the “crumbling” analogy. A lot of these relationships and networks that have built up have been maintained and there are, as I say, already areas where they are deciding to continue them with the new money. We believe it is better to give the money directly to schools rather than through other means, so that, with support, advice and guidance from county sports partnerships, the Youth Sport Trust, Sport England, national governing bodies and others, they can make the best possible decisions available to them where they are best placed to do so.

We talked about political footballs earlier. This is one area where I am keen, having reached the point that we have, to look at where we go now, and to see if we can try to build on the additional money that we have now targeted at primary schools, so that we can all work towards a common goal, which is to improve the level and quality of the sport and PE we provide to our children so that they have a healthier future in which sport is part of their lives.

Q235 Pat Glass: Minister, I know you were not around at the time the decision was made, but certainly the evidence that we are getting and what it feels like is that the decision was made as part of the cost-cutting exercise and that, almost immediately, Government realised that they had made a mistake, and that this actually was something very useful, and therefore they have spent the last two years trying to put it back in a half-hearted manner. Would it not be better for children, for schools and for sport generally to try to put something similar back, whatever you call it—you do not have to call it “school sports partnerships”—and accept that it was a mistake taking it out?

Mr Timpson: As I say, if schools want to either continue a school sports partnership, which many have chosen to, or try to develop something similar that works for their area, they are free to do that. I think that is a much better approach than having a requirement to have a school sports partnership. There are a number of different schemes that work. There are others who will want to use the PE teacher release scheme, which has worked well for them; there will be others who want to develop their own clusters—I gave the example of the four primary schools bordering my own constituency where they are able to do that—that would not necessarily have been able to do that under the old system. Providing that extra innovation will give children greater choice and opportunity.

Q236 Alex Cunningham: Minister, on our travels we have seen some fantastic sport. I think that is one of the problems when you are in a Committee; you always get shown the best rather than the not-so-good stuff, but we have seen some fantastic stuff as we have gone around. We were in East London and we saw hundreds of children in a very large playground engaging in all manner of activities—a great wide range. Of course, that is not possible everywhere because of the sizes of schools and everything else. It is also the situation in schools where we have really committed leaders—where the head or others are really keen on sport. You talk about the freedom available to schools to provide excellence. How do we ensure that all schools, including the small rural schools, deliver quality in PE and sport?

Mr Timpson: I spoke at some length before about the various accountability measures that are in place, some for the first time. This additional money is ring-fenced. As I said, it is the only part of the school budget that is ring-fenced for a specific purpose, so schools already know that they have to think very carefully about how they are going to spend that specific sum. With the greater scrutiny that there will be from Ofsted, with the inspection handbook being enhanced to reflect that, schools will be under no illusions. Clearly, I am not the first Minister from the Department for Education to hear from teachers about the role of Ofsted in their lives and how they often think about them at weekends as well as when they are at school. There will be the additional money, which is targeted, but also the much stronger emphasis on how that money is going to be spent through the Ofsted process that will enable that to happen.

Q237 Alex Cunningham: What happens if they do not deliver? You have given them the freedom, so some of the schools doubtless will fail to deliver on this. What will happen as a result of that?

Mr Timpson: It is going to have an impact on how Ofsted view the school.

Q238 Alex Cunningham: Yes, but that does not help the children. What are we going to do then with schools? Are we going to get to a position where you say, “Sorry, your freedoms are now taken away. You need to do these things”? Is that what you will be telling them, either directly or through Ofsted?

Mr Timpson: The school will need to improve. If their rating is poor, the school will need to improve. Clearly, it is one measure of many that, with the new Ofsted framework, will be taken into consideration. We cannot have failing schools. We know that. That is why we are doing what we are with our wider educational reforms to deliver outstanding schools right across the country.

Q239 Alex Cunningham: Surely a school will not fail because it does not get its PE right?

Mr Timpson: It will depend on what else is happening in the school. I am not going to start dictating what Ofsted are going to say about any individual school, but clearly, if they are not delivering a decent PE and sport provision for children in that school, even with the additional £8,000 plus £5 per pupil over 17 pupils, that is not a very strong indication of a school that is performing well.

Q240 Alex Cunningham: So teachers or head teachers could be required to go off and do various courses to learn how to deliver better?

Mr Timpson: We are doing a huge amount of work with the new National College on improving initial teacher training.

Q241 Alex Cunningham: That is great, but it is the ones that are actually in schools now. Are we going to say to them, “You are failing. You need to train more. Go and do it”?

Mr Timpson: We are also improving continuing professional development, something that Lord Coe was very keen that we did. That is why we have included it as part of trying to drive up performance in schools. We are trying to give the many primary school teachers who have been nervous or lacked confidence in the delivery of PE and sport better skill levels so that they can be the people best placed to bring about that change.

Q242 Alex Cunningham: That is very good news, Minister. What you are saying is that teachers who are not into sport will get proper training and support to ensure they deliver what the Government and probably all of us want to see?

Mr Timpson: Yes. For example, a school may decide to use some of its sports premium to buy in some additional continuing professional development from some of the national governing bodies and other PE specialists. That can then help to address perhaps some of the issues that the Chair raised right at the start of this session about where we go next. If you have more teachers in more primary schools confident in delivering PE and with better skills, plus PE specialists roaming around or put in a school, depending on how they choose to spend their premium, as I described in my own constituency, that is how you can start to embed a culture change in how schools view sport as part of their work.

Q243 Alex Cunningham: That is very helpful. I will come back to PE specialists in a minute. Do you think schools should have delivered better value for the money from the School Games programme?

Mr Timpson: I think the School Games programme has been a real success. We have seen high levels of participation.

Q244 Alex Cunningham: We have seen a drop from half to a third, have we not?

Mr Timpson: There are 17,000 schools registered for the School Games. I need to check that figure. The level of participation that it has generated in a competitive environment has been a welcome boost to the opportunities for many children who otherwise would not have had them.

Q245 Alex Cunningham: Yes, but there has been that drop from a half to a third of all schools participating in the programme. What do you blame for that? Is it something to do with the loss of the school sports partnership money, or are people just doing their own thing?

Mr Timpson: I am not sure where you have got your figures from, Mr Cunningham. I will look at them, but I know 17,000 schools registered and over 13,000 are fully engaged in the programme. That is a pretty good result in a very short space of time. We always want to encourage more schools to be involved, and the sports premium will provide them with more money to join that programme as well.

Q246 Alex Cunningham: Yes. Hopefully we will see that reversed. Again on our travels, we have seen how primary PE specialists working across schools can deliver real participation and real excellence. You have acknowledged in your written evidence that it is the primaries that need more support. You have already talked a little bit about that. How is that going to be delivered? We need to get these people trained. You have talked a little about how there are more people who are going to be trained, but that is in the future, is it not?

Mr Timpson: We have recognised that this is an issue and we are seeking to address it in two ways. One I have already spoken about, around the work with the National College to beef up in initial teacher training the ability of primary teachers to deliver the curriculum and improve the way in which they do that.

Q247 Chair: Sorry to interrupt, Minister. Could you tell us a little more about that? Is it the hours? Is it the expertise? What is changing in teacher training that will make primary teachers better able to support sport in future?

Mr Timpson: I know Ofsted, the national governing bodies, Sport England and the College itself are working on how they can best achieve that in terms of the training, not just in the time that they spend on sport—

Q248 Chair: But does it include the time they spend? Are they going to spend more time?

Mr Timpson: I will need to write to you about where they have developed this to the point they are clear what is going to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Q249 Chair: It would be a strange kind of change that did not lead to any additional time spent on it.

Mr Timpson: I am afraid I do not know the answer to that question. It may be time; it is also about the quality of the initial teacher training that they are getting on the subject matter. I am happy to beaver away and try to establish a little bit more detail on that aspect of it. Where we are also clear is around getting more PE specialists into primary schools to deal with physical literacy.

Q250 Alex Cunningham: How many do you think we need in order to bring us up to—

Mr Timpson: I know when Baroness Sue Campbell gave evidence to the Committee she was clear that it is just not practical for every primary school to have a full-time PE specialist, but we clearly need more than we have at present, which is why we have initiated a pilot programme starting this summer to train up 120 primary school PE specialists—it is in three parts of the country; I think the Committee has the details—so that they can start to work not just in the schools in which they will be working but in a cluster-type approach, so that they can start to help with initial teacher training and continuing professional development in primary schools surrounding them. We will try to build on that in the following summer if it proves to be successful this summer.

Q251 Craig Whittaker: Minister, can I just challenge you on that 120? I know you said it was a pilot, but we have 17,000 primary schools in this country. It is a long time since I did maths at school, but that would mean that you had to have clusters of one teacher to 142 schools. Clearly that is nowhere near enough, even though it is a pilot. The funding is there for two years. We do not know whether it is going to go on beyond that—you have said that yourself—although that would be an aspiration. Is this not potentially going to end up being a whole waste of £300 million-plus if we are not careful?

Mr Timpson: It is right that we do not just give the money out and hope that everything is going to be hunky-dory, because, if this is truly going to embed and sustain PE and sport provision in primary schools and beyond, we need to keep a close eye on ensuring that it does just that. That is why I have set up a cross-Government ministerial group—myself, the Department of Health and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport—who will be meeting almost precisely this time next week, along with Lord Coe and other bodies

that are important in delivering this, to keep a close track on how this is starting to be implemented. One of the dangers of Government is that you announce something and then implementation is not given the close eye that it needs.

Q252 Chair: How will you know?

Mr Timpson: We have the “one year on” survey that Ofsted will be doing. I have already written to 40 specific schools that we know are outstanding in their delivery of sport, so I understand what good really looks like, to enable other schools to benefit from that. When we provide each primary school, in a few weeks’ time, with a comprehensive and detailed information pack about how they can use the sports premium, that will form part of that work. I am going on a number of visits in the next few weeks to schools that will receive the money soon and others that have a good track record. Lord Coe is doing the same. We may even meet at the same school at the same time; you never know. As a delivery group, we will want regular feedback from Sport England, the Youth Sport Trust and the national governing bodies. We have also worked closely with Russell Hobby from the NAHT, who are very keen to help disseminate information on all this and provide us with feedback. We need to keep that dialogue going, so that we do not lose what I think has been a welcome announcement on the commitment we have made. We need to keep vigilance high so that we ensure that it has the impact that we want.

Q253 Chair: Are you going to maintain that all the way to 2015? It strikes me as the classic thing, where there is a lot of enthusiasm post a big event and then that wanes and people from multiple Departments stop turning up after a while. If we return to talk to you in early 2015, will we find that all these meetings have been maintained with the same high level of participation that they had at the beginning?

Mr Timpson: As long as I am still in this position, I am clear what my expectations are. Although we all love a meeting, what I am most interested in is making sure that this cross-Government co-ordinated effort continues beyond the table that we will sit round when we meet.

Chair: Much as I would like to see you promoted, let us hope the reshuffle does not destabilise all this positive work, Minister, in due course.

Q254 Alex Cunningham: We have high expectations and hopes as well, but I am trying to put together these different strands of Government policy and some of the things you have said. You have talked about the freedom of individual schools to make decisions on how they spend their money. You have also talked about their responsibility to deliver excellence within the school. You have also talked about the development of more PE specialists, who should be working across all schools. How does that actually deliver, in the end? I just see that at some stage, there are going to be lots of schools that do not make the grade. How are you going to encourage them with a firm hand to use the money appropriately and to use all these various initiatives that you have put in place? You have given them the freedom to do what they like.

Mr Timpson: I do not think the areas that you have described are in any way incompatible; they are all complementary. It is about understanding and being committed to the idea that head teachers and teachers are best placed to know the children in their own schools and how they will best benefit from this additional money. As I say, for the first time it is ring-fenced and it will be inspected by Ofsted.

Q255 Chair: In the two years of the primary sports premium, what percentage of schools will be inspected by Ofsted?

Mr Timpson: I do not know the answer to that.

Q256 Chair: I know the answer to that. It is a fraction. It is a tiny number. The idea that Ofsted, in two years, is going to be able to hold primary schools in their vast numbers to account is, I would suggest, fundamentally flawed. They are not going to be able to. They are not going to be seen. They are going to have other priorities. The truth is there is a very little stick with which to make a head teacher of a primary school, under pressure from other things, worry about sport.

Mr Timpson: I do not accept that, because every school knows that they will be held to account for that measure through Ofsted. Not every school knows when they are going to be inspected by Ofsted.

Q257 Chair: They have got a pretty good idea. If you had an inspection last week and you were found to be outstanding, you know you are not going to see Ofsted for the next two years. That “outstanding” will have had very little to do with sports provision when you get it. You are going to know you are free from Ofsted for the next two years. That is true, is it not, unless your exam data collapse?

Mr Timpson: I hope you would concur with my philosophy that if you have an outstanding school that is deemed to have been outstanding at all levels by Ofsted, that is a good indicator of its future likelihood of continuing to provide high-quality teaching and learning. That does not mean that they avoid any future inspection whatsoever.

Q258 Chair: Is it possible, Minister, that you could be woeful at sports provision and still be outstanding? Are there outstanding primary schools in this country that are woeful at sports provision?

Mr Timpson: I would be hugely surprised if, with the new inspection coming in with an emphasis on sports provision, a school would be able to achieve an “outstanding” rating if it was failing dismally to provide an acceptable level of school sports. Ultimately, it is a matter for Ofsted.

Q259 Chair: Yes, but they will not be visiting. I suggest it is important to keep in perspective the amount of accountability there will be for most schools, which, in most cases, will be none. Most schools will not be inspected by Ofsted in the next two years.

Mr Timpson: Clearly the inspection itself is an important element of holding schools to account, but it is also about the knowledge that this is now part of the inspection regime and that this money is ring-fenced. Also, schools will have to put on their websites what their sports offer is so that parents can compare what their school is offering with what the school next door or across the border is offering. Parents can be a very powerful group, who can hold their school to account either through their role as school governors, where that is the case, or, more widely, through PTAs and elsewhere. There are a number of different measures for accountability that go beyond Ofsted and include the wider community.

Q260 Neil Carmichael: Since we have leapfrogged into my area of accountability, I will press on with it and develop it a little bit more. I accept the point you are making about the threat of Ofsted arriving as a useful encouragement to schools to do the best for sport, but I want to tie it in to the previous discussion about school leadership. I would have thought Ofsted would want to make it clear that school leadership, including governors, would want to ensure that sport was being treated properly. Do you agree that that is one of their drivers?

Mr Timpson: I think I have made it clear how important leadership is within any school—indeed, any environment. That is going to be the same for sport as elsewhere. I

know, having been to schools that have fantastic sport on offer, that it is more often than not driven by the head teacher, or someone with responsibility in the school for sport, who has a passion and belief that sport can make a huge difference to a child's life. Yes, the leadership will be a crucial aspect of primary schools delivering good sport.

Q261 Neil Carmichael: How are we going to measure participation in primary school sport in particular?

Mr Timpson: We have the School Games level of participation; we have around the national curriculum the need to ensure the number of children who reach the requisite level of swimming is met; and I have mentioned the number of different surveys that also exist: the "Taking Part" survey from DCMS as well as the "Active People" survey. Then we have the National Child Measurement Programme, which is, from the Department of Health's point of view as well as more widely across Government, an important indicator of whether a child is being active and participating in sport.

There are a number of ways of ensuring that participation is being understood, but it is not just about participation. I think this is where sometimes the argument has been skewed in the past. It is also about whether the participation itself is meaningful, whether the type of sport that is being delivered is making a difference to that child, whether there is a competitive element to it, whether it is improving their health, and whether they are reaching their personal best. They are all aspects that will be considered when looking at whether this is delivering or not.

Q262 Neil Carmichael: Do you think the various kite marks and so forth for school sports are going to be helpful as quality-control measures?

Mr Timpson: Generally speaking, I do not have a problem with kite marks as long as they mean what they say. Sometimes it is easy to pursue a kite mark, quality mark or whatever it may be, that, when you dig beneath it, does not demonstrate a huge level of commitment. As long as there is great rigour behind the kite mark or quality mark that is on offer and it has the "Ronseal" element to it, it can be of benefit to schools, particularly as they are, on their websites, going to have to tell a much wider audience what they are doing to deliver for children in their school.

Q263 Pat Glass: Minister, we have heard a great deal about the primary sports premium, and it has been welcomed in the sector, but we have heard from head teachers that they are being deluged by calls from coaches offering services and, in some cases, there are questions about ability and standards. We are also hearing that they are not getting the independent advice that they need to decide how this money would be best spent for all their children. What kind of independent advice are you and the Department giving to head teachers on how they should best spend this money?

Mr Timpson: An answer I gave a few moments ago touched on exactly this point. We have been developing a comprehensive information package, which is going to go to every primary school in the next few weeks so it hits that point between the end of SATs and the end of school, so head teachers will have a huge amount of guidance and information available to them about how they can spend this money. On the ground, there are still many school sports co-ordinators, as well as the Youth Sport Trust, Sport England, national governing bodies and others, who are providing this information as well.

You raise an important point, and one that I am acutely aware of, that those heads who are not as knowledgeable as others about what options are available, or may be looking for a way of dealing with this issue, may find it very attractive when it is presented to them on a plate without understanding the full implications of it. They need to have some strong steers

that provide them with the best possible information on what works. That could be the Change4Life club, or it could be through the type of arrangement I described in my own constituency. It is to help improve that understanding that I have written to 40 of the best-performing schools for them to provide case studies to go out to all primary schools to show, “These are the ways we know it can work well”. It is important they have that information and I know that many of them want to receive that, which is why we are taking the steps that we are.

Q264 Pat Glass: That is good news. How detailed will that be, Minister? Will it say, “These are the kinds of qualifications that you need to insist upon. These are the things you need to check out” or will it say things like, “These organisations have the kinds of skills and abilities that you need to be looking for”—not necessarily recommending, but pointing them in the direction of known and trusted organisations?

Mr Timpson: I have asked to see this package before it goes, as have Ministers from the other Departments. If we are not content with it, then it will go back, hopefully without losing precious time. I am confident that it will provide primary schools with the level of information that they need about all the various ways that they can spend that money, whether it is buying in specialist PE teachers; paying for professional development, as we discussed before; hiring special sports facilities; or providing places for after-school or summer sports clubs. It will provide the range of potential activities and settings, but also where they can go for the best possible guidance. The county sports partnerships are going to be a crucial part of that make-up, too.

Q265 Pat Glass: Can we have a copy of that when it is ready? Will you be putting in there: “These are the kinds of rates you should be paying”? Heads very often have no idea. What we are hearing is that some of these charges are going up simply because the money is there. Putting in a range that schools should be looking at paying would be very helpful to heads.

Mr Timpson: I will certainly take that suggestion away and consider it very carefully. Unless I am told otherwise, I see no problem with the Committee having a copy of the package that has gone to primary schools. If I do not provide it, I am sure a primary school will want you to have a look at it anyway.

Q266 Chair: We will trust that you will provide it. There are no reasons why we should not have a copy and therefore we shall have a copy, Minister, and you will doubtless provide it.

Mr Timpson: I am sure we can even stretch to providing every Member of the Committee with a copy of it.

Chair: You do not necessarily need to go that far. Just send us one and we will go from there. Electronically, I am sure we can all have one.

Q267 Mr Ward: Baroness Grey-Thompson told us that very often young disabled children are “sent to the library” when it comes to PE and sports. What can you do to ensure that school sport is truly inclusive?

Mr Timpson: First, we have to recognise the real sea change that the Paralympics has brought about in a lot of people’s attitudes towards disability and disabled sport in particular, and we need to nurture that where we can. There are a number of pieces of work and programmes that we have to support disabled children. I touched on the Project Ability programme. I know one of the head teachers who came to give evidence to the Committee was clear about the really positive impact that that was having, and certainly the school I

visited in Chislehurst last week was a strong demonstration of that. About 5,000 have benefited from that programme. I mentioned the School Games as well; about 10,000 schools have a disabled sport element to the competitive games that they have on offer.

Q268 Mr Ward: As you have raised it, we had a head of a special school who said they found it very difficult to find the funding to go beyond level one of the School Games. Is that something that you have identified as a problem for schools?

Mr Timpson: That is not something that has been raised with me directly before, but I am happy to look at that. If there are any blockages that, from a common sense point of view, should not be there, we should do what we can to try to unblock them. There should be no disadvantage. The Equality Act is very clear: schools should be making reasonable adjustments for children with a disability and should not be stifling any opportunity that they have. I am happy to go and have a look at that.

The other elements that are part of trying to promote and enhance the prospect of disabled children playing sport move into the realm of Sport England, which is putting around £10 million into grassroots projects in communities to try to give disabled children much more opportunity outside school than they currently have. There will be a dedicated day of Paralympic sport in the stadium in July 2013 as part of the “one year on” celebrations, and I think that is an important landmark, which has never been done before, which gives us an opportunity to re-highlight the importance of all that work that I have just talked about continuing.

Q269 Chair: Were we, in our report, to recommend that you move to improve the inclusivity of the School Games, is that something that you would expect to take seriously and act upon?

Mr Timpson: I will take it very seriously. I will be in close discussions with my ministerial colleagues who have a part to play in delivering the School Games to see what we can do should there prove to be any outstanding issues.

Q270 Mr Ward: The Baroness also raised the absence, under what will be the old system, of references within a statement to sports. Will this be something that could be incorporated within the new EHC regime when it comes in? If so, how?

Mr Timpson: Just to understand your question, are you talking about within the current statement?

Mr Ward: The point made by Baroness Grey-Thompson was the absence of a reference to physical activity and the benefits that that would bring. Once you have the new system in place with the education, health and care plans, is that something you would expect to be incorporated? If so, how?

Mr Timpson: Each plan—currently a statement; soon, hopefully, to be an education, health and care plan—is assessed for each individual child’s needs. Part of some children’s assessed need will be a greater level of physical activity, for example, so thought needs to be put into how that would be achieved. I do not think you can prescribe in every case that that would necessarily be part of their plan. What we can do and we are doing is try to improve the offer in schools for children with a disability who want to access sporting opportunities. The local offer will be a strong document to make it clear and transparent what that offer is to disabled children, as well as other activities that they may want to engage in.

Q271 Mr Ward: We have clearly identified the disparity between the skills and experience that exist in secondary schools compared with primary schools in PE and sport. Within that, there is also a disparity between PE and sport skills for general pupils as opposed

to those with special needs. What can be done to ensure that that expertise exists not only in primary schools but in primary schools for disabled children?

Mr Timpson: There is the work that is being done on the ITT programmes. Although the sports premium is attached to each child, it is a general pot for the school to spend, but where there is a clear need in a school for a cohort of children with disabilities to have sports provision, they may want to consider using their sports premium to bring in some professional development for one or a number of their teachers or to buy in specialist PE teaching as a way of fulfilling that responsibility. Again, it is a matter of schools making sure they have got the right mix of expertise that meets the needs of the children in that school individually and collectively, and that should include disabled children, for the reasons I gave: the need, under the Equality Act 2010, to make reasonable adjustments.

Q272 Chair: Can I take you back to the issue of the new EHCs replacing the statements? David asked you about the inclusion of physical activity in those. You moved on to say that the local offers should be specific about support for disabled children in getting activity, but if I could take you back to the EHC, it is a health plan as well as an education and a care plan. For the record, without prescribing that it should happen in all cases, would you expect physical activity to be incorporated into the plan, if appropriate? We have heard evidence that disabled children, when it comes to sports, can be sent to the library. Without the signal, it is possible, notwithstanding improvements to the local offer, that certain children may be excluded because their plan does not specifically mention physical activity. Where appropriate, would you like to see it incorporated into the plans, for the record?

Mr Timpson: What I can say is that, where there is an assessed need that it is necessary for that plan to enable that individual child to achieve their educational outcomes, and having that opportunity to engage in physical activity in whichever way is best for them in school is a part of that, clearly it should be in the plan. What would not be appropriate is to have a catch-all saying in every plan there must be that reference.

Q273 Chair: No, I was clear on that. Where appropriate, with the caveats you have just given, you would expect some disabled children's EHCs to include some description of access to physical activity.

Mr Timpson: Yes, where it is an assessed need that it is necessary for them to reach their education outcomes, which is the criterion set. We have the duty now on health commissioners, which is an addition to the current regime and should help pull them into helping deliver whatever physical activity is needed.

Q274 Chair: It just strikes me that, because Health will look at it, as all Departments do, through its own silo view, and the NHS does not provide physical activity for youngsters—schools do—there might be a danger that it does not get included and the kids still end up being sent to the library instead of having some form of sporting provision. I wondered whether you had given any thought to that, and whether there are any signals you might want to give this afternoon on this to make sure that the need does get assessed and that it does get included in the plan, if appropriate.

Mr Timpson: One of the joys of reforming the special educational needs system has been a multitude of discussions with the Department of Health at every level. Clearly this is an area that we continue to discuss with them, so they have a full understanding of the views of this Committee—very legitimate views they are too.

The Department of Health has an interest in what happens in schools both for able and disabled children, in relation to the School Games; in terms of delivering a healthy lifestyle for all children through the Ofsted accountability structures; and also through their

Change4Life programme. There is quite a lot of crossover in their engagement with the school environment. What we need to do is, at a commissioning level, make sure that that becomes much more engrained than it has been in the past.

Q275 Chair: The code of practice is going to be amended as a result of learning from the pilots and the process through Parliament. Is there a possibility that the code of practice might say something about physical activity or, indeed, that you might look at putting something on the face of the Bill that includes physical activity? There is a danger that it might come under Health but they will not think of it as being a Health prescription because it is something delivered by schools.

Mr Timpson: I am not going to commit to something on the hoof in Committee, and I know we have got the delights of a long Report stage and Third Reading later this afternoon on the Bill. However, I am very happy to look at your suggestion, Chair, about the code of practice and where the current draft touches on this and whether there is potential for a clearer approach.

Chair: We could ask no more. We are very grateful. We know it is a very heavy day for you: you have got the Children and Families Bill Report stage and Third Reading this afternoon, which would be a rigorous test of any Minister, and you have been with us this morning. We really do appreciate your giving your time to us and being with us today.