

The 7 key messages of PE

- 1. The importance of enjoyment and play.** The child who associates fun and enjoyment with physical education lessons and who gains a sense of achievement will develop the positive attitudes so necessary for continued participation in physical education lessons and physical activity. Through play the child learns to move effectively, to think, to interact socially with others and to express feelings.
- 2. Maximum participation by all children in the physical education lesson.** The desire by children for active participation can be seen as the starting-point for the teacher when planning and implementing physical education lessons. Lessons which can be identified as successful in achieving the pre-determined objectives will inevitably be those where the children were active throughout the entire lesson.
- 3. The development of skills and increasing understanding** of the activities which the children are experiencing. The development of skills forms a significant part of the curriculum for physical education, beginning through structured play activities at infant level and extending throughout the class levels. As the skills are developed there should be an emphasis too on increasing the child's understanding of the activities he/she is engaged in. This can be achieved by adopting appropriate teaching methods where discussion is an essential part of the process.
- 4. Providing a balance between competitive and non-competitive activities.** Activities incorporating some elements of competition can benefit the child as he/she progresses towards the achievement of his/her potential. The positive opportunities presented include the development of respect for opponents, rules and classmates as officials. However, the pressures of competition can form barriers to progress for some children, and competition does not always present the ideal environment for development of skills. A balance should therefore be sought between provision for competitive and non-competitive activities.
- 5. Providing a balance between contact and non-contact activities.** The needs of the individual child should be considered when selecting suitable activities. A balance should be sought which, for example, allows the child who favours non-contact activities to enjoy those activities and yet be able to engage in contact activities, where possible modified to suit his/her needs.
- 6. Providing opportunities for achievement for each child.** It is essential that the child be presented with achievable tasks, regardless of the activity he/she is engaged in. The satisfaction of achievement is the factor that motivates many children to continue to participate in physical activity.
- 7. Providing activities equally suitable for girls and boys.** Activities which have traditionally been associated with either sex can be presented, sometimes with modifications, to a mixed class. Single sex classes should be exposed to a range of activities from all six strands where possible, thus ensuring that a balanced programme is presented to them.