

THE GAMES IN SCHOOLS: PE & CROSS CURRICULAR IMPACTS

› Legacy area: **EDUCATION**

› Policy focus: **IMPACT**

› **THE EVIDENCE:**

School-based initiatives are the most effective way to use the Games to engage and excite children and young people

› **THE BIG THREE DEBATES:**

1.

Can short school based initiatives have a longer-term impact on sport participation, learning and behaviour?

2.

Are there Olympic and Paralympic themes beyond sport that can engage and excite children and young people?

3.

Is it realistic to try to use the Games to get children and young people who don't like sport to play more?

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› WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

Initiatives that target schools have long been identified as an effective way to promote sport, physical activity and healthy lifestyles to children and young people. This is because school based programmes and events offer the opportunity to reach all children and young people – an opportunity that is not available in any other setting or among older age groups.

Two important London 2012 themed initiatives have been the [Lloyds TSB National School Sport Week](#) and [Bank of Scotland National School Sport Week](#) in primary and secondary schools, and the [Change 4 Life School Sport Clubs](#) in secondary schools and colleges. Research shows that these initiatives have not only touched a significant number of children (the National School Sports Weeks involved almost five million children and young people and almost 14,000 schools in 2010), but that they are having an impact on important target groups, such as those that do not normally engage with sport and physical activity. In particular, the evidence shows that:

- Olympic and Paralympic themes impact on learning across the curriculum, particularly in primary schools where the impact is largest in the core subjects of literacy and numeracy.
- Promoting the celebratory aspects of the Olympic and Paralympic Games is particularly important in engaging primary school pupils who say they do not particularly like sport.
- Providing opportunities to try new Olympic and Paralympic sports has been effective in getting secondary school pupils who do not play much sport to play more.

› HOW WAS THE EVIDENCE GATHERED?

SPEAR evaluated [the impact of Lloyds TSB National School Sport Week in England and Wales and Bank of Scotland National School Sport Week in 2010 and 2011](#). Across the two years, over two and a half thousand teachers, parents and pupils were asked about the impact of the weeks on sport participation, on learning and on behaviour through surveys, interviews and focus groups. This helped develop an understanding of not only how much sport participation and learning had increased and improved, but also of the many different ways in which children and young people enjoyed and experienced the week.

Change 4 Life School Sport Clubs were developed to capitalise on the Olympic and Paralympic Games to try to get young people aged 11-18 who don't play much sport to play more. SPEAR asked over 1,000 children in over 80 schools about what they liked about the clubs, what they think about sport, and whether they play more sport since joining the club. Teachers and club leaders were also asked about how the clubs were set up and organised through both surveys and interviews.

› WHO WAS THE AUDIENCE?

The [Youth Sport Trust](#) commissioned SPEAR to evaluate the National School Sport Weeks on behalf of Lloyds TSB and the Bank of Scotland who sponsor the events in England and Wales and in Scotland respectively. The Youth Sport Trust also commissioned SPEAR to conduct an evaluation of Change 4 Life School Sport Clubs, which are part of the wider [Change 4 Life](#) programme on behalf of the [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#) and the [Department of Health](#) who fund this programme.

The Youth Sport Trust and their partner sponsors and funders wanted to know what effect the Olympic and Paralympic Games can have in schools, both on physical education, physical activity and sport, and on learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum. They were particularly interested to know whether the Games could have an impact on children and young people who do not normally get very excited about sport.

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› THE BIG THREE DEBATES

A key question for school-based initiatives and events like the National School Sport Weeks and Change 4 Life School Sport Clubs is whether the children and young people who are involved continue to play more sport once the programme has ended. In 2010, after the National School Sport Weeks, the research showed that almost one and a half million primary school children were doing more sport since the weeks, and that almost a million primary school children had joined a new club inside or outside of school since the weeks. Although the children who say they do more sport could fall again, the fact that many children have made an effort to join a new club suggests that they are likely to continue to participate in the future.

THE BIG THREE DEBATES ABOUT THE GAMES IN SCHOOLS...

- 1** How can short school based initiatives like the national school sports weeks have a longer term impact on sport participation, learning and behaviour?
- 2** Should schools using the Olympic and Paralympic Games just focus on sport, or are there other themes that can be used to engage and excite children and young people?
- 3** Is it realistic to try to use the Olympic and Paralympic Games to get children and young people who say they don't really like sport to play more often?

› FURTHER RESOURCES AND READING

- Youth Sport Trust: <http://www.youthsporttrust.org/>
- SPEAR's research on sport, physical activity and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in schools: <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/Research/Centres/SPEAR/ResearchProjects/Home.aspx>
- National School Sport Weeks: <http://schoolsportweek.org/> / <http://schoolsportweekscotland.org>
- Change 4 Life School Sport Clubs: <http://www.youthsporttrust.org/page/c4l/index.html>
- The Change 4 Life programme: <http://www.nhs.uk/change4life>
- The Department of Health: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/>
- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/>

CREDITS

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