



**Association for Physical Education  
Supports the Transformation of the Physical Education Learning Environment  
'Flexible Spaces for Physical Learners'**

In supporting the Governments agenda for transforming education the Association for Physical Education (afPE) commends the following advice and encourages strategic Local Authority PE colleagues to take a proactive lead in local discussions. In particular afPE supports the ambition to provide spaces for learning that are both innovative and fit for purpose.

**Vision Statement:**

The Association for Physical Education wants everyone to be able to access quality physical learning environments that enable learners to be successful, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

**Learning Centres need to ensure that:**

- The physical environment provides flexibility to support breadth of activity within the learning experience and afford access to physical activities, extended services and community provision.
- Structured curricular learning in the physical environment can support safe, enjoyable, creative, competitive, socially interactive and health focussed activities that not only exist within physical education, but also support active learning across the wider curriculum.

**From Sports Halls to Learning Spaces...**

Amongst a number of key considerations it will be important to reflect on the limitations of some long held beliefs. Physical educationalists are the experts in adapting space to suit the needs of learners. Such maximal space should however not be determined by the parameters of any particular activity. Consideration is required to ensure that space for sport and physical activity in the foreseeable future is flexible and accessible for everyone.

**Considerations:**

The following key prompts, whilst certainly not an exhausted list, provide central discussion areas in determining your future physical learning environments:

- ? What will physical education look like in the future?
- ? What are the learning outcomes learners will need?
- ? What sorts of learning relationships do we want to foster?
- ? What competencies do we want learners to develop based on key concepts, key processes, range and content?
- ? What tools and resources including ICT will support and enhance learning?
- ? Where do learners want their learning to take place?
- ? Who is best placed to lead the learning?
- ? Who will learners learn with?
- ? How will learners learn?

In addition:

- ? How will flexible spaces support multi-disciplinary learning, in physical education and other curricular areas?
- ? What learning spaces are required, including changing areas, to enable the above to be achieved?
- ? How will these learning areas contribute to wider community provision and how is this supported through your role within the local stakeholder group?

\*\*Note here for the community stakeholder discussions:

- ❖ Partnership for Schools – “PE & Sport in BSF Factsheet” to download from:  
[http://www.p4s.org.uk/design\\_guidance.htm#PE\\_Sport](http://www.p4s.org.uk/design_guidance.htm#PE_Sport)
- ❖ Sport England – “The Win Win Scenario” a download toolkit from:  
[www.sportengland.org/bsfinfo](http://www.sportengland.org/bsfinfo)

Learning Centres should provide indoor and outdoor spaces that:

- are flexible and large enough to cater for a range of users;
- provide perimeters that are flexible and support and enhance learning;
- provide ICT functionality to support and enhance learning opportunities;
- provide appropriate surfaces and linage that enhances learning;
- support the requirements of agreed stakeholder groups in particular, support structured learning as well as recreational and sporting activity;
- are suitable for a range of weather conditions and enable users to have year round access;
- provide safe environments fit for learning (see afPE, “Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport”, Chapter 15 - Buildings and Facilities – To be published summer 2008).

‘**Flexible Spaces for Physical Learners**’ is intended as a scene setting document. In order to translate your aspirations into reality you will need to consider the appropriate supporting design and technical documentation, a single overview of relevant design guidance is available on the Partnership for Schools website [www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk](http://www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk), or follow the direct link below to this:

[http://www.p4s.org.uk/design\\_guidance.htm#PE\\_Sport](http://www.p4s.org.uk/design_guidance.htm#PE_Sport)

Then download the ‘**design guidance reference document**’.

In addition, we are developing a range of **Case Studies**. These demonstrate examples of good practice in so much as they have been identified as providing contemporary and flexible learning spaces, support innovative curriculum design including effective engagement with ICT or promote good dual use and community access.

*There are currently only a few initial case studies enclosed to demonstrate how this section should look, we are seeking more and would value any further examples colleagues may wish to suggest.*

*All that is required is a single photograph and a short description of up to 200 words, including a contact e-mail address for further detail. Please return to: [john.matthews@afpe.org.uk](mailto:john.matthews@afpe.org.uk)*

**Please note:**

**The case studies refer to specific projects or builds. Reference to a commercial company within a case study does not imply any particular endorsement of that company by afPE. It is the responsibility of a school or provider to research wider commercial provision of these.**

## Example Case Studies

### Securing additional funding through community engagement – a BSF Pathfinder bid



Colleagues at Penryn College in Cornwall were clear that BSF provided a significant opportunity to enhance the learning environment of the school and strengthen wider provision within the local community. This case study outlines some key approaches in co-ordinating this exciting development, in place from September 2008:

- Formation of a school management team, led by deputy headteacher Paul Walker, involving the headteacher, business manager, two governors with relevant skills and an external adviser. Key was the headteacher's role as part of this team but significantly removed from day to day organisation allowing maintenance of an executive role.
- Funding from the bid was used to provide the release time for managing the project.
- Local community engagement through a number of group sessions involving parents, pupils, various community groups and local higher education provision focusing on what they wanted to maintain and improve on.
- Creation of a whole school vision statement for the BSF bid, with PE, sport and the community central to this.
- School engaged with the LA in the selection of the successful company contract.
- The deputy headteacher, an ex head of PE, used to developing funding bids, worked alongside the RFU, AENA, Sport England and the Football Foundation to provide additional matched funding for community use ensuring the desired enhanced facilities.
- These will include a 6-court sports hall, 4 covered tennis / 2 netball courts, health and fitness suite, PE community classroom, activity suite, dance studio and floodlit astroturf, as well as the existing small training MUGA

For further details on this project please contact Paul Walker on: [PWalker@penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:PWalker@penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk)

### ESP Multi-skills initiative to support the new Key Stage 3 curriculum



Derby City currently operates numerous interventions in primary schools, contributing towards the area wide 'BeActive' campaign that seeks to raise physical activity levels. National research in this area has also been conducted by Leeds Metropolitan University in partnership with ESP (Education & Special Projects). Members of Derby City's BSF key stakeholder group expressed interest in understanding more about physical activity for children during Key Stage 3. In particular understanding the role of curriculum development and teaching styles in supporting the move towards multi-skills and a multi-sports environment.

The ESP CPD team have designed a training module to support some key processes in the new Key Stage 3 curriculum. This will focus on a Multi- Activity Development Environment (MADE), consisting of five permanent thermoplastic markings designed to facilitate multi-skills and multi-sports development. Derby City will be used as the main pilot for this work, with markings installed in all secondary schools. MADE is designed to solve issues related to the more creative use of flexible learning spaces within PE and sport, and at the same time provided a stronger link between indoor and outdoor learning experiences.

For further details on how to be involved in the scheme please contact ESP's Director of Physical Literacy, David Morley: [david.morley@esp-playgrounds.co.uk](mailto:david.morley@esp-playgrounds.co.uk)  
and visit the ESP website: [www.esp-playgrounds.co.uk](http://www.esp-playgrounds.co.uk).

## Multifunctional Squash Courts



Designed and built by ABS, three squash courts transform into a 200 square metre sports hall where a wide range of sporting activity can take place, from Aerobics and Dance to Volleyball, Basketball and Short Mat Bowls. Electric motors move the sidewalls within 2 minutes to create space. The innovative technique of movable walls offers new dimensions to ensuring flexible space

The National Squash Centre at Sport City Manchester host of the Commonwealth Games 2002 has six ASB Squash Courts with movable side walls; these were recently used as a reception area at the British Olympic Gymnastic trials and a show area at the British Open. This type of multifunctional facility already has examples all over the country including leisure facilities in Abingdon, Hungerford and Rugeley as well as the Universities of East Anglia and Birmingham.

John Bright School in Llandudno has two ASB Courts with a movable side wall and two ASB Rotary Glass Back walls. The facility is used by the students as a theatre/drama studio, for squash and other activities during the day and then for squash by the local residents in the evenings. Bramhall High School in Cheshire has two ASB Courts. These are used by students as a dance studio during the day and by a private squash club during evenings and weekends.

ASB UK is currently installing three Squash Courts with movable side walls at the Whitgift School, Croydon and in the new Leisure Centres at Elmbridge, Southwell and Cirencester.

More detail is available at: [www.asbsquash.com](http://www.asbsquash.com)