

## Review of Dragon Sport

Presented to: SPORT WALES



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## 1 Introduction

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Dragon Sport is a Sport Wales initiative funded by the National Lottery, designed to offer 7-11 year olds fun and enjoyable sporting opportunities, outside the school curriculum and in the community. A portfolio of eight sports is used in the scheme. The eight Dragon Sports are rugby, athletics, cricket, football, hockey, netball, tennis and golf. These have been modified to meet the needs and skill levels of children. Dragon Sport also focuses on recruiting parents and other volunteers as helpers to support the development of after school and community sports clubs. Dragon Sport is promoted and delivered through a network of full-time Dragon Sport Co-ordinators, based in each of the 22 local authorities in Wales. It is supported by a comprehensive range of resource cards and equipment to help deliver Dragon Sport sessions, with further resource materials for the recruitment and training of volunteer parents, teachers and coaches.

Arad Consulting was commissioned by Sport Wales to conduct a review of Dragon Sport. This report presents the findings of the review, drawing on evidence collected from schools, local authority representatives and other key partners.

### 1.1 Approach

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This review draws on information gathered through consultations with teachers, Dragon Sports Co-ordinators, Sports Development Managers and National Governing Body officials. A total of thirty semi-structured interviews were carried out in July and August 2010. Sixteen of these were with primary school teachers or head teachers, seven were with local authority Dragon Sport Co-ordinators and five were with Sports Development Managers at a selection of local authorities. The sample included a mix of Welsh and English speaking schools, and schools and authorities from rural and urban districts across north, south and west Wales. Representatives from two national governing bodies were also interviewed. Two of the Dragon Sports Co-ordinators were interviewed face-to-face and the remaining consultations were carried out by telephone.

The interviews with teachers and local authority co-ordinators and managers lasted between twenty and forty five minutes. They explored perspectives on the ethos and impact of Dragon Sport, any changes or areas of progress made in the delivery of the programme, barriers, facilitators or issues experienced with the delivery of the programme, and suggestions for how the programme could be developed and improved in the future. More specifically, respondents were asked to comment on the following areas: links with volunteers and community clubs; the range of activities on offer (and opinions on the merits of sport specific versus multi-skill approaches); the integration



and 'fit' of the programme with the curriculum and other sport provision; the appropriateness of the target age group; the effectiveness and usefulness of the kit resources and branding, and the effectiveness of the structure and general management of the programme.

The two NGB interviews lasted between fifteen and twenty minutes. The interviews explored how the governing body works with Dragon Sport to promote their sport, perspectives on the main impacts and benefits of the programme to their sport, their key areas of progress in working with Dragon Sport; any facilitators, barriers and issues experienced in their relationship with Dragon Sport; their own plans for developing this relationship further and what improvements they would like made to the programme in the future. More specifically, the interviews also sought views on school-club links and the effectiveness of the kit and the branding.

## 2 Delivery of Dragon Sport Activities

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This section reports on the key themes to emerge with regards to; the range and type of activities provided by Dragon Sport; the ethos of the programme; the suitability of the programme for the target age group; how it integrates with core PE provision; the perceived impact of Dragon Sport on children, schools, the community and sport more broadly, and calls for more local choice and flexibility in the delivery of activities.

### 2.1 Range and type of activities

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Teachers and head teachers who contributed to the review provided diverse and sometimes contrasting comments on the range and type of activities offered through Dragon Sport. Several schools reported being satisfied with the number of sports on offer, suggesting that they were at their capacity in terms of delivering after school activities. It was noted that a particular strength of the programme is that it is inclusive, in so far as the range of sports offered ‘*something for everyone*’. It was also suggested to be fairly flexible in terms of its overall structure, with the programme allowing for activity leaders to introduce new ideas and approaches in the delivery of activities.

*“The range of sport is pretty comprehensive, I think if there was more choice then this would muddy the waters - you can use your imagination and be creative with the activities that we currently have anyway.”* (Teacher, north Wales)

*“...children who wouldn’t have been involved in sport are involved now. By offering more fun activities this generates more interest and an awareness of other sports, like golf for example.”* (Teacher, south Wales)

In contrast, some schools, although broadly satisfied with the programme, expressed a desire to see more sports introduced. These schools expressed preferences for newer sports and also for fitness-based activities which would link in with the Key Stage 2 curriculum. One school suggested that the programme was too restrictive, with activities such as dance and orienteering unable to be supported under Dragon Sport.

*“The curriculum has changed since Dragon Sport was introduced. There is now an area on health, fitness and wellbeing which Dragon Sport should also address...”* (Teacher, north Wales)

Another school which had been running the programme since the start also reported feeling that the sports had become a ‘bit stale’. It was explained how:

*“We do 10-12 weeks of invasion games, then move onto Athletics, so we’ve just been plodding along as usual. I think that from my own point of view we could do with a change.”* (Teacher, north Wales)

One teacher also suggested that, if new sports were introduced, resources and equipment could be shared between schools, with activities being alternated or rotated on a termly basis. It was suggested that this would enable schools to offer a wider range of activities without running into storage issues.

Schools’ comments on the range and type of activities provided through Dragon Sport were echoed by local authority officers interviewed. The majority of Dragon Sport Co-ordinators reported that schools were broadly happy with the range of sports available through the programme. Co-ordinators noted that the multi-skill aspect provided a good link to activity in the Foundation Phase and that the short programmes delivered in schools by 5x60 officers had been well received and had provided additional variety.

One Co-ordinator suggested that a couple of the 5x60 sports (basketball and dance) would make popular additions to Dragon Sport. This view was supported by local authority Sports Development Managers who were in favour of enabling greater flexibility and choice in the delivery of the programme (see section 2.6, below). One manager, however, sounded a note of caution, pointing out that this may require additional capacity as local authorities and schools were already “at their limit” in delivering the current choice of sports.

School representatives were asked their views on whether Dragon Sport would benefit from a move to a multi-skill approach, as opposed to being structured according to specific sports. There were mixed views on this issue with a fairly even split on whether or not Dragon Sport should go down this route further. Some schools thought that this would be a positive development;

*“The idea is taking sport and making it accessible, for example catching with a bigger ball, so yes I think skills based is a good idea. You should teach to the lowest ability so it is accessible for everyone...”* (Teacher, south Wales)

*“Multi-skill should be run across the board but started young. It is especially good for less able children...”* (Teacher, west Wales)

Others considered that it should remain ‘sport specific’. Some of these schools considered that there was already enough of a multi-skill component in the current provision, particularly with the introduction of the Invasion

Games bag, and that it came down to the individual teacher as to how far they pursued this kind of approach. Other schools expressed concern that any move in this direction would require additional training, whilst in several schools the view was also expressed that it was important for sports to maintain their individual identities.

The most common suggestion made by teachers on this subject was that a multi-skill approach should be developed for younger pupils, who would benefit from basic skill development activities, but that the provision should remain sport specific for years 5 and 6 who should be encouraged to discover 'which sports they like'. In a similar vein, one of the benefits seen in multi-skill provision was that it facilitates mixed ability teaching, which was seen as particularly advantageous in a very small rural school where all year groups were taught together.

## 2.2 Ethos of Dragon Sport

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A number of school representatives expressed their support for the 'ethos' or overarching philosophy of the Dragon Sport programme, which was seen to be about providing opportunities for all children to participate in sport, regardless of their ability. Dragon Sport seeks to promote the enjoyment of sport and principles of fair play and sportsmanship, as opposed to competition. One school also suggested that the programme provided a vehicle for promoting excellence, at the same time as promoting sport for all. Other important principles that were mentioned by teachers and head teachers included promoting healthy lifestyles and introducing pupils for the first time to a variety of sporting opportunities.

Only one school interviewed during the review felt unsure about the ethos of Dragon Sport and this was suggested to be because their engagement with the programme is limited to 'use of the bags' in core PE lessons, rather than via extra-curricular clubs.

Dragon Sport Co-ordinators also underlined the importance of the inclusive and participative nature of the programme. The programme enables schools to promote sport as a fun and enjoyable experience. Co-ordinators reported that the programme also provides an opportunity to develop both sport specific skills and wider social and communication skills through teamwork activities.

*"It's about sport for all, making it fun and enjoyable, and so that it's not all about winning. It's about getting kids hooked on sport for life."*  
(Dragon Sports Co-ordinator, south Wales)

Importantly, one Co-ordinator commented that, as well as being inclusive in terms of its philosophy and core principles, the scheme also provides an important introduction to children and a launch pad from which they can take sports further should they choose to.

*“Dragon Sport is about encouraging the participation of all children and for all sports to be covered by the same inclusive ethos, but it’s about also providing the opportunities for children to take the sport further if they want to...”* (Dragon Sports Co-ordinator, south Wales)

It was also suggested by a Dragon Sports Co-ordinator that there is sometimes conflict between the inclusive ethos of Dragon Sport and the competitive interests of clubs and NGBs. However, this was not true of the two NGB representatives that we spoke with. Both felt that the Dragon Sport ethos is the ‘right ethos’ as it is all about increasing participation at this age and *‘getting this age group enthused and interested’*. The football representative similarly explained *‘how it is really important to dig below the first 11’*, although he also acknowledged difficulties providing for these players. It was also noted though, that in other sports such as gymnastics, where under-11 is more of a key age, the focus of the NGB may necessarily be more competitive than inclusive.

### **2.3 Target age group**

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A clear majority of schools considered that the programme, targeting key stage 2 pupils, was pitched at an appropriate age group. This view was shared by local authority Dragon Sport Co-ordinators, who also felt that the programme was well suited to the needs of the target age group.

*“Dragon Sport is right for the age group with multi-sport now providing the link between foundation and Dragon Sport with its focus on agility, balance and co-ordination”* (Dragon Sport Co-ordinator, north Wales)

Roughly half of the schools expressed an interest in extending extra-curricular provision to younger year groups, with a couple of schools reporting that they had already done so. There was agreement among these schools that any moves to incorporate the Foundation Phase within the Dragon Sport programme would need to focus on basic skill development. One teacher also identified a potential difficulty: in order to meet the requirements of the curriculum, provision would need to be exploratory rather than directive and



therefore this would differ fundamentally to the Dragon Sport programme as it stands.

The consensus among Dragon Sport Co-ordinators was that multi-skill approaches were better suited to younger age groups (years 3 and 4) within Key Stage 2. One co-ordinator suggested that additional activities, similar to the 'invasion games' bag would be useful here. As well as being popular it was reported that the 'invasion games' bag is used to teach agility, co-ordination and balance. A number of contributors suggested that multi-skill activities were a useful link between the Foundation Phase and Dragon Sport, providing continuity through from the Play to Learn programme. Two of the co-ordinators also thought that it would be beneficial to extend the programme to the Foundation Phase as this would help '*establish good habits*'. However, whilst one of these considered that this would not be difficult to achieve as they already teach generic skills such as ball skills, tag and running, another saw additional complications, especially in trying to involve additional volunteers to support the programme.

Local authority Sports Development Managers also agreed that increasing multi-skill activity would benefit years 3 and 4, as some of the sport specific activity was felt to be too advanced for many pupils in the younger age groups. One manager also expressed an interest in exploring how the programme links with the Foundation Phase, and extending the programme to include this group. A view was also expressed, however, that any provision for this age group would need to be fundamentally different and would have to be more of a 'bolt on' programme. Managers noted that this age group could not be catered for in community clubs.

## 2.4 Integration with core PE provision

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Most schools consider that Dragon Sport links well with the core PE curriculum. Schools noted that the programme supports and reinforces activities being taught in PE lessons. In some cases, this includes incorporating Dragon Sport activities into schemes of work and using resources (i.e. kitbags and cards) as part of core PE provision. One school also described how they connected Dragon Sport with the 'Play to Learn' programme which was also being delivered.

*"It is well integrated-it's all part of the same thing. For example, next week we'll be taking part in a Dragon Sport decathlon, which we've been able to prepare for with our athletics bags. We've been using the PE lessons to prepare for each of the events."* (Teacher, south Wales)

Dragon Sport integrates with PE provision through a number of shared objectives and outcomes, including the promotion of team working, the enjoyment of sport and improved skill and fitness levels. An opinion voiced by representatives of several schools was that Dragon Sport was well placed to be integrated into core school approaches, and the resources were there to facilitate this, but it was down to the individual teachers and schools to make this happen. That said, a number of schools thought that the programme could be developed so that it ties in better with mainstream provision, in terms of incorporating curriculum activities such as fitness or adventurous activity, and making it easier for the programme to be incorporated into schemes of work. The only school to report that Dragon Sport activity was not integrated with core PE, explained that this was a conscious decision taken to avoid the risk of excluding children who were not Dragon Sport participants.

Interviews with Co-ordinators revealed contrasting views on the issue of integration between Dragon Sport and other programmes: some felt that there were good links between Dragon Sport and 5x60, facilitated by transition events run jointly for years 6 and 7 and close working between Dragon Sports and 5x60 officers. However, a number of Co-ordinators also reported feeling that there was too much separation and distinction between different programmes run in schools. Some reported a lack of clarity about how the PESS, Dragon Sport and 5x60 integrated:

*“...There is too much separation and distinction between different programmes, for example whether an activity is being run on PESS time, or Dragon Sport time. This stops the overall picture, it should be more coherent as they’re all working towards same thing...”* (Dragon Sport Co-ordinator, south Wales)

The lack of integration was clearly a concern for some of those who contributed to the review and it was suggested that sports provision needs to become more coherent so that the different programmes are working towards common outcomes. In a similar vein, it was also suggested that the programme should develop stronger links to the education agenda and the inspection framework, on the basis that some schools will take it more seriously if they feel that the work carried out in after-school clubs could have a positive impact on inspection reports.

One Dragon Sport coordinator explained that, by virtue of the being ‘located’ within the authority’s education department the sports development team had been able to help promote the importance of after-school sports clubs with schools, both directly and via LEA officers.

*“Working closely with partners in the education department, we have been able to argue the case that Dragon Sport – and after-school*

*sports clubs more generally – can become a positive feature of schools during inspections.” (AYP Manager, north Wales)*

This was exemplified in a number of inspection reports in recent years, one of which noted:

‘The standards pupils achieve in physical education are enhanced significantly by their participation in extra-curricular activities... offered under the ‘Dragon Sports Scheme’. By the time pupils leave [school x], they achieve very high standards in physical education. An indication of this is the large number of pupils who have gone on to gain regional, national and international success in their chosen sport.’  
(Estyn inspection report; Estyn.gov.uk)

It was also suggested that tying the programme in more with the health and fitness component of the curriculum might attract schools that do not currently participate because they already have successful after school clubs in core sports.

Some Sport Development Managers echoed concerns expressed by Dragon Sport Co-ordinators. Some took the view that the programme was too ‘isolated’ and that an important future priority was to improve how it links up with PESS and 5x60. A key issue here seemed to be to allow more flexible use of the Dragon Sport branding. One of the managers described how they currently have other organisations coming in to deliver sport in schools but they can’t use the Dragon Sport branding; this serves to reinforce the sense of separateness. Another manager also favoured a more demand and local club led approach, which allows for more continuity, flexibility and closer working with the NGBs where appropriate.

In one local authority the Sports Development Team was seeking to better integrate the programme by trying to get it written into school plans. They have made links with the school effectiveness department and together have identified priority schools so that they are also pursuing a more needs based approach. Another perceived advantage of this approach is that it acts as an extra incentive for schools, and especially head teachers, to fully engage with the programme. This was considered to be particularly important at a time where there are many competing initiatives, meaning that the programme must be attractive both to pupils and to schools.

The review team also heard examples of effective integration, stemming from good relationships between Dragon Sport and Sport Specific Officers. This has resulted in effective joint planning and working. Another local authority representative described how Dragon Sport has been integral to other programmes (eg 5x60). In one case, all programmes are linked in with the leadership programme and Dragon Sports is the lead activity. Volunteers

trained to deliver Dragon Sport are consequently able to work on other programmes too, so there is a good cross over and linkages.

## **2.5 Impact of Dragon Sport**

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Respondents identified a range of impacts of the programme which can be categorised into impacts on children, impacts on schools and wider impacts; in the community and on sports more broadly.

### **2.5.1 Impact on children**

The most commonly identified impact or benefit of the programme was increased participation and interest in sport, particularly among those children of lesser ability, who might not otherwise engage in extracurricular sport. The 'no pressure', fun environment, the success of the festival events and the range of new and different sports on offer were seen as important factors in encouraging participation.

Linked to this, a number of schools suggested that the programme increased self esteem, confidence, skills, health and fitness levels of children, and also improved the team work and social skills of children. More specifically, it was suggested that the programme had improved the skill levels of low/ medium ability children in particular. One school also suggested that the programme directly led to children joining local sports clubs, and another suggested the programme raised the profile of sport in the school more generally.

*“A number of children, who aren’t especially interested in sports come along to the clubs. So through Dragon Sport we are able to reach out to those who might otherwise be sat in front of the TV after school...You can see the difference – it definitely has an impact on their fitness levels”. (Teacher, north Wales)*

*“Dragon Sport has encouraged the kids to participate. All of the children are able to progress and get results even if they don’t excel. We are very happy with it. There are events, like the Athletics event, which are run in the area which never happened before and this is down to Dragon Sport.” (Teacher, south Wales)*

*“An important impact is that kids are now joining clubs outside school as they gain confidence and skills. It acts as a stepping stone.” (Teacher, west Wales)*

### **2.5.2 Impact on schools**

Another key impact cited by schools was the positive influence that the programme had in encouraging teachers to get involved with delivering extracurricular sport. It was suggested that the programme provided teachers with new ideas on how to run activities, developed teachers' confidence in teaching new areas, and improved the delivery of sports lessons in the school more generally. One school also described the programme as a catalyst which encouraged them to run further activities in the school. The variety of sports on offer, the equipment provided to schools and the festivals and events run by Dragon Sports were seen as key benefits of the programme.

*"The main benefits of the programme are twofold; having good equipment and supported by good lesson plans, which makes it easier to deliver the activities."* (Teacher, north Wales)

*"One of the main benefits of Dragon Sport is that it helps schools keep their after school activities in-house, rather than getting in outside coaches. This is because the training and cards help teachers build confidence in teaching PE"* (Teacher, south Wales).

Co-ordinators reported very high (and in some authorities complete) rates of participation by schools in their local authority areas. A primary impact was the increased variety of sports now accessible through schools, which occurred as a direct impact of the programme. One Co-ordinator described schools as 'now saturated with sports', whilst another described an effect of 'broadening out':

*"Dragon Sport has been a good tool for broadening people's perspectives – including teachers, pupils and parents. It has enhanced what schools are offering."*  
(Dragon Sport Co-ordinator, west Wales)

*"In this part of the world, rugby dominates – we're keen to introduce young people to new experiences and Dragon Sport has certainly enabled us to do this."*  
(Dragon Sport Co-ordinator, west Wales)

A key outcome reported by Dragon Sport Co-ordinators was that the programme increased teacher confidence, enabling schools to offer extra-curricular clubs in house, rather than relying on specialist sports coaches. This was considered to be especially relevant for 'non-sporty' schools, which previously offered very few or no extra-curricular activities. For schools with a strong sporting tradition the key benefit was providing resources to offer a much wider range of activities. Another factor facilitating sustainable in-house provision of extra-curricular sport were initiatives aimed at increasing parent and student volunteers, which reduced the need for schools to bring in outside coaches.

Sports Development Managers reported that the programme had been a vehicle to strengthen links between local authorities and schools. One manager described how the programme has enabled much more of a focus on junior sport and that schools have been brought together through the festivals and cluster-wide activities.

Resource cards and Dragon Sport activity bags had a significant bearing on engaging schools in the programme. The resources 'provided something to offer the schools, to get them on board'. However, it was also noted that although there were incentives at the start (eg kit) there is now a need to find something new to sustain interest. The increased range of activity on offer now in schools was widely identified to be another key impact. Progress in recruiting and training teachers and volunteers to deliver the programme were also seen to be important impacts, crucial to ensuring the sustainability of the programme. One manager explained how their work in training teachers and volunteers also served as a foundation from which to build other provision.

### 2.5.3 Wider impacts

Dragon Sports festivals were seen as extremely positive developments to emerge from the programme. They were useful in providing 'tasters' and introducing new sports, as well as bringing schools together and assisting in transition between Key Stages 2 and 3.

Local authority co-ordinators also identified positive impacts on sport provision outside of the school setting, namely through festival events and competitions, holiday clubs and junior provision at local sports clubs. Several of the co-ordinators identified 'very successful' festival programmes to be one of their main achievements. These were described as having particularly high participation rates, and to be extremely effective in promoting new sports, as '*a number of clubs get started up on the back of these*'. One of these authorities also described how well their 'oversubscribed' summer fun clubs had worked, providing 'extra exposure to sports for kids', and suggested an important factor here to be the good reputation of the Dragon Sports brand. Another positive impact of the programme at the community level, mentioned by a couple of the co-ordinators, were the community sports clubs set up directly as a result of Dragon Sport.

Two of the Sports Development Managers also identified one of the key impacts of the programme to be the community links that had been established through the programme, including links with sports clubs and volunteers.

From NGB perspectives the critical impact of Dragon Sport was raising the profile of, and participation in, their respective sports (netball and football).

The NGB for netball considered Dragon Sport to be *‘fulfilling its role of raising participation’*, reporting *‘really high participation in this age group’*, although the interview went on to explain how participation rates drop off considerably in the post Dragon age groups. Another positive impact for the football NGB was the *‘joined up working’* that they achieved in some areas, which has not only helped raise participation, but has also helped identify and recruit volunteers. Dragon Sport was seen to be useful for collecting monitoring data too, in terms of gathering information on participation rates in extra-curricular football amongst this age group.

*“In successful areas we’ve achieved joined up working and this has helped raise participation in football and also identify volunteers”  
(Football)*

*“The main benefits of Dragon Sport to us is that it raises the profile of the sport and is successful at achieving high participation numbers. Where we experience problems is post Dragon Sport where there is a large drop-off, meaning it doesn’t really lead anywhere.” (Netball)*

## 2.6 Local choice and flexibility

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A number of the Dragon Sport Co-ordinators interviewed during the evaluation suggested that there may be scope for the programme to become less prescriptive in terms of the sports / activities delivered. Instead, it was noted, more flexibility and choice should be available to both co-ordinators and schools, reflecting demand or interest in particular activities. One co-ordinator noted:

*“The programme is too rigid, affording little flexibility to schools who would like to do something different”.* (Dragon Sports Co-ordinator, north Wales).

Suggestions fell into two main areas. On the one hand there were proposals for opening the programme up completely so that individual schools or clubs could use the Dragon Sport brand and, in some cases, receive support for other junior sport activities. For example, although one co-ordinator saw it as important to protect the core sports and the inclusive ethos, they also wanted flexibility to be able to link the Dragon Sport brand in new areas or to new activities. Another co-ordinator suggested that the tenth anniversary should be used to expand Dragon Sport’s reach and scope so that all activities can be promoted as Dragon Sport, provided they demonstrate that they are well planned and are consistent with the programme’s original aims. This was seen to be especially relevant for schools which, unlike clubs, cannot receive equipment under the ‘community chest’ initiative, and so would benefit from support for new sports, provided that a strong case is made.

Another possible way forward which was proposed by three of the Dragon Sport Coordinators was to adopt a more consultative approach, where local sport provision is built around the needs and interests of clusters of schools. It was explained how schools already work together in clusters, for example in local festivals and transition events which involve Dragon Sports, PESS and 5x60 officers. Another co-ordinator described how they have looked at how the feeder schools serve secondary schools in terms of sports offered and have tried to identify priority sports based on local need. One co-ordinator even favoured disregarding Dragon Sports altogether, with resources instead being used to support school sports partnerships (clusters of schools working together locally) who would jointly plan after school sports clubs under a collaborative model. Under this approach, schools within the partnership would embark on a consultation process with pupils, deciding collectively what activities and provision to deliver, while sharing resources. The benefit of such an approach was described by another co-ordinator to be that schools/local clusters could respond to need in a more flexible way.

Mirroring the views expressed by Dragon Sport Coordinators, four out of the five Sports Development Managers expressed the view that the programme would benefit from greater flexibility in terms of what activities can be supported as Dragon Sports. A key theme here was that the programme should be made more responsive to local needs and opportunities. One possible route being explored in two local authorities was cluster based approaches. One manager described how they have reorganised staffing so that 5x60 officers are now given greater responsibility for Dragon Sport, working with groups of schools. It was explained how this means that:

*“They are more in touch with local needs and this helps improve consistency and transition between programmes. These officers are better placed to keep on top of what’s going on in schools.”* (Sports Development Manager, south Wales)

Another explained how they would like to see schools in local areas identify their priorities, and use locally available facilities and resources to respond to these priorities. According to one manager, this could potentially achieve more local input and lead to additional sports. In another authority the example was given of how a local interest in setting up a lacrosse club could not receive local authority funding, even though it had had the backing of the Welsh Lacrosse Association. This manager therefore wanted more flexibility so that they can capitalise on such opportunities, and pointed out that there are already resources in place in the NGBs. As such it wouldn’t be a case of starting from scratch, rather working together with NGBs to establish an after-school club and tapping into available expertise and resources.

It was also suggested that increased flexibility and local choice would help target the harder to reach, the non-participants, by offering potentially more





appealing activities, as 5x60 has succeeded in doing. Likewise, it was noted that more local choice might enable the provision of activities more likely to engage girls, who were seen to be under-represented in Dragon Sport participation figures.

### 3 Resources supporting the delivery of Dragon Sport

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This next section discusses the main types of resources which were identified to be important for supporting the delivery of Dragon Sport. They have been categorised under the headings; teachers and volunteers, training resources, equipment and promotional material.

#### 3.1 Teachers and volunteers

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Three key groups were identified as being important to the delivery of Dragon Sport activities: teachers, parent volunteers and student volunteers. Support from parental volunteers was identified as a key component of the programme from the outset however the balance of opinion among schools interviewed as part of this review indicates that this has not been as effective as originally hoped. Only three of the schools interviewed reported having good links with parents. This included one school where the Dragon Sport club for years 3 and 4 was run entirely by a group of six parents, while the school PE coordinator oversaw the club for years 5 and 6, with support from parents.

Many schools reported issues and difficulties they had experienced in recruiting and retaining parent volunteers. Common problems identified included:

- difficulties in engaging parents in the first place;
- legal and administrative barriers presented by the requirement for CRB checks;
- high levels of turnover of parent volunteers; and
- lack of quality and experience of parent volunteers.

In terms of improvements in this area one school suggested that the local authority could run volunteer training courses for parents, similar to the 'leader' courses run for specific sports. Other schools reported to have 'moved away' from targeting parents and to have instead focused their effort on encouraging teacher involvement or involving students from local secondary schools and further education colleges.

*"We've begun to focus more on teacher rather than parent involvement. We're wary of involving parents as they would have to be CRB checked, plus they leave when their kids leave so we don't have lasting relationships. We would rather use Dragon Sport workers, teachers and college students. As a big school we have lots of staff to pick from."* (Teacher, south Wales)

Dragon Sport Co-ordinators and Sports Development Managers also cited difficulties in ensuring sufficient numbers of people to lead activities. One Co-ordinator referred to problems in *'getting teacher buy-in, meaning that it's nearly always left down to one person.'* The same Co-ordinator explained how there is a lot of demand for coaches but that they don't have the budget to bring in external specialist coaches to run activities. Similarly, another Co-ordinator highlighted how in his local authority area they had been focused on initiatives aimed at increasing parent and student volunteers, to reduce the need for schools to bring in outside coaches. Overall however, there seemed to be a view that engaging parent volunteers has been problematic and largely ineffective. Reasons suggested to explain this included the timing of clubs (when most parents are at work), high parent turnover, a lack of parental experience, qualifications and complications with CRB checks. In one authority it was suggested that where parental involvement has worked well this has been down to the efforts of individual schools, but that generally the programme is run far more by staff than parents. In recognition of these difficulties one authority described 'family nights' which they run to encourage parents to get involved and to offer training to volunteers, as well as a club-teacher mentoring programme which they have recently started and were developing to build the confidence, and increase the pool of teacher coaches.

Most discussion amongst co-ordinators and managers related to schemes targeting student volunteers, which were seen to be a more effective way forward than targeting parent volunteers, and important for sustainability. One of the co-ordinators explained how they put schools in contact with a number of external partners – colleges and universities – who come in and help deliver specific activities, usually covering a specific activity during a school term. Another described a volunteer programme which they run with a local university, which operates three-year placements for students and provides high quality volunteers. Two of the co-ordinators also described the role of the 'Young Leaders' programme in supporting Dragon Sport, with one co-ordinator explaining how it 'has been better to set up their own programme of developing leaders'. This programme was described as being run for 14-19 year olds in secondary schools and colleges, who were being trained so they can deliver sport in primary schools and local clubs. This co-ordinator commented that they *'are now starting to see the results as it's the kids that took part in Dragon Sport at their primaries are now returning to deliver it'* and that they are *'growing a generation of future coaches'*(Co-ordinator, south Wales). Another co-ordinator also described how this volunteer programme formed part of their transition programme. In this authority a specific Dragon Sport qualification is run in 10 out of the 12 secondary schools, with the volunteers then running transition activities. As well as training up and providing opportunities for student volunteers this was seen to provide increased participation for year 7 by helping to keep the Dragon Sport ethos going when it could potentially become more competitive. These kinds of programmes were seen to be positive developments but also key priority areas for future work. Barriers to be overcome include:

- access issues for volunteers in rural areas which causes difficulties for rural schools;
- how to make it easier / more acceptable for Young Leaders to be allowed to deliver sessions in primary schools, particularly with regard to legal worries eg insurance, CRBs.

One Sports Development Manager explained how they had considerably improved their volunteer stock by developing and strengthening their support system for volunteers. They have introduced systems to maintain close links with volunteers, ensuring they feel valued and setting up mentoring arrangements. They gave the example of a recent grant provided by the Football Association Wales to train and qualify 6<sup>th</sup> formers on a football leader's course. 10 out of 16 people who qualified then went onto to deliver football in local primary schools. They are now aiming to recruit more student volunteers to support activities.

### **3.2 Training resources**

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The provision of training, advice and guidance to staff running the clubs was also identified as an area which could be improved. Several teachers felt that they would benefit from more training events being run for teachers, the sharing of good practice between schools, and possibly an on-line forum and more guidance notes to accompany the different bags (which were recognised to be really useful for building teacher confidence in delivering new sports).

The view among most co-ordinators, however, differed somewhat. They felt that there is a considerable amount of information and training already available to schools, and that it was down to the schools to make the most of these. One Co-ordinator also described how the current club to teacher mentoring programme that they offer has been very well received, and provides a useful crossover with PESS.

Another Co-ordinator reported issues with the way training is delivered. It was explained how the provision was too rigid; experienced people are put onto basic training which is unnecessary, in addition to which there are not enough development opportunities. This co-ordinator also objected to the 'closed' list of training providers which they were compelled to use and who were seen to be expensive, describing the system as a 'very closed shop'.

### **3.3 Equipment**

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The equipment provided to schools in the different 'kit bags' was viewed extremely positively across the board. The bags were described as:



- providing good value for money;
- being suitably detailed and instructive;
- fun and enjoyable to use / child friendly;
- providing the teachers with plenty of ideas for delivering the sessions, which helped to build teacher confidence and to enable the in-house provision of activities.

The only issue raised with the kit was that over time pieces of kit went missing or got broken, and some schools had experienced difficulties or additional costs in trying to replace these. Likewise the most common suggestion for improvement in this area was to make it easier for schools to replenish their kits. Related to this, a couple of schools suggested the introduction of electronic resources such as CD Roms or an interactive website. The advantages of this, it was suggested, would be that the cards and templates could be re-printed by schools, and that schools could design their own activity cards which could subsequently be shared and exchanged. More variety in bib colour was also suggested, as this would be particularly useful for when schools play one another.

Co-ordinators shared teachers' positive views about the kit and resources, and reported receiving very encouraging feedback from schools. The equipment was described as *'really well adapted for youngsters'*, and the cards were seen as *'a real help to the teachers, because they generally aren't experts in different sports'*, and again as important for building teacher confidence. Specific suggestions were again made for electronic resources such as discs with all Dragon Sport cards on (as in Play to Learn, Gymnastics programme), and also blank templates (as in P2L) so that schools can make their own, freely replace cards and have access to a much wider range of material.

### **3.4 Promotional material**

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On the whole the schools did not have strong views on the branding of the programme, although most felt able to comment on it. Six schools felt that the branding was good and mentioned the following as positive features of the brand; that the dragon was fun and age appropriate, and that the brand was distinctive and had established an identifiable and trusted reputation. Certificates offered under the scheme and visits from the dragon were specifically identified as positive promotional features. Five schools, on the other hand, were unsure what the branding contributed to the programme, with several of these schools suggesting that the activities were just seen as 'after school rugby or netball' etc. A couple of schools also commented that although the branding had been a strong and important feature of the programme ten years ago, they felt that the branding had become 'tired' and 'diluted' and the programme had lost its identity to a large extent. One school also felt that the dragon brand was a little 'babyish' for the oldest year groups.

Various suggestions were made for how the programme might be better promoted or refreshed. These tended to be straightforward publicity materials, e.g. banners at events, posters in schools, visits by the dragon etc. There were also suggestions for more functional developments which would promote and refresh the brand at the same time as serving training or instructional purposes. On-line or electronic resources were again seen to offer potential here. For example, an interactive forum to promote networking between schools and clubs, or a website with video clips of 'today's sporting heroes' which could be used to help teach key skills (the original videos were now seen to be out of date). The re-introduction of some kind of awards scheme, with different levels of awards for children to work towards (eg bronze, silver, gold) would similarly help improve the focus and profile of Dragon Sport. This point was also made by one of the NGB representatives, who explained how the re-introduction of an accreditation programme could be used to support Active Mark Cymru. The festivals currently run by Dragon Sport were also suggested to be successful in raising the profile of the programme and particular sports and several schools suggested running more local festival events.

Among local authority Dragon Sport Co-ordinators there were mixed views on the effectiveness and future role of the Dragon Sport brand. Some saw it to be still very effective and important. One co-ordinator explained how the brand had been crucial to promoting holiday camps and activities as it is *'so well known, is trusted, which helps promote the clubs'* (Co-ordinator, north Wales). As such the clubs have been much more successful than when local leisure centres tried to run such events. Both NGB representatives also considered the branding to be strong and effective and the football representative expressed an interest in having joint branding, which could help drive their programme forwards.

Other co-ordinators, however, considered the brand to have become a bit tired and meaningless. Although these considered that in the early days the branding was effective, and had a 'buzz' about it, it was suggested that the identity and branding of Dragon Sport has suffered over time, for a number of reasons. A first reason, raised by a couple of co-ordinators, was the increased range of extra-curricular activity and other programmes being run at schools. This causes confusion between the different programmes and newer programmes such as PESS and 5x60 have much stronger identities which have eclipsed Dragon Sport. It was also noted how some schools no longer use the name, choosing instead to run 'after school rugby/ football' etc. Echoing the view of a teacher, one co-ordinator also suggested that the brand was too childlike for years 5 and 6, and contrasted this with the 5 x 60 graffiti based logo.

Most of the managers and co-ordinators agreed that the scheme would benefit from a re-launch or 'reinvigoration'. One co-ordinator suggested that



the tenth anniversary should be used to expand the programme so that all under 11 sport is branded as Dragon Sport with the guiding principle of inclusion and 'sport for all'. Applying Dragon Sport branding to a wider range of activities was proposed by a number of teachers, co-ordinators and at a strategic level among Sports Development Managers. One noted that Dragon Sport could tie in with other Sport Wales campaigns e.g. 'Behind Every Star' (where local sporting heroes link with schools to promote their sport), or using young people who have excelled in particular sports as role models.

The need for more coherence has been a common theme in this review and it was suggested that expanding the programme in this way would help integrate junior sport provision across Wales, and help it become more of a national programme.

One co-ordinator, it should be noted, favoured discontinuing Dragon Sports altogether, with resources instead being used to support school sports partnerships (clusters of schools working together locally) who would decide collectively how to take forward after school clubs.

In a similar vein, one of the managers also questioned the future of the brand and indeed the programme altogether.

*'Dragon Sport is not really a brand, just a logo and set of resources. Dragon Sport doesn't add value in community settings - clubs are much more interested in their NGBs.'* (Sports Development Manager, south Wales).

This individual advocated the discontinuation of the programme and was in favour of local authorities being freed up to plan and deliver their own programmes for 7-11 years olds in schools, using funding from Sport Wales.

## 4 Partnerships and programme management

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Feedback from schools on the structure and management of Dragon Sport was generally very positive, with the majority of schools reporting excellent or good levels of support from Dragon Sport Co-ordinators and Sport Development Officers. Positive features of this support, as noted by teachers and head teachers, included the coordination of events and courses, good information sharing and the fact that co-ordinators were 'approachable and responsive'.

*'All the necessary structures and resources are there – it's basically down to the schools to make use of them.'* (Teacher, south Wales)

Very few issues or concerns were raised in relation to programme management, although one school reported that there was less contact with local officers than they had experienced in the earlier years of the programme.

Some suggestions were made relating to how support structures might be improved. These included:

- increased contact and visits by local co-ordinators to schools;
- more regular consultation with teachers (by the local authority and Sport Wales);
- support in facilitating school networking and information sessions to enable the sharing of good practice and cross working.

PESS cluster meetings were suggested as an effective model which could also be replicated for, or run jointly with Dragon Sport for the purposes of good practice sharing. These meetings were described as a "*useful opportunity to see examples of how other teachers teach, as you do run out of ideas*". More specifically, a role for local authorities in promoting club links has already been described, and a rural school thought that the local authority could do more to address difficulties with transporting children to clubs and events.

### 4.1 Links with external clubs

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Most schools interviewed recognised the importance of developing links with sports clubs in their local community, providing opportunities to identify and further develop young people's talent. A smaller proportion (just under half of the schools that took part in the review) considered that they had developed good links with clubs, while roughly a third of schools considered that they had only poor or limited links with local clubs.

The extent and nature of school-club relationships also varied considerably. As a minimum, schools provided information to pupils on local clubs in the



area, and encouraged them to attend these clubs. More extensive features of school-club engagements included club-led coaching sessions run in schools, the use of club facilities by schools and participation in, or joint hosting of competitions, run by schools and local clubs. Where there were effective club links these were attributed in many cases to personal connections between the PE teacher and clubs in the area, as opposed to being a direct result of the Dragon Sport programme. Difficulties in this area were also mentioned by several rural schools who suggested that their rural and isolated location made club links difficult; clubs were sparse and it was difficult for children to access the clubs. Another school explained that the requirement for CRB checks made it difficult for club-based volunteers to work in schools.

Various suggestions were made for how this aspect of the programme could be developed. A number of schools considered that the local authority should play more of a role here, by providing more information to schools about interested clubs in the locality; more actively encouraging clubs to approach schools or by convening some kind of district level working group made up of representatives from local sports clubs, schools and governing bodies, for example. The on-line forum that was mentioned in previous sections of this report was also said to present opportunities for engaging clubs and facilitating active club-school relationships. A couple of schools also commented that clubs should have more presence in schools; it was not enough simply to provide flyers about clubs, club coaches should come and run sessions in schools.

Only two of the co-ordinators considered the links between Dragon Sport and clubs to be effective in their areas. One described links with over 100 community clubs, including sports clubs, community groups, scouts and guides clubs, youth service, and through this suggested that

*‘the reach of Dragon Sport has widened out substantially in recent years.’*

The co-ordinator at a smaller authority explained how they have links with approximately 12 clubs including 4-5 set up as a direct result of Dragon Sport. Clubs were also described as making a positive contribution to festivals and holiday clubs. These links were forged through speaking to all clubs and encouraging them to join up and make the links with schools. Generally this has involved passing on information from clubs to schools, but if clubs have coaches available then they often do work in schools too. The local authority with extensive club links explained how the AYP team also goes out of its way to forge links between community clubs / the youth service and schools.

Several other co-ordinators, however, reported this to be an area of difficulty or weakness. One described these links as a bit ‘hit and miss’, whilst another co-ordinator thought that although they had been effective in getting children to go to clubs, they felt that they were less effective in getting clubs to go to



schools, or to set up their own Dragon Sports clubs. One difficulty raised by two of the co-ordinators was of a clash in 'ethos'; that clubs would not set up special Dragon Sport clubs because of the non-competitive ethos of the programme, and that the brand was a bit meaningless in club settings. Related to this it was explained that clubs have less incentive to buy into the scheme because they can access funding for equipment from other sources such as community chest. Another, thought the problem lay in not having volunteers available from the clubs to run after school activities (i.e. many are at work and not free at this time).

Several co-ordinators also gave specific examples of how they are looking to develop Dragon Sport at club level. These included work to increase the number of young leaders involved in community clubs, thus building on what was seen to be a key achievement of the programme in recent years. Another co-ordinator also described how they're currently looking at paying clubs to come into schools and deliver activities and are also trying to work with existing programmes and providing support to these e.g. Cardiff Blues, rather than promoting separate programmes.

Developing Dragon Sport in local community clubs, and encouraging club-school links was identified as a key priority area by most of the Sports Development Managers interviewed. One manager described having increased the number of clubs operating Dragon Sport in the area, and another reported having a Club Development Officer who is identifying clubs to link into schools, as well as priority areas in which to build club links (e.g. more deprived areas). One of the managers also described how they have been looking into perceptions of the programme to see how it could be more acceptable to clubs, as it was felt that sometimes the Dragon Sport brand can be a barrier as some community clubs want to maintain their own identity and not become Dragon clubs. The preference of this manager would be to support such clubs, asking only of them that they use the logo rather than become a specific Dragon Sport club. Another route being explored by this authority was using LAPA funding to support club-school links. This would involve commissioning clubs to deliver extra-curricular sport in schools. It was thought that this could encourage specific activities to promote sport among girls, e.g. by working with the local women's baseball club.

As well as working with community sports clubs one of the managers described how they had also been targeting other community clubs. It was explained how they have been training staff in a network of after school childcare clubs so that Dragon Sports activities can be delivered at the clubs, and will also be training play workers in a community based sport and play project.

Representatives of NGBs interviewed as part of the review felt that club engagement with Dragon Sport was an important part of their remit. The Welsh Football Trust representative saw this as an area where the governing

body could help promote Dragon Sport as they have contacts in communities. However, it was noted by both representatives that sometimes clubs were given Dragon Sport status by the local authorities for the sake of meeting targets rather than because they were developing the programme and actively working to create school-club links. It was felt that the equipment bag is a big incentive for community clubs, and was similar to their own bag which they supply to clubs.

In the case of netball fundamental problems were identified with a lack of junior provision in community club networks, which was thought to be a factor in the significant drop-off in participation rates in the post-Dragon age group. It was explained how in Cardiff there are only 4 junior clubs, and the representative described a sense of *'herding into a lobby with no doors'*. A key priority for this NGB was to improve junior club provision for the post-Dragon age group and ensure continuity of provision. It was explained how whereas football has a solid professional network, netball doesn't have facilities or strong club ethos and getting adult teams in community clubs to cater for juniors remains a challenge.

## 4.2 School-local authority partnerships

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In general Dragon Sports Co-ordinators were pleased with the levels of service and support which they provided to schools. A common theme to emerge in the discussions was that much of the success of the programmes depends on the schools and the levels of commitment that they show to the programme, and that schools need to take responsibility for delivering sport.

*"Ultimately, it's down to them [schools]. We provide support and do what we can to enthuse them but you're always going to be relying on them to deliver."* (Dragon Sports Co-ordinator, west Wales).

Another co-ordinator explained that there is a considerable amount of information and training available to schools: Dragon Sport is on the agenda at Active Young People cluster meetings and PE association meetings, while every school receives information about Dragon Sport from them on a termly basis. Co-ordinators did acknowledge, however, that whereas in the earlier years there was more delivery of sports in schools by specialist coaches, now there is a shift away to train up volunteers and teachers. Although, in some cases this has been questioned by the schools (particularly where other organisations still offer this type of provision) these changes were considered to be necessary in order to ensure sustainability.

Co-ordinators noted that the commitment of head teachers was a critical factor in whether or not the programme was run successfully in schools. One of the co-ordinators felt that a positive development here might be to promote head teacher buy in by running conferences for head teachers. Another co-

ordinator also reported feeling ‘spread very thinly’, which meant that they couldn’t visit schools as much as they would like.

### **4.3 Partnership with Sport Wales**

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One of the co-ordinators saw ‘freedom for local delivery’ to be a positive feature of their relationship with Sport Wales, on the basis that ‘what works well in different areas will vary’. However, another co-ordinator felt that they would benefit from more national leadership, as they are ‘left to their own devices too much’ with there being much more focus on 5x60 than on Dragon Sport. This Co-ordinator advocated a national training programme, which could facilitate idea sharing. Although there used to be regular national training this was felt to have gone ‘by the by’. It was noted how:

*‘there are lots of very experienced officers now and it would be useful for them to attend so they can share their expertise, sharing ideas and practice.’*  
(Co-ordinator, south Wales).

This and another of the Co-ordinators also called for increased consultation with local level providers, or for a mechanism to ensure that information can be fed through from the local/regional level up to Sport Wales.

It was also suggested that another useful development would be for national level agreement between different programmes, national bodies and primary schools on priorities. This co-ordinator explained how at the moment there are conflicting priorities and that Sport Wales should consider prioritising sports which target Under11s in place of those which don’t (e.g. athletics).

Sports Development Managers spoke positively about their relationship with Sport Wales. One of the managers explained how in the past Dragon Sport had been delivered in a very prescriptive way but that they now have a much better relationship with the regional officer, a post also described by another manager to be like a ‘critical friend’. A key issue for the future, though, was to be able to develop more local control and flexibility so that the programme is more responsive to local needs and opportunities. A couple of managers also suggested a need for more synergy across Sport Wales, in particular that links should be improved between Dragon Sport and NGBs, and that the programme be expanded using NGB schemes. One of the managers also commented that they *‘should listen to their front line staff more as they don’t always listen to what they’re saying’* (Manager, north Wales).

## 4.4 Partnerships with NGBs

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A small number of Dragon Sport Co-ordinators considered that they have good relationships with National Governing Bodies, and that this had been a key improvement during recent years. However, two of the co-ordinators also reported experiencing difficulties with some National Governing Bodies who were seen to 'have their own agendas'. It was suggested that some don't tend to be interested in Under 11s, as their focus is on competition and they are more interested in participants at a more elite level. It was similarly noted that specialist sport officers often also have different priorities to Dragon Sport.

All Sports Development Managers saw value in trying to strengthen their relationships with NGBs. One explained how they have tried to prioritise particular sports and now have several partnership agreements which identify priorities, roles and responsibilities. Another explained how some NGBs have helped with festivals, provided grants and that their support has been important in building links with community clubs. The work of the Welsh Football Trust in encouraging clubs to link up with schools was mentioned as a positive example and it was hoped that other governing bodies might follow this example. A couple of the managers, however, reported variable relationships. One manager explained that some NGBs have sport specific officers in the department, and these relationships are productive, whilst others just have regional officers. Once again, it was noted that much depends on relationships at an individual level. Another explained how some NGBs work closely with Dragon Sport, others don't; *'there isn't a one size fits all approach, if the NGB offer is strong then they need flexibility to work with it.'* (Manager, south Wales) This manager described how 10 years ago there were similar football programmes run by NGB and Dragon Sport but now the two have effectively joined together. They are currently looking at how to replicate this in other sports.

It appears, however that there is considerable variation between authorities. NGB representatives who contributed to the review expressed some frustration at the lack of co-ordination and effective joint working in some local authority areas. The football NGB explained how four years ago the FAW met with Dragon Sport to discuss closer joint working; however it was reported that *'nothing really came of it and in many authorities they are still operating totally separately'*.

Cardiff was seen to be a good model for football with very close working relationships between Dragon Sport and their own officer, and it was explained how AYP co-ordinators and the football development officer in Gwent were also meeting this week 'to put their calendars on the table and look at merging their work programmes.' The NGB representative now has meetings scheduled with the Cardiff officer to try and see how this model can be replicated in other areas and also with Sport Wales, to try and make their approach more systematic across Wales. Although local variations were



acknowledged it was felt that there should be more unification than there is currently. This NGB also suggested that it would be useful to have joint branding for junior football programmes.

In the case of netball the NGB representative considered that the local authority had a critical role to play in working with clubs to promote junior netball, particularly for the post-Dragon age group where numbers drop off substantially. They saw an issue here to be that the local authorities just want participation but aren't so interested in development too; it was suggested that, in some cases, they are too focused on numbers for the purposes of monitoring data.

## 5 Recommendations

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### General

The review identified a wide range of positive impacts for children, schools and local communities. Dragon Sport has resulted in increased participation and interest in sport, including among children who might not otherwise engage in extra-curricular sport. The emphasis on fun and inclusiveness has led to good levels of engagement and the range of activities available has provided an opportunity for pupils to gain new experiences.

*Recommendation 1:*

**Based on the findings of this review and evidence presented by schools and by local authority representatives, the Dragon Sport programme should be continued.**

*Recommendation 2:*

**The emphasis within the programme on an inclusive approach that presents opportunities for all to participate should be maintained.**

### Range and type of activities

Some schools and local authorities advocated expanding the programme to include additional sports, responding to identified demand. The programme should remain sport specific, however schools and local authorities, working with community clubs should be invited to broaden out the range of activities in response to identified demand.

*Recommendation 3:*

**Sport Wales could consider developing additional multi-skill resources to be targeted at the younger age groups, in particular. However, multi-skill should not be extended in place of sport specific provision.**

*Recommendation 4:*

**Sport Wales should consider opening the programme up so that individual schools or community clubs can use the Dragon Sport brand to promote and deliver junior sport activities not currently included as 'Dragon Sports'.**

*Recommendation 5:*

**Sport Wales should explore options for allowing greater choice and flexibility in the delivery of activities, including the implications for the funding and resourcing of additional sports.**

*Recommendation 6:*

**If such an approach is pursued by Sport Wales then schools/ clusters and local authorities could be encouraged to identify and respond to local needs and opportunities in a more flexible way.**

### **Target age group**

Key Stage 2 is an appropriate target age group for Dragon Sport, although it should be recognised that some activities are better suited to different age groups. E.g. Multi-skills approaches and the ‘invasion games’ activity is seen as being most appropriate for years 3 and 4. In addition, these activities ensure good continuity from Foundation Phase provision.

*Recommendation 7:*

**Dragon Sport should remain targeted at pupils across Key Stage 2.**

### **Integration with curriculum**

*Recommendation 8:*

**There is a need for Sport Wales to ensure that Dragon Sport is relevant to the KS2 curriculum, which is constantly evolving. One way might be to consider introducing activities (and possibly new kit bags) that reflect the emphasis on health, fitness and well being activities.**

*Recommendation 9:*

**Schools should also be encouraged to include after school sports clubs (and Dragon Sport in particular) as part of their overarching school development plans.**

### **Integration with other programmes**

It is important that there is a complementary relationship between Dragon Sport and other school-based PE programmes in terms of their implementation and intended outcomes. This does not necessarily mean that various programmes aim to achieve the same goals, but it is essential that they are well integrated and that they fit together strategically.

There is variation across Wales in terms of how well Dragon Sport is integrated with other activity. In some areas, this is a cause of concern. In other authorities, innovative approaches are being taken to ensure that the new developments through PESS and 5x60 are also helping to raise the profile of Dragon Sport.

*Recommendation 10:*

**Sport Wales should ensure that good practice in integrating Dragon Sport with other programmes, including examples identified during this review, should be shared across Wales in order to encourage more coordinated approaches to delivering the programme.**



## **Parent / external involvement in delivering Dragon Sport**

The involvement of parent volunteers has not proven to be as successful as originally hoped. There may be more potential to build on links with external partners in secondary schools, FE and HE to bring in additional capacity and expertise to deliver Dragon Sport activities.

*Recommendation 11:*

**Local authorities should facilitate links with secondary schools, FE and HE, where schools are interested in doing so.**

*Recommendation 12:*

**Some authorities are already introducing systems to encourage more student volunteers. Models of good practice by local authorities in this area could be shared between authorities.**

## **Resources to support Dragon Sport**

*Recommendation 13:*

**Sport Wales should consider creating an online directory / database/ forum (through the Sport Wales website) where resources and ideas can be accessed or shared online.**

*Recommendation 14:*

**Sport Wales and local authorities should ensure that schools have access to replacement kit and cards. Online or electronic resources would facilitate the replacement of activity cards.**

## **Promotion and branding**

There are variations across Wales in terms of how extensively the Dragon Sport brand is used. The brand is however still valued by many of those who contributed to this review and local authority representatives consider that it would benefit from a relaunch in order to raise awareness and enhance the programme's profile.

*Recommendation 15:*

**Sport Wales should relaunch Dragon Sport, possibly as part of an event to celebrate 10 years of the programme.**

*Recommendation 16:*

**Sport Wales and Dragon Sport Coordinators should encourage a flexible approach to using the Dragon Sport brand in settings that encourage young people to take part in extra-curricular sport. This may include using the branding to promote activities that are not among the 8 Dragon Sports.**

*Recommendation 17:*

**Sport Wales could consider developing functional resources such as websites and on-line material, or awards/ accreditation programmes as part of the**

relaunch of the programme.

### **School/club links**

*Recommendation 18*

**Schools should actively try and make links with local sports and community clubs.**

*Recommendation 19:*

**Local authorities and NGBs (including those representing sports which aren't Dragon Sports) should encourage clubs to forge links with local schools and to provide their own junior activity clubs.**