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## Changes in the provision of physical education for children under twelve years. 1870-1992

Bell, Stephen Gordon (1994) *Changes in the provision of physical education for children under twelve years. 1870-1992*. Masters thesis, Durham University.



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### Abstract

A chronological survey over 120 years cannot fail to illustrate the concept of change, as history and change are intertwined

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and in some ways synonymous. Issues arising from political, social, financial, religious, gender and economic constraints affecting the practice and provision of Physical Education for all children under 12 in the state and independent sectors, including those with special needs are explored within the period. The chapter divisions are broadly determined by the Education Acts of 1870, 1902, 1918, 1944 and 1988 to illustrate developing changes. The survey of relevant literature is followed by an introductory chapter outlining pre-1870 provision and practice, identifying pioneering efforts by physical educationalists to meet significant needs. Changes in the evolution of the subject are shown to reflect changes within contemporary society throughout the period of study. Chapters 2, 3 & 4 span the period from 1870-1939 and trace the first official provision in elementary schools, the contest between military drill and Swedish gymnastics, and the

strong therapeutic element in Physical Education linking it to the School Health Service, A parallel development in the independent sector shows differing priorities. Chapter 5, covering World War II highlights in particular the impact of evacuation, which acted as a catalyst for reviewing provision and practice as a serious management consideration, Plowden's assessment of Physical Education in the Report on Primary Education, 1967, halfway between the end of the war and the Education Act of 1988, is seen as a watershed between the cumulative effects of war, and the build up to massive reforms in the Acts of 1981 (Special Needs) and 1988. The model of the independent sector becomes a target for legislation in State schools under Conservative administration. This is examined in Chapters 6 & 7, whilst Chapter 8 summarizes the legislation and subsequent Physical Education entitlement

for all children. However, in conclusion, it is pointed out that legislative changes, incumbent on social historical progress, are also dependent on human and financial resources which are finite, and therefore need to be managed, in order to maximise present provision and practice, and as a basis for future planning.

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