

Schools urged to improve PE for SEND students

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Schools Minister, Catherine McKinnell, is calling on schools to enhance physical education (PE) and school sport opportunities for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), in the spirit of the Paralympic Games.

The government's Inclusion programme is available to all schools in the country, through both expert support and free resources, and can help schools enhance opportunities for young people with SEND to engage in PE and school sports, including some of the 22 sports featured in the Paralympics.

Now in its fourth year, the programme works with a network of 52 lead schools to support local counterparts, including mainstream schools, special schools, and alternative provision settings, providing advice and training to upskill the school workforce to make their PE and sport more inclusive.

The government recently launched a Curriculum and Assessment Review to drive high and rising standards for all pupils and tackle the barriers which hold them back, including pupils with SEND. The review will consider how best to open up access to subjects such as PE and sport, music, art, and drama.

School Standards Minister, Catherine McKinnell said: Following a summer of major sporting events including the Olympics and Paralympics, the profound impact sports can have on young people has been clearer than ever - shaping

their character and fostering a sense of belonging.

Every child, regardless of their circumstances, background and abilities should have access to, and benefit from, quality sporting opportunities both inside and outside of school.

It's fantastic to see so many organisations coming together to break down barriers to opportunity and improve the quality and accessibility of PE and school sport provision for pupils with SEND.

Delivered by a consortium of the Youth Sport Trust, ParalympicsGB, Swim England, Activity Alliance and nasen, the programme offers a unique opportunity for young people to draw inspiration from the Paralympic spirit and be encouraged to participate in physical activities within their schools.

The programme has achieved this by sharing best practice and creative thinking on how schools can adapt their PE and school sports delivery to meet the needs of all their pupils.

The Inclusion programme is not the only initiative supporting young people to get involved in sport. For example, [School Games Organisers](#) (SGOs) are essential in ensuring that all children have the opportunity to take part in local sport and physical activity competitions.

In the 2022/23 academic year, the country-wide network of 450 SGOs provided 2.2 million opportunities for school children to engage in local and inclusive sporting competitions across 40 different sports and activities.

Ali Oliver MBE, Chief Executive Officer at the Youth Sport Trust, said: The Inclusion 2024 programme embeds the four core values of the Paralympic Movement - determination, equality, inspiration and courage - across PE and school sport. With the eyes of the world on the incredible athletes taking part in the Paralympic Games, now is the time to harness the nation's love of para sport to leverage change, so every child can experience the joy and life changing benefits of play and sport at school.

Inclusion 2024 is led by schools and informed by a consortium of network partners with expertise in inclusion and creating opportunities. I'm proud to say over the last three years, Inclusion 2024 has supported the development of

inclusive PE and sport in 5,000 schools through 55,000 interactions - including competitions, staff training, volunteer development and local events.

In our mission and with support from the Department for Education, we are united in our belief that every child should be able to participate in PE and school sport, and we are determined to work together to make this a reality.

David Clarke, Chief Executive of ParalympicsGB, said: Physical education is fundamental to children's happiness, allowing them to have fun whilst they develop motor skills, build confidence, and improve physical and mental health. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND.

Image by [Stefan Schranz](#) from [Pixabay](#)