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Physical Education in primary schools: head teachers' beliefs and practices

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY
SCHOOLS: HEAD TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND
PRACTICES.

Sarah Williams

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University for the degree of Doctor of Education

March 2022

Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.
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Thesis Abstract:

This study investigates primary school head teachers' beliefs about Physical Education (PE). It illustrates significant ways in which head teachers' personal and professional experiences shape their beliefs about PE and the ways in which PE is conceptualised in schools. In so doing, this research has been designed to develop an understanding of the factors that have shaped the participants' beliefs and practices in PE, thus strengthening the existing knowledge and understanding within the field. The research is situated within an interpretivist framework in order to understand the subjective experience of primary head teachers. Moreover, the research follows a sequentially timed, explanatory mixed methods model to gain a pragmatic understanding of the participants' experiences.

The thesis presents an argument that, after many years on the side-lines of the primary curriculum, a critical period for the positioning and development of PE has been reached, whereby a careful, objective evaluation needs to take place to protect and secure the educational integrity of PE. Moreover, it is argued that, if PE is going to meet the needs of children, it is essential to question the ways in which PE is conceptualised and taught in primary schools. This would assist the refocusing of PE's educational goals. It is, therefore, important for head teachers to understand the unique subject goals and pedagogies of PE and acknowledge the somewhat contradictory messages that have accompanied recent policy.

Currently, research on primary head teachers' beliefs and practices the factors that have shaped their conceptualisations of PE is limited. Hence this research addresses an

established gap in the body of knowledge. The findings illustrate significant ways in which head teachers' personal and professional experiences shape their beliefs, conceptualisations and practices in PE. Drawing on Lawson's model of teacher socialisation (1983a, 1983b), this research serves to reinforce the importance of effective initial and early career teacher continuous professional learning for generalist primary teachers in PE to ensure pedagogical practice in PE is aligned with other areas of the curriculum. This study reinforces the vital role of head teachers in developing and leading a school culture that models positive health practices and motivates learners to become lifelong participants. In order to fulfil this role effectively, it is imperative that head teachers understand the unique contribution and educational value of PE and are able to clearly articulate the purpose of PE to ensure it is taught in a way that is educative. The findings of this research have led to the development of several recommendations including professional learning opportunities and materials to support headteachers to consider the unique contribution and educational value of PE and the provision of high-quality Initial Teacher Training experiences including opportunities to teach PE during school-based training.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Few would disagree with the suggestion that the beliefs held by head teachers influence the value afforded to curriculum subject areas in their school. Moreover, it has been established that the belief systems of teachers are resistant to change unless challenged and proven unsatisfactory (Valke et al. 2010). Notably, Pajares (1992:307) states that “attention to the beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates should be a focus of educational research and can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research agendas have not and cannot”. However, research investigating the extent to which head teachers’ beliefs influence PE is limited (George & Curtner-Smith, 2017:383).

During my first three years teaching I was fortunate to work in a primary school led by a head teacher who shared my enthusiasm for Physical Education (PE) and school sport. Although I had much to learn about my role as a reception teacher, the head teacher nurtured my passion for PE and encouraged me to develop my skills as a specialist and subject leader. Hardly a week passed without me knocking on the head teacher’s office door to ask if I could share a new PE resource at the next staff meeting, set whole school PE homework or develop a new after school club. Regardless of how busy the head teacher was and how outrageous my suggestion, he always encouraged me to give things a go (and to write a risk assessment). I felt that my head teacher believed both in the potential of PE and my ability as a subject leader. This belief gave me licence to be creative and the confidence that flowed from that spilled over into all aspects of my teaching career.

Given the influence of head teachers and their responsibility to ensure high quality expert teaching and professional development of staff (DfE, 2020), an understanding of head teachers' beliefs about PE are critical. This point is reinforced in the Headteachers' Standards (2020) which highlight the significant influence of head teachers in ensuring high quality teaching and achievement in school whilst creating a positive and enriching experience for pupils. Although the standards for head teachers in England are non-statutory, they are intended to benchmark and reinforce the behaviours and attitudes expected of head teachers who it is claimed, hold an "influential position leading the teaching profession and on the young people who are their responsibility" (DfE, 2020:1). Hence the aim of this research is to examine primary head teacher beliefs about the purpose of Physical Education (PE).

By way of introduction, I will begin by explaining the ways in which my personal and professional development has been shaped by my cultural beliefs, self-belief, the nature of beliefs and self-efficacy. Each of these contributing factors has influenced me as a primary teacher, teacher educator who specialises in PE and a researcher. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the significant impact that policy has had on whom, how and what is taught in primary PE, and in particular the influence of outsourcing. The chapter concludes with an explanation of my beliefs with respect to the importance of PE in the primary curriculum and the justification for this research study.

Cultural beliefs

Although not Maori, my identity is strongly connected with my New Zealand origins and, as such, this influences the way in which I view the world. In Maori culture, whakapapa refers to genealogy, a term used to describe the traditions and history that are passed from one generation to the next. In this sense, whakapapa is the layering of beliefs and experiences from one generation to the next. It is a tradition in Maori culture to state your whakapapa at the beginning of an address, as a way of situating yourself in a place and alongside your ancestors. Whakapapa is transmitted from one generation to the next and is accompanied by beliefs, power, and responsibility. Furthermore, as a researcher, it influences the position from which I view the world. Whilst this is clearly not the entirety of my positionality, it is an important element of my researcher identity.

Self-Belief

As Bandura (1997:77) notes, “Self-belief does not necessarily ensure success, but self-disbelief assuredly spawns failure”. Hence, beliefs and identity are powerful, affirming, and motivating forces. Identity, by its very nature, is dynamic. I have always had a strong sense of self and pride in my heritage, which I acknowledge is a result of my privileged upbringing. My identity, the beliefs I have about the world I live in and the value I place on certain learning experiences were moulded from a very early age. I was fortunate to be born into a family that valued and had succeeded in education and, as a result, I assumed that a school was a place where I belonged and would be valued. I had a certain sense of inevitability with regards to my progress through school and higher education, although I was always acutely

aware that my journey was going to be different from my sister who was, in my adoring eyes, flawless and incredibly brainy. I do not use the word 'privilege' lightly. However, I am certain that my whakapapa, cultural obligations, community, and aspirations afforded me opportunities and shaped an identity that I might not have otherwise enjoyed. Furthermore, my family willingly sacrificed time and finance to support me to achieve both academically and within sport, and I am acutely aware that this was not always the case for other children at my school.

Having trained as a primary teacher in New Zealand and taught there for six years, I moved to the United Kingdom, where I taught in both primary and secondary schools. In the latter age range, I was a PE specialist, working with a number of feeder primary schools.

Subsequently, I became a teacher educator at a university, where I continue to enjoy training early years and generalist primary teachers. I love the idea that I can share my passion for learning, and in particular my love of physical education, with the next generation of teachers.

As a consequence of commencing my doctoral studies, I started to reflect on my journey in education. This journey included moving schools at the age of six in order to access additional learning support, additional Reading Recovery throughout my primary school years, a private reading tutor from the age of six, a maths tutor from the age of ten and night school at various times during my secondary school years. Although, academically, for me, nothing was simple, my aspirations and self-efficacy sustained me throughout my school years, which was sadly not that case for the majority of my lower set peers. As I

delved more deeply into my own reflections, I sought to develop an understanding of how I had managed to negotiate through my school life with such a positive sense of self and appreciation of education. However, I recognise that my learning journey has not been straightforward, due to my undiagnosed dyslexia. Part of my reflection was guided by the work of the educational sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, and in particular his key concepts of habitus, field, and capital. However, although some of Bourdieu's key concepts have been used alongside the work of other theorists including Badura, Pajares and Lawson, it is important to note that this thesis is not a Bourdieusian analysis. I did however feel it was important to acknowledge the early influence of Bourdieu's work on my understanding of beliefs and the way in which dispositions are shaped by past experiences and current practices. This led me to explore power structures and subsequently the socialisation of teachers which is fundamental to this thesis.

Nature of beliefs

At an early stage of my doctorate, I encountered the concept of habitus and considered how this might be related to whakapapa. Bourdieu (1977:95), described habitus as 'an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted'. This suggests that an individual's characteristics are acquired as a result of being part of a social class. Whilst this concept does not fully encompass whakapapa, it does however acknowledge the power that comes from the position that an individual occupies, and one's fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality.

On the surface, it could be perceived that habitus is durable and fixed. However, this is not entirely the case, as habitus is both complex and multi layered. Furthermore, Wacquant (2011:85) described habitus as dispositions that are both instilled and inscribed, which challenges the idea that habitus is innate and predictable. The dispositions that contribute to a person's habitus are socially constructed but largely operate below a sense of consciousness (Hay & Macdonald, 2010). As a child, I was not acutely aware of how important my early experiences of education were, and it was not until early into my career as a teacher educator that I became more aware of the interconnected role of the past and present context.

Habitus and socialisation

The connection between past experiences, present practice, and the environment in which the practice is taking place is defined by Bourdieu (1977) as the theory of practice.

Bourdieu's theory of practice examines how the past and present context and experiences guide how individuals act. An examination of the relationship between past and present experiences is significant in this research in interrogating the PE beliefs held by primary head teachers through undertaking an examination of childhood experiences, teacher training, classroom teaching and, finally, experiences as a head teacher. Habitus refers to the enduring dispositions held by an individual that manifest as behaviours, competencies, and perceptions. It is through examination that a meaningful understanding of the factors which have shaped participants' beliefs in relation to PE will be developed. Hence, this study examines the socialisation process by which teachers acquire the values, norms and behaviours of the teaching profession.

The theoretical framework used to guide the data collection and analysis was Lawson's model of occupational socialisation (1986). As observed by Lawson, the occupational socialisation of teachers is a lifelong process that initially influences entry into the teaching profession and continues throughout a teacher's career (1983a, 1983b). This differs from traditional models of teacher socialisation which typically commence at higher education. Consequently, three stages of teacher socialisation are identified by Lawson (1983a, 1983b). These include consideration of the influence of childhood experiences, teacher training experiences and experiences as a classroom teacher are considered throughout this research. This will serve to strengthen understanding of the existing knowledge within the field and fill an established gap in the body of knowledge in relation to the role of school leaders in conceptualising PE.

Self-Efficacy and Beliefs

According to Bandura (1986:129) "People regulate their level and distribution of effort in accordance with the effects they expect their actions to have. As a result, their behaviour is better predicated from their beliefs than from the actual consequence of their actions". I was fortunate that, throughout my schooling, my efforts and abilities in PE were recognised as being on a par with other areas of the curriculum. This perception fostered a sense of self-efficacy beyond the PE environment and inscribed a belief in my ability to succeed (Wacquant, 2011), self-efficacy being the belief held by an individual in relation to their ability to succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1977).

The term 'self-efficacy' is often used interchangeably with 'self-esteem', but they refer to quite different things. Bandura (1997) explains perceived self-efficacy as the judgement one makes about one's ability to succeed. This is not based on an outcome but, rather, the relationship between actions and outcomes. It is through positive early experiences at school that I built a belief in my ability to succeed, which contributed to my sense of efficacy and power; for example, I vividly remember sitting in a cloakroom at the age of six, doing Reading Recovery and the teacher asked how I came to be so good at tennis and if I could one day show her how to play. I was so excited and full of pride that, at lunchtime, I ran to the staffroom with two wooden bats to find my teacher. That year, Sister Fidilus had to see every racket, trophy and photo taken of me playing tennis and she put down numerous cups of coffee to play paddle tennis at lunchtime. Furthermore, she humoured the six-year-old me when I stopped her in order to correct her grip. As I look back at that time, I appreciate my early positive experiences in school with Sister Fidiulus and the role she played in shaping my beliefs in relation to the critical role of play and physical education in the early years.

Although this research isn't not specifically framed by the work of Bandura, developing an understanding of the concept of self-efficacy was important because of the powerful relationship between efficacy and perceived competence. Self-efficacy is described as a mediating mechanism of personal agency, between prior influences and subsequent behaviour. This understanding helps to refine the research questions and establish distinctions between teacher confidence and self-efficacy which is an important distinction when exploring notions of teacher socialisation.

From Generalist to Specialist

Early in my primary teaching career in New Zealand, I began trading lessons with colleagues who felt less confident about teaching PE. Initially, I started teaching one or two lessons each week for a colleague and, within two years, was teaching one PE lesson a week to all classes in the school. This is termed 'class swapping' and research suggests that this practice is present in many countries across the world, including New Zealand, Australia, England, and Canada (Jones & Green, 2017). I was a non-specialist generalist teacher who had a background in sport, an enthusiasm for PE and high level of self-efficacy. These qualities in themselves seemed to qualify me as a PE specialist, a title which I was more than happy to assume. This accords with Lawson (1986), who describes the degree to which a person perceives that they meet the requirements of a position, as a subjective warrant. In the case of PE, the teachers tended to base this assessment on achievements within sport.

A substantial amount of literature within the field suggests that prior personal experiences and early teaching experience significantly impact on teachers' perceptions (Lawson 1983a; Lawson 1983b; Curtner-Smith et al., 2001; Hastie et al., 2005). Consequently, the approach taken by many generalist teachers replicates a sport-oriented curriculum, which can often lead to negative perceptions about the quality of learning experiences (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011). Whilst sport can play a part in the physical education of children, the agenda for sport within the curriculum has only intensified with the increased number of sport coaches being used to teach PE in primary schools. The practice of outsourcing sports coaches in PE is extensive both internationally and in England, as a result of the shifting policy and practice. In England, unprecedented investment over the past two decades,

including the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy and the PE and School Sport Premium (DCSF, 2008; DfE, 2018), have served to further intensify debates related to the educational value of PE (Sprake & Temple, 2016). Although these strategies were designed to address concerns about quality of PE in primary schools and sporting opportunities for 5–16-year-olds, Mackintosh (2014:439) states that ‘that primary physical education appears to have been a key loser in this policy transition and that a new tier of problems for practice may have unexpectedly been generated’. This point is reinforced by Griggs (2010) who contends that policy and teachers’ willingness to give up PE have conspired resulting in greater involvement of sports coaches within the curriculum.

Three years into my teaching career, I was predominantly teaching PE, leading whole school training, and providing planning support for other teachers. I was considered an expert and deemed to possess subject specific knowledge that other teachers lacked. As a young teacher, I thrived in my specialist teaching position. I enjoyed the profile I had both within the school and in the wider school community. My newfound PE role undoubtedly raised the profile of PE and sport in the school. However, an unintended consequence of this was that teachers who had previously enjoyed teaching PE began to feel they lacked expertise. This phenomenon is being widely felt in England through the ‘outsourcing’ agenda, where teachers are inadvertently being ‘deskilled’ rather than ‘upskilled’, thereby creating a further deficit in teacher competence and confidence (Griggs & Randall, 2019). Moreover, the outsourcing agenda has gained momentum through significant investment by successive governments, including £1.5 billion via the PE and School Sport and Young People strategy (DCSF, 2008) and, more recently, the £1.4 billion Primary PE and School Sport Premium (DfE,

2017). Whilst the intention of these initiatives was to improve the provision of PE and sport, research carried out by Jones and Green (2017) showed that the PE workforce in primary schools now includes volunteers, teaching assistants and sports apprentices. Furthermore, a report published by Ofsted (2014:6) reported that the PE and School Sport Premium was mostly used to “deploy new sports coaches and other personnel qualified in sport to teach pupils in PE lessons”. It has been suggested that sports coaches and specialist teachers have the skills to enhance the performance and movement skills (Decorby et al. 2005). However, a review of international literature (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012) reinforces the point that having a specialist does not guarantee a quality programme.

New Zealand culture is dominated by sport. This culture in which I grew up, undoubtedly reinforced dominant ideologies and beliefs about PE and school sport and is supported by Garrett and Wrench (2007:27) who state that “discourses that achieve dominance in physical education do so with support and close alignment to the hegemonic discourses of wider society”. A study carried out by Sport New Zealand (2017) suggested that most New Zealanders see value in sport and active recreation. Furthermore, the study claimed that sport and an active lifestyle defines who New Zealanders are, and this sets New Zealand apart from other nations. In this sense, sport and active recreation are said to be “in our DNA”. Although I would consider my teacher training in PE to be of high quality, in the early stages of my teaching career, I acknowledge that I predominantly replicated my childhood PE experiences, where team games dominated PE in both primary and secondary school.

Through my specialist role, I was increasingly leading PE as sport discourse to meet the performance expectations of the extremely grateful parent body and school leadership team. PE lessons were being designed to prepare children for competition and, as a result, the after school and Saturday morning sports activities were thriving. This served to further support my 'expert binary' as I was seen to have superior knowledge and experience related to sport in comparison with the inexpert, generalist teachers (Dyson et al., 2016). However, as my primary classroom practice developed and I became a more critical and reflective practitioner, I began to question my beliefs about PE and its purpose within the curriculum.

Lifelong participation is widely acknowledged as a core purpose of PE (Green, 2004; Kirk, 2005) and it is accepted that a high-quality PE curriculum provides an effective and inclusive means of providing all students with the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding, conducive for lifelong participation (Harris, 2018). Furthermore, Dewey (1916:50) defines the process of educating as a continual transforming of experience and so therefore I believe that in order for PE to be deemed educative and assert its unique place within the curriculum, it should inspire growth, curiosity, creativity and further participation.

I now recognise that for many years I had a fixed mindset about what PE should look like and importantly what the outcome should be. This in part was based on how I was taught and the success and rewards I felt as a child. During my early years teaching PE as a generalist teacher and then a PE Specialist, I predominantly focused on teaching sport techniques. Whilst lessons mostly involved the playing of modified games, lessons were

sport and often performance orientated. This, Dewey (1916) would term as non-educative. That is not to say that some students didn't achieve the lesson outcomes, but lessons were not specifically designed to inspire growth. Furthermore, and with hindsight, I would assume some students felt excluded and marginalised.

In order to develop inclusive and educative practice, it is broadly agreed that generalist classroom teachers are considered best placed to teach PE due to their ability to respond to individual needs. Furthermore, Coulter et al. (2009:39) state that 'the generalist teacher is best placed to teach the child-centred, integrated curriculum in primary schools, and hence is best placed to teach PE as one element of that curriculum'. It was therefore suggested that efforts needed to be devoted to supporting teachers to improve their teaching of primary PE (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). However, Jess et al. (2017) describes a 'broken narrative', which has gained momentum through various individual and institutional factors. The narrative highlighted by Jess et al. (2017) is the assumption that many generalist teachers are either uninterested or lack the professional training necessary to teach PE. In a study carried out by McEvelly (2021), focusing on undergraduate PE students' view of outsourcing PE, it was identified that, whilst generalist teachers were probably competent to teach PE in the early years, PE was considered basic and less important, and it was perceived that many teachers lacked the knowledge of sport required to teach older children. Whilst the participants in the study carried out by McEvelly (2021) acknowledged that some generalist teachers might be 'sporty', they considered these to be in the minority. Therefore, if it was impossible for schools to have PE specialist teachers, external sports coaches should be recruited.

Following my move to the United Kingdom in 2003, I began working alongside generalist teachers to support their teaching of PE. The support ranged from an 'I teach, we teach, you teach model' to one day training courses, which usually provided the resources to support the replication of the training activities in schools. Initially, I worked with teachers across a local authority region and, within two years, was delivering national training on behalf of a large sport-related charity. The majority of teachers who participated in the training had low confidence about teaching PE, much of which they attributed to either their own poor school experiences or insufficient teacher training. I enjoyed my teacher training role and, at the time, felt the opportunity to collaborate with teachers had a positive impact on their beliefs about the contribution of PE within the curriculum and, more importantly, their perception of themselves as teachers of PE. I did however fall into the trap of providing teachers with quick fixes, much appreciated by those who attended training and lacked confidence.

In 1996, a national charity (Youth Sport Trust) developed a PE professional development programme for primary schools. Training was delivered via Local Authorities and included one day of training, a set of 'Tops' teaching cards and a bag full of equipment suitable for use with the activities. Initially the cards were play (Top Play) and games based (Top Sport) and latterly included gymnastics and dance. The Tops cards were re-released in 2002 to align with the National Curriculum and coincidentally, with my move to England. I delivered Tops training to local primary schools on behalf of the Local Authority and on the whole, those who attended lacked confidence teaching PE and felt their teacher training did little to prepare them for teaching PE. Teachers enjoyed the day out of school, networking with

other teachers, having a play of the games and leaving with a big bag of equipment and a simplified teaching resource. In 2011, Harris et al. carried out a study looking at the impact of Tops training on teachers' perception of PE. The study reported that the majority of teachers felt that training had positively impacted on their attitudes towards PE and subject knowledge. However, impact was limited by the programme's inability to address pedagogical issues such as planning and assessment and the absence of follow-up support from Local Authorities. My experience delivering Tops training initially reconfirmed my 'PE as sport' ideology, but over time I could see through my interactions with schools that the impact of this training was short-lived. This was confirmed in a study carried out by Harris et al. (2011) that concluded that impact was destined to be short-lived, and it would be unreasonable to assume that the Tops programme could address the longstanding issues in PE. Whilst I agree that it would be unreasonable to expect one day of training and a pack of teaching cards could address the inherent problems in PE, I would argue that Top Sport had a significant impact in terms of what schools felt PE should look like and who had the appropriate skills to teach PE. Fundamental to this was the term 'sport' in documents designed to deliver the PE National Curriculum.

Teaching efficacy is described by Woolfolk Hoy et al. (2009:628) as a 'future orientated task-specific judgement' whereby a teacher judges their ability to influence student outcomes. This suggests that the way in which a teacher perceives their capability to teach is not fixed but is a result of an interplay between individual effort, the support and resources provided and contextual factors. It is however important to acknowledge that it is also widely documented that, in order for professional development to be effective, it needs to be

meaningful and sustained, closely linked to content and pedagogy and involve reflection that clarifies the process of learning and development (Richards & Gaudreault, 2018; Thorburn et al., 2019)

Much like my route into specialist PE teaching, my journey into Initial Teacher Education was atypical. As a result of my time spent working closely in schools with teachers who lacked confidence about teaching PE, I developed a huge amount of empathy for teachers who felt unprepared to teach PE as a result of the insufficient emphasis on and preparation for teaching PE during their initial teacher training. Concerns highlighted in a primary PE study carried out in Australia found that the largest barrier to teaching PE were the qualification and preparation of teachers (Lynch & Soukup, 2017).

It was against this background that, with eight years of teaching experience in the UK, I decided to contact the Head of the Early Years and Primary Education Department at my local university to share the concerns that had been levelled, fairly or not, at the training provider. I felt I had the warrant of the teachers with whom I had been working and wanted to see how I could help to support early career teachers. I now cringe to think about the boldness of my request! To the credit of the Head of Department at the time, they invited me in for a meeting. It was my intention merely to share my observations and not at all to be disrespectful, as I was aware, through my own experience of teacher training, that priority of preparation during teacher training was paid to subjects which carried the highest status in schools.

During the meeting with the Head of Department, I shared my concerns. These concerns were based on both my observations and research, which suggested that many primary teachers receive little more than an introduction to the teaching of PE, which does little to develop their knowledge and confidence in regard to teaching the subject (Marshall & Hardman, 2000). This is unsurprising, given that, in England, primary teachers on a Post Graduate Certificate in Education training route can receive as little as nine hours of PE training, and those on the school-led training route can receive as little as three hours (Griggs, 2012). Furthermore, a report published by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in 2009 stated that “the subject knowledge of primary teachers was less secure than that of secondary teachers, often because they had entered the profession inadequately prepared to teach the full range of physical education activities and this had not been fully compensated for by professional development” (Ofsted, 2009:5).

During my discussion with the Head of Department, I asked if an opportunity could be provided for me to offer additional PE training for students who felt they would benefit from more experience and support with regard to teaching the subject. I was surprised to be greeted with enthusiasm and support and, within a couple of weeks, I was providing my first ‘bolt on’ PE seminar with final year undergraduate trainee teachers. Over the course of that year, several programme tutors promoted my free PE workshops. I soon started to enjoy interacting with the students and was thrilled when the Head of Department encouraged me to apply for a full-time position teaching PE and leading the teaching of Foundation Subjects across the Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes.

Having accepted the role, I suddenly started to regret the way in which I had sold my versatility and ability to teach the whole range of Foundation Subjects. This however proved to be a wonderful opportunity to revisit my love of generalist classroom teaching and made me rethink my beliefs about the wider contribution of PE within the curriculum.

Although my personal journey has not always been straightforward, my love of education and beliefs about the importance and value of PE within the curriculum have been unwavering. I credit this to the quality of my personal experiences, my initial teacher training, and the support I received during the early stages of my teaching career.

Preparation of teachers

Although the benefits of PE have been widely claimed (Bailey, 2018; Carse, et al., 2018), globally, there are persistent concerns about the status of primary PE (Griggs, 2012), which in part is attributed to the limited amount of teacher training that focuses on this area (Randall & Griggs, 2020; Blair & Capel, 2011). Teacher education has been repeatedly criticised over the past five decades and, most notably, in recent times, by Caldecott, who insisted that trainees simply do not receive enough quality PE training to develop a “secure knowledge and understanding of their subject” (2006:45). It is reported that the amount of time spent preparing generalist primary teachers to teach PE is inconsistent across Europe (Green & Hardman, 2005) and, in the UK, trainee teachers’ receive an average of 12 hours of training in total (Kirk, 2012).

The providers of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) currently have the freedom to design courses and assign curriculum hours in the way they feel best prepares primary trainee teachers for their role as a generalist teacher; however, all ITT courses must ensure that all ITT graduates recommended for Qualified Teacher Status meet the expectations set out in the Teaching Standards (DfE, 2011). The ITT provision reflects the needs of schools, draws on research and evidence within the field and ensures all aspects of the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (CCF) are addressed (DfE, 2019). The CCF, developed in 2019, outlines a minimum entitlement for all trainee teachers which must be delivered by the ITT providers. Whilst the framework is aligned with the Teaching Standards and places importance on the development of subject knowledge, it is not a curriculum, nor does it outline all aspects that need to be developed in order to be a competent teacher. Hence, some areas of the curriculum are prioritised over others and value is placed on preparing teachers to be 'expert' in key learning areas, such as literacy, phonics, numeracy, and science, which are deemed to be the core curriculum areas (Ardzejewska, et al., 2010). As a consequence, subjects such as PE and art have been referred to as the "skills and frills" of the curriculum (Stodolsky, 1988:4).

However, ITT in England is currently under review and providers in future will need to go through a rigorous accreditation process (DfE, 2021). Whilst it is too early to consider the possible implications of this, it is suggested that the process of accreditation could lead to a more prescribed curriculum and increased time on placement for all trainee teachers. Therefore, the time spent at university will be reduced and mentors will become

increasingly responsible for leading school-based training and supporting trainees to develop their subject knowledge across the curriculum.

Overview of the thesis

Taking into consideration the nature of beliefs, the importance of teacher socialisation, along with reflections on my own experience, this study is situated in relation to recent research within the field of primary PE along with the policy that influences and impacts on its teaching. In so doing, it seeks to develop an understanding of the factors that have shaped primary head teachers' beliefs and conceptualisations of PE, thus strengthening existing knowledge and understanding within the field. Two research questions underpin this study, namely:

- What do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools?
- What factors have shaped the head teachers' conceptualisation of PE?

It is anticipated that, in answering these questions, this study will highlight the significance of head teacher practices in shaping and exemplifying beliefs about PE and will provide valuable insights into an area that is yet to receive adequate attention within the primary PE research community.

This chapter has helped to situate my own experiences and interests within the research area and introduced some of the key concepts, including the nature of beliefs, the role of childhood experiences in shaping perceptions of PE and the impact of Initial Teacher Training on teacher efficacy. Furthermore, it highlights the key challenges and

contemporary issues that are impacting on the research area and the role theory has played in guiding my thinking. This chapter introduced the work of key theorists, including Bourdieu and Bandura, who shaped my initial understanding of the influential nature of beliefs and the interconnected role of past and present experiences that guide how individuals act. Importantly, this chapter introduces Lawson's (1983 a & b) theory of teacher socialisation which will be reviewed in greater detail within the discussion and conclusion chapters. Building on the work of Pajares (1992) on the importance of beliefs, Lawson's (1983a, 1983b) theory of teacher socialisation has been used in this study to consider the multiple factors that influence head teachers' conceptualisation of PE and the factors that influence teacher beliefs and practices. Whilst the work of Bandura and Bourdieu helped guide my initial understanding of beliefs and the lasting dispositions of habitus, it is Lawson's theory of socialisation that will provide a theoretical framework to examine and address the research questions.

In chapter two, the literature review highlights the research and literature that has informed and challenged my thinking. Chapter three sets out the methodological logic applied in this study and the research design. In doing so, this chapter justifies the research design that was applied and the ways in which the pilot study helped inform this research. Building on the established methodological approach, chapter four explains the methods that were used, outlines the rationale for the participant selection and justifies the way in which the data were analysed. This chapter also helps to illustrate the way in which the data were gathered and the profiles of participants. Chapters five and six present and discuss the results of the study and consider the extent to which the data address the research

questions. In doing so, the discussion chapter applies a theoretical lens for examining the extent to which the participants' beliefs are shaped by a process of socialisation. The final chapter presents a synopsis of the key findings and makes recommendations for future research. It draws on a model of teacher socialisation, details the ways in which this research will impact on my practice, and identifies the implications for initial teacher education and the continuous professional development of teachers.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In exploring the wide range of research and literature that has informed and challenged my thinking with respect to gaining insights into head teacher beliefs in relation to PE, this chapter contextualises the research focus. In so doing, my examination of the literature identifies a research gap that has contributed to the refining of the focus of this research. Before considering the impact of head teacher beliefs on the leadership and teaching of PE, it is necessary both to examine the literature with respect to the factors that influence the teaching of PE in English primary schools and ways in which head teachers' conceptualisation of PE has been shaped, and also consider the purpose of PE, aspects that determine the way PE is taught in primary schools and the training of teachers.

Defining PE

Due to the complex nature and possibilities within the field of PE, it is argued that it can legitimately aspire to achieve a wide range of educational outcomes (Kirk, 2013). However, there is no one widely accepted definition of Physical Education. This may in part be due to the accusations that PE has tried to achieve too much across different learning domains and, as a result, become increasingly disconnected (Carse et al., 2018). It is also the belief of Penney (2013) that it is through creative interpretation, in the absence of clearly defined boundaries, that what is known as physical education is defined.

Internationally, there is inconsistency in the way in which PE is taught. However, there is some consensus with regards to the purpose of PE. The International Association for PE position statement (2020:8) notes that:

Learning should be the goal of physical education, as it is of all education. Physical education is not about playing games or sport, nor is it about simply building fitness or accumulating a minimum amount of physical activity during lessons; the focus should be on purposeful learning. Depending on the cultural and regional context, this learning includes objectives in the psychomotor, cognitive, social, and affective domains. These objectives can be reached through various content offerings, for example sport and games, dance, fitness, and/or outdoor pursuits, or a combination thereof.

This statement reflects a holistic view of PE that focuses on meaningful educational experiences rather than a competitive sport agenda or a cure-all for social ills, including inactivity and obesity. Importantly, it acknowledges the complexity of PE whilst clearly establishing the educational intent.

Moreover, the Position Paper of the Association for Physical Education in the United Kingdom (2020:4) states that:

Physical Education is the planned, progressive learning that takes place in school curriculum timetabled time, and which is delivered to all pupils. This involves both 'learning to move' (i.e., becoming more physically competent) and 'moving to learn' (e.g., learning through movement, a range of skills and understandings beyond physical activity, such as co-operating with others). The context for the learning is physical activity, with children and young people experiencing a broad range of activities, including sport and dance.

Although important commonalities exist between the two position statements, the Association for Physical Education in the United Kingdom defines the purpose of PE whilst also addressing the differing health and sport schema that have emerged in England. This further reinforces the accusations that PE has tried to achieve too much across different learning domains. Moreover, an emphasis on competitive games within the English National Curriculum for PE (Department for Education, 2013) has done little to assist with a move from a looks-like-sport model to one focused on educational outcomes (Ward & Quennerstedt, 2015). Therefore, it is vital that head teachers are guided by the subject associations and research within the field to understand the unique subject goals and pedagogies of PE, so that they can then contribute to a refocusing of the educational goals. However, in 2019, an All-Party Parliamentary report on PE blamed Physical Educators for remaining silent and, thereby, failing to keep PE true to its core purpose. The report went on to state that PE was not about nurturing Olympians but is instead about “educating children about the physical so that learners are provided with educational experiences from their early years through to leaving school, enabling them to discover their individual route to a lifelong love of, and engagement in, movement, sport and physical activity.” (APPG, 2019:8)

A recent Research Review series was produced by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED, 2021). This set out to explore the curriculum necessary to deliver the broad aims for PE. Whilst the review recognised that the purpose of PE remains highly contested and that understanding of concepts such as physical literacy can be framed differently dependent on ideologies, the review clearly defines the important

role PE plays in promoting and sustaining physical activity. However, importantly it highlighted the similarities and differences between PE, physical activity and sport. Additionally, the review affirmed the important role PE plays in closing gaps and reducing inequalities, highlighting pillars of progression required to physically educate all pupils. This review provides a valuable source of information and guidance for schools. However, if there is to be held a common view on the purpose of PE, it is important that all stakeholders have an opportunity to make a contribution. This includes head teachers, whose voices have previously been absent, who hold positions of influence and power with regards to curriculum enactment (Ní Chróinín et al., 2019).

Whilst it has been established that the purpose of PE is highly contested, in the absence of a widely accepted definition and for the purpose of this study, the following definitions are provided. These definitions have been produced by the Association for PE in the United Kingdom, have been disseminated nationally to schools and subject leaders and are drawn on in professional development training lead by national partners (AfPE, 2015, 2020). In this research, I draw on definitions with which the participants in this study are most likely to be familiar.

- (i) **School sport** is the structured learning that takes place beyond the curriculum (i.e., in the extended curriculum) within school settings; this is sometimes referred to as out-of-school hours learning. Again, the context for the learning is physical activity. The 'school sport' programme has the potential to develop and

broaden the foundation learning that takes place in physical education. It also forms a vital link with 'community sport and activity' (AfPE, 2020:4).

- (ii) Physical activity** is a broad term referring to all bodily movement that uses energy. It includes all forms of physical education, sports and dance activities. However, it is wider than this, as it also includes indoor and outdoor play, work-related activity, outdoor and adventurous activities, active travel (e.g., walking, cycling, rollerblading, scooting) and routine, habitual activities such as using the stairs, doing housework and gardening (AfPE, 2020:4).

It is important that a common language is used within and across PE, school sport and physical activity policy documents and curriculum guidance in order to provide schools with greater clarity and conceptual understanding. Furthermore, it is important that key concepts and definitions are regularly reviewed to ensure terminology is research informed and reflects the evolving nature of the landscape for PE, school sport and physical activity. For example, in 2019 an All Party Parliamentary report on Mental Health through Movement, a distinction was made between Physical Activity and Movement (APPG, 2019). The report stated that movement means more than what is understood as Physical Activity and suggested that movement was more inclusive of early years and experiences in play and the term 'movement' was less entrenched in the obesity dilemma than physical activity (APPG, 2019:17).

Factors Influencing the teaching of PE in English Primary Schools

In England, there has been an evolving neoliberal discourse around the place, role, and contribution of Physical Education (PE) in the National Curriculum. Neoliberalism is built on a premise of liberation and free markets which are guided by knowledge produced by 'experts' within an institutional framework (Harvey, 2007:66). When examining the development of the current primary PE National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), it is evident that both the role of the expert, increased emphasis on accountability, and a desire to give schools flexibility and choice, have had a profound impact on the place and definition of PE within the curriculum and the programme of study. Furthermore, the increased coverage of high-profile sporting events, including the 2012 Olympic Games, and, in more recent years, the mounting preoccupation with health and childhood obesity have served to reinforce the perceptive dispositions of head teachers and the way in which PE is conceptualised.

An examination of the current practices related to PE in England and the place of the subject within the curriculum is critical to ensuring that PE not only meets the needs of children, but also secures its unique position within an intensely monitored and crowded curriculum. PE can undoubtedly have a positive impact on the development of children, and it could be argued that, at the time of a global health crisis, there has never been so many positive associations being constructed between children's physical, social, emotional, and mental wellbeing. However, for PE to fulfil the needs of children, a comprehensive consideration of the current practices related to PE and a discussion around the future of the subject within the curriculum is vital to ensure that PE not only meets children's needs but also asserts its distinctive position within a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.

Penney and Chandler (2000:71) argue that, if PE is going to meet the needs of children in the 21st century, we need to question the “adequacy and appropriateness of the ways in which the subject is defined, structured and taught in state schools in England”. Furthermore, to achieve this, there needs to be a clear articulation and vision for the subject (Bailey, 2009:1). This would serve to help inform and shape school leaders beliefs about the potential, purpose and contribution of PE. Without this, PE is at risk of becoming redundant or surplus to requirements due to the tensions between different relative values such as daily physical activity (Griffiths & Gillespie, 2016:2).

A case for Physical Education

After existing for many years on the margins of the primary curriculum, a critical period has now been reached in the development of PE. As a subject, it has been a centrepiece in an ideological struggle between successive governments. PE has been accused of trying to achieve too much, which has resulted in confusion and, at times, contradictory views. Johnrose and Maher (2010:15) poignantly argue that it has served as a political football. This assertion is based on claims that PE has the ability to support a range of outcomes, such as promoting health, fostering a love of sport, developing resilience, and impacting on school behaviour. This has done little to secure the educational status of the subject (Sprake & Temple, 2016:159). Consequently, PE finds itself in a vulnerable position due to the competing discourses and policy areas, including education, health, and sport. A careful, objective evaluation is needed to protect the integrity of physical education within the

curriculum and to ensure head teachers understand the unique contribution and value of PE (Lynch & Soukup, 2017:7).

Thus, the policy areas of education, health and sport have served as powerful influences which, over time, have shaped and manipulated what PE has become. In 1995, Stolz acknowledged that PE was suffering a crisis of legitimation and blamed practitioners for failing to counteract claims by providing credible, coherent reasons about why PE should retain its position in the curriculum. As a result, Stolz (2014) argued that the legitimacy of PE would continue to be challenged until it could provide a reasoned account of its practices and provide a strong philosophical position that is accessible to all. Therefore, if PE is suffering a crisis of legitimisation, it is necessary to question the multiple claims and consider whether the subject has tried to incorporate too much and, as a result, 'failed to identify a specific focus within its huge potential' (Armour & Jones, 1998:85).

Furthermore, this evolving pressure has been further exacerbated by a curriculum that has resisted change and is deeply rooted in a philosophy whereby physical development is considered subordinate to intellectual development (Griggs & Ward, 2012:210). Therefore, there needs to be a careful consideration and articulation of primary PE to ensure the subject positively impacts on children, fundamental to which is the development of clearly focused learning and educational goals (Jess et al., 2016:1031).

It is claimed that, as a result of the many complex networks that influence developments in PE and school sport, there are multiple variants of the original intention. Furthermore, it is

claimed that the differing and sometimes contradictory views about the purpose of PE held by the stakeholders is serving further to reinforce this contestation (Griggs, 2018). As a result, there have been calls for an examination of PE to help to generate greater conceptual clarity and precision (Lawson, 2018).

At a time when protecting the wellbeing and mental health of children is high on the political and educational agenda, there is potential for PE to once again become misrepresented by the diverse interests of the stakeholders, which could further distort the views about the purpose of PE. Whilst there is comprehensive evidence to suggest a positive relationship between mental health and physical activity (Penedo & Dahn, 2005), it is important that PE and physical activity are seen as distinctly different concepts that contribute to a positive movement culture. Although physical activity is defined broadly by the Association for PE as bodily movement that uses energy, PE is defined as a programme of education that involves progressive learning through the context of movement and physical activity. Hence PE is therefore not about intervening or avoiding risk for the most vulnerable students but is about strengthening the health knowledge and resource of all children (Quennerstedt, 2019).

It is therefore proposed that, in order to reduce the current fragmentation of the understanding and purpose of PE, that promotion of dialogue is needed across the stakeholder groups, paying particular attention to those whose voices are currently marginalised or limited, including head teachers (Carse et al., 2018). This point was previously suggested by Wild (2010), who considered that there was a greater necessity for

clarity within the PE curriculum and identified the importance of securing the engagement of senior leaders in driving change. Subsequently, Ní Chróinín et al. (2020) proposed that head teachers should have an opportunity to contribute towards a clear vision as they are often the ones who have a significant influence on the implementation and resourcing of ideas.

English National Curriculum

The division of the curriculum areas determines the extent to which subjects are valued and, as such, positions PE as a 'low priority' subject that is pushed to the margins of the curriculum (Morgan & Hansen, 2007:99). The core curriculum subjects, namely English, maths and science, are widely considered to lay the foundation for the learning of other subjects (Harris, 2018:9). As a result, they benefit from higher status than the foundation subjects that form the wider curriculum and, consequently, the core subjects benefit from a significant amount of dedicated time not only in the classroom but also during teacher training and ongoing professional development. Duncombe et al. (2018:76) argue that the foundation subjects have always suffered from low curriculum status in comparison to the core curriculum. The impact of the status maintained by the core subjects goes beyond the training of teachers and is further reflected through the allocation of resources in schools. As a consequence, PE, along with the other statutory foundation subjects of art and design, computing, design and technology, languages, geography, history, and music, tends to be marginalised, thus undermining the intentions of a 'broad and balanced' curriculum (Boyle & Bragg, 2006).

This has not gone unnoticed by Ofsted who, in 2017, expressed concerns about the narrowing of the curriculum. Moreover, this is not a phenomenon that is unique to England. Although PE has remained a compulsory subject in most nations across Europe, there has been a steady decline in the amount of curriculum time allocated to PE (Hardmann, 2008). In 2000, the majority of countries in Europe provided primary schoolchildren with an average of 121 minutes of PE and secondary schoolchildren with 117 minutes. By 2008, these average figures had dropped to 101 minutes in primary schools and 90 minutes in secondary schools (Hardmann, 2008:8).

It is claimed that the gap between subjects identified as core, and other areas of the primary curriculum, widened with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in the late 1990's (Morgan & Hansen, 2007). At this time, the government agenda focused on raising standards, with a particular emphasis on attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. It is suggested that, through the distinction of 'territories of priority', the curriculum narrowed, to focus predominantly on subjects assessed through national testing (Boyle & Bragg, 2006). This was evident from the 'Excellence in Schools' White Paper (1997), which stated that the "first task of the education service is to ensure that every child is taught to read, write and add up" (DfEE, 1997:9).

Performativity

Alongside the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, national testing was introduced, providing schools with 'success level' targets. Whilst the National Curriculum

remained unchanged, the national testing regimes created an environment where schools could be publicly named and shamed (Chitty & Dunford, 1999). The pressure caused by these comparisons and expectations was undoubtedly felt by the head teachers and resulted in greater emphasis being placed on the high stakes core curriculum subjects. It is suggested that the high stakes associated with accountability and performativity, embodied within national testing, brings teachers to 'the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies, and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (Foucault & Gordon, 1980: 39).

Many of the performance measures which are now commonplace in schools were borrowed directly from commercial settings and adapted to fit the educational priorities (Ball, 2017). These measures are managed and administered by head teachers, who are described as the main 'carrier' and embodiment of the new managerialism and are crucial for the transformation of the organisational regimes of schools (Grace, 1995). The extent to which the associated pressure brought about by the increased transparency, accountability and a results-driven curricula have affected the way in which head teachers manage schools, is unknown. It is interesting to note that Rizvi and Lingard (2010:3) state that "educational purposes have been redefined in terms of a narrower set of concerns about human capital development, and the role education must play to meet the needs of the global economy and to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy".

PE within the curriculum

It can be argued that PE has, in fact, enjoyed a privileged position in UK schools, as it has maintained its status as a statutory subject since 1991. However, for a prolonged period of time, PE has been on the margins of the educational policy. Despite extensive and admirable scholarly work, the research has failed to extend beyond journals and books and stand up to institutional pressures. The debate around the educational value of PE has never been conclusively resolved to the extent that it has parity with other subjects (Kirk, 2013).

Moreover, in the 1980s, at a time when the national curriculum was being developed, scholarly work failed to drown out the emerging rhetoric related to the state of children's health and also the lack of success achieved by elite athletes in the UK (Houlihan & Green, 2006). This very public debate on elite sport coincided with the debate over the content of the National Curriculum and it is suggested that the late 1980s represented 'a watershed in British Physical Education discourse, with the production of definitions of Physical Education' (Kirk, 1992:2).

The representation and construction of worth in PE was, in fact, shaped by the perceptions and experiences of the Conservative government at the time. This served to reinforce the perceptive dispositions of a distinct group of agents. At the time when the current National Curriculum was being developed, the government claimed that there existed a 'crisis' in education and set out to re-establish a traditional curriculum that would be easily recognisable (Penny & Evans, 1999:45). This 'back to basics' approach embraced the familiar and, on that basis, was deemed to be

worthwhile and sensible. During this period, there was also extensive public debate surrounding competitive sport and performance and, as a result, a curriculum group predominantly consisting of sporting bodies was assembled, reflecting the government's desire to focus on traditional games and competition.

It has been argued that, as a result of the influence of sport-orientated organisations, a non-pedagogic knowledge, situated in sport, health, citizenship, and physical activity, influenced policy (recontextualised) and subsequently influenced the pedagogy in schools (Jung, Pope & Kirk, 2016). Therefore, it is unsurprising that PE has been described as holding an ambiguous place in the curriculum and placing a disproportionate amount of attention on a narrow range of competitive games (Penney & Evans, 1999).

In recent times, there has however been growing momentum, both nationally and internationally, to legislate changes to protect the position of PE (Penney, 2009). PE has been described "as the only curriculum subject whose focus combines 'the body' and physical competence with values-based learning and communication, which provides a learning gateway to grow the skills required for success in the 21st Century" (McLennan & Thompson, 2015:6). The Child of the North report, published during the Covid-19 pandemic, illustrated the critical role that schools play in supporting the wellbeing of disadvantaged children (Pickett et al., 2020). Whilst this report shone a light on the inequalities experienced by children living in the north of England, it also highlighted the relationship between poverty and social inequalities that lead to worse physical and mental health

outcomes, and educational attainment. Furthermore, the report highlighted the way in which the existing inequalities had been exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic, including the increased prevalence of childhood obesity, lower levels of physical activity, and limited access to green spaces. The report concluded that a Covid-19 recovery should not be solely about lost learning, but equally as much about lost social, cultural, and sporting opportunities. This was further highlighted in a statement within the report from a head teacher, who stated that, by making physical activity a priority in their school, other people started to understand its importance.

PE as a core subject

Although PE remains the only foundation subject that is statutory at all four key stages, there have been repeated calls over the past ten years for PE to become a core subject and for a minimum of two hours of PE to be taught each week. These calls have been the result of the increased concern for children's health, unease about the prevalence of the outsourcing of PE in primary schools and the reduced time allotted to PE in secondary schools. The case for PE to become a core subject within the National Curriculum alongside maths, English and science was presented by Dr Jo Harris and the English Physical Education Expert Group in 2018. Subsequently, a national petition for PE to become a core subject was launched to the United Kingdom Government and Parliament in 2019. The case presented by the Physical Education expert group included an argument that, if core subjects are defined as those that lay the foundation for learning in other subjects, the unique contribution of PE to spiritual, moral, cultural, and mental development should be recognised (Harris, 2018). Furthermore, it was claimed that making PE a core subject would

lead to the improved physical, mental and personal wellbeing of children, which would lead to whole school improvements.

Pressure for PE to become a core subject further intensified in December 2021, and during the Covid-19 pandemic. A House of Lords Select Committee (2021) called for a national plan for sport, health and wellbeing to be developed to address declining physical activity levels. The report presented by the select committee stated that the Department for Education must designate PE as a core subject across all key stages to ensure PE receives adequate time and resource. Furthermore, the report claimed expected standards for the delivery of PE and school sport needed to be established and the quality and delivery of PE and school sport needed to be a focus of school Ofsted inspections. The government responded to these points and confirmed there were no plans to change the status of PE. Whilst Ofsted do not inspect individual subjects, since 2019 they have been carrying out 'deep dives' into specific curriculum areas including PE. Although 'deep dives' pull together evidence from several subjects and do not make judgements on individual subjects, they are designed to gather evidence related to curriculum intent, implementation, and impact to establish if there is sufficient evidence to suggest a quality education (Ofsted, 2019).

There is a significant amount of literature documenting the varied levels of confidence and competence of primary school teachers to teach PE (Griggs, 2008; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011) and a study carried out in 2012 stated that PE lessons delivered by primary school teachers are often of poor quality (Tsangaridou, 2012). This therefore raises questions about the types of evidence being gathered in 'deep dive' PE inspections to suggest a 'quality

education'. Whilst it cannot be denied that government investment in PE has been significant, it is evident that investment has not protected the subject, nor has it had a positive impact on the quality of provision in primary school. In fact, it is suggested that the unintended consequence of the PE and Sport Premium is the virtual 'ceding' of the subject to unqualified teachers, and predominantly sports coaches (APPG, 2019).

Included in claims about the contribution of PE to the education of children are suggestions that PE should develop resilience. Resilience is a concept used to explain why some children manage to avoid negative consequences and succeed despite adversity. This construct is grounded in a social-ecological understanding of resilience, based on the capacity of individuals to thrive, despite exposure to stressors and challenge. Although there is evidence to suggest that physical fitness is effective in buffering stressors, this tends to be based on the medical model (Silverman & Deuster, 2014). Whilst there is a growing interest in the ability of PE to promote the development of resilience, as yet there is limited evidence to support this claim. Furthermore, although it has been recognised that PE can support the emotional and social development of pupils, it is important to note that this is not and cannot be the sole responsibility or fundamental purpose of PE (Ofsted, 2022). However, a study carried out by Jefferies et al. (2019) indicated that resilience was positively correlated with a number of indicators of physical literacy, including movement competence and competence.

Physical literacy is described by Whitehead (2019:8) as 'the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement

in physical activities for life'. As a result, Physical Literacy presents as an attractive all-encompassing concept. A study carried out by Jefferies et al. (2019) concluded that, through the development of a robust physical literacy curriculum in PE, children are more likely to participate more widely in a range of activities as a result of their increased confidence in their physical abilities. Whilst this study claimed that, through exposure to appropriate challenges, children develop agency and confidence, it emphasised that these benefits are more likely to be felt by vulnerable children during physical literacy lessons than sport activities (Jefferies et al., 2019). However, the term Physical Literacy has been subject to persistent debate over the past two decades as a consequence of differing ideologies and viewpoints (Young et al., 2021). Uncertainty around what is and is not Physical Literacy has further added to the messy construct of PE. A recent study carried out by Young et al. (2021) mapped prominent scholarly literature related to Physical Literacy. The study identified that Physical Literacy is referred to as both a goal for PE and a means to achieve quality PE. As a result, the authors suggest that there is a risk that differing ideologies merge and become a catch-all concept to address problems across sport, education and health (Young et al., 2021). Thus, conceptual and ideological debates continue to contribute to ambiguity surrounding the purpose of PE.

Claims about the health and wider educational benefits associated with PE have prevailed since the 1909 Syllabus of Physical Education and, although the perceptions about health and the needs of children have changed, the opinion that PE has the ability to address health concerns persist. However, Bailey et al. (2009) warns that, if the PE profession is going to make claims about the wider educational and health benefits of PE, it must be

willing to be held to account and that, in order to do so, further evidence is required to make robust and justifiable claims. Kirk (2002) suggests that it is universities that should play a critical role in the ongoing critical intellectual work to inform pedagogy and the curriculum. However, in order to do so, Kirk (2002) suggests that strong partnerships should be formed between universities so that complementary expertise can be called on to address complex issues. Additionally, Kirk suggested that these partnerships should be quickly called to action in order to generate evidence to inform future PE.

As a PE teacher educator, I was part of a working group that, in 2019, produced an All Party Parliamentary Group report on the Primary PE and Sport Premium. The group consisted of 25 voluntary members, that included representatives from seven English universities. The report asserted that PE has become a 'Cinderella Subject', functioning to serve a wider educational agenda and the promotion of health and wellbeing, and that the shifting priorities have, in fact, served to weaken the subject (APPG, 2019:10). The report argued that, as a result of the shifting policy and priorities, the capacity and educational value of PE as a curriculum subject have been weakened and, as a consequence, PE has become increasingly 'disconnected and fragmented' (Carse et al., 2018:498). This position supports a warning from Petrie and Griggs (2018:397) who stated that, internationally, governments are intent on exploiting PE in order to achieve a range of political goals. This has subsequently led to the creation of a contested field that has become increasingly disconnected through the creation of promises that cannot be kept (Bailey et al., 2009).

Increasingly, schools have become settings where political agendas are enacted. As successive governments have taken a more neo-liberal view of education, driven by performativity and outsourcing, the funding for PE has been less from the education and more from sport and health budgets (Evans & Davies, 2014). It is as a result of the many complex networks that influence developments in PE that there are multiple variants of the original intention. This phenomenon is referred to as 'policy slippage' or a 'crisis of legitimisation', whereby multiple variants of the intended policy are observed (Penny & Evans, 1999:39). Whilst PE undoubtedly benefits from policy connections and investment, an easily observable unintended consequence of this position has been the development of an open market for external providers.

Evidence of a more neoliberal focus can be seen in the shift towards a competitive sport agenda in the PE curriculum, with the regular outsourcing of PE to sporting bodies and the commercial sector (Griggs, 2016). Additionally, it is suggested that the key stakeholders, namely the children, parents, health professionals and the media, have developed conceptual models and agendas that are impacting on and influencing primary PE. This includes a health schema focused on obesity and physical inactivity (Carse et al., 2018). As this schema (health, sport, and education) jostles for position within the PE landscape, PE as a curriculum subject has become increasingly disconnected and disintegrated.

This evolving and fragmented landscape has been further exacerbated by a curriculum that has resisted change and is deeply rooted in philosophical thinking,

whereby physical development is considered subordinate to intellectual development (Griggs & Ward, 2012:210). Therefore, it is argued that there needs to be a careful consideration and articulation of primary PE to ensure that the subject positively impacts on children. Fundamental to this is ensuring that head teachers understand the unique subject goals and pedagogies of PE. Additionally, it is important that the somewhat contradictory messages that have accompanied recent policy are acknowledged in order to consider a shift in perspectives to refocus on educational goals (Jess et al., 2016:1028).

Impact of Policy on PE

PE finds itself in a vulnerable position due to the competing discourses and policy areas, including education, health and sport. These areas have served as powerful influencers which, over time, have shaped and manipulated what PE has become. This phenomenon is identified as 'policy slippage' which could also be construed as a crisis of 'legitimation' (Penny & Evans, 1999). It has been suggested that the complexity of this landscape has served to confuse practitioners, alienate policy makers and, to some extent, support the divergence and dilution of the meaning of PE (Petrie et al., 2020). This is not to suggest that each of these fields does not play a valuable role in young people's lives; however, the varied associated meanings of these disciplines have served to muddy the meaning and purpose of PE.

The terms PE and sport or PE and games are often used interchangeably in schools (Coulter & Ni Chroinin, 2013). This is a legacy of traditional PE, consisting largely of playing sport,

that was experienced in post-war Britain and continues to dominate PE in both primary and secondary schools in England. As previously noted, the Association for PE in England (2020:4) defines PE as the 'planned, progressive learning that takes place in curriculum time and which is delivered to all pupils' and define sport as the 'structured learning that takes place beyond the curriculum'. School sport is generally defined as a competitive, performance motivated and elective activity that is often delivered outside the school day. However, in reality, PE lessons are often organised as multi activity areas with a dominant discourse of games and sport and there is very little to distinguish PE from organised sport. The English National Curriculum for PE makes reference to competitive sport and the discourse of performance in that:

A high-quality physical education curriculum inspires all pupils to succeed and excel in competitive sport and other physically demanding activities (DfE, 2013:1).

There have been warnings that, if PE as sport prevails, sport is liable to become the dominant frame of reference for PE (Hardman, 2008). Quennerstedt (2019b) states that education should be at the heart of what is done in school and PE and, if not, PE is at risk of becoming fitness instruction, obesity prevention or the playing of sport. Although alternative conceptualisations of PE are needed in order for it to engage and remain relevant for children, the future of PE within the curriculum is reliant on experiences that are educative and lead to growth in experience.

Additionally, it is argued that PE has been resistant to change due to the role of the government in the conceptualisation of PE, and the increasingly neoliberal practices in schools, including performativity, have led to PE being increasingly led by sports coaches

and providers other than teachers. The curriculum is often developed with minimal input from the PE profession, including teachers, head teachers and those working in ITT and research. As a result, the curriculum conveys messages about wider ideologies, discourses and the values of the current government which, as a result, has further served to maintain the entrenched hierarchy of the curriculum. Discourses are described by Foucault (1973) as sets of truths that circulate in society, apply power, shape subjectivities and influence power. In response to the 2019 petition to make PE a core subject, the government released the following statement:

it is important for all schools to offer PE and sporting activities to their pupils throughout their time at school. PE and sport can make an important long-term contribution to health and building character. We have set an ambition under our Childhood Obesity Plan that primary pupils should be given the opportunity to do 30 minutes of the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day while at school (DfE, 2019:1).

This statement very clearly illustrates the dominant sport and health discourse and highlights the way in which the policies on PE have reinforced the government's broader social objectives (Jung et al. 2016). Additionally, it further illustrates the interchangeable use of the terms 'PE' and 'sport'.

The complexity of the PE landscape is felt beyond the United Kingdom. For example, in New Zealand it has been argued that a shift in the agenda, driven by the government and the introduction of new initiatives, has created confusion that has resulted in muddled thinking around the whole movement area (Culpan, 20005). Moreover, Lounsbery and McKenzie

(2015:143) state that, in the United States, the general educational trends and frequent changes of focus are at least partially responsible for the confusion about PE. Furthermore, a study carried out in the United States in 2016 demonstrated how terms such as 'health and physical education', 'physical literacy' and 'health literacy' have created confusion amongst practitioners (Lynch & Soukup, 2016).

Unsurprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in concerns for children's health and has led to the widespread examination of teaching and learning in PE as well as a call to protect the unique contribution of PE to children's wellbeing (Howley, 2021). It was estimated that, by April 2020, 138 countries had closed schools, resulting in disruption to education for 80% of children worldwide (UNESCO, 2020). Whilst it is acknowledged that the pandemic has resulted in changes to the ways in which schools operate, the European Physical Education Association (EUPEA) appealed for PE to rise above the challenge of the crisis and return to curriculum time at least at levels established prior to the pandemic (EUPEA, 2020). Whilst EUPEA acknowledge the role that PE can play in addressing the sedentary behaviour experienced during the pandemic, they urged the decision makers not to confuse the teaching of PE with a single and unstructured offer of physical activity and physical fitness, external to the curriculum (EUPEA, 2020:2).

Interestingly, during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, there was an explosion of online fitness orientated resources done in the name of PE, such as 'PE with Joe' (The Body Coach TV ,2019). Joe Wicks' involvement in PE provoked debate within the PE community with some academics within the field offering support whilst others concern. For example, Stirrup et al.

(2020) claimed that the rise of celebrity PE teachers was undermining the professional status of qualified teachers and leading to a narrowed fitness orientated conceptualisation of PE. Conversely, Windsor (2020) praised the way in which Joe Wicks created a family centric engagement in PE that is more novel and inclusive. These opposing positions raised questions about the conceptual understanding of PE and, furthermore, the degree to which the current PE practice in schools is focused on physical activity. Moreover, the profile and proliferation digital influencers (such as Joe Wicks) have highlighted a need for educators and academics to be reflexive to ensure that PE maintains its relevance and meaning and asserts its unique position within the curriculum. Whilst it is undeniable that there was a surge of external influences during the Covid-19 pandemic, the rise of Joe Wicks was far from unexpected as schools continue to grapple with challenges in the delivery of high-quality PE and demonstrate a willingness to hand over responsibility to external partners (Jones & Green, 2017).

Outsourcing PE

As noted above, schools in England talk interchangeably about PE, sport and physical activity. This has in part been attributed to developments which followed the election of New Labour in 1997. With the introduction of a new political agenda, public services saw a shift in the emphasis on partnership work within education. In 2002, the Government developed the PE and School Sport Strategy (PESS). This encouraged primary and secondary schools to work together to form local communities for the development of PE and sport.

In addition, a public service agreement was created to increase the percentage of school aged children engaged in a minimum of two hours of PESS within and beyond the curriculum. The PESS strategy provided secondary schools with unprecedented ringfenced funding to release specialist teachers of PE to support the development of PE and sport in primary schools. These communities were referred to as School Sport Partnerships (SSP's) and they were headed up by a Partnership Development Manager (PDM) who was centrally funded through the PESS but based in and employed by a secondary school. In most cases the PDM was based in a school that had been awarded Sports College status and received additional funding to act as a local driver for community sport.

Whilst the impact of the PESS strategy is undeniable in terms of the increased opportunities for primary children to be active, it did little to rectify a belief that PE in primary schools is a 'watered down' version of secondary PE, with too much emphasis on the activity rather than the learning experience (Talbot, 2007). In addition to releasing secondary teachers of PE, the PESS strategy provided funding to release primary teachers who were the nominated lead for PE. The nominated PE lead in primary schools was called a Primary Link Teacher (PLT) and their role was to be the link between the lead secondary school, championing high quality PE in their primary school and coordinating a school sport programme. However, research carried out by Griggs (2010) suggests that rather than focusing on local needs, the PLT was largely a passive recipient of initiatives and national targets handed down by the SSP. Although early findings reported on the positive impact of School Sport Partnerships, over time there was a shift in performance indicators away from high quality PE to participation statistics linked to policy goals (Griggs & Randall, 2019). Consequently, it was perhaps

inevitable that, as a result of substantial investment and increased targets related to participation in school sport and out of school hours activity, there was a surge in the number of external providers offering to supplement the delivery of physical activity and sport on school sites. The practice of employing coaches has led to an increasingly privatised model for teaching PE (Smith, 2015). Although there is an established belief that generalist teachers are best placed to teach PE in primary schools, a study conducted by Jones and Green (2017) revealed that 92% of primary PE subject leaders did not support a generalist model of teaching PE and indeed over half of subject leaders had significant reservations due to perceptions of teacher confidence and competence.

In addition to the PESS strategy, the Government introduced the Workforce Remodelling Act (DfES, 2003) which was designed to support schools to raise educational standards without adding additional workload responsibilities for teachers. It was acknowledged that the expectations of teachers to raise the performance standards to ensure that all children had high levels of literacy were escalating, along with the teacher workload (Hargreaves, 2000). From September 2005, the planning, preparation, and assessment (PPA) time was introduced, providing all teachers with a 10% reduction of timetabled teaching to plan lessons, prepare resources and assess pupils' work. This policy was welcomed by teachers. However, it placed head teachers in the challenging position of having to recruit a wider workforce of support staff to support teaching. The Workforce Remodelling Act (DfES, 2003) stated that teachers' PPA time is protected and that teachers should be involved in identifying PPA priorities. It went on to suggest that the provision of PPA should not add to teachers' workload. With these requirements in mind, there are a number of factors which

are likely to influence head teachers' decisions, including academic achievement, which result in the prioritisation of subjects including English, mathematics and science, and the resources available to provide cover (Petrie et al., 2014). According to Burke and Welsch (2018), the choices that head teachers make provide a crystallised picture of the value afforded to each subject area. Interestingly, they asserted that teachers saw their worth being down and categorized into checklists of performance standards or competencies (Burke & Welsch, 2018).

A number of factors are likely to influence head teacher decisions. These may include teacher preference, the prioritisation of and protection of English and mathematics and, crucially in PE, confusion between the skill set needed to teach PE and coach sports respectively. Additionally, there is a vast pool of coaches perceived to hold relevant qualifications who are readily available to cover PE lessons for an hourly rate of pay. The argument against the use of coaches to cover PPA time has done little to sway many head teachers, who are struggling to address significant budget-related issues. Carney and Howells (2008:3) stated clearly "coaches with sport specific knowledge, but without an education background, are not the answer", thus reinforcing the importance of pedagogical understanding. This is further supported by Talbot who states that:

the best quality PE she [Talbot] has seen in primary schools has been delivered by primary teachers who were not physical education specialists, but specialists in children's development. . . who know the children they teach well (Talbot, 2008b:7).

For Talbot, the answer is to develop the confidence and competence of primary school teachers to deliver high quality PE. Whatever the arguments for and against using coaches who lack pedagogical skills to meet the needs of all children, this is a reality and one that has, in some way, been facilitated by recent policy. Ironically, the policy that was designed to support the development of quality PE has contributed to the deskilling of teachers (Harris et al., 2012).

Following a change of Government in 2010, it was announced that the PESS funding (£162 million) was to be cut and that there would be a move towards a more bottom up, decentralised approach. The Secretary of State for Education stated that ringfencing around the main school funding pot would be removed, as this has 'limited head teachers' powers to spend money as they wished' (DfE, 2010b:1). In addition, the Minister announced that the government would "revise the PE curriculum in our curriculum review to place a new emphasis on competitive sports" (DfE, 2010b:1). A renewed and resolute emphasis on competition and sport within the PE curriculum did little to address the practice of the outsourcing PE and the converged discourse of PE as sport (Powell, 2015).

The local primary PE networks, which were by this stage well established and reliant on PESS funding, set out to explore ways to maintain work with external partners as the traditional concept of a teacher working solely within the confines of a school was a vision of the past (Bailey, 2010). The main emphasis of the PESS strategy was to enhance the amount of time

children spent being active but, as a consequence of the strategies adopted to increase capacity, many head teachers were left with a teaching workforce that felt de-skilled and lacked confidence. Consequently, schools developed an increased dependency on partners to support the delivery of PE and were left with a workforce who had not taught PE for several years.

As a result, the interconnection between the notion of the inexperienced teacher and the expert outside provider made the outsourcing of PE inevitable (Powell, 2015). Furthermore, the 'normalisation' of the use of sports coaches and increased legitimisation of unqualified teachers within the curriculum further conflated PE and sport. This has undoubtedly impacted on the curriculum and the prioritisation of sport skills (Blair & Capel 2011). A growing body of international research (Griggs, 2010; Petrie, 2011; Williams, Hay, & Macdonald, 2011) indicates that PE has become to some extent 'an open market' in which teachers are no longer the sole or main providers of PE.

Research carried out by Jones and Green (2017) highlighted three different models for the delivery of PE in primary schools, as described by senior leaders. The models included one or a combination of different groups, including generalist classroom teachers, specialist primary teachers and outsourced sports coaches. This study revealed that 11% of PE lessons were taught by the generalist classroom teacher whilst 69% of lessons were delivered by someone other than the class teacher. In 44% of schools, this was a coach. The increased legitimisation of coaches, in combination with the introduction of PPA time in 2005, meant that schools needed to find a workforce to backfill teacher release. This opened up an

opportunity for head teachers to bring in coaches who could solve the issue of the decreased confidence in teaching PE and assist with teacher release for significantly less than the cost of hiring supply teachers. Jess et al. (2016) state that the consequence of outsourcing has de-skilled teachers. Controversially, Powell (2015) suggests that outside providers are expert primary PE teachers whilst classroom teachers are inexperienced.

Additionally, it is suggested that, when schools outsource services to external organisations, they not only employ a business strategy associated with the private sector (neoliberal notions of choice and efficiency), but also allow public education to be used as a tool for non-public organisations (voluntary, private and philanthropic organisations) to 'profit' both strategically and financially (Powell, 2014). However, outsourcing aspects of the provision and external providers working in schools and/or alongside teachers has rapidly become normalised and largely accepted as a reality of the current policy landscape. As a consequence, external provision has become legitimised as part of the discourse of PE.

The current national curriculum for PE is a slimmed down version of previous iterations which arguably offers schools greater freedom but consequently requires teachers, subject leaders and head teachers to have a greater depth of subject knowledge in order to fulfil the ambitions of a planned and progressive curriculum (Griggs & Randall, 2019). The previous national curriculum included six areas of learning (including dance and gymnastics) and assessment levels, which went some way in advocating for a broad and balanced, progressive curriculum. Whilst there were persistent criticisms related to the quality of teaching learning and assessment in PE, the curriculum at the time meant that schools were held to account in these areas by Ofsted. As a result of the slimmed down curriculum, Griggs

(2010) claims that schools no longer have to justify to Ofsted, the inclusion or exclusion of activity areas and there is a lack of robust assessment of pupil progress as a result of limited guidance and expectations.

The following table provides an illustration of some key differences between the previous and current national curriculum for PE in key stage 1 and key stage 2. Interestingly, the table highlights a shift in emphasis from the development of knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the subject to a more performance orientated curriculum with an emphasis on excellence and competition.

	National curriculum for PE published in 1999	National curriculum for PE published in 2013
Extent of guidance provided within the national curriculum for PE	Key stage one: 415 words Key stage two: 706 words Swimming guidance included in guidance for both in key stage 1 and key stage 2: Key stage 1: 68 words Key stage 2: 78 words	Key stage one: 103 words Key stage two: 157 words Swimming across key stage 1 and 2: 55 words
Purpose statement	yes	yes
Curriculum aim	Key Stage 1&2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquiring and developing skills ● Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas ● Evaluating and improving performance ● Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health 	Key Stage 1&2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities ● are physically active for sustained periods of time ● engage in competitive sports and activities ● lead healthy, active lives.
Assessment	Seven attainment level statements	General attainment statement for all key stages

Figure 2.0 Table illustrating the key differences between the national curriculum for PE published in 1999 and 2013

The current national curriculum and an increased emphasis on competition, lends itself well to creation of a games-based learning experience that prepares children for competition. Consequently, the stripping down of the national curriculum and an emphasis on competition has resulted in greater justification for the recruitment of external agencies who have the skills to coach and prepare children for sport. Additionally, Griggs & Randall (2019) question if the unintended consequence of unprecedented investment in PE and the recruitment of coaches to teach PE has rendered the role of PE subject leader as obsolete.

A recent research review series published by Ofsted (2022) states that high quality PE depends on effective subject and school leadership. However, since the removal in 2002 of the requirements for trainee teachers to hold a subject specialism beyond their general primary teacher training, the subject leadership role in PE has often been assigned to the newest and most enthusiastic member of staff regardless of their experience and or expertise (Clohessy et al. 2020). In 2019, Ofsted published *Inspecting the Curriculum* which laid out the methodology to be used during school inspections which included 'deep dives' in one or more foundation subjects. The format for a deep dive includes an evaluation of senior leaders' intent for the subject area and subsequently, evaluation of subject leaders' planning and curriculum sequencing. As a result, head teachers often assume the overarching responsibility for the initial direction and leadership of the curriculum. Moreover, they are responsible for the allocation of funding, curriculum time, staff resources and training.

In March 2013, the Government provided £150 million of ring-fenced funding per annum to improve the provision of PE and sport in primary schools. This was a deviation from a move just three years earlier, to a less 'top down' approach to funding. Subsequently, in 2016, it was announced that the Primary School PE and Sport Premium (PESSP) was to increase further from £160m to £320m per year as a result of the National Obesity Strategy (2016) and 'sugar tax'. This funding was designed to help primary schools to make further improvements to the quality and breadth of their PE and sport offers. However, it has been argued that this only served to promote further the employment of coaches and has created a 'truncated' version of PE (Dyson et al., 2016). It could be argued that the PE and sport premium has inadvertently set a precedent for the removal of teachers from PE, or it is possible that PE will inevitably be passed back to a workforce that has been de-skilled over a number of years (Randall & Griggs, 2020). Ultimately, the outcome and decisions made by head teachers will undoubtedly be influenced by future policy directives, funding such as the PESSP and school's budget and staffing positions.

In March 2022, Ofsted published a series of research informed subject reviews including PE. The PE research review set out to explore literature related to PE in an effort to identify factors that contribute to a high-quality PE curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and systems. The review acknowledged the growth of outsourcing as a solution to address teachers' lack of subject knowledge and confidence. Nonetheless, it cautioned that a specialist does not guarantee a high-quality PE programme and cautioned that PE could become disconnected from the wider context and culture of a school if planning is left solely to external providers.

Furthermore, the review warned that the use of external providers could reduce PE to a narrow offer of sport dictated by intra school competitions. Although the report acknowledged that as yet there is very little known about the impact of outsourcing on pupils' development in PE, it highlighted the need for subject leaders to critically review commercially bought programmes and for there to be robust monitoring of the intended and enacted curriculum. Additionally, the review insisted that where PE is outsourced, school leaders must ensure teachers do more than observe lessons and are actively involved supporting and feeding back to pupils and importantly, states that "school leaders have responsibility for the PE curriculum in place at their school". However, ten days after the release of the 2022 research review for PE, the Secretary of State for State in England presented a White Paper entitled Opportunity for All: Strong Schools with Great Teachers for your Child (DfE, 2022). Whilst the White Paper reinforced the need for schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, the paper clearly highlighted the need to prioritise teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy to meet the governments 'levelling up' agenda. It includes an ambition to get seven in ten children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by the end of primary school to nine in ten children by 2030. This serves to reinforce a priority of literacy and numeracy within the curriculum.

The critical role of head teachers in the leadership of PE is reinforced in a study carried out by Rainer et al. (2012) that concluded that it is head teachers that are crucial to the successful development of PE in primary schools to ensure that the wider government targets are achieved not at the cost of effective high-quality PE. Furthermore, Rainer et al.

(2012) suggest that a greater understanding of head teacher attitudes and priorities is crucial to the development of PE policy and practice.

Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the numerous strategies that have been discussed in this chapter, and which have impacted on the provision of PE and sport in primary schools.

Many of these strategies were designed to impact on the quality and quantity of PE and sport in primary schools. However, there has been tension between the PE strategies and strategies designed to manage teacher workload.

Year	Government Department	Strategy	Purpose	Funding Total
2002	Department for Education and Skills (DfES) & Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)	PE School Sport, Club Links (PESSCL)	To increase the number of 5-16-year-olds who spend a minimum of 2hrs a week on PE and school sport.	£1.1 billion
2003	Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	Workforce Remodelling Act	Supporting teachers and schools to raise educational standards without adding additional workload responsibilities.	N/A
2005	Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	Planning, Preparation & Assessment time for all teachers (PPA)	Teachers in England and Wales have a legal entitlement to 10% of their timetabled teaching time for Planning, Preparation and Assessment.	N/A
2008	Department for Children, Schools & families (DCSF)	PE and School Sport and Young People strategy	To deliver a 5hr offer to all children including 2hrs PE within the curriculum and 3 hrs of extra-curricular sport.	£1.5 billion
2013	Department for Education (DfE)	Primary PE and School Sport Premium	To improve the quality of PE and sport in primary schools, with an emphasis on the professional development of teachers	£1.9 billion to date
2022	Department for Education (DfE)	Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child	Designed to introduce and implement standards that will improve children's education	N/A

Funding for PE and school sport to date (2002-2022)	£4.5 billion
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Figure 2.1 Overview of the strategies that have impacted on teaching of primary PE

PE in Initial Teacher Education

Primary PE has traditionally been delivered by non-specialist classroom teachers. However, as previously noted, there is an increasing trend, both in the UK and internationally, for the use of outsourcing external providers (Dyson, 2016). Whilst there is some evidence to support the value added by external providers, considerable evidence indicates that their use often results in the delivery of a narrow range of activities that tend to be pre-planned and reflect the provider’s agenda (Powell, 2015; Dyson et al., 2016; Ni’ Chroinin et al., 2019).

Over the past 20 years, research has highlighted some of the difficulties that primary teachers face in delivering PE lessons (Morgan, 2008). Some of the major barriers to developing effective teaching and learning in PE include the inadequate training, a lack of time and interest, the limited support and resources, and low levels of teacher confidence (Morgan & Bourke, 2008). Research has indicated that many classroom teachers believe they do not possess the knowledge or ability to teach PE and have asserted that a lack of confidence is related to their belief in their own ability to perform skills and activities competently (Layson, 2016).

The limited time spent learning to teach PE during primary Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in England has been of concern over a number of years, with reports that teachers have

received as little as six hours of PE training during their initial teacher training (Caldecott et al., 2006). Talbot (2007:8) stated that “six hours is simply not acceptable ... this is a national disgrace”. As a result, many primary generalist teachers enter the profession lacking the confidence to teach PE (Morgan & Bourke, 2008). Combined with the difficulties associated with the need for diverse subject specific and pedagogical knowledge, class and behaviour management, PE is perceived as one of the most challenging subjects in the curriculum for primary teachers to teach (Chappell, 2006). A recent study carried out by Dely et al. (2013) identified that trainee primary teachers felt their Initial Teacher Training only provided them with a rudimentary understanding of primary PE but lacked the depth needed to give them the confidence to teach PE. In addition to this limited training, trainee teachers state that there is limited opportunity to teach PE in schools due to lessons being covered by external providers and/or lessons being cancelled due to other demands on multipurpose facilities, such as Christmas shows.

In light of the limited ITT input in PE, and the resulting lack of knowledge, skills, and confidence of primary teachers with regards to teaching PE, it is perhaps unsurprising that Ward (2005) reported that a third of all primary schools were using external sports providers to cover PE lessons. Moreover, a study carried out by the Department for Education (DfE, 2015) found that 73% of schools had changed who delivered PE lessons as a result of the Primary PE and Sport Premium. This report highlighted that there had been an increase in the use of outside providers, from 38% to 78% between 2012/13 to 2014/15. The guidance on the use of the Primary PE and Sport Premium suggests that schools should recruit outside providers to support the upskilling of generalist teachers so they can develop

subject knowledge which will assist teachers to improve pupil learning. However, whilst coaches have sport specific knowledge, they do not possess the pedagogical knowledge and experience across the curriculum to deliver planned and progressive lessons (Carney & Howells, 2008). Talbot (2008b:7) argued that the best quality PE lessons in primary school are “delivered by primary teachers who were not physical education specialists, but specialists in children’s development ... who know the children they teach well”. Therefore, Talbot’s argument reinforces the need for educators to develop the confidence and competence of primary school teachers in order for them to deliver high quality PE lessons.

In addition to the initial teacher training, the evidence also points to the inadequacies in the traditional forms of continued professional development (CPD) in PE, leading to calls for more effective ways of developing teachers' competence to deliver high quality PE. The CPD for non-specialist primary teachers has tended to be sport-focused, involving physical skills and drills, and, in recent times, is generally led by a coach, which does little to address pedagogical practice and the child development theories (Dely et al., 2013). Additionally, research carried out by Randall et al. (2016) established that generalist teachers were only present at 2.3% of the PE lessons that were delivered by external providers. This raises the question of the use of collaborative partnerships to upskill teachers in PE and suggests instead that factors such as providing inexpensive PPA cover (£20 per hour) influences the decision to outsource PE (Griggs, 2010). Although there is extensive global research claiming that the quality of primary PE is mediocre, there is little evidence to suggest that outside providers improve the quality of teaching (Morgan & Bourke, 2008, Elliot et al., 2013, Carse et al., 2017). A research report on the use of the PE and Sport Premium suggests that 78% of

coaches were hired by schools based on their experience and only a minority of schools hired external providers as a result of specific qualifications (Callanan et al., 2015). Furthermore, only 12% of the schools in the study indicated that they looked for professional accreditation when recruiting coaches, with only 2% requesting specific governing body qualifications.

The literature related to the development of primary generalist teachers suggests that the most effective teachers have a deep subject knowledge of the subjects they teach (Coe et al., 2014). Furthermore, it is claimed that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers' (Barber & Mourshed, 2007:13). The literature on professional development for teachers is critical of the one-day or weekend courses that have no follow-up (Mockler & Sachs, 2011). It is therefore suggested that the traditional one-day, off-site courses are largely ineffective in supporting teachers in advancing their pedagogy and so, in turn, their practice. Moreover, professional development programmes that have been found to support genuine advances in practice are contextualised and make connections between practice in PE and other areas of the curriculum (Mockler & Sachs, 2011).

Impact of teacher socialisation and head teachers' beliefs on the leadership and teaching of PE

Head teachers have been identified as significant players who hold the majority of power in schools. They are described as a centrifugal force due to the influence and often solitary nature of their role (Southworth, 2010:62). The choices made by head teachers communicates a crystallised picture of the value afforded to each subject area (Burke &

Welsch, 2018:2). Ultimately, head teachers are responsible for the leadership and management of the curriculum through their expectations for teaching, the appointment of staff, management of finances and fundamentally, the allocation of curriculum time to subjects. Therefore, in order to develop a better understanding of the way in which PE is enacted and articulated in primary schools, it is imperative to examine the complex factors that have shaped head teachers' beliefs.

Borg (2001:186) considers beliefs to be propositions which may be consciously or unconsciously held, accepted as true by the individual, and therefore imbued with emotive commitment and as serving as a guide to thought, behaviour and pedagogy. Parajes, (1992:307) had previously noted the importance of paying attention to teachers' beliefs due to the role they can play in informing educational practice. However, research investigating the extent to which head teachers' beliefs influence PE is limited (George & Curtner-Smith, 2017:383). As Borg (2001:186) claimed, this may be due to the lack of clarity and consensus surrounding the concept of beliefs or the possibility that, typically, educational researchers have either approached humanistic theories such as self-efficacy and self-esteem, or subject specific beliefs, such as beliefs about teaching PE (Parajes, 1992:308). Furthermore, there is often confusion when distinguishing between knowledge and beliefs, especially the point where one starts and the other begins (Parajes, 1992:316).

In a review of 95 qualitative studies published between 2000-2017, Chroinin et al. (2019) recognised a lack of representation of school principals and policy makers in relation to the purpose of PE. They go on to state that there is a:

need to examine the perspectives of those underrepresented stakeholders, serving as an entry point for bridge building to shape the future direction of primary physical education (Chroinin et al., 2019:2).

It has also been suggested that further investigation is needed to understand how head teachers 'interpret, read, or perceive the subject', particularly given the fact that "their beliefs about the subject are largely shaped by their own experiences of PE and sport when they were children and young people rather than any formal training that they had received" (George & Curtner-Smith 2017:383). This social phenomenon is termed an 'apprenticeship of observation', where early acculturation and beliefs about teaching begin to be shaped (Lortie, 1975:62). The work of Lortie (1975) builds on the early work of Waller (1932) which is acknowledged as the founding work on the socialisation of teachers. This work laid the foundations for Lawson's theory of occupational socialisation in teaching (1983a, 1983b). Since the publication of Lawson's two papers in 1983, over 300 journal articles and chapters have been published, using occupational socialisation theory as a framework (Richards et al., 2017). Lawson's work continues to be influential particularly in relation to research into the occupational socialisation of physical education specialists and generalist trainee teachers (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008).

Whilst research into the socialisation of teachers in PE has brought new learning and insight, there is a call for further research involving teachers at different stages in their career, working in different socio-political environments (Richards et al., 2017). Kearney (2015) suggests that the socialisation of teachers needs to be considered not as a linear process but rather a dynamic and ever-changing process over time. Teacher socialisation is defined as a

lifelong process that is fundamental in developing an understanding of the way in which beliefs are acquired and an understanding of why individuals and groups behave the way they do. It “includes all of the kinds of socialisation that initially influence persons to enter the field of physical education and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers” (Lawson, 1986:107).

Whilst three distinct stages of socialisation can be identified, namely acculturation, professional and organisational socialisation, it is important to note that these three stages are frequently experienced at the same time and can often be viewed as incompatible. Therefore, socialisation is a messy construct that can be problematic. However, recognition of difference can assist in explaining variability of experience between teachers and their perceptions, current and future practices (Lawson, 1983a).

Research within the field tends to portray teachers as powerless and unable to create positive change. However, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) describe the socialisation process as a continuum whereby at one end of the continuum teachers strive to maintain the status quo and at the other end teachers seek to innovate. Whilst Lawson (1983a) suggests that teachers quickly learn the knowledge and skills of PE that are valued by a school, it is also claimed that colleagues and mentors significantly impact on the organisational socialisation of teachers (Capel, 2007). As a result, teachers often adopt customary strategies and rarely question these approaches in order to maintain the status quo (Tsangaridou, 2006). The dominant force of an institution over a teacher can serve to wash-out innovative approaches and this adjustment can be permanent depending on how closely aligned they are to an individual’s methods (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1981). This point is supported by

the work of Lawson (1986:109) who states that in instances where an early career teacher encounters beliefs that are in conflict with those, they were exposed to during teacher training, there is a washing out of the influence of Initial Teacher Training. Therefore, effective professional development plays a fundamental role in teachers' decisions, actions, ability to innovate and pedagogical practices across their teaching career (Richards et al., 2014). As a result, professional development, which is typically prioritised and organised by head teachers, plays an important role as a socialising agent (Parker, Patton & Tannehill, 2017).

In recent years there has been a significant structural shift in education including the dismantling of local authority support and management of schools, to a decentralised system where school leaders have relatively high levels of autonomy and accountability (Armstrong et al., 2018). Therefore, it is particularly important to examine the process of socialisation and the influence this has on head teachers' beliefs and conceptualisation of PE and subsequently, their practice and the influence they have on teachers within their community.

Globally, there has been criticism of PE provision in primary schools. Morgan and Bourke (2008) suggest that despite the positive contributions that primary PE can offer children, a large proportion of generalist primary teachers find teaching PE challenging. This has been attributed to numerous factors including poor initial teacher training, limited support and resources and lack of interest and time (Morgan & Bourke, 2008). It is suggested that teachers' early experiences in PE are inherently linked to their future practice and

confidence to teach PE. In recent studies, it was claimed that up to 76% of teachers felt they had experienced inadequate pre-service education and wanted further continual professional development in order to feel confident teaching PE (Morgan & Hansen, 2007). Furthermore, it is clear that the socialisation of early career teachers is often modelled on pedagogical approaches experienced in their days as children and as trainee teachers (Morgan & Hansen, 2008; Ní Chróinín & Coulter, 2012).

Elliot et al. (2013) draws on Lawson's socialisation model, and states that during the organisational socialisation stage experienced by teachers at the early stage in their career, there are major challenges for teachers who want to apply the skills they developed during their teacher training. Additionally, the article reported that during a study of generalist primary teachers, participants highlighted key players that shaped their experiences teaching PE. Some of the participants specifically mentioned that the views of the head teacher determined the importance placed on PE in a school and how it was delivered within the curriculum. The article went on to suggest that head teachers play a fundamental role in developing a positive PE culture in schools and argues that to do so, school leaders need to provide adequate support structures to create an innovative teaching environment. These points highlight the complex nature of teacher socialisation, and the influence school leaders can have on the practices of teachers and the constraining or enabling influence they have on professional learning (Armour, 2006).

There is an extensive body of research examining the influence of socialisation on the teaching of PE including examination of the socialisation of pre service teachers (Goodman, 1988, Templin & Schemp, 1989, Elliot, Atencio, Campbell & Jess, 2013; Curtner-Smith, 2001; Capel & Blair, 2007), secondary teachers of PE (Curtner-Smith, 1999, Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009) and primary generalist teachers (Morgan & Bourke, 2008; Morgan & Hansen, 2008; Murphy & McEvoy, 2020). Additionally, there are studies exploring the socialisation of head teachers (Weindling, 2000; Male, Bright & Ware, 2002) and factors that have shaped head teachers' beliefs about PE (George & Curtner-Smith, 2017) however there is an absence of literature specifically examining head teachers' beliefs about PE and influence this has on the ways in which PE is conceptualised and practiced in schools.

It is therefore envisaged that through examining the experiences of head teachers involved in this study, as learners, teachers and school leaders, that this thesis will supplement existing literature examining the impact of teachers' socialisation in primary PE and will fill an established gap in research. Furthermore, this study will examine head teacher's underlying beliefs and practices and the way in which this influences the professional development of teachers and experiences of children.

Chapter Summary

By reflecting on the literature, it becomes apparent that the political warrant for the development of policy is shaping provision in schools. However, the forces shaping the ways in which this is enacted in primary schools is more complex. Schools are increasingly being

steered by policy levers to address complex social problems, such as inactivity and childhood obesity, whilst PE is being pushed to the margins of an increasingly narrow curriculum that is motivated by attainment in just a few subjects. If young people are to develop the motivation and skills to remain active and lead healthy lifestyles, there needs to be careful consideration and articulation of primary PE, where the subject is positioned and fundamentally how we can support the ongoing development of primary PE practices. Having reached a critical period, where careful and objective evaluation is needed to protect the integrity of PE within the curriculum, consideration of the influence of teachers' socialisation and the influential role held by head teachers in the organisational socialisation of teachers is vital. Few would disagree that the beliefs that head teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments which, in turn, affect how and what is taught in PE, the development of staff and the experience of children.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Building on the literature review, this chapter outlines the research aims and subsequently discusses both the theoretical and practical considerations which have shaped this research. In so doing, it provides a link between the aims of the research, the methodological paradigm and the research design. Consideration is paid to issues relating to reflexivity, insider perspective and credibility. The strategies which were undertaken are explained in order to demonstrate that the research was conducted with transparency and full consideration of the ethical issues inherent in research. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the way in which a sample was selected, together with how the data were collected, analysed and interpreted.

Research aim

As noted in chapter one, the aim of this research project is to investigate the Physical Education beliefs held by primary head teachers. This will be achieved by asking the following research questions:

- What do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools?
- What factors have shaped head teachers' conceptualisation of PE?

In seeking answers to these questions, I developed a framework by analysing the factors that have shaped the participants' beliefs in relation to PE. This serves to strengthen our understanding of the existing knowledge within the field and fill an

established gap in the body of knowledge in relation to the role of school leaders in conceptualising PE.

Research paradigm

This section outlines the theoretical framework for this study, referred to as the research paradigm (Mertens, 2005). It considers the '4 building blocks' (Coe et al., 2017:15) of research; namely, ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. This assists with the construction of a framed study, guided by an established theoretical position and purpose. By way of conclusion, a table summarises how these building blocks helped to establish the paradigm in which this research is located.

The theoretical framing of a study is crucial to understanding the researcher's intention and expectations since, without a clearly defined paradigm, there is no basis for the subsequent choices regarding the methodology, methods, literature, or research design (Mackenzie, 2006). As an early career researcher, I was familiar with quantitative and qualitative research, and held the opinion that qualitative studies tended to be messy in comparison with quantitative approaches, which seemed concrete and straightforward in nature. I was less familiar with the role of paradigms within educational research. This confusion may have arisen because, when a layperson enquires about a research project, the tendency is to focus on whether it is quantitative or qualitative, rather than the research paradigm (Mackenzie, 2006). However, at an early stage of my doctoral study, I developed an appreciation of the role of theoretical underpinning in creating a well-considered study and an understanding of the fundamental role of paradigms in the positioning of this research.

Lincoln and Guba (2005:163) define paradigms as human constructions that indicate where the researcher is coming from and their philosophical orientation. Thus, a paradigm indicates how meaning will be constructed based on a researcher's experiences and beliefs. Paradigms are, therefore, important as they provide transparency in terms of a researcher's beliefs, and how they may influence what will be studied, how it will be studied, and how the results of the study will be interpreted (Kuhn, 1970). It is, therefore, essential to clearly identify the paradigm in which this research is situated, as it significantly impacted on the decisions made during the research process, including the choice of methodology and methods.

Since all research is based, to a degree, on underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes 'good and robust' research, it is important to understand the assumptions on which this research project is based. This research project is based within the constructivist and interpretivist paradigm, which is located at the opposite end of the ontological continuum from realism, which states there is one reality which is independent of individuals' perceptions. The constructivist position asserts that social meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2016:29). Such a stance suggests 'there is no objective truth to be known' (Hughly & Sayward, 1987:278), maintaining that a diversity of truths can be applied. Alongside the constructivist approach is the interpretivist paradigm, the central endeavour of which is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

An interest in understanding the relationship between head teachers' personal experiences and beliefs, and the role these play in conceptualising PE in schools, is linked to a constructivist epistemological stance. This stance recognises that meaning is a human construct and, as a result, individuals develop subjective meaning as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998). Furthermore, a constructivist stance recognises that humans shape meaning from their own experiences, connecting their previous experiences and knowledge to new concepts. Hence, the research methods employed must ensure they develop an understanding of the contextual features, such as culture, education and teacher training experiences, in order to consider the impact that personal experiences have had on the meaning head teachers attach to PE. Consequently, this stance has influenced how the research questions have been shaped with respect to the influence of head teacher values in shaping primary PE along with the identification of appropriate methods.

The purpose of interpretivist research is to reflect understanding rather than find universals (Willis et al., 2007:2). This is underpinned by a core belief that reality is socially constructed and making meaning a social process. Furthermore, an interpretivist study asserts that the world is constructed in different ways and that events carry different meanings for each one of us (Thomas, 2017:110). Located within an interpretivist framework, this research sets out to explore the subjective experience of head teachers in an attempt to gain a better understanding of how their beliefs have been shaped. This research method was deployed in order to facilitate an in-depth discussion with the participants to establish an accurate

account and awareness of the participants’ context and experiences, and the impact of these on PE within their settings.

To summarise the research paradigm, Figure 3.1 demonstrates the methodological underpinning for this research.

<p>Paradigm</p> <p>Worldview based on beliefs a researcher brings to an inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2011:39)</p>	<p>Constructivism/interpretivism</p> <p>Researchers’ intent is to make sense of the meaning others have of the world, whilst also recognising the specific contexts in which people live and work (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:8)</p>
<p>Ontology</p> <p>World views differ and the nature of reality and what is real (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2011:42)</p>	<p>Constructivism/interpretivism</p> <p>Multiple realities (e.g., researchers provide quotes to illustrate different perspectives) (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2011:42)</p>
<p>Epistemology</p> <p>How we gain knowledge of what we know (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2011:42)</p>	<p>Constructivism/interpretivism</p> <p>Reality needs to be interpreted through closeness in order to uncover the underlying meaning of activities and behaviour (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2011:42)</p>

Figure 3.1 Overview of worldview and approach for this study (adapted from Creswell & Plano Clarke 2011:42)

Reflexivity

Reflexivity has been a fundamental consideration throughout the research process, from the development of the research questions to the collection and analysis of the data. Fundamental to reflexivity is an acknowledgment that researchers are involved as constructing agents. As a result, this can conjure up criticism of narcissistic self-reflection, since reflexivity refers to a researcher's ability to examine their own thoughts, feelings and motives and consider how these influence and impact on the research process and outcomes (Howell, 2016). Reflexivity is important in order to maintain an awareness of the complexity of how knowledge has been created within this study. Hence, in the broadest sense, reflexivity refers to the acknowledgment that the methods chosen are entangled in the politics and practices of the social world (King et al., 2019:174). Moreover, reflexivity is typically associated with qualitative researchers who are widely accused of not being objective observers of social phenomena due to their positioning in the world they are studying (Walker, 2013). Therefore, the adoption of a reflexive stance and transparency throughout this study is essential in order to enhance the degree of confidence in the research and credibility. For this reason, it is important to acknowledge the issues pertaining to reflexivity and the broader debate about the axiological components of the self-intersubjectivity of knowledge (Berger, 2015:220). Berger states:

researchers need to increasingly focus on self-knowledge and sensitivity; better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge; carefully self-monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research; and maintain the balance between the personal and the universal (Berger, 2015:220).

When carrying out this research and analysing the data, I was mindful of the importance of transparency and the need to avoid claiming to be completely objective, as all research is carried out from a particular position. Positionality describes the worldwide view I hold, the assumptions I make in relation to what is known about the world, the beliefs I hold about knowledge and my assumptions about human nature and agency (Holmes, 2020). An awareness of positionality is vital because it lies at the root of how people form and shape their perspectives (for example, experiential, theoretical, moral, ethical, and political), since these then become invested in their work (Urrieta & Hatt, 2019:4). An awareness of my positionality in this study was achieved through the acknowledgment of my interest and involvement in the research area, my knowledge of the research participants and my professional interest in the research area. Additionally, throughout the research process, I kept a reflexive diary that captured my thoughts about the research process, the choices I made throughout the study and my interpretation of the results. In doing so, I was able to create space between the various stages of the research. This enabled me to step back from the data and revisit the research process to examine the influence of my positionality and bias. Therefore, the process of maintaining a diary enabled me to be more critical of each stage in the research process.

Consequently, the way in which this research is conducted, within an interpretivist paradigm, is critical to the interpretation of the data gathered, along with an

acknowledgment and understanding of the extent to which positionality will influence the way in which the views of the research participants are interpreted. This is reinforced by Gough (2003:25), who states that as a rule reflexivity focuses on revealing hidden agendas that will have a direct impact not only on how the research is undertaken but also on the whole research process.

Social research is inherently biased, and as a result it is impossible for a researcher to be completely neutral, as they are an integral part of the process and final product (Galdas, 2017:2). Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991:5) state that “people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them” and, as a result, a researcher cannot assume to be divorced from this research. It is therefore critical that transparency and reflexivity are maintained in relation to the preconceptions, existing power relations and relationship dynamics throughout the research process. This is particularly significant during the qualitative data collection stage. Alex and Hammstrom (2007:2) state that power is always present in the transaction of an interview, as in all human interactions. Further details about how reflexivity was maintained throughout this research process are provided in Chapter four.

Insider perspective

Imperative to the process of creating trustworthy research is an awareness of an insider perspective within the field and the location of the research. In the second half of the twentieth century, a distinction between the insider and outsider position emerged, based

on a presumption that certain groups have increased or, at least 'privileged', access to particular kinds of knowledge (Merton, 1972:11). Within this notion, outsiders are non-members and insiders have a similar biography or familiarity with those involved in the research project. Whilst this distinction is clearly defined, it is often the case that individuals have, not a single status, but a status set (Merton, 1972:22). For this reason, the dichotomy of either insider or outsider positionality is rebuffed in favour of a continuum where the boundaries are ever shifting.

The dichotomy of the insider/outsider perspective has been described as a continuum with multiple dimensions that researchers slide along, depending on the time, participants, and context (Mercer, 2007). It was, therefore, important in this research to consider more specifically the dilemmas related to participant bias, reciprocity in interviews and research ethics. Throughout this study, it could be perceived that I was working as an 'insider' due to the participants' involvement in teacher education within the locality. As such, it was particularly important that a continual internal dialogue and self-evaluation of positionality were maintained.

The claimed benefit of an insider perspective is that the participants feel at ease and willing to share personal insights (Jensen, 2016). However, the closeness of an insider relationship needs to be carefully managed. This is not to say an insider relationship has a negative influence on the research process or raises ethical concerns, but it does highlight the need for the researcher to take responsibility for their situatedness within the research, to ensure a continual 'bending back' and questioning and querying of any assumptions (Braun &

Clarke, 2019:594). Insiders are identified as members of a specific group and, in relation to this study, I acknowledge multiple statuses: insider positionality as a result of my occupation, a familiarity with the participants (although not to an intimate degree) and their work settings and, in many instances, the participants' awareness of my personal interest in the subject area. 'It is important however to acknowledge that I have not lived the participants' experiences as school leaders.

Validity and reliability

Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) explain validity in terms of the research study, its parts, the conclusions drawn and the quality of its application. Validity in its broadest sense is what is claimed to constitute credible truth rather than singular truth. Therefore, validity and reliability are key aspects of successful research. It has been argued that the legitimization of mixed method research approaches is more challenging than that of monomethod studies (Collins, 2016). Hence, validity as a component was considered throughout the research process and is evident in the transparency of this thesis.

Reliability refers to the degree to which results are consistently obtained, fundamental to which is the stability of the collected data and the ability to limit variation over time (Bryman, 2016:157). Bryman (2004) describes three fundamental factors that are required to assert reliability: stability is the degree to which results are stable over time, while internal reliability is the degree to which data and indicators are consistently used, and inter-observer consistency is consistently used between observers in their recording and interpretation of the data. Therefore, for this research to be deemed reliable, it must be

able to withstand scrutiny by research communities. However, ultimately, the judge of research quality will be the head teachers who participated in this study.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985:301) suggest using a number of techniques to address credibility, including activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation. The credibility of a study, or the confidence in the truth of the study and therefore the findings, is the most important criterion (Polit & Beck, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider the notion of credibility through the following framework:

- Are the findings “true” for the participants and the context?
- Are the findings applicable in other contexts or with other people so can the findings be generalized or transferred to another setting?
- Would the findings be similar if the research were repeated with the same or similar participants in the same or similar context?
- How much have the researcher's biases and perspectives influenced the findings?

This framework was consciously used as a tool to examine the research diary. On occasion, the questions raised as a result of application of this framework were used to shape the discussion within the supervision meetings. This provided an additional level of reflection which was important, as questions of credibility are not always straightforward. The interpretivist framework, used in this research, sets out to explore the subjective experience of a small number of head teachers and, as previously explained, the purpose of

interpretivist research is to reflect understanding, rather than to find universals and acknowledge the existence of multiple realities.

Examples of the ways in which the reliability, validity and credibility were interpreted in this study are discussed in the following section by examining my methodological logic and mixed method approach.

Methodological logic

Having reflected on the research paradigm, established a clear theoretical position, and considered issues of reflexivity, credibility and the insider perspective and the most appropriate methodological logic to adopt, I concluded that a mixed method approach was the most appropriate choice. This would enable me to achieve a detailed, pragmatic understanding of the research area and reinforce the strength of the research conclusions through the gathering of multiple sources of data (Walliman, 2016).

A mixed methods approach to thinking is aligned with an interpretivist framework which encourages multiple ways of making sense of the social world and acknowledges multiple standpoints on what is important, and to be valued and cherished (Green 2008:20). Whilst this approach was, at one time, described as the so-called incompatibility thesis (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997), this has been challenged by scholars (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Subsequently, a mixed method approach has become an increasingly influential way to understand research in the social sciences, including education (Arthur, 2012:159).

In its most simplistic form, a mixed method incorporates a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches through combining the strengths of each method by integrating the in-depth descriptions of data obtained by qualitative methods with the statistical generalised data gathered via quantitative methods. However, it is important that the fundamental principle of mixing methods in a way that has complementary strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses is applied, with a recognition that all methods have both strengths and limitations (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

There are different levels to which one might aim to combine or mix approaches (Coe et al., 2017:160). For the purpose of this study, a mixed method approach is being used to generate a varied and accurate understanding of social phenomena which would be less robust if only one approach were to be applied. Furthermore, a recognised strength of a mixed method design is that it provides different perspectives on phenomena which, when combined, can produce a more comprehensive representation than would be the case were a singular approach to be adopted (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This is, however, reliant on constant examination of the issues related to validity and trustworthiness, which needs to be applied at every stage throughout the research process. Issues related to validity and the development of trustworthy research is not limited to a mixed method approach since a complementary model of triangulation can be used to create a fuller representation of phenomena than would be the case if only one method were applied (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Furthermore, Symonds and Gorard (2010:122) maintain that “mixed methodologists have made substantial progress in conceptualising how multifaceted research can be constructed effectively” through both data triangulation and research design.

The challenge for a mixed method approach for this research is the increased complexity of gathering findings from multiple sources that are credible, trustworthy, dependable, and transferable (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Additionally, there is the challenge of legitimisation, which is often exacerbated as a consequence of the unique crises that the quantitative and qualitative methods present. Consequently, “it would be unwise to think that threats to validity and reliability can be erased completely” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017:105). I adopted various approaches to minimise the issues related to legitimisation when employing a mixed methods design. This research adopted a sequential approach, whereby the quantitative method was complete prior to the collection of qualitative data to maintain a consistent approach to the data collection. This approach capitalises on the strength of a mixed method approach whilst minimising researcher influence on the process by anticipating the responses, vocalising the assumptions, and providing cues for the participants. Although a multiple wave design can be used to test the reliability, this approach can also provide an opportunity for the researcher to influence the participants. A multiple wave approach involves loops back and forth between the approaches, thereby increasing the opportunity for approaches to vary between participants. The section entitled ‘mixed method design’ further justifies the use of the mixed method approach that was applied and the benefits and limitations of using a fixed mixed method approach.

Mixed method approach

As previously stated, once a clear theoretical position for this research had been established, a mixed method approach was selected. Whilst Hardy and Bryman (2010)

acknowledge that, although there are clear differences between quantitative and qualitative research, it should also be recognised that there are similarities. This has resulted in what is known as the paradigm debate, arising from disagreement about the relative merits of differing theoretical positions. It is important to recognise this struggle when considering the notion of the compatibility of the mixed method research in this study. Quantitative purists assert that an observer must be separate from the phenomena being researched and, where possible, should be time and context free. Furthermore, they maintain that researchers should be emotionally detached and uninvolved in order to eliminate bias (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This is countered by qualitative purists who maintain that it is impossible to make context-free generalisations, and that the knower and known cannot be separated, because the subjective knower is the only source of reality (Guba, 1990). The conflict between purists, which is referred to as the incompatibility thesis, states that the two communities of practice are governed by different sets of genres. This notion has, however, now been discredited and, in recent times, mixed method research has become established alongside these two traditional positions, subsequently being identified as a third methodological movement (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Whilst the early attempts to define mixed method were inconsistent, it is broadly described as the process of mixing at least one quantitative method and one qualitative method, neither of which are linked to a particular paradigm (Cresswell & Plano Clarke, 2011). This simplistic definition of mixed methods has evolved in recent years to incorporate research elements including methodology, research processes and design and philosophy.

It is important to note that there is often confusion between the terms 'mixed methods', 'multimethod' and 'mixed model' research. In multimethod investigations, the research questions are addressed using two data collection procedures or methods, both of which are from the quantitative or qualitative tradition. Mixed model research differs from multimethod research, as it is mixed at many or all stages throughout the study, including the data collection and analysis phases. However, a mixed method approach, such as that adopted for this research project, differs once again, as it includes both qualitative and quantitative phases, which are carried out either sequentially or in parallel phases. Whilst there are diverse viewpoints and no widely adopted definition regarding mixed method research, there are core characteristics of mixed method research that highlight the key elements involved in designing and conducting mixed method research (Cresswell & Plano Clarke, 2011). The following elements of mixed methods applied within my research are:

- the researcher collects and analyses, persuasively and rigorously, both quantitative and qualitative data (based on the research questions)
- the researcher links the two forms of data sequentially by having one build on the other, or embedding one within the other
- the researcher gives priority to one or both forms of data (in terms of what the research emphasises)
- the researcher uses these procedures within philosophical worldviews and theoretical lenses
- the researcher combines the procedures into specific research designs that direct the plan for conducting the study

These characteristics were considered throughout the design and implementation of this study to create an authentic, well-justified mixed method approach to the research. In the next section, I will describe and justify the design adopted in my research.

Mixed method designs

Mixed method designs can, on a basic level, be categorised as either fixed or emergent and, from the outset, this mixed method design was fixed for this research. Each of these approaches falls broadly into two categories: namely, typology-based and dynamic (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). These categories assist with the legitimisation of the mixed method approaches by providing design models that are clearly distinct from either quantitative or qualitative designs (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Moreover, the establishment of design models assists with the underpinning of a common language amongst researchers and also with the formation of comprehensive, robust research projects. Furthermore, design models aided the discussions related to suitable prototypes for this research and when seeking research approval.

It is, however, important to note that, although the design model for this project was predetermined, it was based on experience gained during a dynamic pilot study that involved constantly looping forwards and backwards from the research questions to consider the interrelationship between different components of the research project (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Whilst there are design differences, mixed method research must place the research question at the heart of the design process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

There are different levels to which one might aim to combine or mix approaches (Coe et al, 2017:160) and, for the purpose of this study, a mixed method approach was used to generate a varied, rich understanding of the subjective experiences of primary head teachers which would have been less robust had only one approach been applied. It is important to acknowledge that there are a number of variations and inconsistencies within the mixed methods approaches which need to be comprehensively considered in accordance with the research paradigm. The following sections outlining the typology and explanatory sequential design explain and justify the approach applied within this research.

Rationale for adopting a mixed method approach

A mixed method approach was selected in order to achieve a detailed, pragmatic understanding of the role of head teachers' values in conceptualising primary PE and reinforce the strength of the research conclusions by gathering multiple sources of data (Walliman, 2016). The systematic integration, or 'mixing', of quantitative and qualitative data was designed to generate an in-depth understanding of head teachers' role in conceptualising primary PE, to strengthen the existing knowledge about the field and fill an established research gap.

To justify the use of a mixed method design, I draw on a pragmatic paradigm which rejects the incompatibility theory and supports a multistage research project that applies a practical and applied research position (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). A pragmatic stance is orientated towards solving practical problems in the real world rather than being based on assumptions about how knowledge is created (Hall, 2013). Additionally, it has been

suggested by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:21) that research is advantaged if the researcher studies “what interests and is of value to you, study it in different ways that you deem appropriate, and utilise the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system”. This resonated with my desire to present a practical and purposeful research philosophy that seeks to address educational issues and pushes back against criticism that university research in the field of education is irrelevant to the training and practice of educators (Heck, 2011). Moreover, it has been noted that there needs to be a clear sense of pragmatic validity of research on an educational problem, in a way that is comprehensible and practically useful for educators (Nuthall, 2004).

Research Timeline

The research took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic hit the education sector particularly hard and in March 2020 schools were instructed to close their gates other than to vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. Over the following three months schools had to address the unprecedented challenge of providing remote learning for the majority of children including pupils in foundation stage and those without access to the internet or suitable electronic devices. Schools gradually reopened in the summer term of 2020 however, during this time schools had to continue to innovate in order to manage high levels of staff absence and to meet national social distancing and hygiene requirements. Pupils returned to school following the summer holidays, but a second lockdown and school closures were soon announced. By this time, most schools were better prepared to provide remote learning however the impact of school closures and the digital divide was becoming increasingly apparent in schools with high levels of deprivation. A

study carried out by the Sutton Trust (2020) found that whilst 23% of pupils took part in live online learning each day during school closures, children from middle class homes were almost twice as likely to access learning compared to children in working class homes. Furthermore, the report stated 24% of teachers surveyed stated that less than 1 in 4 children were returning work that had been set during school closures and that teachers in the most deprived schools were more than twice as likely to report that pupil's work was of a much lower quality than before the pandemic. The pandemic presented unprecedented upheaval for schools and school leaders and the impact of lost learning time and staff absence continues to be a challenge in most schools. The added pressure placed on head teachers during the pandemic was significant as they balanced the needs of pupils and staff. This emphasises the generosity of participants involved in this study and implies the value placed on the research area.

The following table illustrates the timing of this research in the context of the pandemic. The table helps to demonstrate the timing of the project alongside the extended period of uncertainty felt by participants on both a personal and professional level as head teachers managed full and partial school closures.

Research Activity	School /National Context
2019	
May - Pilot study approved	
July - Pilot study data collected	
2020	
January - pilot study complete	
<p>Between March and August 2020, the pilot study was analysed and plans for the main study were put in place.</p> <p>As a result of the pandemic and limited access to schools, the research project was revised on two occasions.</p>	16 March - National Covid announcement to stop non-essential travel
	17 March – Ofsted inspections suspended
	23 March - National message to ‘stay at home’.
	26 March – lockdown measures legally enforced
	16 April - Lockdown extended
	1 June - phased reopening of schools
	23 June – national Covid restrictions relaxed
September - main study receives ethical approval	
29th September - head teachers invited to participate in quantitative data collection	
26 th October - questionnaire closed	28th October- 1 November - Half term for most schools in the research location
	31st October - Second national Covid lockdown announced
19th November – Zoom invitations sent to interview participants	
	2nd December - second national Covid lockdown eases
3-22 December - Interviews carried out via Zoom	

Figure 3.2 Research timeline

Moreover, the key factors that were taken into consideration included the sample size, proportion of quantitative to qualitative data and process for handling and integrating the

data. These factors contributed to an overall assessment of the feasibility, which was largely based on the outcome and lessons learnt during a small-scale pilot study.

Pilot study role

A small-scale pilot study was implemented prior to the design of this research project. This served as a preliminary small-scale rehearsal to test both the viability of this study and the adequacy of the research instruments. Whilst the data collected during the pilot study were of interest, the main purpose of the study was to ensure the quality of future data collection. The pilot study investigated the personal and professional PE experiences of four primary head teachers and examined the degree to which their beliefs influence the way in which PE is enacted in their respective schools. The study was carried out in a city in the north of England and the participants were members of a citywide primary PE strategy group, with a shared interest in the development of primary PE. The identified location of the pilot study was based on ease of access to the participants as a result of existing relationships and to fit with the research timescales. A group of engaged, informed participants of this nature is referred to as a 'theoretical sample' and the group provided a useful method for obtaining knowledgeable information linked to the research area (Walliman, 2016:115). Furthermore, the participants were supportive of both the pilot process and research area, and happy to be involved in the testing of the final research instruments.

The pilot study tested the validity and effectiveness of a concurrent mixed method model; namely, a model in which both the quantitative and qualitative phases are carried out over

the same time period, during a single study, with the same participants. The study adopted a convergent triangulation design whereby the qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time but analysed separately, and the data were integrated at the point of interpretation using a side-by-side comparison (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Whilst a constructivist study often adopts a qualitative approach followed by a quantitative approach, for the purpose of this pilot study, a concurrent model was adopted to accommodate the limited amount of time available for both the researcher and participants in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A triangulation approach was developed, based on the assumption that the data would be used to corroborate and cross-validate the findings through the administration of a side-by-side comparison. This involved the interrogation of the statistical quantitative data, followed by a discussion of the qualitative data, which confirmed the statistical results. Such an approach is the most commonly used mixed method design, particularly with novice researchers, many of whom, like me, assume that the multiple methods provide different types of data which will provide complimentary sources of data and so, ultimately, yield a more robust outcome. The pilot study involved the application of three methods; namely, an online questionnaire followed by a semi-structured group interview with three participants and an individual interview. All of these methods were carried out over a two-week period.

Lessons learnt from the pilot study

The pilot study overall was successful, and I identified several aspects which subsequently shaped the main study. This is discussed in further detail in the methods chapter. Whilst a successful convergent parallel design would typically compare or relate data to produce a detailed understanding of the research area, during the pilot study, it was difficult to establish whether or not greater insights were gained from using mixed methods due to the small-scale nature of the project. It did, however, highlight the potential for using a mixed method approach and reinforced the importance of undertaking a careful research design in order truly to maximise the benefits of this approach. Moreover, I believe that the results of this study were limited, largely due to the fact that I was insufficiently skilled and acquainted with the individual research methods and had not fully understood the key decisions behind choosing a mixed methods design. Using the guiding principles related to the notion of consistency of approach within the Lincoln and Guba (1985) framework, I recognised the importance of accurately capturing verbatim statements to ensure transparency and openly acknowledge the influence of positionality and power throughout the data collection phase.

It is important to note that, whilst no significant ethical issues were raised during the pilot study, the ethical procedures were further reviewed in preparation for this research to ensure that the participants had confidence in the process and also minimise bias. In addition, the pilot study proved to be useful in terms of testing the reliability of the methods and, furthermore, it highlighted the need to examine how the approach used in this study would capitalise on the strengths of adopting a mixed method approach. This is

not to say that convergent parallel studies are not suited to interpretive studies but, rather, it highlighted the complexity of merging mixed method data and the need to have a clear rationale and purpose for each stage of the design. After considering the interaction, priority, and timing of the data collection in the pilot study, I reconsidered the major mixed methods typology designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Typology

Typologies provide researchers with a number of well-defined options which can guide them and help to inform their design choices in relation to the research questions and research paradigm. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) summarised a range of 'typology based' models and identified 15 different classifications which serve to illustrate how the mixed method design approaches have developed and evolved. Although there are a significant number of mixed method design approaches, it is important to note that there are also many similarities between them.

Within the discipline of educational research and policy, there are four core mixed method designs; namely, the convergent design, the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design and the embedded design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). These designs are the most commonly used frameworks to guide the implementation of rigorous mixed method studies. The typologies are based on purpose and design characteristics as a consequence of the extensive diversity of mixed method studies and it is unreasonable to assume that any single typology will encompass all design dimensions. However, by using one of these typologies, researchers (particularly inexperienced ones) can feel reassured

that a framework is in place that encompasses important criteria for the researcher and any underlying assumptions (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008).

Explanatory sequential design

This research project adopted an explanatory sequential design, which is a two-phase approach to data collection and analysis. Below is an illustration of the predetermined, two-phase, explanatory sequential design which was adopted in this study.

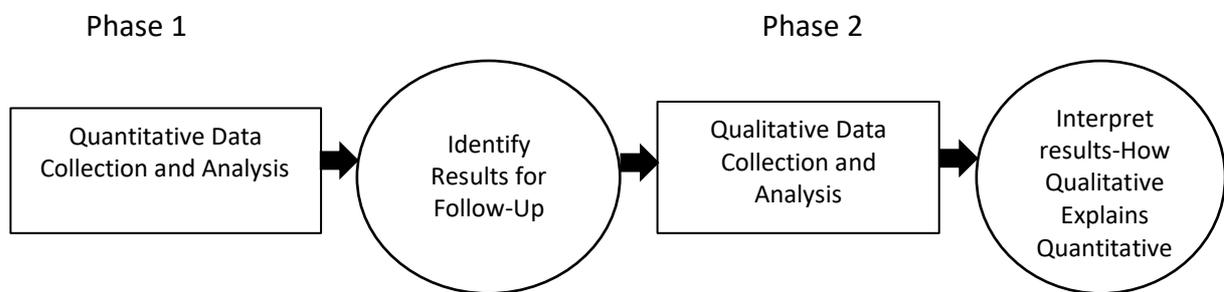


Figure 3.3 Explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:218)

This design involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The priority and weighting of the methods are illustrated in figure 3.3 below, through the use of upper-case and lower-case text. The quantitative phase is illustrated in lower case, as it was initially used to inform the qualitative approach, which carried greater emphasis and weighting.

Emphasis of an explanatory sequential design

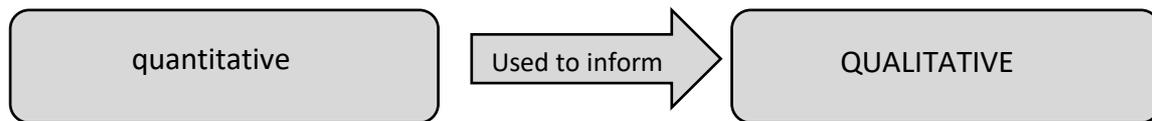


Figure 3.3 Explanatory sequential design used in this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011:109).

This figure illustrates the interaction between the two methods in this study. Interaction relates to the level to which the quantitative and qualitative processes are separated, and it is widely maintained that this is one of the most critical design decisions made in a mixed method study (Greene, 2007). The level of interaction is broadly deemed to be either independent or interactive. Independent studies purposefully keep the two mixed method strands independent, whereas an interactive approach merges both quantitative and qualitative data. In the next section, I explain and justify the theoretical drive for this research and the priority and weighting of the quantitative and qualitative methods.

Inductive theoretical drive

The two strands of this research were independent. Priority in terms of the weighting of the methods was applied. Strands can carry equal priority, or greater emphasis can be placed on one method over another. An inductive theoretical drive was applied, whereby the quantitative method was used to inform the qualitative method. The process followed a sequential model whereby the quantitative method was carried out prior to the commencement of the qualitative method. This research placed greater emphasis on the data gathered via the qualitative method, meaning that the qualitative strand took priority

over the quantitative data. Although this research purposefully applied an independent approach, whereby the quantitative and qualitative strands were applied in a two-phase sequence, this does not mean that the data were handled in isolation. The overall intent of this approach was that one method (qualitative) would help to explain in more detail the other (quantitative). Therefore, it was important that a connection was made at certain points in the research process in order to inform and confirm the results.

It was at the point, when the conclusions were reached, that the data was brought together and mixed. This process of mixing is typical of inductive approaches to research. When assuming an inductive approach, I worked from the unknown to the known, which involved a process of interpreting data to identify emerging, meaningful explanations. This process is described as bottom up and is illustrated in figure 3.4 below.

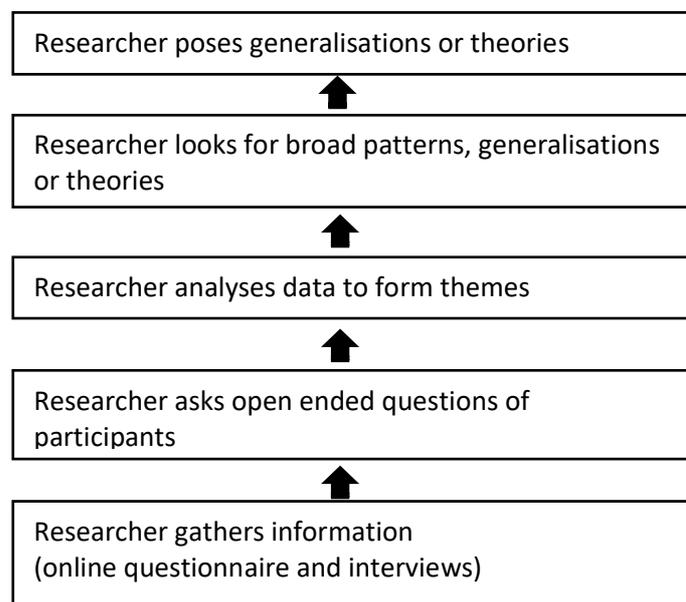


Figure 3.4: The Inductive Logic of Research in Qualitative Study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:64)

It is important at this point to distinguish between explanatory and exploratory design as they are easily confused and serve very different purposes. An exploratory design applies a two-phase approach much like that of an explanatory approach; however, the first phase of an exploratory design is qualitative, and this phase is used to inform the quantitative stage. This research applied an explanatory design which built the qualitative phase of the study on the findings of the initial quantitative data collection. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:82) state that the overall purpose of an explanatory design is to use the qualitative strand to explain the initial quantitative results in order to assess the trends and explain the reasons behind these trends. During the first stage of an explanatory design, the quantitative strand is implemented, followed by an analysis. The first stage of this research involved the dissemination of an online questionnaire to 141 primary school head teachers. The process of dissemination was assisted by a citywide, school-owned, improvement body, which was in regular and direct contact with school leaders. It was anticipated that the questionnaire response rate would be greater if an invitation to participate in the study was backed by a trusted, reputable body, which proved to be correct. The data gathered through the self-administered online questionnaire were subsequently analysed and used to guide the development of the interview schedule. During this process, areas that required further investigation and clarification, together with gaps in the data, were considered. This process helped to refine the interview questions and, importantly, assisted with the identification of a purposeful sample for the second phase of the research. As such, the quantitative phase plays an important role in refining and shaping the qualitative phase.

Limitations of adopting a mixed method approach

In justifying the use of mixed methods, it is important to consider the limitations of this approach. Whilst it has been suggested that a mixed method approach can offset the disadvantages associated with other singular research methods, this stance assumes that all mixed method designs have been developed in a way that capitalises on their complementary strengths (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This research, which examines the Physical Education beliefs held by primary head teachers, has adopted a complementary mixed method approach, whereby a qualitative method was employed to provide a greater depth of understanding, whilst a quantitative method provided a greater breadth of perspective. Mixed method designs are complex to construct and so, in order to capitalise on claims and create 'peaceful co-existence', careful planning was applied throughout the research process.

It cannot, however, be assumed that the findings of a mixed method approach will automatically produce a coherent picture. Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011:13) recommend that researchers, at a minimum, should be "acquainted with both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques" and need to understand "essential issues of rigour in quantitative research, including reliability, validity, experimental control and generalisability".

Research is never without limitations and trustworthiness can be called into question particularly when it might be unclear to participants if they are sharing their particular memories and experiences or those of a representative group such as teachers.

Additionally, when carrying out interviews, it cannot be assumed that what participants say is an accurate account of their behaviour and experiences or predictive of their future actions (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). This phenomenon is often termed as attitudinal fallacy or attitude behaviour consistency. It refers to the fact that the attitudes and beliefs expressed by individuals can be inconsistent with behaviours. Although most sociological studies such as this seek to understand behaviour, researchers tend to draw conclusions based on what participants report (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). This presents an obvious challenge when asking researching participants to recall memories and articulate beliefs. In seeking to understand factors that have shaped head teachers' conceptualisations of PE, it was particularly important to be aware that people frequently act in ways not consistent with their attitudes and beliefs and they may provide inaccurate accounts and memories of past behaviour. Furthermore, although participants may be representative of a particular group, the unique situation presented in interviews and questionnaires cannot be assumed to be generalisable and indicative of how all members of a group would respond. Even when issues associated with reliability, validity, experimental control and generalisability were considered, I was aware of the need to be mindful of the time and resources required to adopt a mixed method approach. This was particularly relevant to this research project, which involved busy professionals, needed to be implemented within the school term constraints, and was largely conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ethical considerations

Earlier in this chapter, I established the importance of establishing a reflexive stance in order to maintain transparency. Additionally, I discussed the importance of

sustaining an awareness of my own beliefs and positionality, as well as my perspective as an insider. Building on these earlier sections, I will now discuss the ethical considerations that were put in place to ensure that this research is truthful and not misleading, as well as the steps taken to ensure that the participants were appropriately informed about the intentions of the study and their right to withdraw. The ethical framework that guided this study was based on Sheffield Hallam University's institutional process, which includes 'Application for Approval of Research Programme' form (RF2), and knowledge I gained through the completion of two EPIGEUM ethics modules and Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA,2018).

In line with the BERA (2018) guidelines, the participants were invited freely to engage with both phases of the mixed method study via email correspondence. The invitations included a participant information sheet (Appendix E) and, in addition, the interview participants were emailed a formal consent to proceed document (Appendix F). Those who chose to participate in the online questionnaire were not required to return a consent form. However, they were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study prior to the submission of the questionnaire.

The interview participants were asked to return a signed consent form and made aware of the period available in which to retract their consent. The consent form informed the participants of the purpose of the study and reassured them that their data would be anonymised in order to protect their identity. To ensure

confidentiality throughout the study, the names of the participants and schools were removed. Participants were allocated pseudonyms and data related to the schools were rounded up and clustered into bands in order to mitigate the risk of schools being identified. Furthermore, a process of re-identification was put in place so that the data could be converted back to their previous form. Fundamental in this process was the secure storage of data and development of a key for translating data back to their original form. The data were securely stored on a university platform, in line with a data management plan (Appendix G) and will remain confidential until the time they are no longer needed and are disposed of. Every effort has been made to ensure that the participants and schools cannot be identified, and anonymity is maintained. This is described in further detail within the Data Management Plan (Appendix G).

However, despite my best attempts to ensure confidentiality and anonymise the data, I was acutely aware that this would be challenging due to the relatively small scale of the study and my involvement within the city where the study was being conducted. In order to minimise the chance of the participants becoming aware of each other, no reference was made to other participants involved in the study and I have not disclosed the identity of the participants or schools to anyone outside the supervision team.

Throughout the research process, the participants were assured of their anonymity and the safe handling of their data. Although the interviews were conducted online,

the participants were reassured that the recordings of our discussions were limited to the use of a Dictaphone rather than via the online video platform. Additionally, the participants were provided with password entry to the virtual space where the interviews were conducted, and a waiting room was arranged to limit further the risk of the interview being interrupted. Furthermore, I conducted the interviews in a quiet, private location, so that participants could feel reassured that the interview would not be overheard by any other parties.

The pilot study was carried out with a purposeful sample that included five participants who were well known both to me and each other, and shared an interest in, and knowledge of, primary PE. A purposeful sample is known to be helpful in terms of providing information-rich insights due to the fact that the participants have been identified as being knowledgeable about the research area. Additionally, the pilot study sample proved to be particularly helpful in informing and shaping this study due to the familiarity of the group with both each other and me. Although this sample was identified as a result of their knowledge and expertise, it was also a convenient sample due to my relationship with them and ease of access.

Working with a familiar, convenient, and purposeful sample highlighted several ethical considerations which served to inform this study. The pilot study included an individual semi structured interview and semi structured group interview. A semi structured approach was designed with the intention of maximising the established rapport within the group and to generate discussion. However, while working as an

'insider' with a purposeful convenient sample, it proved difficult to extract myself from the study. The participants chose to answer questions in turn, and spoke directly to me, making assumptions about my knowledge of them and their schools. This meant that details were often implied rather than verbalised, leaving me vulnerable as a researcher to make assumptions.

During the analysis of these data, it quickly became apparent that my understanding of the data at the time differed from that which was recorded. As a result, I needed to examine the ethical challenges associated with purposeful sampling, working with small samples and convenience sampling. Interestingly, the pilot study revealed that my influence on the research participants, process and data was less apparent in the individual interview. Although I had an established and familiar professional relationship with the individual participant, the interview felt more formal compared to the group session. Whilst the individual participant disclosed personal details that they may not have otherwise discussed with a less familiar researcher, they avoided making assumptions and uttering phrases such as 'as you know (...)'.

My experiences during the pilot study made me aware of the challenges and benefits associated with working with a convenient and purposeful sample. This experience made me particularly aware of the need to maintain an awareness of my positionality, as well as the potential risk of bias and making assumptions. Although I was aware of the need for and continual internal dialogue and self-evaluation of my positionality, as a novice researcher, I found this particularly challenging. As a result, I

chose to interview participants in this study with whom previously I had had only limited contact.

As a result of the learning that occurred during the pilot study, I was mindful of the potential risk that the participants might feel exposed, judged and/or stressed as a result of my insider perspective. Consequently, the participants involved in the interviews were reassured that, if they felt negatively about the process in any way, they were entitled to remove themselves from the study within a two-week period. Previously in this chapter, it was established that, as a result of my involvement in primary PE within the area where the research was located, I hold an insider perspective. An awareness of my perspective as an 'insider' was vital in order to create trustworthy data, limit the potential risk of the participants feeling judged and minimise bias. The pilot study reinforced the need to maintain a neutral position and resist the urge to share my own experiences or knowledge of the participants and their schools. Whilst it is beneficial to have a rapport with the participants, the boundaries can become blurred, leading to participants feeling exploited (Fleming, 2018). Whilst I felt confident that my relationship with the participants was sufficiently removed, the ethical considerations were continually monitored through a strict adherence to the ethical framework for this study and the regular reviewing of the interview recordings and field notes.

Chapter Four: Method

Building on the methodology chapter, the research instruments, participants and process of analysis will now be considered. In doing so, I will provide an accurate account of the research process, which drew heavily on the lessons learnt from the pilot study.

Online questionnaire

An online, self-administered questionnaire was developed as a result of the learning during the pilot study, as discussed below. This method drew on recognised advantages, including cost effectiveness, quick and easily distribution, absence of interviewer effects, absence of interviewer variability, and convenience (Bryman, 2016). Importantly, I recognised the potential barriers to participation and challenges of this approach when working with a large number of participants who are likely to resist engaging in time-consuming tasks. As noted by Rugg and Petre (2007:143), it is important that researchers have a strong rationale for using questionnaires as, all too often, they are chosen simply because researchers have failed to consider other methods. Consequently, I asked myself, “Do I have a clear rationale for what I am asking the participants to do and are the questions relevant and unambiguous?”.

Whilst the pilot study’s online questionnaire provided little insight beyond that which was gathered via the qualitative method, it did prove to be an efficient and effective tool for collecting data. The response rate was high and rapid. Furthermore, the pilot questionnaire played an important role in refining the research questions and identifying an appropriate balance of open and closed questions for this research. Rugg and Petre (2007:141) state

that “questionnaires are very easy to use badly and are very rarely used well”.

Consequently, a further careful examination of the responses to the pilot study questionnaire served to assist with sharpening the questions and method employed for the analysis in this project. Additionally, when considering the inductive drive of this research, I decided that an online questionnaire was the most appropriate and logical method for gathering and analysing large amounts of quantitative data. It should be noted that the pilot study was conducted prior to a Covid-19 lockdown in England and the decision to conduct the first phase of this research online proved advantageous.

Whilst there are advantages associated with conducting research online, it is important to recognise the elements that have proven to be more successful than others. Research carried out by Mavletova (2013) reported that there was no significant increase in the completion rates between embedded and email questionnaires and that, typically, questionnaires completed online resulted in fewer words being written in response to open ended questions.

In recognition of the potential limitations, such as the low completion rates and inability to probe for further participant elaboration, the following steps were considered to improve the design of the questionnaire (Bryman, 2016).

Questionnaire presentation

Building on experience gained during the pilot study, the research questionnaire was developed using an online platform. This made it possible to embed the questionnaire

within an email, thus facilitating access for the participants. Furthermore, since response rates of this nature are typically higher than those for other forms of questionnaire, such as postal, the online platform enabled the participants to complete the questionnaire using a mobile device. This proved to be a particularly beneficial decision in light of the challenges which arose during the early stages of the study as a result of Covid-19. After reviewing a number of free web-based questionnaire options, I chose to use the Qualtrics platform for this research due to its ability to be easily manipulated. In addition, the participant numbers on this platform are unlimited and it offers a relatively simple interface for users.

Qualtrics was administered via a university login, which offered an additional level of data security and confidence regarding confidentiality for the participants. This is important since the perceived trustworthiness of a research platform has been shown to be a crucial feature for participants, along with a sense of enjoyment when participating (Bryman, 2016).

Furthermore, one of the main advantages of distributing the questionnaire using an embedded link is that the questionnaire was self-administered, which offered participants flexibility in terms of when they completed the survey. This was an important consideration when carrying out research with busy professionals and also during a pandemic.

Development of a Likert Scale

A Likert scale was applied to the questionnaire to assist with structuring the responses. This approach has been shown to be an effective way for researchers to investigate attitudes, beliefs and behaviour when applied in a well thought-out and connected way. Likert scale responses enable researchers to think about data;

however, they are not a substitute for thinking about what the data truly mean and say about a population (Bishop & Herron, 2015:298).

In addition, a five-point bipolar ordered scale, such as a Likert scale, provides a well-known format for the participants. As a consequence, this has been shown to impact positively on the completion rates. There were, however, potential issues that I needed to consider in order to ensure the responses led to a valid statistical conclusion. It is essential to ensure that the response options are balanced so that the participants feel there is an equal distance between their choices both in relation to the number of options and the terms being used, such as strongly disagree and agree (Bishop & Heron, 2015:297). Interestingly, it is argued that an odd number of responses serves to provide a middle value which provides participants with an option to hold a middle or neutral position (Chyung et al., 2017). This can be seen to be a negative when trying to gather accurate responses. However, withholding a middle position can inadvertently encourage a more conservative position or risk frustrating the participants. In an effort to manage the reliability, several questions were framed similarly to see if the responses correlated, a process referred to as convergent validity, which reflects the extent to which two questions measure a similar construct (Carlson & Herdman, 2012:15). Examples of similarly framed questions can be seen in Appendix C and questions 1, 2 and 8.

Questionnaire development

In seeking to develop a meaningful understanding of the factors that had shaped the head teachers' beliefs in relation to PE, the online questionnaire focused on four key themes, namely:

- childhood school experiences of PE, at both secondary and primary school
- primary teacher training experiences
- experiences as a generalist primary school teacher
- experiences as a head teacher

These themes were identified through an exploration of Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977) and examination of the relational nature of the social structures and practices that have influenced the head teachers' conceptualisation of PE. Bourdieu's theoretical construct of practice and agency is communicated through the equation, habitus, capital + field = practice. This model illustrates the relational construct between the individual and social world. Central to Bourdieu's theory of practice is the examination of how the past and present contexts and experiences guide how individuals act. Whilst this is not necessarily a fixed disposition, Bourdieu states that new experiences are "at every moment, perceived through categories already constructed by prior experiences" (Bourdieu, 1992:133).

When considering the wider context of 'field', I also considered the structures and agents that influence the development of teacher beliefs and practices by reflecting on a model of teacher socialisation, which Lawson (1983:4) describes as a 'tug of war' between institutions and people which shapes each other. Moreover, I drew on Borg's (2003) conceptual framework of teacher cognition (figure 4.1). This identifies five factors that influence

teacher beliefs and practices, and illustrates the relationship between the individual and the social world.

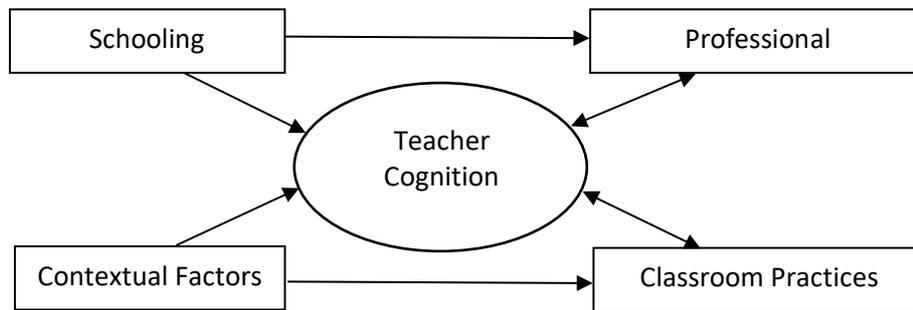


Figure 4.1 Conceptual Model of Teacher Beliefs and Practices (Borg, 2003:82)

Further practical considerations when developing the online questionnaire included ensuring that the survey was easy and quick to complete, that the questions were unambiguous, and that the questions were presented in a logical order. As Bryman (2016) observes, it is perhaps unsurprising that shorter questionnaires typically achieve higher response rates. Consequently, the questions were carefully considered and rationalised.

In order to establish confidence in the final questionnaire, I sought the advice of several experienced research colleagues and the initial pilot study participants. My colleagues offered me particular guidance in relation to face validity. Face validity determines whether the measurement accurately reflects the concept and stated aims (Bryman, 2016:159).

These discussions helped me to identify issues, such as ambiguous wording, and helped to guide my decisions, including various possibilities for analysis. The pilot study participants were subsequently asked to provide feedback on the questionnaire and the following questions were provided as prompts for their feedback:

- Does the introduction clearly communicate the purpose of the study?
- Do you think that after reading the purpose of the questionnaire that head teachers will be motivated to engage with it?
- Is the layout appealing and simple to follow?
- Is the sequencing of questions logical?
- Does the multi choice function provide you with relevant and sufficient choices?
- Would you prefer the question format to include more opportunities to enter your own response?
- Were you reluctant to answer any questions?
- Did you find any of the questions ambiguous or confusing?
- Do you think the number of questions, or the time spent completing the questionnaire could be a barrier for participants completing the questionnaire?
- Approximately how long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?
- Do you have any further suggestions in relation to the format or questions?
- Does the questionnaire clearly communicate how data will be used?

Whilst the feedback was positive and reassuring, suggestions were made which prompted me to reflect on aspects of the questionnaire that had not been considered previously.

These included the addition of a progress bar, a back button which allowed the participants to amend their responses and also save the survey and return to it later, if they wished. The final modification made to the questionnaire was the inclusion of a forced response. This feature was added to minimise the gaps in the data which would impact on the quality and volume of the data collected.

Based on the recommendations of the pilot study participants, a progress bar was added along with an indication of how long it would take to complete the survey. The pilot study participants did not suggest the survey was too long but that the participants would

probably want to be made aware of the commitment required before commencing the questionnaire. Interestingly, whilst the pilot study participants stated that the survey took approximately ten minutes to complete, the average time needed for the participants to complete the survey was nineteen minutes. This may have been due to the participants' familiarity with the study as a result of their involvement in the previous study. Nonetheless the time taken to complete the final questionnaire (Appendix C) is something that undoubtedly impacted on the participant completion rates.

The final online questionnaire can be seen in Appendix C. The questionnaire consisted of 58 questions, 49 of which were closed multichoice questions, five comprised open-ended comment boxes and four questions that asked the participants to rank the options in order. The questionnaire went live for the participants on September 30th, 2020 and remained available for 31 days. Fortunately, the closure of the questionnaire coincided with the eve of the announcement of a second national Covid-19 lockdown. Given that this was a time of uncertainty for head teachers, a later deadline could have impacted negatively on their levels of participation.

Individual Interviews

Qualitative methods can be broadly defined as techniques and procedures that are used to produce in-depth, detailed, and contextual data or information in order to address a problem or question. Commonly used qualitative methods include interviews which allow the researcher to explore intimate conceptualisations and experiential knowledge of

identity with the participants and communities (Urrieta & Hatt, 2019:2). Therefore, qualitative methods are typically favoured within an interpretivist framework.

Whilst interviews and questionnaires can be viewed as similar in many ways, they can also differ vastly (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). In this study, a key similarity was that both the interview and questionnaires sought to reveal attitudes and beliefs. A key difference between these two methods was that the questionnaire was completed independently, and the interviews were carried out through interaction with the researcher. This allowed for more open-ended questions, each interview typically lasting 45-50 minutes.

Interviews have proven to be an efficient, effective tool for gathering data. The pilot study used both individual and semi structured group interviews. Although both methods were shown to be successful in terms of collecting rich data, it proved challenging to schedule group interviews due to the busy nature of the participants and their reluctance to be out of school. In light of the challenges faced by the participants during Covid-19 and successive partial and full school lockdowns, I did not feel it either appropriate or practical to arrange group interviews either face-to-face or online.

Whilst it is important to note that there are benefits associated with interviews, including the joint production of meaning, it was my experience in the pilot study that, as an insider, the participants saw me as an expert and spoke to me rather than to each other. I considered that this scenario could be further exacerbated when conducting interviews in an online environment as a result of the Covid secure measures. Merriam et al. (2001:413)

state that power-based dynamics are inherent in any and all research and suggest that power is something not only to be aware of, but to negotiate in the research process. It occurred to me that managing group interviews online would have made it particularly difficult to manage issues related to reflexivity whilst building a rapport with a group of participants.

Development of the interview schedule

There are a number of different interview characteristics, and in order to be effective, interviewing depends on a well-planned interview guide (Coe et al., 2017:185). This research employed a general interview approach, meaning that the topics and questions were specified in advance of the interview. However, the sequencing, and exact wording of the questions were developed during the course of the interview. This assisted in creating a more conversational environment and opportunity for probing, whilst still providing sufficient structure to gather consistent data.

As previously mentioned, this research adopted an explanatory sequential design approach involving the collection of questionnaire data and as well as the analysis and development of an interview schedule. The theoretical drive was inductive, which meant that the data gathered from the questionnaire were used to inform the development of the interview schedule and discover points for further probing and investigation. This is not to say that the quantitative data did not add value in themselves, but they were valuable when identifying key areas to probe in greater detail, whilst still addressing the overall research questions. The questionnaire established that most schools currently provide a similar amount of time

for PE within the curriculum and that the participant's teacher training had had a limited impact on their confidence to teach PE. As a result, the interview schedule focused more on the participant's teacher training than the quantity of PE being taught.

Reducing variability

If there is variation in the asking of questions or recording of responses, then there is an increased risk of error. The aim therefore was to keep variation to a minimum in order to increase the validity. When conducting this study, it was important to be aware of the opportunities for variation due to the nature of the interviews. Key to this process was an awareness of my own behaviour when conducting interviews. There were a number of occasions during the pilot study when intra-variability occurred. For example, I asked questions in an inconsistent way due to my relationship with the participants and knowledge of their settings. Having the benefit of the pilot study, I managed to eliminate the opportunities for variation through applying the following measures:

- conducting the interviews myself,
- conducting interviews using the same format-online,
- gaining a thorough knowledge of the interview schedule and being fully conversant with it,
- developing a rapport with the participants, all of whom were previously unknown to me,
- limiting the variation when asking the questions,
- maintaining the order of the questions within the themes, and
- recording the interviews using the same equipment, which were then transcribed by the same person.

A key strength of qualitative methods is the ability to probe and prompt. However, when conducting interviews, it can be highly problematic for researchers to manage variability. This was kept to a minimum through the use of an interview schedule which was carefully reviewed to check for clarity and ambiguity. After the first interview had been conducted, I listened to it in its entirety to see if there were any elements which I felt had impacted on the respondent's replies. I was, however, satisfied that the schedule limited the need for probing and further prompts.

Rationale for the interview sample selection

A number of issues can arise when selecting participants to take part in a study and deciding on a sample size is not straightforward. Theoretically, the larger the sample size, the more representative it is likely to be. However, practical considerations must also be taken into account. If a sample size is relatively small, the chances of error can increase but that is not to say that a large sample guarantees precision (Bryman, 2016).

Once the first phase of the data analysis had been completed, I reviewed the total percentage of participants and the number of participants who had volunteered to be involved in the second part of the study. The online questionnaire was completed by 44 participants. This equates to 36% of the possible participants, of whom 17 participants volunteered to take part in the second phase of the study. This self-nomination rate of 33% exceeded my initial expectations. Using these figures (questionnaire participants and interview volunteers), I considered a comparable sample size for the questionnaires and established that 34% of the 17 volunteers equated to six individuals. In addition, I

considered the practicalities of interviewing the sample online, during a pandemic, and felt that, with the time and resources available, I would interview between five and seven participants. The sample was identified from within a relatively homogeneous population, meaning that they had a shared occupation, carrying out similar roles. Therefore, the sample need not necessarily be as large as a heterogeneous sample.

Whilst qualitative sample sizes tend to be relatively small in order to support the depth of analysis fundamental to this phase of a mixed methods study, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the relatively small interview sample. The main limitation of a small sample size is the ability to confidently generalise findings and limit variability. However, Sandelowski (1995:183) suggests that sample sizes in qualitative research need only be large enough to reveal a 'new and richly textured understanding' of the area of study but small enough that a 'deep, case-oriented analysis' can be managed. Additionally, a systematic review conducted by Vasileiou et al., (2018) suggests that researchers should be able to exercise nuanced judgments in relation to the adequacy and sufficiency of sample size and sufficiency in a particular study and whilst ensuring that studies demonstrate transparency in terms of sample size, selection and analysis. In this study, the interviews provided a rich insight into the beliefs and practices of five head teachers which provided a rich understanding that supplemented knowledge gained during the larger quantitative phase of the study.

The questionnaire participants were asked to provide their school contact details if they were willing to take part in a subsequent interview. By providing their school details, it

made it possible for me to consider a quota sample by school location and designation.

Quota sampling is relatively rare in social research (Bryman, However, this process helped to identify participants working in different settings across the city.

The figure below shows the detail in which the sample of volunteer schools were examined, and the criteria used to establish a varied sample 2016). and rich contextual information. All of the data included in the table have been adapted to limit the possibility of schools being identified and, as a result, compromising the anonymity of the participants.

The criteria identified in the first seven table headings shown in Figure 4.2 have been created using key statistics identified in the Department for Education, school pupils and characteristics census (DfE, 2019). These column headings identify national averages as a percentage and individual school scores that exceed national averages have been highlighted in bold text. Ofsted grades schools on a four-point scale ranging from grade one to four. Ofsted grade one is awarded to schools that are judged to be outstanding and schools deemed to be inadequate are graded four. Where statistics have not been published, these have been coloured grey. Exact scores have been rounded to the nearest five percent, and the number of children on roll has been rounded to the nearest 50. The final column of the table presents data identified in *'The Child Welfare Inequalities Project App'* (Webb & Thomas, 2020) which draws on English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015 & 2019). The multiple deprivation scores have been divided into equal bands of 10 and scores above 20 indicate high levels of deprivation.

Participants (listed in order of response to questionnaire)	% FSM (Last 3 yrs, av 23%)	Ofsted	Persistent Absence (nat 8.2%)	Pupils on roll 18/19	% EAL (nat av 21.2%)	SEND support (nat av 12.6%)	Expected standard in reading, writing, maths (nat av 65%)	English Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) higher figure indicates higher level of deprivation
	15%	2	10%	200	25%	10%	65%	11-20
	40%	2	10%	500	10%	20%	70%	51-60
School F - Did not respond	15%	2	5%	200	15%	15%	65%	41-50
School G - Did not respond	30%	2	10%	200	5%	15%		61-70
	30%	2	10%	450	5%	15%	65%	31-40
	15%	2	10%	400	5%	10%	80%	11-20
	30%	2	10%	400	15%	15%	65%	11-20
School D - Richard's school	25%	3	10%	500	5%	10%	60%	11-20
	40%	2	5%	350	30%	10%	80%	31-40
School B - Valerie's school	5%	1	5%	400	10%	10%	80%	0-10
School A - Daniel's school	45%	2	10%	400	85%	15%	65%	31-40
	10%	2	5%	200	10%	10%		0-10
	5%	1	5%	250	25%	10%		0-10
	5%	2	5%	500	15%	10%	90%	0-10
	15%	1	5%	350	25%	10%	70%	0-10
School C - Sarah's school	10%	2	5%	100	5%	10%	70%	11-20
School E - Sam's school	50%	3	15%	150	5%	25%	50%	11-20

Figure 4.2 Data Related to the Interview Volunteer Schools

After reviewing these data, I identified a list of seven schools that I felt would provide a representative sample of the schools within the city. The schools that were identified vary in size and rural/urban location, and reflect ethnic diversity, varied levels of deprivation, breadth of attainment measures and Ofsted inspection ratings. A criticism that is often levelled at quota samples is that they are inaccurate, as they reflect superficial characteristics, and the interviewer is likely to make judgements based on stereotypes. I, however, felt confident that the likelihood of this would be minimised through the use of multiple indices and also a map to confirm the selection and citywide representation.

Following a review of the data collected in figure 4.2 and the location of the volunteers, the following rationale was discussed with my supervisors. This was designed to test the significance of the data that were used to examine the sample and help to minimise bias. Once I had established the distribution and rationale for selecting the participants, an individual email was sent to seven head teachers, inviting them to participate in an online interview. The following figure identified the characteristics of the seven schools.

School	Participant name	Identified characteristics
A	Daniel	Relatively high Free School Meals (FSM), high English as an Additional Language (EAL), high Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), meeting expected standards in maths and literacy.
B	Valerie	Relatively low FSM, Ofsted 1, low deprivation, high attendance, fairly large school and exceeding maths and literacy standards.
C	Sarah	Relatively low FSM, Ofsted 2, low deprivation figure, very low absence, small school in a rural setting and exceeding maths and literacy standards.
D	Richard	Average FSM and deprivation, Ofsted grade 3, large school, below expected maths and literacy standards
E	Sam	Relatively high FSM, Ofsted grade 3, high absence, small school, high SEND, below expected maths and literacy standards, average deprivation
F	Did not participate	Faith school, high deprivation, relatively small school, meeting national maths and literacy expectations
G	Did not participate	High levels of absence, small school, high SEND, high deprivation

Figure 4.3 Characteristics of the schools invited to participate in the research interviews

The participants were provided with further information about the purpose of the study, asked to identify a suitable time and date for the online interview and sent a research consent form to complete. An example of the consent form sent to the volunteers can be seen in Appendix F. Following the distribution of the invitations, five of the seven members

of the sample responded immediately. Subsequent confirmation emails were sent to the volunteers, along with a password-protected link to an online platform where the interview would be carried out. The two participants who failed to respond were sent a follow-up email two weeks after the initial email. Due to the significant challenges facing the participants in schools as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, I decided that it was inappropriate to send out any further invitations or contact any additional schools. Furthermore, it was considered that five participants would provide an adequate sample size.

Location of the interview sample schools

Head teachers located in primary schools across the city volunteered via the questionnaire to participate in an interview. The location of schools was mapped across the city to help to identify coverage and contrasting locations. This information has not been provided to protect the anonymity of the participants. However, the process of mapping schools was valuable as it illustrated the spread of the schools and the geographical variation within the sample. Additionally, it was important to examine the variation and contrast between the schools in order to provide a relatively representative sample. To do this I drew on national data reported in figure 4.2 and personal knowledge of the communities where schools were based.

Quantitative analysis

The research participants answered all 59 questions included on the online questionnaire. The questions were designed to address four main themes, which drew on Borg's (2003)

conceptual framework of teacher cognition (Figure 4.1). The themes identified as the factors that influence primary head teachers' beliefs about PE included:

- personal experiences of PE and sport
- current behaviour and involvement in physical activity and sport
- initial teacher training experiences of PE
- perceived teacher efficacy regarding PE

Quantitative data were collected via the online platform Qualtrics. The data collected were subsequently exported from Qualtrics to a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is a recognised and reputable tool that aids researchers in analysing questionnaire data, enabling them to carry out complex analyses, and can be used to analyse large amounts of data. However, like any tool, it is only as effective as the researcher's skills. In order to use SPSS effectively, I completed an independent online learning module, attended a masters' module on data analysis and employed the support of an experienced research tutor. Although it was time-consuming to develop the skills to use SPSS effectively, I felt it was necessary in order to have confidence in the statistical output of this research.

Once the data had been cleaned and I was left with the raw data, gathered from the participants who completed the full questionnaire, I began the process of analysing the data. As a result of the initial analysis of the questionnaire data, the emerging themes were identified and subsequently used to identify the variables for further analysis and consideration, ahead of the design of the interview schedule. The figure below presents the

independent and dependent variables together with the survey questions related to each variable.

Variable	Code	Title	Questionnaire Number
Dependent Variable	DV1	The majority of PE lessons are taught by qualified generalist primary school teachers in my school	35
	DV2	The majority of PE lessons in my school are taught by a qualified specialist PE teacher with QTS	36
	DV3	The majority of PE lessons in my school are taught by an external provider without QTS	37
Independent Variable	IV1	Prior personal experience (enjoyment)	1,2,7,8,9
	IV2	Prior personal behaviour (participation)	3,4,5,6
	IV3	Current behaviour	11,12,13
	IV4	Current attitudes	14,27,31
	IV5	Previous PE training	20,21,22,23,24
	IV6	Self-Efficacy (confidence)	30
	IV7	Prior teaching experience	26
	IV8	Perceived teacher confidence (staff)	41
	IV9	Perceived teacher skills (staff)	42
	IV10	Policy	49,50
	IV11	Subjective norms/others	51,52

Figure 4.4 Quantitative variable table

The independent variables (IV) were created by grouping questions that test similar themes. For example, Independent Variable 1 (IV1) groups together questions one and two, and seven to nine, which are related to the participants' prior personal experiences; for example, Q1, "As a child I enjoyed my primary school PE experiences". The IVs are umbrella themes which include, in most cases, clusters of questions that are assumed to have a direct impact on the dependent variables (DV). The DVs are being used to test the degree to which the independent variables relate to and impact on the variables. Through this, I was able to see the impact different IVs have on the DVs which are all related to the teaching of PE.

The following model illustrates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

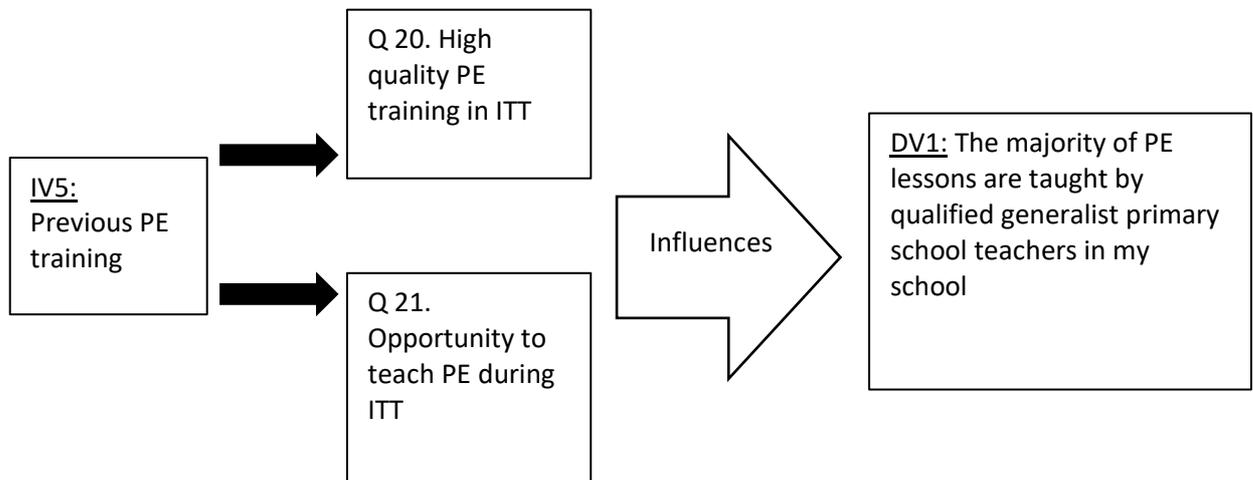


Figure 4.5 Relationship between the dependent and independent variables

This example illustrates the degree to which the questions included on IV5 influence DV1.

The intent of this test is to identify the degree to which the initial teacher training experiences affect the DVs. Through the process of manipulating IVs and their effect on the DVs, I was able to start to draw conclusions about the ‘cause and effect’ relationships.

Quantitative validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of the quantitative data were tested using the Cronbach’s alpha (1951), which is used to measure the consistency of a questionnaire and the internal reliability of the measures. Therefore, the Cronbach’s alpha is employed to test how reliably variables which include two or more questions measure the same construct. The Cronbach’s alpha was applied through the use of SPSS, and all of the IVs were assessed within a range

of 0-1. The higher the Cronbach's alpha value, the greater the consistency and reliability of the data. The overall Cronbach's alpha score for the 48 variables included in the reliability analysis is $\langle .771$ which is just above the internal consistency measure of $\alpha .7$. This score indicates that, generally, the variables lie within what is considered to be a 'good' range in terms of internal consistency and reliability.

The figure below presents a consistency score for each of the IVs which include between two to five questions. The internal consistency rating varies from high reliability to low reliability. The Cronbach's alpha score indicates that the consistency of some of the measures is lower than that of others, which may indicate that some of the questions within an IV may not be measuring the same underlying construct. Whilst, ideally, a Cronbach's alpha score should be close to one, a low Cronbach alpha score does not necessarily mean a variable is redundant, as scales including a small number of scales typically produce a lower reliability coefficient. However, if a scale includes a large number of items and the Cronbach's alpha score is low, this would be deemed unacceptable. Although there is some variability between the IVs, the variables with lower Cronbach's alpha scores are those with low item numbers.

Independent Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items	Internal consistency
IV1	.894	5	High reliability
IV2	.886	4	High reliability
IV3	.451	3	Low reliability
IV4	.478	3	Low reliability
IV5	.846	5	High reliability
IV10	.521	2	Moderate reliability
IV11	.645	2	Moderate reliability

Figure 4.6 Cronbach's alpha scores (Hinton, McMurray & Brownlow, 2014).

Qualitative data analysis-individual interview

Thematic analysis

Data analysis is fundamental to credible qualitative research and the researcher has been described as the research instrument in terms of their ability to understand and interpret experiences to uncover meaning (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 3351). To gain an understanding of the role primary head teachers' beliefs play in the enactment of physical education, I chose to analyse the interviews using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (Clarke & Braun, 2017:297). Moreover, Braun and Clarke (2006:78) suggest that it is a qualitative analysis method that '...provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis'. Thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical frameworks, as it is unbound by theoretical commitments (Clarke & Braun, 2017:297), meaning that it is not confined to a particular framework or paradigm. Thematic analysis is, therefore, a flexible

yet pragmatic method which, according to Braun and Clarke (2017:82), is an analytical method that identifies patterned meaning across a dataset and identifies 'themes' that carry importance in relation to the research area. Furthermore, they claim that thematic analysis is not wedded to any particular theoretical framework and, therefore, can be used in a range of ways within different frameworks (2017:81), as well as within both an essentialist and constructivist paradigm. It is suggested that, although thematic analysis is described as a flexible method, a good thematic analysis should be transparent and clearly state its theoretical position, as all theoretical frameworks carry certain assumptions.

The analysis in this research involved constant review, moving back and forth between the raw data and the data being analysed. This was particularly important in this interpretivist research, which aimed to reflect understanding rather than universals. There are various approaches to thematic analysis and this study used Braun and Clarke's six phase model of analysis (2006). Although there are several approaches to thematising meaning and thematic coding, I opted to follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) model, as they state that thematic analysis is a method in its own right rather than a process within a tradition such as grounded theory.

A key commitment when carrying out qualitative research is to see things through the eyes of those who have volunteered to participate (Gibbs, 2007:7). This is easier said than done, and Gibbs (2007:7) states that '...there can be no simple, true, and accurate reporting of respondents' views' due to the matter of interpretation within qualitative research. The interviews were conducted online but recorded using a voice recorder. I did this in order to

be confident that the recordings were secure and could easily be shared with a transcription service. Although the process of transcription is useful, the time spent transcribing during the pilot study was considerable. Thus, I recruited a reputable, established transcription service and, although this data was not particularly sensitive, I was reassured to know the recordings would not be held after the transcriptions had been signed off as an accurate account of them. Additionally, the transcriptions were password-protected and returned via email separate to an email containing the password. I was therefore confident that the data had been handled and managed ethically.

I acknowledge that it is important for researchers to immerse themselves in the data and become familiar with their content depth and breadth (Braun & Clarke, 2006:87). However, there are several ways of achieving this and I felt my time was best spent actively and repeatedly listening to the recordings and making notes on them. I carefully read the transcriptions and listened to the recordings to ensure that the former was 'true' to the original interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006:18), and punctuation was added to clarify the intended meaning. However, it is important to note that thematic analysis does not require the same level of transcription detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006:88) as other conventions, such as discourse analysis, as there is no one prescribed or standardised method for conducting thematic analysis. This may be one reason why qualitative research methods have been viewed as less rigorous than quantitative methods (Makieson et al., 2019:966) and why reflexivity is considered crucial throughout, particularly when constructing knowledge throughout the various stages of research.

Initially, I engaged with the data through notetaking and the identification of key words and themes. Latterly, I did so manually alongside the transcribed notes and then with the assistance of NVivo software. Writing is an integral part of analysis and Braun and Clarke (2013) maintain that writing should begin during the initial stages of analysis, through jotting down ideas, and continue right through the analysis and coding process. This process is central to the development of a 'bottom up', inductive process, and many of the precoding memos identified themes that had emerged directly from the data and were subsequently expanded into key terms and codes. Figure 4.7 provides an illustration of the initial coding that helped to develop a framework for the initial thematic ideas.

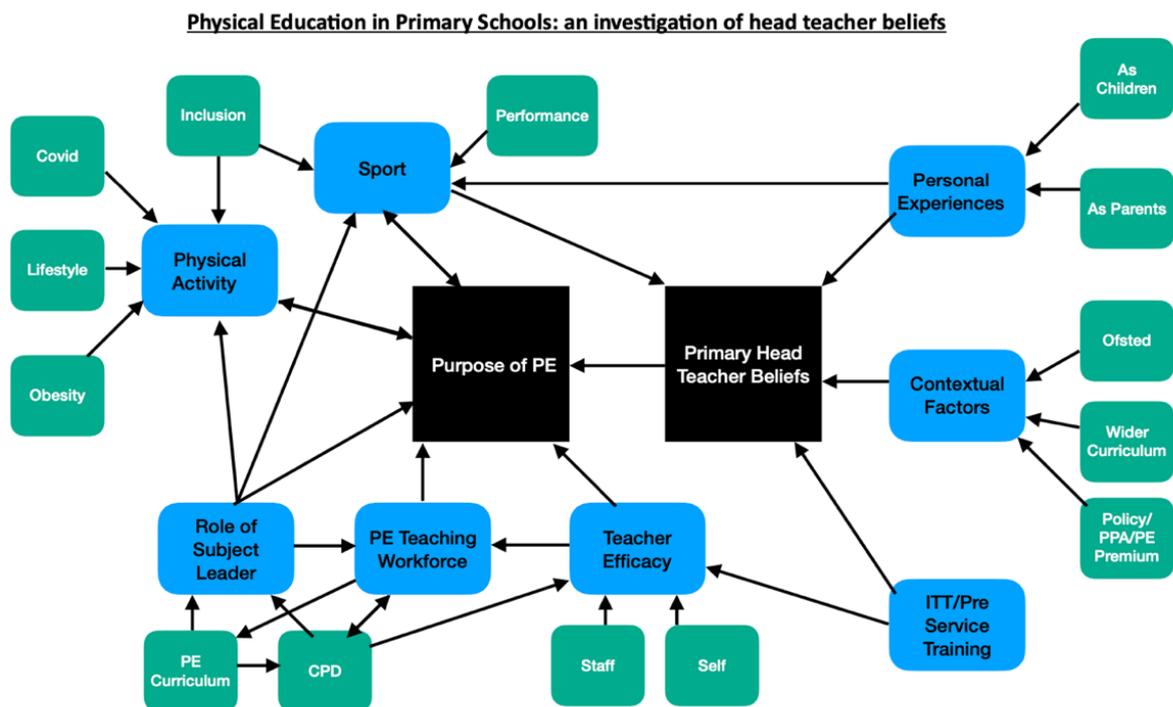


Figure 4.7 Initial theme map

Generating the initial codes

The generation of codes required the identification and production of initial codes from the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006:18). This involved the identification of features within the data that were of interest and relevant to the research area and questions. As mentioned previously, the analysis of data from a data-driven, inductive position is often called 'open coding', as it avoids starting with preconceived ideas (Gibbs, 2007:45). It is, of course, impossible to be completely void of preconceived ideas. However, as much as possible, I engaged with the data, looking initially for semantic themes which were immediately explicit within the data. Subsequently, I identified the underlying latent ideas and themes that were relevant to the research area.

The process of coding is central to making sense of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018:190), and involves the aggregation of text into smaller categories. This process is called 'winnowing' and is where relevant data are highlighted, and some data discarded. As a result of my experiences during the pilot study, I managed to avoid a coding trap experienced by many beginning researchers, namely that of generating an extensive list of initial codes which resembled an index of key words rather than a meaningful grouping (Creswell & Poth, 2018:190). A descriptive-based approach such as this is referred to as categorisation and is somewhat superficial. Nonetheless, I found the process of retrieving information useful and it led to refinement by reducing and combining codes to develop a number of themes.

The method used initially involved manually and systematically working through the entire data set, paying equal attention to all data, and identifying points of interest. I used a highlighter to mark any points of interest that occurred to me, and then searched for and counted the repeated patterns. Repetition is one of the simplest ways of identifying themes, achieved by highlighting reoccurring topics and ideas (Ryan & Bernard, 2003:89). This is not to say that all occurrences constitute an important theme, but it does highlight their significance for the researcher.

From the beginning of my journey as a researcher, I have been aware of the challenges surrounding the defining of physical education and the tension between PE and sport (Penney & Chandler 2000:73). The language surrounding PE and sport has been described as a 'conceptual and ideological minefield' (Bailey et al., 2009:2). Therefore, efforts continue to be made to clarify that physical education is not merely about 'doing', nor can it be equated with 'sport' (Penney & Chandler 2000:74). What quickly became apparent through the process of identifying repetition was how integral language and developing a shared understanding was. Throughout the interviews I referred to 'PE'; however, the participants continually referred to 'sport'. We may have, in fact, been talking about the same activity, but this was not established at the time. Through the initial process of analysis and identification of repetitions, it became apparent that it would be vital to establish a shared understanding and definition of both PE and sport in future studies.

Searching and reviewing the themes

Following the initial coding across the data set, the codes that formed potential themes were identified and are listed below in Figure 4.8. This process involves a shift from memoing and describing the data to classifying and interpreting the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018:189).

Teacher confidence	Teacher competence	Self-efficacy
Initial teacher training	Professional development	Coaches
School inspection	School performance	National policy
Sport	Obesity	Physical activity
Health	Covid	Personal school experiences
Curriculum	PE and Sport Premium	Resilience

Figure 4.8 Themes formed from the initial codes

The codes were examined several times and, eventually, a lean list of themes was developed. Figure 4.9 identifies the lean list of sub themes, feeding into five main theme piles, identified in bright blue, and circled.

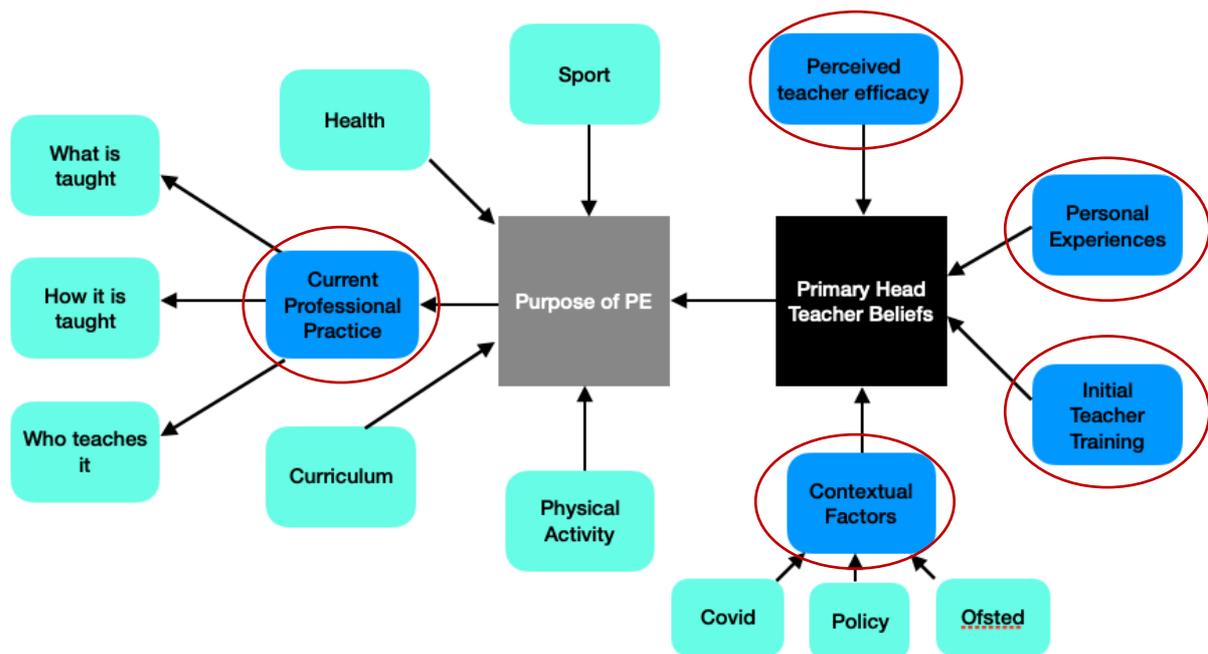


Figure 4.9 Illustration of the main themes and sub themes

Once the sub and main themes had been developed, a final check was carried out to ensure these accurately reflected the meaning of the complete data set. This was conducted by listening to the interviews whilst reviewing the mind map to check that the themes were as apparent as they seemed once the data had been chunked down, and also that they formed an accurate representation.

Defining the main themes

Since coding is a method for categorising ideas, it is important to establish a framework for defining to what a code does and does not refer. Hence, the use of a structured list of codes and the rules for their application, sometimes referred to as a coding frame (Gibbs, 2007:39) or thematic framework, was applied. The following thematic frame identifies the main

codes and their interpretation, within the context of this study. The process of coding took account of the intended interpretation from the initial memoing phase, and clarifies the thinking behind it (Gibbs, 2007:40). The development of a thematic frame assists with the consistent application of the coding.

Perceived teacher efficacy	A teacher’s belief in his or her capacity to organise and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998:233).
Personal Experiences	Knowledge gained through direct observation or participation.
Initial Teacher Training	Statutory requirement and process of Initial Teacher Training
Contextual Factors	Dynamic forces that influence the way in which the curriculum is designed, taught and monitored.
Current Professional Practice	The actual application or way of doing something.

Figure 4.10 The thematic coding frame

The following results chapter explains how the five main coding themes listed above, are encompassed within four main themes that are used to communicate findings in relation to the research questions.

Interview sample

In order to protect their anonymity, the interview participants were allocated a pseudonym. The figure below (Figure 4.11) provides information relating to the interview participants, including their gender, route into teaching and the number of years spent in the role of

head teacher. The interview participants are identified in the order in which they were interviewed, and, in the following section, I present a brief professional biography of each one.

Interview participant	Participant gender	ITT route	Years teaching	Years as a head teacher
Richard	Male	PGCE	15	1 (+one term)
Valerie	Female	PGCE	23	4
Daniel	Male	PGCE	14	12
Sarah	Female	PGCE	10	7
Sam	Male	GTP	10	1

Figure 4.11 Interview participant profile

Richard

Richard is the head teacher at the largest primary school involved in this study. Compared to the other schools involved in the qualitative phase of this study, Richard’s school has the lowest percentage of free school meals, and the percentage of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is below the national average. The school joined a multi academy trust in 2018 prior to Richard’s appointment as head teacher and this is Richard’s first head teacher position. At the time of the interview, he had been in post for four terms. Richard describes himself as being passionate about PE and he applied for a teaching role within his school so he could take on the role of PE subject leader. He describes himself as active and attributes his involvement in sport from an early age to his father, a secondary school PE teacher. Richard completed a PGCE and did not feel his teacher training was particularly effective in preparing him to

teach PE. Furthermore, he has identified that more time needs to be invested in supporting teachers to develop confidence about teaching PE and the school needs to establish a clear vision for PE that can help to ensure the subject is both inclusive and progressive.

Valerie

Valerie has been a head teacher for four years and has been working in education for over 20 years. Her junior school has been rated 'outstanding' by the past two inspections and pupil attendance is particularly high in this large junior school. Whilst the number of children entitled to free school meals is low, the number of children with SEND is in line with the national average. During Valerie's interview, she discussed her active childhood, spent playing outside and on a bike, which she felt was characteristic of a childhood in the 1970s. Although Valerie can recall little about her own primary school PE experiences, she vividly remembers being given the opportunity to captain a sports team and the importance of winning. She describes her school as highly competitive and, although she believes this is valuable, her current focus is on engaging all children in activity. All of the teachers at Valerie's school teach PE. However, typically, one lesson each week is taught by a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) so the teachers can be released for Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA). The HLTA who has responsibility for teaching PE works closely with the PE subject leader and Valerie also chooses to be involved in overseeing the PE and sport programme in school. Although there is PE expertise in the school, Valerie believes it is important that each teacher take ownership for planning PE lessons, as they do for other subjects.

Daniel

Daniel has been teaching for 30 years and has experience of working in several primary schools. He was appointed as a deputy head teacher in his current school and, 12 years ago, became the head teacher. Daniel recalls his teacher training provided him with guidance on how to structure a PE lesson, but he credits a secondary PE teacher who worked alongside him in his first school with showing him how to teach engaging PE lessons. He feels fortunate to have had this experience but believes that, at the time when he trained, most early career teachers had to fend for themselves. As a result of this experience, Daniel has both a PE subject leader and a sports Teaching Assistant (TA) who support teachers with PE. The sports TA joined the school as an apprentice and assists with the organisation and teaching of PE alongside the classroom teachers. This additional capacity has been made possible through the PE and Sport Premium. Daniel believes it is important that the curriculum that is being taught meets the needs of the children at his school. Almost 85% of the children at the school have English as an Additional Language and, as a result, Daniel believes it is important that cultural differences are acknowledged and reflected when planning the PE curriculum. Additionally, he feels that sport is an important part of providing the best school experience for the community.

Sarah

Sarah spent ten years teaching before becoming a non-teaching assistant head teacher in a diverse inner-city school. Seven years ago, Sarah was appointed head teacher at a small rural primary school, which contrasts strongly with her previous school. Because of the challenges associated with the budget and staffing a small school, Sarah covers teaching on

a weekly basis which she feels helps to demonstrate to the staff that she practices what she preaches. Additionally, teaching provides Sarah with an opportunity to get to know the children and she occasionally teaches PE. Sarah does not have positive memories of primary school PE. She recalls feeling embarrassed during PE, getting picked last for teams and hating competition. However, in her final years of secondary school, she enjoyed the range of non-competitive, fitness-based opportunities on offer. During Sarah's teacher training, she began to see PE as something that was fun and inclusive, and this helped her to gain a new perspective on PE.

Additionally, as a parent, she came to realise how much her own children benefitted from being involved in PE and sport. When Sarah moved to her current school, a secondary PE teacher was leading PE and covering some of the PE teaching. When this teacher left the school, Sarah appointed an HLTA who had expertise in high intensity fitness. Sarah does not believe that obesity is an issue in her school. However, she does think that the children's fitness levels need to be improved. The HLTA works closely with a PE subject leader and Sarah believes this partnership helps the school to develop a PE and sport offer to the community.

Sam

After a trip to Kenya to support his partner who was teaching in a village primary school, Sam decided on a career change. Twelve years ago, Sam completed a primary Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) and, after seven years of teaching, was appointed to an assistant head teacher role in his current school. Sam has now been head teacher for just over a year.

He has always been active and involved in sport, due to his family's interests. However, he recalls little about PE during his primary school years. The PE training was limited on his GTP, and he does not recall spending more than half a day on PE. Sam had previously completed several coaching badges and believes these helped to prepare him to teach. Sam recalls being observed teaching PE during his training year. He received positive feedback and recalls thinking how simple it was to do well in PE. In 2020, Sam appointed a coach from a local school sport partnership to come into school one day a week both to teach PE and act as PE subject leader. This coach has been developing extra-curricular activities and been supporting the staff to build their confidence about teaching the subject.

Chapter Five: Results

This chapter presents a detailed report of the results of this study, to address the two main research questions: 'What do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools?' and 'What factors have shaped head teachers' conceptualisations of PE?' In doing so the result of this study will highlight the way in which head teacher practices exemplify beliefs about PE. Furthermore, this chapter draws on both the quantitative and qualitative results in order to present a coherent representation of the data, which are examined in greater detail in the discussion chapter.

As previously identified in both the methodology and methods chapters, this research applied a mixed method approach in order to present a detailed understanding of a research area that has received limited attention to date. A sequential explanatory method was applied to this study, which involved the collection of quantitative data via an online questionnaire, followed by a series of individual interviews which generated qualitative data. The findings of the first quantitative phase of the study served to inform the second qualitative phase, and a summary of the quantitative results followed by the qualitative results are presented in this chapter. The subsequent chapter discusses the findings of both methods and illustrates the connected and complementary approach that was applied in this mixed method study.

The following two sections provide a brief summary of the number of participants involved in the online questionnaire and individual interviews. Additionally, I explain how the

participants were selected and the unique features of each setting that are relevant when considering the results.

Online questionnaire

Data collected via the online questionnaire provided generalised results from a large proportion (over 30%) of primary head teachers who are based in schools within the city where the study was located. The questionnaire consisted of 59, mainly closed-ended questions, which were developed in order to provide an insight into the views of the head teachers in relation to the research questions.

The online research questionnaire was completed by 44 current primary head teachers who are based in schools located within the city where the research was located. All of the primary head teachers within the city were invited by email to participate in the study. The highest proportion of participants (33%) indicated they had been head teachers for three to five years. The figure below demonstrates their responses to the online questionnaire with respect to the amount of time they had been in the role of head teacher. Of those who fully engaged with the online questionnaire, seven participants reported that they had been in the role of head teacher for one to two years and nine participants reported having been in the role for 11 years or more.

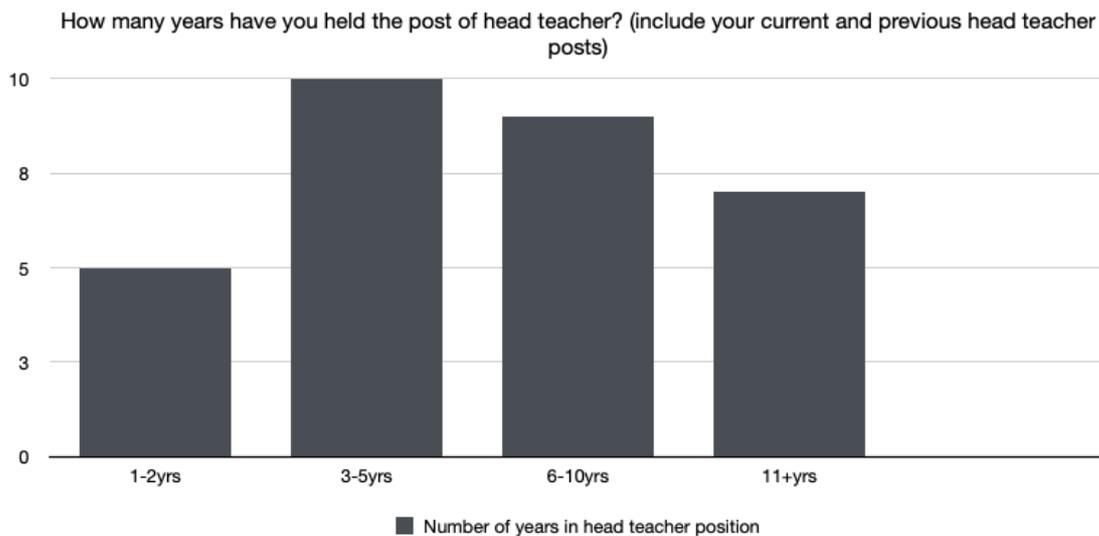


Figure 5.1 Questionnaire participants' time in head teacher positions

The quantitative data were analysed in two, closely related stages. The first stage involved the early examination of the data using the report tools available on Qualtrics, the questionnaire platform. This helped to review the engagement with the questionnaire and generate an early familiarity with the data. The quantitative results discussed in this chapter reflect the findings of the detailed analysis using SPSS, which provided reassurance in terms of both the validity of the instrument and the quality of the data.

Individual interviews

Qualitative data were gathered via conducting five individual interviews, using an interview schedule. The interview schedule was designed to reveal the attitudes and beliefs of the participants. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom over a three-week period in December 2020. All of the interview participants completed the online questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, they provided their contact details, indicating that they were

happy to be contacted in order to participate in a subsequent interview. Seventeen of the head teachers volunteered to participate, of whom seven were invited to attend an interview. As explained in the methods chapter, the seven participants are located in schools in different areas of the city, having attributes that reflect the diversity existing within the city. The method for selecting the participants was based on the school characteristics, which included the percentage of children entitled to Free School Meals, Ofsted ratings, number of pupils on the roll, percentage of pupils persistently absent, expected standards of reading, writing and maths and percentage of SEND and EAL pupils.

Building on Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977), that identifies a connection between past experiences, present practice, and the environment, Borg's Conceptual Model of Teacher Beliefs (2003) was used to shape the questionnaire, which addresses four broad areas.

These four areas encompass the five main thematic coding themes used when analysing the qualitative data. The areas that were used to communicate the mixed method findings in relation to the research questions are:

- **Personal experiences of PE and sport** (linked to the coding theme Personal Experiences)
 - Childhood experiences
 - Current personal experiences
- **Teacher training experiences and self-efficacy** (linked to the coding theme Initial Teacher Training)
 - Initial teacher training
 - Self-efficacy
- **Current Professional Practice** (linked to the coding themes Current Professional Practice and Perceived Teacher Efficacy)

- The purpose of PE
- Perceived teacher efficacy of staff
- How PE is taught in school
- **Contextual factors** (linked to the coding theme Contextual Factors)
 - External factors that influence the teaching of PE
 - Internal factors that influence the teaching of PE

The following four sections identify the results using the themes listed above. Each of these sections include two subsections, one for the quantitative results and the other for the qualitative results. The mind map below illustrates the relationship between the four themes and eight subthemes, which will now be examined.

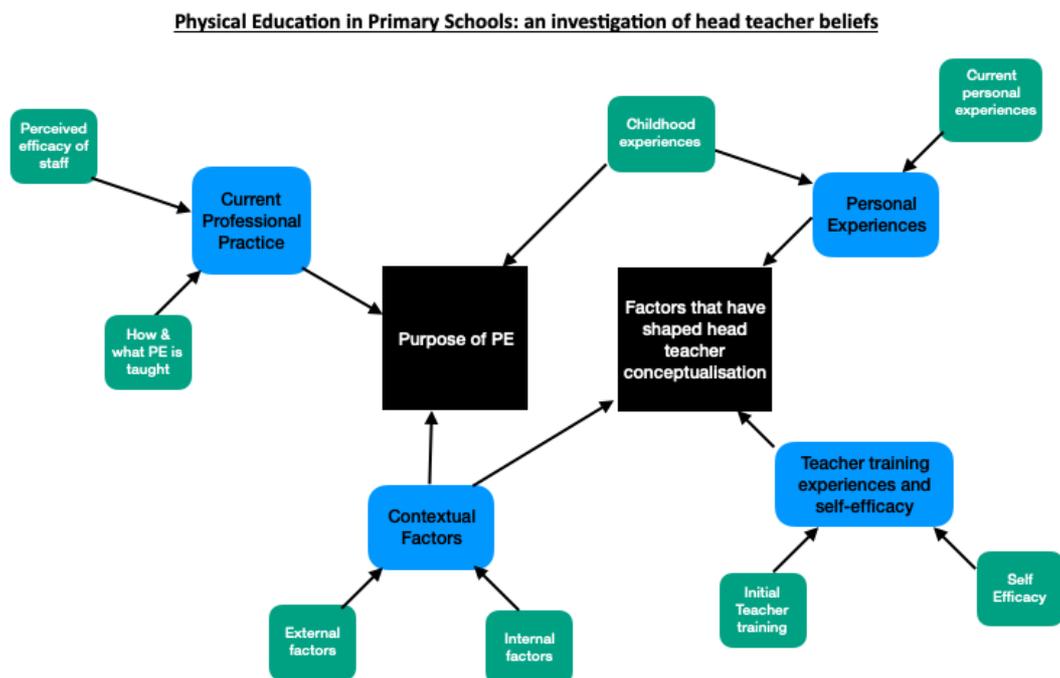


Figure 5.2 Mind map of the research themes and sub themes

Personal Experiences of PE and Sport

Quantitative data

The online questionnaire asked the head teachers to indicate the degree to which they enjoyed their childhood PE experiences. Question one asked the participants to reflect on their enjoyment of PE in primary school and Question two asked them to consider the degree to which they enjoyed their secondary school PE experiences.

All of the participants responded to both questions and 73% of the participants indicated that they somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with the suggestion that they had enjoyed PE as a primary school child. When the participants were asked if they enjoyed their secondary school PE experiences, 67% of the respondents stated that they somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Whilst the data indicate that the majority of participants have positive childhood memories of PE at both primary and secondary school, it is evident that comparatively more participants agreed or strongly agreed with the suggestion that they enjoyed primary school PE. However, when comparing those who strongly agreed with these two questions, it is noteworthy that 7% more participants strongly agreed with the suggestion that they enjoyed secondary school PE in comparison with primary school PE. Thus, the data indicate that, on average, the participants are more likely to have enjoyed primary school PE, but less likely to strongly agree that they enjoyed primary school PE in comparison to secondary school PE.

The results of these two questions are interesting, as they show that, whilst almost three quarters of the participants enjoyed PE at primary school, they were less likely to feel strongly about these experiences. The length of time since the participants had these experiences could have influenced their responses. However, the number of participants who strongly disagreed with the statement that they enjoyed their secondary PE experiences was 9% higher than those who strongly disagreed with the question related to enjoying PE in primary school. It is therefore helpful to consider the dispersion of values between these two questions as this indicates the variance in the participants' responses.

As illustrated in Figure 5.3 below, the standard deviation for question one related to primary PE was 1.15 and the standard deviation for question two was 1.45. Considering the spread of the responses to these two questions, it is evident that, although the mean was higher for question two, on the whole, the participants' experiences of secondary school PE were more likely to have been varied. Nonetheless, the degree of agreement within and between these two questions suggests that the majority of head teachers who responded to the questionnaire enjoyed PE when they were at school themselves. However, it is important to note that the participants used the full range of the scale when responding to these questions, indicating the varied intensity of their responses. This suggests that measurement was not compromised by social desirability, whereby participants answer questions in a way that displays them in a positive light.

The following figure illustrates the results for the two questions related to the enjoyment of primary and secondary school PE. The Likert scale ranged from one to five, with one

representing strongly agree, two somewhat agree, three neither agree or disagree, four somewhat disagree and five strongly disagree. The standard deviation was below two, which indicates that the results are close to the mean value and so contain limited variation. Furthermore, the mode is the most frequently selected response and indicates that the participants enjoyed PE in both their primary and secondary education.

	Response range	Mode	Mean	SD
As a child, I enjoyed my primary school PE experiences	1-5	2	2.2	1.15
As a child, I enjoyed my secondary school PE experiences	1-5	1	2.4	1.45

Figure 5.3 Online Questionnaire results related to childhood PE experiences.

When asked to consider both their primary and secondary sporting engagement outside school, the participants responded in a similar way to which they responded to the questions related to their experiences of PE. It is, however, important to note the first two questions relate to enjoyment and these two questions relate to participation. When asked to indicate the degree to which they regularly participated in sports activity outside school, the combined responses of the participants for both primary and secondary school PE were closely aligned, as can be seen in Figures 5.4 and 5.5.

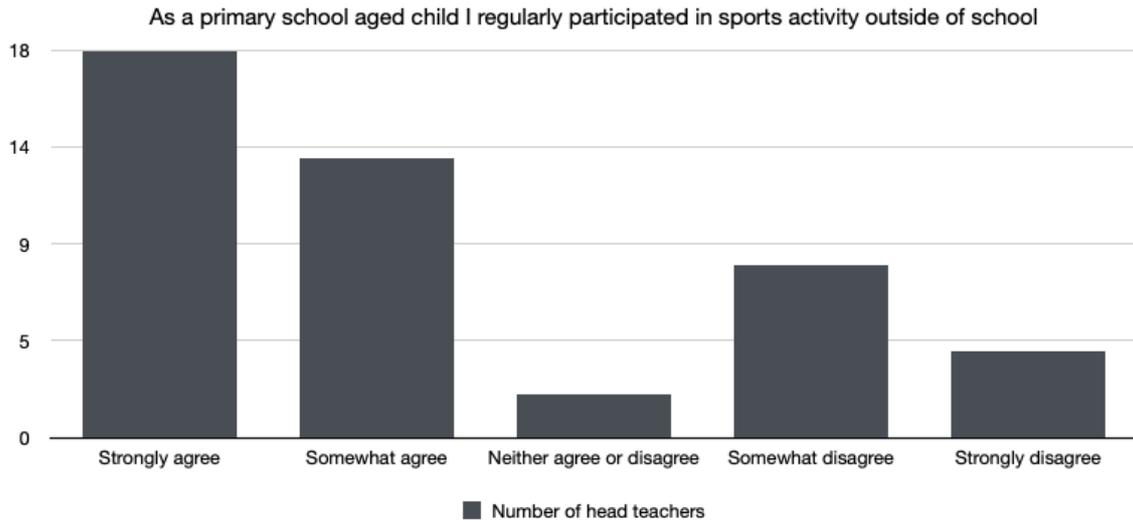


Figure 5.4 As a primary school aged child, I regularly participated in sports activity outside school.

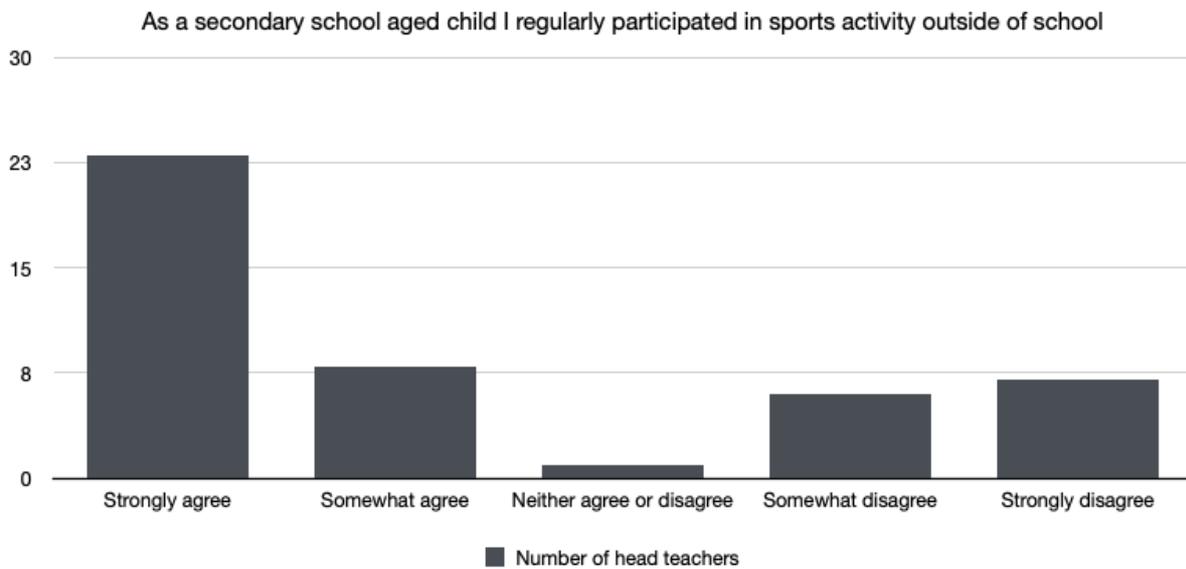


Figure 5.5 As a secondary school aged child, I regularly participated in sports activity outside school.

The visual representation of these data helps to illustrate how closely aligned the responses were related to participating in sport in both primary and secondary school but, once again,

the secondary school experiences tended to be more divided than those referred to in the primary school data. There are various reasons why participation outside school may vary between the two age groups, including, for example, the independence of secondary school aged children and the number of opportunities available to them. However, when comparing the responses about PE and sport, it is evident that the experiences at secondary school tended to be more polarised and diverse.

The participants were more inclined to agree that they regularly participated in sport outside school during secondary school compared with primary school. Whilst these results were not entirely unexpected, it was surprising to see that over half of the participants indicated that they regularly participated in sports activity outside secondary school. This is in contrast with the reported pre-pandemic levels of outside school activity for school aged children.

The Active Lives Children and Young People survey (2017/18) reports that activity levels outside school were the highest amongst year five to six pupils, and there is a substantial decline between in school and outside school activity levels for secondary school children. It is important to note that the data shown in Figure 5.6 below are not specifically related to sport. However, whilst the overall activity levels in primary schools are lower than those reported in secondary schools, the secondary school children were less likely to be active outside school.

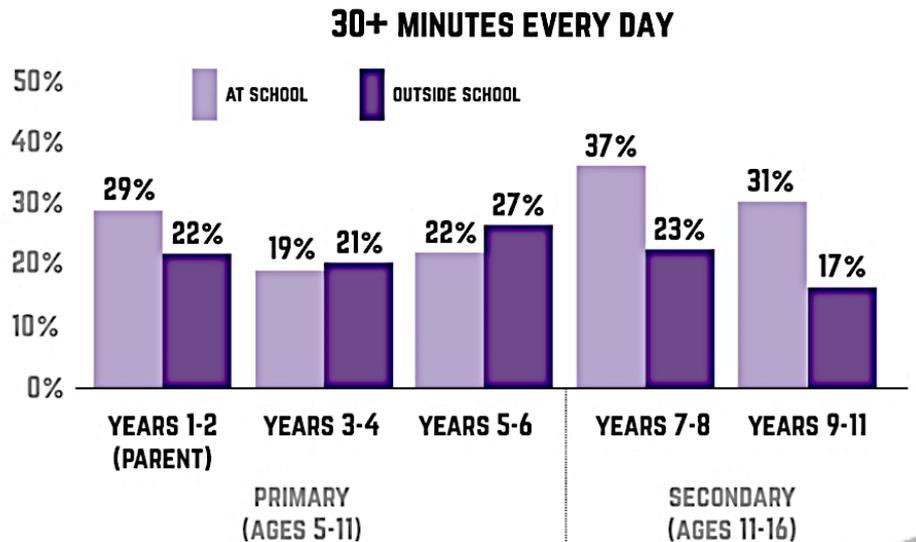


Figure 5.6 Extracted from the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2017/18 (Sport England, 2018).

The largest deviation between the primary and secondary school data was seen when the participants were asked to reflect on their regular participation in competitive sports.

Almost 20% more participants strongly agreed that they regularly participated in competitive sport while at secondary school compared with primary school. Furthermore, just over half of the participants strongly agreed with the suggestion that they regularly participated in competitive sports while at secondary school. However, in contrast, almost a quarter of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. These data further indicate that many of the participants felt strongly about their secondary school experiences and were more inclined to submit responses that lay at the extremes of the response scale.

The final quantitative questions, which relate to childhood experiences of PE and sport, invited the participants to reflect on the degree to which they believe their childhood

experiences shaped their beliefs about the teaching of PE, and their confidence to teach PE. Once again, the participants utilised the full range of responses available. However, when asked if their childhood experiences had had a negative impact on their confidence to teach PE the standard deviation, as shown in Figure 5.7 below, was at the lowest level seen across the results. Only one person strongly agreed that their childhood experiences had negatively impacted on their confidence to teach PE.

	Response range	Mode	Mean	SD
My childhood experiences have shaped my beliefs about the teaching of primary PE	1-5	2	2.4	1.20
My childhood experiences had a positive impact on my confidence to teach PE	1-5	2	2.2	1.14
My childhood experiences had a negative impact on my confidence to teach PE	1-5	5	4.1	0.99

Figure 5.7 Online Questionnaire results related to the impact of childhood PE experiences on the teaching of PE.

The results indicate that the majority of the participants felt that their childhood experiences of PE had shaped their beliefs about PE and had a positive impact on their confidence about teaching it. Furthermore, over 70% of the participants either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with the suggestion that their childhood experiences had had a negative impact on their confidence about teaching PE. Additionally, as shown in Figure 5.7 above, the standard deviation is lowest in response to the question about

whether their childhood experiences had negatively impacted on their confidence to teach PE. This indicates that the responses were closely aligned and, therefore, highly reliable.

In addition to examining their childhood experiences of PE and sport, the participants were asked to report on their current levels of physical activity, consider if physical activity is a priority for them, and state the types of activity they participate in and the barriers to participation. The reason for gathering these data is based on the recognition that schools play a significant role in providing and promoting physical activity among children and that children are more active on the days when they have PE lessons (Cheung, 2020). The place and influence of teachers in the socialisation of young people is grounded in social cognitive theory, that claims learning is acquired through observations and is notably influenced by role models (Bandura, 1977). A role model in an educational context includes the teachers, who play an important role in encouraging increased activity and motivation (Payne et al., 2003).

As illustrated in Figure 5.8 below, 65% of the participants stated that physical activity is a priority for them.

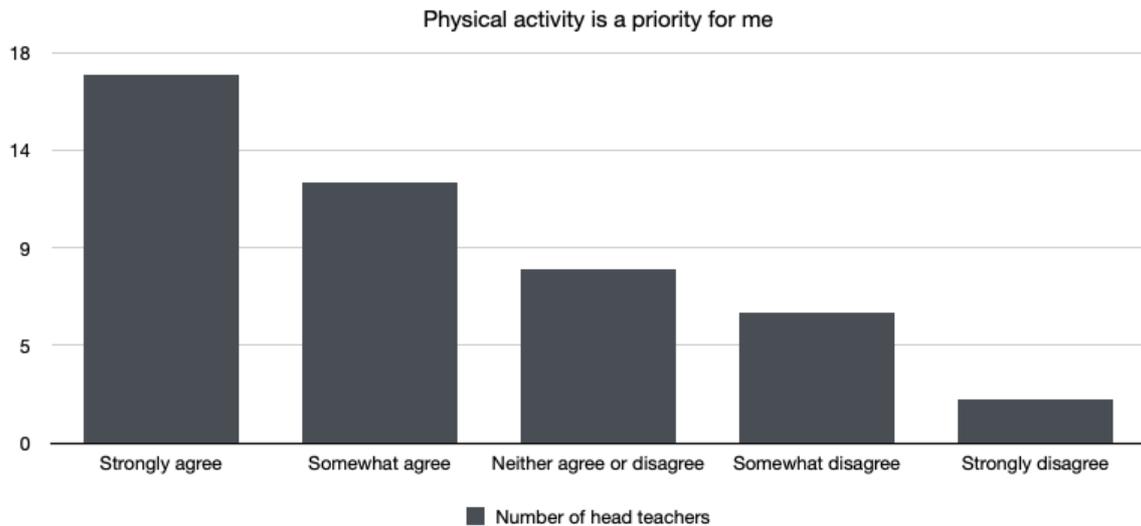


Figure 5.8 Online questionnaire results related to physical activity

This is a substantially higher response compared to the 17% of participants who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the suggestion that physical activity was a priority for them. Furthermore, it was interesting to see that 75% of the participants participate in informal activities, including walking and cycling to work, three or more times a week, while just over 50% of the participants stated that they participate in fitness activities, such as running or weight training, three or more times a week. This indicates that the majority of the participants are regularly active. This is in line with the data on adults in the city which were captured by the 2019/2020 Active Lives Survey (Sport England, 2020).

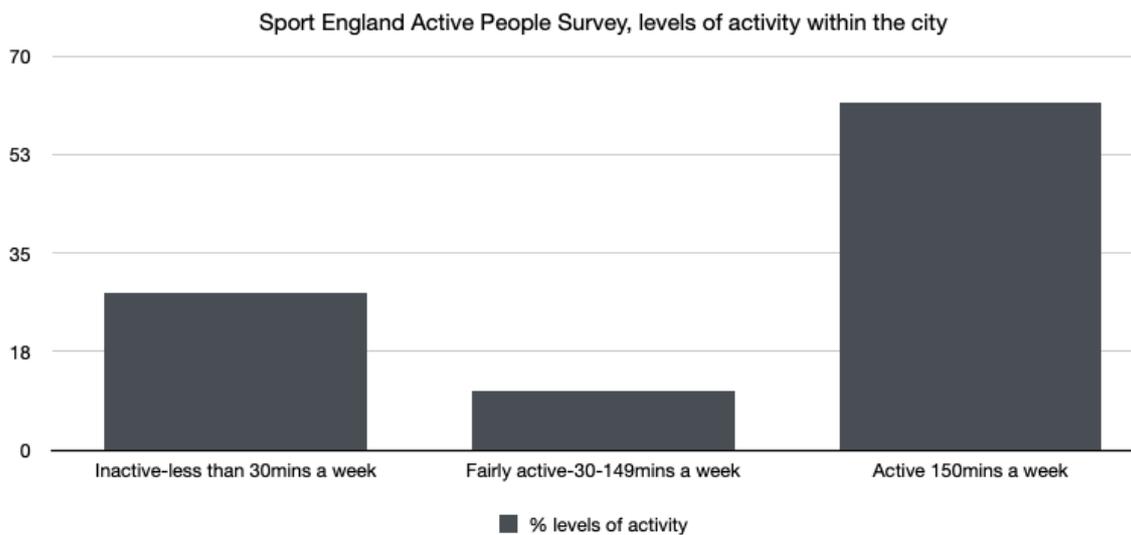


Figure 5.9 Extracted from the Sport England Active People Survey, levels of activity within the city

In terms of what motivates the participants to be active, the overwhelming majority stated that caring for their mental health was the main reason for being active. Other popular motives for being active include the health benefits, enjoyment, and spending time with others. It was unsurprising however, to see that all but two of the participants state that time was a barrier preventing them from being active and many indicated that this is as a result of work commitments.

The quantitative data collected in relation to the questions associated with personal experiences of PE and sport provided an insight into the experiences of the participants and their current personal attitudes and behaviour in relation to physical activity. These data are useful when considering both research questions, which were related to the purpose of PE and the factors that have shaped the head teachers' conceptualisations of PE.

When examining the quantitative data set, it was interesting to examine the correlation between some of the variables used to analyse the data within SPSS. Correlation shows a relationship rather than causality. Whilst these data suggest some interesting associations between the IVs, they do not indicate that one variable directly contributes to the production of another. Figure 5.10 below illustrates this point.

	Prior Personal Experience	Prior Personal Behaviour	Current Behaviour	Current Attitudes	Previous PE Training	Self-Efficacy	Prior Teaching Experience	Perceived Teacher Confidence	Perceived Teacher Skills	Policy	Subjective Norms
Prior Personal Experience	1	.865**	.347*	.569**	0.159	.674**	0.180	0.086	0.097	-0.237	0.157

Figure 5.10 Correlation between the IVs and Prior Personal Experiences.

This correlation table was quantified using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, a measure of linear association between two variables. The values range between minus one and one and, the closer the value is to one, the more positive the linear correlation. It should be noted that the correlation table does not suggest that prior personal experiences directly contribute to self-efficacy. However, the highlighted section of the matrix above shows values closest to one and, as such, is a strength of correlation between prior personal experiences of PE and the current behaviour, attitudes and self-efficacy of the participants. These data, therefore, indicate that prior personal experience is associated with self-efficacy, current attitudes, behaviour and prior personal experience.

Qualitative data

Building on the findings of the questionnaire, the interview participants were asked to share their memories of PE when they were at primary school. All but one interview participant recalled positive childhood experiences of PE. The prevailing impression of PE was that of fun, play and freedom. Daniel recalled memories of old faded t-shirts being 'doled' out and chaotically hurtling down to the fields. Daniel added:

I remember it being fun. You just enjoyed playing a nice game with your friends. Playing a random game of football with the teacher just refereeing it, no sort of structure of skills or we're going to learn this, it was just 'right lads, we're playing football, off you go' sort of thing.

This sense of PE being something that was fun and free was shared by Richard who stated, "I just preferred the freedom that's sometimes inherent in primary school PE. The opportunity to play games, obviously you're building skills, but it feels at that age like you're

playing games.” This notion was supported by Daniel who stated that, “It certainly made me enjoy sports and wanted then to do sports”.

In addition to sharing their memories of primary PE, the interview participants described their lasting impressions of what constituted primary PE. It was apparent that sport dominated many of their memories. Many of these references included elements of competition. Some of the participants recalled positive experiences, including Valerie, who stated:

I remember sports days and I remember I was always very, very sporty. The highlight of my primary years was being captain of one of the sports teams and then I was actually winning so for me that was a really vivid memory of primary school.

However, in contrast, Sarah recalled how she was “always being picked last for the team because I’m not sporty at all”. It was therefore surprising that, although Sarah did not recall positive experiences, she stated that:

I think competitive sport is still really important because I think it's important to learn to fail and I didn't fail in my academic subjects but maybe I did fail a bit in PE and that's a life lesson, isn't it?

Sarah went on to explain “I recognise that other children can be really successful in PE and why shouldn't they be successful in PE? Just because I didn't like it, I was competitive in a different way”.

Building on questions seeking to understand the lasting impressions the participants had of PE, they were asked if they felt that their personal experiences and beliefs had shaped the

way in which PE was taught in their school. It was interesting to hear the participants respond in such varied ways, in contrast to the other questions. Although Daniel believed that there was an increased need for schools to facilitate activities for children due to the more sedentary lifestyles, he felt that the way in which PE is now taught meant that the enjoyment he felt as a child was, in some way, being diminished. He explained:

It [PE] seemed like a bit of fun, everyone was having a good time, we were outside, we were doing something. Now there's more structure to it so it can be - it's less just fun for everybody, now it's another lesson within the day and there's a structure to it. Like you'd have a structure to a maths lesson or a literacy lesson, you've now got that structure to a PE lesson.

However, Valerie considered that her own experiences had shaped her beliefs about PE and how it is taught. She stated:

I think a lot of it will be personal in terms of knowing myself, how important exercise is for myself personally, also for my own children and my husband. We're quite an active family but equally, you know, my children, you know, they're not naturally active, they don't leap out of bed and want to go for a run.

Valerie added that her personal experiences were reinforced by significant moments in her teaching career:

I think it's cultural, it's personal, but I think also I think just generally from teaching over the years, just those absolutely gorgeous lightbulb moments of seeing those children. I've got just a few really vivid memories of choosing girls for a netball team who just didn't think that they would ever be in a netball team and the look of pride.

When considering the applicability of the questionnaire, it is interesting to note the ways in which it contributed to generating an understanding of the personal experiences of the

large number of head teachers who engaged with this study. It raised some interesting points which were further explored during the five interviews. The quantitative data indicated that there was a correlation between the prior personal experiences of the head teachers and their current behaviour, attitudes and self-efficacy. Moreover, the interviews assisted with the corroboration of these results whilst also articulating the diverse personal experiences of the head teachers and their beliefs about PE.

Teacher training experiences and self-efficacy

Quantitative data

The online questionnaire asked the head teachers about their teacher training journey and self-efficacy in relation to the teaching of PE. Self-efficacy is defined by Bandura (1997) as people's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over their own functioning and the events that affect their lives. Furthermore, it relates to a person's beliefs in their ability to succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1997). The questions indicating efficacy refer to teaching confidence and competence.

Figure 5.11 below illustrates that a positive correlation existed between prior personal experience, prior behaviour, current behaviour and current attitudes, and self-efficacy. The greater the correlation coefficient score, the stronger the linear relationship between the variables. The correlation between prior personal experiences and self-efficacy is the most significant and the strength of the linear relationship indicates that the participants who reported positive prior personal experiences had higher levels of self-efficacy.

Variables	Self-Efficacy
Prior Personal Experience	.674**
Prior Personal Behaviour	.534**
Current Behaviour	.391**
Current Attitudes	.597**

Figure 5.11 Correlation between personal experiences, behaviour, attitudes and self-efficacy with regards to PE.

The participants involved in this study were predominantly trained to teach via either a four-year undergraduate degree or a one-year postgraduate qualification, as shown in Figure 5.12 below. The relevance of this question was related to the amount of time available for subject-specific training. Although the amount of time allocated to specific subjects during teacher training will differ between training providers, typically, more time is available for PE training on undergraduate courses.

Participants' routes into teaching	Response count (%)
Undergraduate three-year degree	7% (3)
Undergraduate four-year degree	35% (16)
Postgraduate university led one-year programme	47% (21)
Postgraduate school led one-year programme (GTP, School Direct, SCITT)	11% (5)

Figure 5.12 The questionnaire participants' route into teaching

The participants were subsequently asked if they had specialised in PE during their initial teacher training and only three participants (6%) agreed. It was interesting that, when the

participants were asked to comment on the quality of their Initial Teacher Training in PE, their experiences varied greatly. An equal number of participants agreed with the suggestion that they were provided with high quality PE training as disagreed (eight participants in both cases). However, when combining those who 'strongly agree', 'agree' and 'somewhat agree' with those who 'strongly disagree', 'disagree' and 'somewhat disagree', it was evident that half of the participants (50%) did not feel that they were provided with high quality PE training compared with 38% of the participants who agreed. This is illustrated in Figure 5.13 below.

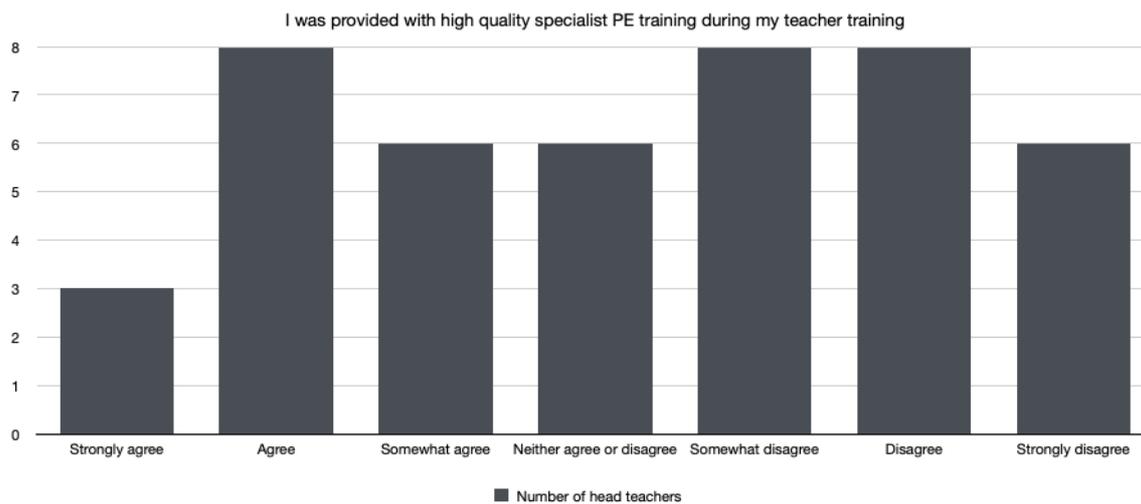


Figure 5.13 I was provided with high quality specialist PE training during my teacher training

It is interesting to note that 89% of the participants had an opportunity to teach PE during their teacher training. This is substantially higher than the figures presented in an article published in 2020 (Randall & Griggs, 2020), which stated that 48% of the 1,194 primary Initial Teacher Training participants involved in a study in 2019 had no opportunity to teach PE.

Whilst the opinion on the quality of the PE training was divided, the majority of the participants felt their teacher training positively impacted on their confidence and competence to teach PE. It was, therefore, surprising that, when asked if the participants felt adequately prepared to teach PE following their teacher training, the results were again varied and disparate, as illustrated in Figure 5.14 below.

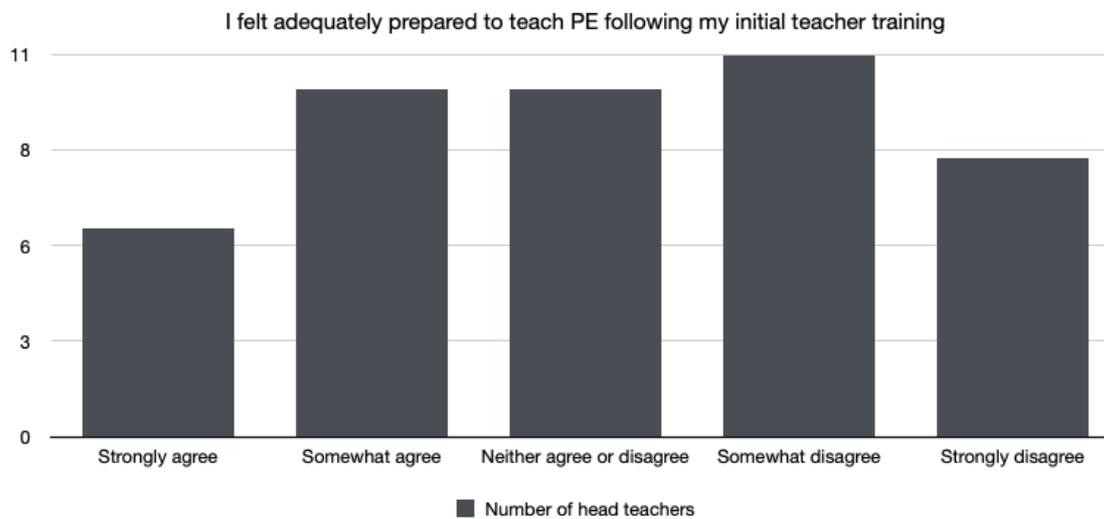


Figure 5.14 I felt adequately prepared to teach PE following my initial teacher training

Although the responses related to the initial teacher training were mixed, there was a positive correlation between those who felt adequately prepared to teach PE with those who had positive prior teaching experience. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 5.15 below, there is a positive correlation between head teachers who felt adequately prepared to teach PE and those who have generalist classroom teachers teaching the majority of PE lessons in their school.

	Previous PE Training	Prior Teaching Experience
Q35 The majority of PE lessons are taught by qualified generalist primary school teachers in my school	.386*	.376*

Figure 5.15 Correlation between PE lessons taught by generalist teachers with head teacher PE training and experience.

Once qualified and teaching in schools, over 90% of the participants indicated that they regularly taught PE and 86% stated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the suggestion that they enjoyed teaching PE in their first few years of teaching. Furthermore, almost half of the participants described themselves as confident teachers of PE and 60% stated that their expectations regarding teaching and learning in PE were in line with other curriculum areas.

Qualitative data

Building on the quantitative data gathered in relation to the head teacher training experiences and self-efficacy, the interview participants were questioned about their initial teacher training experience and experiences of teaching PE prior to becoming a head teacher.

All of the participants agreed that their initial teacher training experiences were limited in terms of the time dedicated to the teaching of PE. This may be due to the fact that four of the participants followed the one-year postgraduate teacher training route. Whilst Sam completed a two-year Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), a school-based route into teaching, this typically included a similar number of PE training days to a one-year

postgraduate award. Sam stated, "I think training on the GTP was very, very limited in terms of PE. I remember doing a day or a half-day possibly somewhere in a gym. I think we were meant to do three half-days, at least one of them was cancelled".

Although the time spent training to teach PE was limited, Valerie and Sarah both felt their training was 'pretty good'. Valerie, who trained as a teacher 23 years ago, said she could not remember receiving a lot of PE training. However, she does recall, "it being really effective, I just think there wasn't enough of it, but I guess that is just the nature of the beast, particularly with primary". Sarah, who trained to teach ten years ago, stated "I remember having fun doing our PE sessions at college. I think we had quite a good teacher who emphasised the importance of PE. I think we had such fun in it".

In contrast to Valerie and Sarah, Richard and Sam, who have both been in headship roles for just over a year, felt their initial teacher training experience did little to prepare them for teaching. Richard stated that:

the training around PE on the PGCE was limited, very limited, I don't think there was much exposure to it. I remember watching a video on how not to teach a PE lesson which was somebody wearing high heels and a skirt and children hanging off equipment quite dangerously and I remember teaching a lesson on placement that very much resembled that and thinking oh my god, that's the lesson they told us not to teach.

Additionally, Sam stated that he "felt fairly well equipped to teach games because I'd played games" and added that he felt teachers were not adequately skilled to teach PE "unless they've got a background in some sort of physical activities themselves". Furthermore, Sam

said that “depending on where you train and what ... the level of training you will have had will differ greatly”. Sam went on to describe one occasion when he was being observed during his teacher training and delivered what he felt was ‘a bog standard’ lesson. He said it “wasn't a brilliant lesson by any stretch of the imagination’ but because the lesson was well managed, and the children were active and under control, it was deemed a success”.

The participants were asked about their experiences of teaching PE as a generalist teacher. Daniel stated that, “I think the development of me as a PE teacher very much happened once, I started teaching. I don't think the PGCE was particularly good at preparing me for that”. This was a view shared by most of the interview participants, including Valerie, who said, “you don't get hours and hours of training at university. It can be very much learning on the job”.

All of the participants recalled enjoying teaching PE. Sarah credited this to having good schemes of work and said, “the scheme was very easy to teach from and I really enjoyed teaching it and the children really enjoyed it so then that felt very positive to me”.

Additionally, Daniel said he benefited from working alongside a secondary PE specialist who, “would run PE lessons with you so you had kind of like an extra pair of hands and you were seeing how it could be done really well. You didn't necessarily have to do a lot”.

Interestingly, 44% of the questionnaire participants attended additional PE training once teaching.

Overall, the results of both data sets indicated that the interview participants felt that the amount of initial teacher training in PE they were offered was limited and the quality of

their training varied between the participants. Additionally, over half of the questionnaire participants did not feel their initial teacher training adequately prepared them to teach PE. However, the majority of the questionnaire participants indicated that they had opportunities to teach PE during their teacher training and several of the interview participants felt that it was as a result of learning on the job that they developed confidence and efficacy. Moreover, the majority of the participants considered themselves to be competent teachers of PE and were thus confident to have generalist classroom teachers teaching the majority of PE lessons in their school.

Current Professional Practice

The following data set relates to the head teachers' perceived efficacy of the teaching staff and how PE is currently being taught, as well as the participants' views on the purpose of PE.

Quantitative data

The participants were asked to select five comments that best reflected their views about the purpose and benefits of PE. The options included that it develops movement competence, impacts on academic attainment, encourages attendance and serves as a tool for whole school improvement. The following comments are listed in order of popularity among the participants:

1. Develops stamina, strength, and fitness
2. Develops opportunities for pupils to become physically confident
3. Promotes healthy lifestyles
4. Supports mental and emotional health
5. Builds character and resilience

These results highlight head teachers' beliefs about PE and clearly indicates that the participants place emphasis on health within PE. Within this, there is an indication they believe PE has a role to play in engaging children in health-focused activity, addressing perceived health-related issues and educating children about the health benefits of physical activity.

The participants were offered an opportunity to share their comments regarding their personal beliefs about PE and/or the PE practice in schools. Of the 13 participants who responded, the majority of the comments highlighted the importance of PE within the curriculum and the role of effective leadership. Participant comments listed below highlight the relationship between head teacher beliefs about PE and practices and in particular the importance of school leaders in championing PE:

- PE, like any subject, needs to be valued by the senior leaders and continually promoted.
- I highly value PE and try to lead by example - I do think the expectations of PE have to come from the school leadership - it needs to be embraced and supported.
- As someone who grew up playing a lot of sport and continues to lead an active lifestyle, I understand and have experienced the benefits and want the same for the children at the school.
- I think PE has the ability to do so much for communities and should play an integral part in any school curriculum.

Additionally, some of the participants commented on the challenges they face in relation to practice, including teacher confidence and appropriate professional development. Two participants emphasised the need for PE specialists. One stated, "I believe that subjects such

as PE should be taught by specialists with skills, knowledge and passion for the subject” while another revealed that they have appointed a PE specialist in every school where they have been the head teacher.

Figure 5.16 below summarises the responses with respect to who teaches PE in the participants’ schools. It illustrates that the majority of PE lessons are taught by generalist primary school teachers in the participants’ schools.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The majority of PE lessons are taught by qualified generalist primary school teachers in my school	60%	14%	5%	7%	14%
The majority of PE lessons in my school are taught by a qualified specialist PE teacher with QTS	7%	12%	12%	19%	50%
The majority of PE lessons in my school are taught by an external provider without QTS	7%	0%	5%	19%	69%

Figure 5.16 Who teaches PE in primary schools?

It is evident from figure 5.17 below why some of the participants choose to employ external staff without Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Of those who employ an external provider without QTS, they cite doing so due to cost and expertise issues. The additional reasons cited for employing external providers included ‘a way of saving on covering PPA whilst having sports expertise to deliver the subject’ and ‘to provide CPD for teachers.

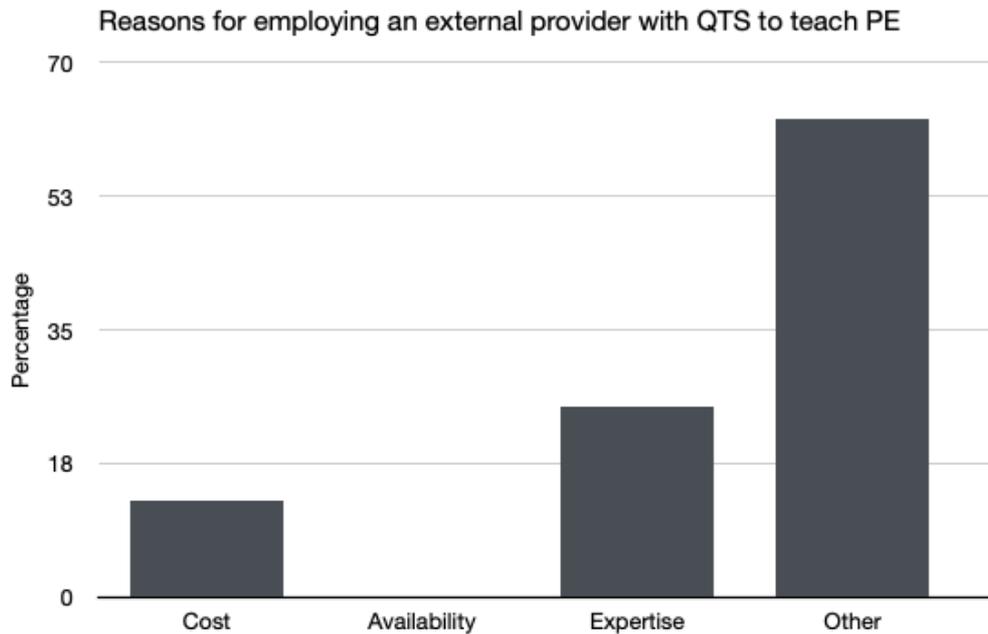


Figure 5.17 Reasons for employing an external provider with QTS to teach PE.

When specifically asked about the reasons for employing a PE specialist, the responses varied. Thirty-one percent of the participants stated the reason for doing so was a result of teachers' low confidence about teaching PE. This was surprising, as 74% of the participants also stated that the majority of teachers in their school are confident about teaching PE and 76% that the majority of the teachers in their school have the skills to teach PE competently. Furthermore, when asked if PE specialists were employed to provide additional capacity for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA), 45% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed.

Interestingly, when asked to select the five most significant factors that influence the delivery of PE, the most popular reasons were time, space, PE and Sport Premium funding, equipment and teacher confidence (Figure 5.18). The cost of PPA was not ranked highly

within the reasons cited. This could infer that, whilst PE specialists are frequently used (45%) to provide additional capacity for PPA, the cost of PE specialists (if used for PPA cover) does not influence the delivery of PE. It could also be a consequence of the availability and comparatively low cost of employing coaches over teachers.

Factors influencing delivery of PE	Percentage %
Time available within the curriculum	16%
PE equipment	11%
The cost of PPA cover	2%
Space-both indoor and out	16%
Teacher confidence	10%
Behaviour	3%
Inclusive practice	7%
Teacher competence	11%
Links with community sports organisations including school sports partnerships	7%
PE and School Sport Premium funding	11%
National policy such as the obesity strategy	5%

Figure 5.18 Factors that influence the delivery of PE.

Qualitative data

The participants were asked to comment on the efficacy of the teaching staff and how PE is currently being taught in schools. Their responses varied, particularly in relation to how PE is taught, and the staff involved in the teaching of PE. Daniel referred to the appointment of a sports apprentice, who is “allocated out to everyone's PE lessons and helps to run them and means that you can focus on the teaching side of it”. This decision was influenced by Daniel’s experiences of working alongside a PE specialist as a newly qualified teacher. He felt that, by appointing an apprentice, teachers could focus on teaching and maximise the time in the PE lessons without the challenge of organising the lesson. Daniel believed this was a more sustainable way of using the PE and Sport Premium over the employment of

external coaches. He stated that “the trouble with that (employing external coaches) is if that money stops and those people can't come in anymore, those skills have gone”.

A more blended approach to teaching PE was highlighted by Valerie, who stated that, whilst class teachers taught some PE lessons, an HLTA taught others. She remarked:

our HLTA PE specialist normally teaches the games, athletics and then the class teachers teach the gymnastics or the dance. Traditionally, that's how it works but with Covid most teachers at the moment are teaching both PE lessons because not every class can access the PPA teacher at the moment because of the way things are.

Valerie went on to comment that, as a consequence of changes to practice during Covid, “they (teachers) absolutely prefer it and I don't think we will go back to the system we had previously so that will mean that there's a need even more so for all of our teachers to be strong at teaching all of the elements of PE”. Valerie added “I think one of our biggest challenges is around staff subject knowledge and confidence and being able to deliver really high-quality lessons”.

In line with Valerie's view that staff efficacy was a challenge, Sam explained how he uses one coach to support the planning, monitoring and teaching of PE. He stated:

she [the coach] would spend the morning (prior to Covid) being PE coordinator if you like, arranging competitions and looking at CPD and things and then during the afternoons she would work with a teacher, work with the kids and that might be planning lessons, that might be team teaching, that might be observing.

He went on to explain how “the kids think she's a teacher and unfortunately she's been that effective that she's off to do her teacher training in September, so we have to recruit”. Sam added that this provision has:

been really effective in improving teachers' subject knowledge and ability to teach because there has been very little training (Initial Teacher Training) and if you've not got a particular sporting background you can look at as many lesson plans as you like but it's not going to help you that much, whereas Elly would sit down with the other teacher before the unit of work and plan it as if it was an English unit.

Sarah has also recruited a full-time PE specialist without QTS to support the teaching of PE. However, she consciously decided that the teachers needed to be involved in the teaching of some PE lessons. She explained:

When you're the class teacher and you teach PE lessons you see your class in a different light. You see different strengths and abilities and you can have that fun but sometimes you can't have so much in class, so I think it's really important that (PE Specialist) does one lesson but the class teacher does the other and I'd like to get some of (PE Specialist) fitness and high intensity workouts into the class teachers as well.

Interestingly, Richard is the only participant who does not employ an additional workforce to deliver or support PE. He recognised that “many teachers feel confident teaching PE so there's been an awareness that we need to invest a bit of a time and a bit of money in professional development for staff”.

In summary, the data analysed based on the qualitative and quantitative responses identified the amount of time available within the curriculum for the teaching of PE was the most prominent factor influencing how PE is taught. Whilst the majority of primary teachers in the participants' schools are, in some way, involved in the teaching of PE, an external coaching workforce is regularly used to enhance the capacity for PPA and support the

teaching, organisation, and planning of lessons. This is due to the fact that many of the interview participants felt that the degree of self-efficacy amongst the teaching staff was low and the external workforce provided effective professional development for teachers.

Contextual Factors

In addressing the two research questions, both the internal and external factors that influence the teaching of PE were examined.

Quantitative data

The questionnaire asked the participants to consider the internal and external factors that influence the teaching of PE, including the national policy, parents and caregivers, and the impact of Covid-19. Over two thirds of the participants strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the national policy influences how and what is taught in their school, for example the PE and Sport Premium and the Obesity Strategy, in comparison to the influence of the Ofsted framework. See Figures 5.19 and 5.20 below.

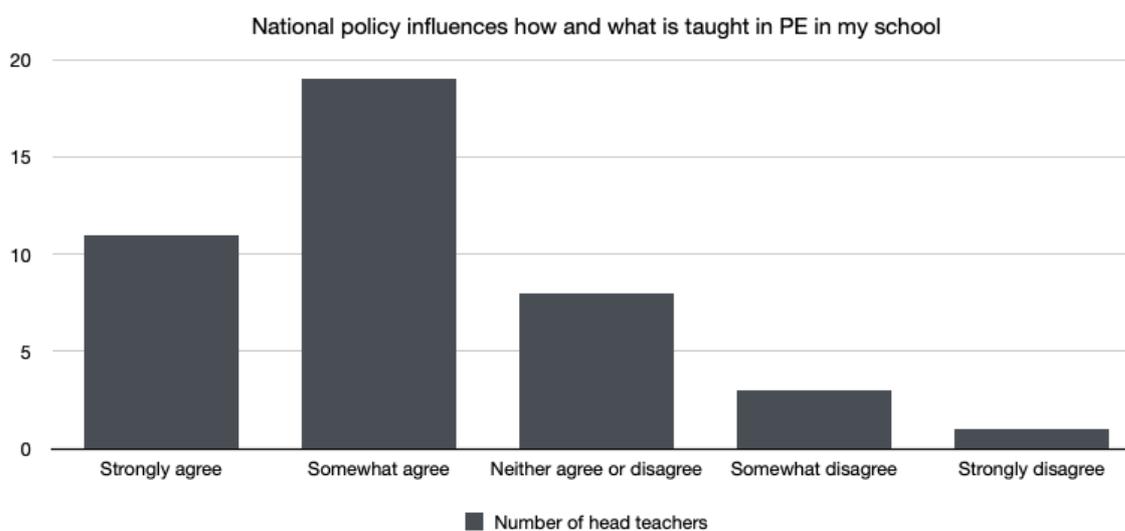


Figure 5.19 National policy influences how and what is taught in my school

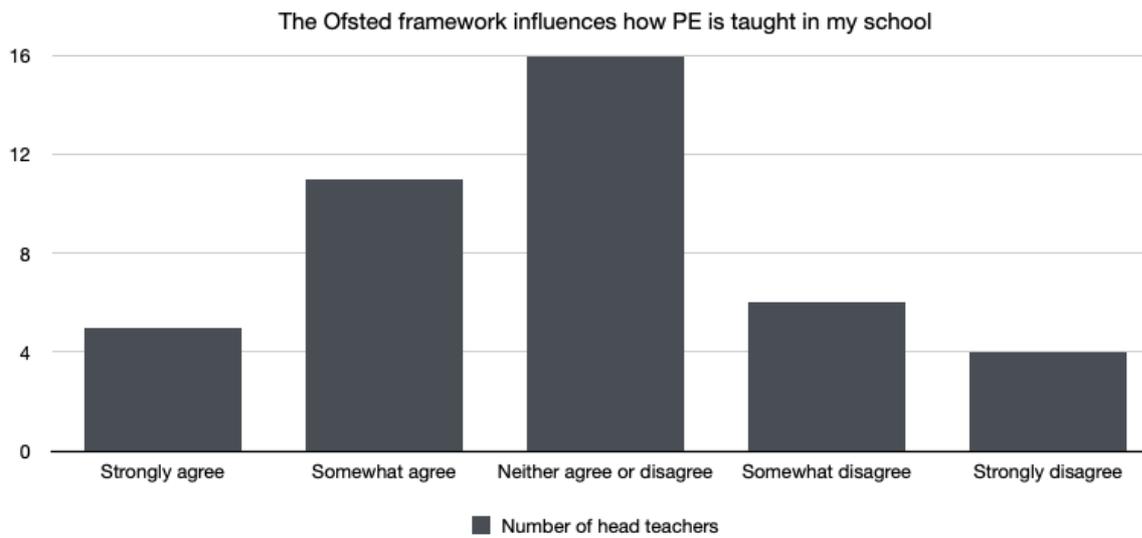


Figure 5.20 The Ofsted framework influences how PE is taught in my school

When asked if the majority of the parents and caregivers value PE within the curriculum, the results were positive, indicating that the parents believe PE is an important area of the curriculum. These results (Figure 5.21) were echoed by the participants when asked if the majority of parents and caregivers value competitive sport.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The majority of parents/caregivers in my school value PE within the curriculum	36%	45%	17%	2%	0
The majority of parents/caregivers in my school value competitive sport	24%	48%	24%	5%	0

Figure 5.21 Parents' and caregivers' evaluation of PE and competitive sport

Since the Covid-19 pandemic was impacting on society and schools in England during the period when the participants were responding to the questionnaire, it was relevant to ask them to report on the ways in which the pandemic was impacting on the teaching of PE. Although they reported that the curriculum had been reduced because of Covid 19 (Figure 5.22), the time dedicated to PE was not reduced. In addition, 35% of the participants commented that the amount of time dedicated to PE and physical activity in the school day had increased (Figure 5.23). This suggests that the participant's felt PE was particularly valuable during the time when health was at the forefront of our minds and a prioritised area of the curriculum.

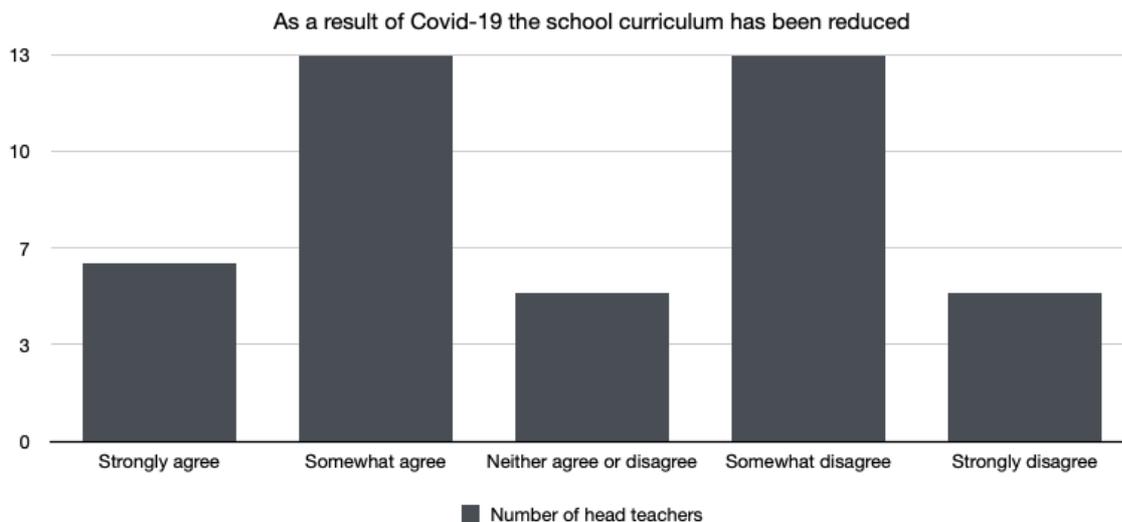


Figure 5.22 As a result of Covid-19, the school curriculum has been reduced

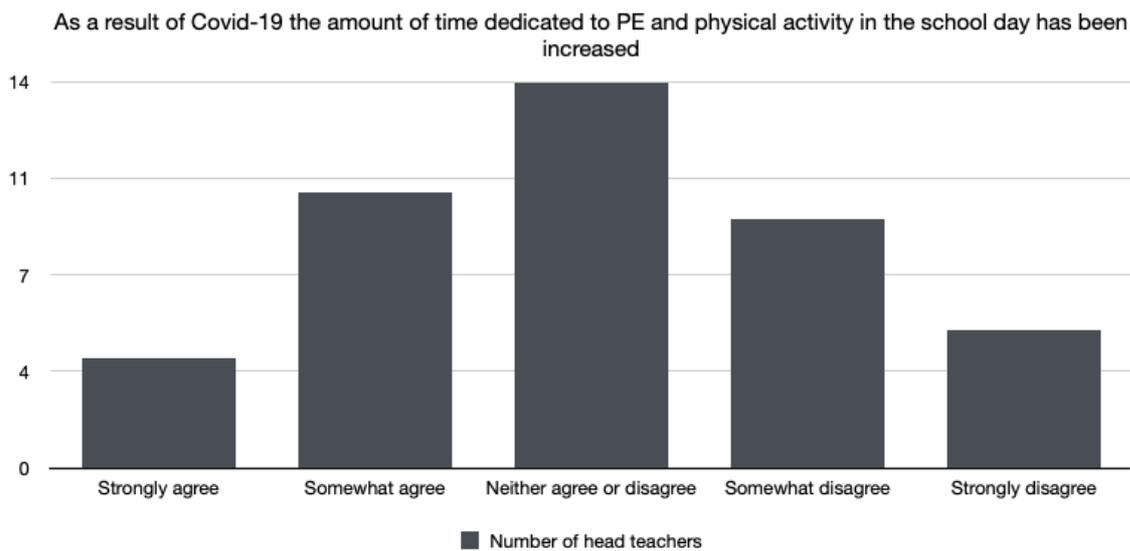


Figure 5.23 As a result of Covid-19, the amount of time dedicated to PE and physical activity in the day has increased

Qualitative data

The interview participants were asked to discuss the factors that influenced how PE is taught in schools. The responses were wide-ranging and included the PE and Sport Premium, parental expectations, Ofsted, and concerns about children’s health. Daniel, the most experienced head teacher, said, “we’re mindful of Ofsted and all of that but we try not to let it drive everything we do”. He went on to say that, as a head teacher, you have an opportunity to ‘steer’ things and commented “if you’re doing what you’re doing for the best reasons, and you know what that rationale is then there shouldn’t be a problem, but that freedom certainly does exist”. He emphasised the fact that, as a head teacher, “it’s about serving this community and making sure that we’re giving this community the best experience that we can in school and sport is part of that”.

Valerie, who is based in an urban school graded one by Ofsted, specifically commented on the impact of the PE and Sport Premium. She said, "I think the positive of the sports premium money is that we have a direct, if you like, external pair of eyes that is regularly reviewing that subject and our developments in that subject which we don't have with any other foundation subject in school". Valerie added, "I think the more you've got an external pair of eyes looking at a subject or an area of your school it's only healthy, as long as it's realistic and it's based on good practice and good research".

In agreement with Valerie, Sarah, who is the head teacher at a small rural school, also felt that the PE and Sport Premium had impacted on her school. She said, "I think we probably wouldn't have had as much focus on sport and PE as we've had because of sports premium". She stated that they "spend most of our sports premium money on enabling the children to go out to places, on getting coaches in" and "I think it forces school to demonstrate impact and it makes you consider what you're doing and why and not, let's just keep on doing what we've been doing for years and years".

At the time of the interview, Richard had been in his first post as head teacher for just over a year. He said he did not believe that his "fundamental core values around PE have changed" but did feel he was now in a position to influence change. He felt PE was a big part of the school's identity but there was a lot that needed to change. PE was one of eight curriculum areas that were being developed in the school. He discussed the influence of Ofsted and said he had seen a shift within the inspection framework towards a greater focus on "the wider curriculum and for the first time since I've been a teacher, I think my view's very much mesh with Ofsted's which is not something you can always say is it? You know,

they're emphasising the breadth of the curriculum and the quality across all (aspects of) the curriculum being really important, so I think I agree with that, and I think that's what we're trying to do at our school". Richard added that he believed Ofsted were now focused on progression and, as a result, were focusing on developing knowledge and skills, year on year.

Sam's views supported those of Richard. He considers that the new Ofsted inspection framework is a step in the right direction. Sam explained "we're the one school in our local area that's RI (Requires Improvement) so we've got (schools) down the road that are outstanding and ... If you're a parent in the local area and you see that, you send your kids to the other schools which is why we end up in the situation with 50 kids short and £250,000 out of the budget. So, it's essential that we get a good Ofsted judgement and although the framework has changed 18 months ago and it's a lot more about a broad and balanced curriculum, we've got to get the results".

In summary, whilst the data analysed from the qualitative and quantitative responses identified that a range of internal and external factors influence the teaching of PE, it was evident from the qualitative data that the school context and inspection outcomes have an impact on PE practices but did not impact on head teacher beliefs. Whilst figure 5.20 reveals that the Ofsted framework influences what is taught in school both Sam and Richard's comments regarding Ofsted inspections indicates that they have established beliefs about the valuable contribution of a broad and balanced curriculum. The participants agreed that there was a shift in inspection emphasis towards personal development and a broad, rich curriculum, which they felt had a positive impact on the teaching of PE, along

Central to the mind map are the two research questions, the four main themes being identified in blue and the subthemes in green. The key findings that have been raised in this chapter, marked in yellow, will be considered in the discussion chapter. Finally, the three stages of socialisation used to discuss the results are identified in orange.

Chapter Six: Discussion

This chapter presents an interpretation of the results of this mixed method research and considers how the results address the research questions, related to the wider literature on the field. In so doing, it serves as preparation for the concluding chapter, which explores what can be learnt from this study and what further research might be valuable in the future.

Given that the aim of this research was to investigate primary school head teachers' beliefs about PE, as Pajares (1992:307) noted, attention needs to be paid to their beliefs due to the role these can play in informing educational practice. The value of this research lies in the fact that it addresses a gap in the literature, given that, currently, as noted in the literature review chapter, research relating to the extent to which head teachers' beliefs influence PE is limited (George & Curtner-Smith, 2017). Moreover, as previously explained, this is a critical period for the positioning and development of PE, whereby a careful, objective evaluation is required if PE is going to secure its place in the primary curriculum and be regarded as educative. Hence, this research serves to develop a meaningful understanding of the factors that have shaped the head teachers' beliefs in relation to PE and, in doing so, addresses the following questions:

- **Research question one:** What do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools?
- **Research question two:** What factors have shaped head teachers' conceptualisations of PE?

In seeking answers to these questions, a constructivist approach to the research was adopted (as discussed in Chapter Three) in order to understand the relationship between the head teachers' personal experiences and beliefs, and the role these play in conceptualising PE in primary schools. This stance recognises that humans shape meaning based on their own experiences, connecting previous experiences and knowledge to new concepts, thus further highlighting Bourdieu's (1977) belief in the relational nature of social structures and practice, and what Lawson (1983:4) describes as a 'tug of war' between institutions and people. It was, therefore, important to develop an understanding of the contextual features, such as teacher training experiences and educational policy, to consider the impact these may have had on the head teachers' conceptualisations of PE.

To answer the research questions, four main themes were used to identify the factors that influence the primary head teachers' beliefs and conceptualisations of PE. Whilst Chapter Five examined the data in relation to these themes and sub-themes (Figure 6.1), this chapter consolidates and discusses the findings to address the two research questions.

Theme	Subtheme
Personal experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Childhood experiences ● Current personal experiences
Teacher training experiences and self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initial teacher training ● Self-efficacy
Contextual factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal factors ● External factors
Current professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How PE is taught ● Perceived efficacy of staff

Figure 6.1 Themes used to identify the factors that influence the primary head teachers' beliefs and conceptualisations of PE.

Research question one: What do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools?

This question ‘what do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools’ was designed to establish the head teachers’ personal beliefs about PE and the purpose of PE within the curriculum. Developing an understanding of the head teachers’ beliefs about PE and their views with respect to its purpose and potential within the curriculum is essential in securing a place for PE within the curriculum. Without this understanding, it is argued that the educational credential of PE is vulnerable to the effects of neoliberal policies, such as outsourcing, each of which are dominating the educational settings across the world (Jess et al., 2021).

The following sections discuss the key themes that were identified by the research participants in relation to the purpose of PE, namely:

- the importance of health and wellbeing
- the development of resilience
- the importance of inclusive, fun activity
- the development of meaningful PE

Additionally, the key themes are discussed that impact on what and how PE is taught. These are:

- how policy influences who teaches PE,
- how policy influences what is taught in PE and
- how who teaches PE impacts on what is taught in PE

The place of PE within the curriculum

It is argued that PE is becoming a more complex and congested area of the curriculum due to the shifting agendas and wide-ranging claims about its potential. This, it is claimed, is as a result of governments increased neoliberal campaigns that are making the outsourcing of PE commonplace and open to stakeholders from the fields of health, wellbeing, and sport (Jess et al., 2021). Physical education has, for a long time, been perceived as a subject focused almost entirely on the physical domain, which is understandable when considering PE's origins in drill exercises and gymnastics. However, this narrow perspective has endured. As a result, PE has been marginalised and seen to be subordinate in comparison to core subjects such as English and maths.

The competing demands and perceptions about the importance of PE have been felt both internationally and within England, with many schools viewing PE as a break from the real learning which takes place in the classroom (Richards et al., 2018; Pickup & Price, 2007). In recent times, PE has benefitted from unprecedented levels of funding, associated with a policy that claims PE has a vital role to play in supporting the broader educational objectives, including cognitive functioning, social development and psychological health. As a consequence of investment by numerous policy stakeholders, the position of PE within the curriculum has been described as precarious, not based on its inherent value but on the way in which the curriculum in general has been conceptualised (Bailey, 2018). Thus, PE has been described as an ambiguous subject that has become increasingly disconnected from the primary curriculum (Carse et al., 2018). Therefore, it is imperative that head teachers not only have an understanding of the unique contribution and educational value of PE but are able to clearly articulate it to teaching staff.

Healthifying PE

It was evident in the responses to the online questionnaire that the head teachers fundamentally felt the purpose of PE was to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of children. The development of stamina, strength and fitness was ranked highest amongst the suggested outcomes on the questionnaire, and this view was supported by all of the interview participants, including Valerie, who stated “I think first of all, it's about physical health, it's about making sure that children are physically active and obviously the health benefits that go with that, whether that be physical or mental”. Additionally, Sam stated that the purpose of PE was “getting the children to enjoy being physically active and to get better at being physically active will be a big one”.

Health has been advocated globally as an objective of PE and schools have been encouraged to fulfil a health promotion role, promoting an active lifestyle (World Health Organisation, 2018). Furthermore, this perspective was recently reinforced by a national subject association journal article, that called for PE to become a Core Subject in the National Curriculum (Harris, 2018:8). The article claimed that making PE a core subject “would stimulate significant health and educational attainment benefits, lead to improved physical mental and personal wellbeing of children, develop essential life skills and contribute to whole school improvements” (Harris, 2018:10). Whilst there is limited evidence to suggest that PE positively impacts on academic outcomes, it has been found that the physical activity levels are higher in high performing schools. However, these findings should be accepted with caution, as few robust studies have been undertaken in this area and it is widely acknowledged that multiple factors contribute to school performance. It is important

that assumptions about health are considered, since the role of PE in promoting health and physical activity is widely accepted (Fairclough & Stratton, 2005).

In most Western PE settings, health is connected to aerobic capacity, fitness, body weight and the number of steps taken each day. For example, targets such as walking 10,000 steps a day (originating from the marketing of a fitness device in 1965) have become commonly accepted health targets, even though little evidence suggests there are benefits of walking more than 7,500 steps a day (Bottoms, 2021). This is an example of how morally normative notions of health and fitness (such as the ideal body shape and the assumptions about obesity) persist, in spite of robust evidence to support this claim. Quennerstedt (2019a) suggests that a different notion of health in PE needs to be created in order to move away from preventing or avoiding risks towards children forming positive dispositions about themselves and their bodies. Moreover, it is argued that if health is something that students can learn, they can also learn about things that prevent health development, for example 'I am clumsy', 'that I am fat' (Quennerstedt, 2019a:7). The ambition, therefore, for PE, should be to create the conditions that inspire positive health practices and, in addition, view health as something we work towards rather than something that has an end point that can be achieved, such as a healthy weight or the ability to run a mile a day. However, it was noted by Howells (2021) it is quite possible that primary and early years teachers do not fully understand the importance of PE in developing children's confidence and skills to be physically active. Therefore, head teachers have a vital role to play in championing a school culture that models positive health practices in all areas of school life and inspires children to move in a range of ways.

Resilience

In addition to the development of physical health, Valerie also stated that the purpose of PE was to develop resilience. Resilience scored highly with the interview participants, indicating it was valued, along with the building of character. This was echoed by Sarah, who said “I think building resilience is a really key thing for me across all aspects of the curriculum and PE has a part to play in that”. The concept of resilience refers to evidence that suggests some individuals have relatively good outcomes despite their exposure to stressors (Tudor et al., 2020). A somewhat extreme but not altogether unfamiliar example of this includes lessons that are described by Larsson and Karlefors (2015), as ‘PE lessons that look-like physical training’. During these lessons, children participate in vigorous physical activity that is aimed at pushing children to the point of exhaustion, whilst often being cheered on by their teachers to try harder. These lessons look like classes one would expect to see a fitness coach lead, which might be what led Sarah to decide to appoint a fitness coach as an HLTA to teach PE. She stated, “I’ve now got that HLTA who’s come in and he’s really keen to improve the quality of the PE lessons and also to improve the fitness”.

Although, as of yet, there is no research on resilience and the role it plays in creating positive outcomes such as student motivation and wellbeing, there is evidence to suggest that children experiencing daily stressors, such as disagreements with their peers or teachers, have poor concentration and performance in school (Torres et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, there are academics in the field who call for PE to move beyond what is perceived as ‘fun’ in order to remove the negative perception around the educational worth of PE (Ferkel et al., 2017). Moreover, Ferkel et al. (2017) state that the “Physical Education classroom is an ideal setting to foster a challenging and engaging environment that can help

develop the skills, knowledge, fitness, mental resilience and self-confidence to succeed”.

The authors go on to assert that physical work is required to build mental toughness and that, although the shift from fun to challenges might momentarily push children out of their comfort zone and impinge on their enjoyment, it would provide a learning opportunity needed in life. It is however important that head teachers carefully consider the ways in which challenge is facilitated across the curriculum, not just in PE, in order to ensure it is done so in a way that is educative and avoids children feeling exposed.

Inclusive and fun

Fun and enjoyment are recurring themes in the PE research, since it is important when reflecting on these perspectives to ensure that fun is not trivialised and considered at odds with the educational ideal of PE (Dismore & Bailey, 2011). An understanding of children’s motivations and attitudes towards PE is essential in order to develop positive attitudes about being physically active and encourage children to value an active lifestyle (Dismore & Bailey, 2011). Fun and enjoyment are, therefore, important considerations when designing appropriate, inclusive PE lessons. Moreover, research conducted by Beni et al. (2017), showed that students found PE meaningful when the activities are fun and entertaining. This was also evident in this research, as reflected by the comments made by head teachers Daniel and Richard. Daniel commented “I don't recall any sense of there being whether you were good, it was just inclusive. This sentiment was reiterated by Richard who said, “I just preferred the freedom that's sometimes inherent in primary school PE”.

Furthermore, when reflecting on the purpose of PE, Richard remarked “inclusion would be at the core of it because I think PE offers such a wide range of benefits”. If the purpose of PE

is, as Richard describes, to develop positive attitudes and inclusive practice, then the creation of learning environments that promote personal meaning and positive attitudes is essential. Identifying ways in which to foster positive attitudes towards PE is complex, as numerous variables and factors impact on children's enjoyment. Research suggests that fun is achieved through the mastery of movement and the personal satisfaction achieved through undertaking appropriate challenges (Wright, 2004). The pursuit of fun is also described as fundamental to the achievement of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992). Flow is a term used to describe the state of joy felt when involved in an activity that inspires creativity and provides an intrinsic reward. In pursuit of flow, the level of challenge needs to be carefully managed in order to create satisfaction and avoid the potential for anxiety if the challenge is too great, or boredom if the challenge is insufficient and the opportunities to be creative are limited (Dismore & Bailey, 2011). It is, therefore, evident that creating a learning environment that promotes meaning is fundamental in order to create PE lessons that impact on children's attitudes and motivation to be physically active. This, I argue, is only possible through effective pedagogy and an understanding of children's needs.

Meaningful PE

The development and prioritisation of experiences of PE that are personally significant for learners is essential in order to encourage lifelong participation in physical activity. Beni et al. (2017) claim that developing PE lessons that provide meaning for students means they are more likely to understand how participation impacts on their quality of life. Central to the idea of meaningful PE is the student-centred pedagogy. This is something that Daniel touched on when discussing the curriculum. He stated "I think what we always try and do is what's best for the kids, that's the first and foremost thing. We tend to either buy things and

adapt them or often just generate things ourselves because we know the children and feel we know what works". This demonstrates how, at Daniel's school, there is an acute awareness of the importance of designing a curriculum based on personally relevant learning experiences and an understanding of children's culture and community values. Rather than designing a curriculum solely based on the achievement of learning objectives, that can often feel disjointed, importance is placed on the value of designing a curriculum that is personally relevant. It is suggested that an activist approach to teaching PE is an effective method that involves children in the curriculum design process, through which children develop a sense of agency. As a result, finding meaning in PE becomes a priority rather than a possible outcome (Beni et al., 2021). However, this presents challenges for schools that outsource the teaching of PE or have staff with low levels of self-efficacy and subject knowledge. Whilst it is not impossible for external providers to create meaningful experiences, fundamental to this concept is a knowledge of the class, a student-centred pedagogy, and the motivation to plan lessons that reflect the motivations of individual groups of children. This will present challenges for outsourced providers of PE, who are typically only paid for the time they spend with the children.

Outsourcing PE

If knowing children is central to the development of meaningful PE, this raises questions about the impact on their education as a consequence of the outsourcing to adults other than teachers within the curriculum. As explored in Chapter Two, over the past 40 years, the outsourcing of PE has become increasingly commonplace in primary schools. This study set out to develop an understanding of head teachers' beliefs about PE and factors that have shaped their conceptualisation of the subject. Through examination of some of the factors

that have influenced head teacher's beliefs and conceptualisation of PE, it was evident that concerns about children's health, contextual factors such as teacher release and perceived efficacy of staff, were serving to normalise outsourcing in PE. Consequently, it is argued that the educational credentials of PE are compromised.

In seeking to develop an understanding of the factors that have shaped the head teachers' beliefs about the purpose of PE, it was important to ask questions related to both who teaches PE and the extent to which the head teachers felt the policy was influencing how PE is taught. Although it is well established that generalist teachers are best placed to teach primary school children, due to their understanding of the students' needs, a study carried out by Jones and Green (2017:762) showed that more than half of PE subject leaders had substantial reservations about classroom teachers teaching PE. Generalist teachers' lack of subject knowledge and confidence about teaching PE were cited as the reasons behind the head teachers' reservations, along with claims that it is difficult to teach PE if one is not very 'sporty' and coaches are obviously very good at sport. Whilst the results of the questionnaire indicate that the majority of the PE lessons within the sample are taught by qualified generalist teachers with QTS (60%), it was evident in the interviews that participants had different delivery models and perspectives of outsourcing. For instance, in some cases teaching was supplemented by an external coach and in other cases a coach was employed by the school on a permanent basis and is therefore seen as a member of staff rather than a coach.

Outsourcing relates to the appointment of external staff, which, in the case of PE, is likely to be a sports coach. Moreover, the teaching of PE has been perceived as a commodity that

has seen school boundaries dissolve, and knowledge can be purchased beyond the school gate (Macdonald, 2014). Although outsourcing can be seen as a way in which schools demonstrate choice and autonomy in relation to how they use and prioritise resources, it comes with a warning that it can also result in outsourced subjects, such as PE becoming detached from the curriculum and seen as a low status subject.

The normalised practice of outsourcing was evident during the interviews with several participants, including Sam, who discussed how a coach had impacted on the teaching of PE in his school. Sam had previously worked with a local coaching company but now had a long-term arrangement in place with an external school sport organisation. Sam said:

we know we need to do it; we know our teachers aren't very good at it, you get on with it during PPA time. I think [the coach] is much more effective in that she's a (...) we treat her as a member of staff, she just happens to only work one day a week so it's not like someone else is coming in, she's a (...) teacher. The kids think she's a teacher.

It was apparent that, although Sam had outsourced PE, the relationship that had developed with one specific coach normalised this practice to a point whereby the coach was being identified as a teacher. Sam did, however, explain "I think there's are instances where it's useful to get external people in but that shouldn't be the default position (...) I think too often it's just an easy way of covering PPA time". It was evident that Sam differentiated between the outsourcing of a casual coach and the employment of one specific coach who had established a relationship with the school. This illustrates the complexity of the PE teaching workforce in primary PE, which has served to blur the boundaries between PE, sport and physical activity. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the skills of sports coaches,

it is equally important to recognise that the mandate for coaches differs from the educative practices and expectations of teachers as well as the teaching expectations evident in other areas of the curriculum. Whilst schools may see added value in employing a coach who is part of the school community, this does little to address the concerns about the pedagogical skills necessary to teach PE, potentially pushing the 'E' out of PE (Coulter et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in Australia, it is argued that issues related to the outsourcing of PE have served to de-professionalise the teaching of PE (Sperka, Enright & McCuaig, 2018).

Conversely, Richard voiced concerns about the outsourcing of PE and felt it was “the school’s responsibility to upskill and to train teaching staff and support staff to deliver PE that reflects the vision and the drive of your school”. He went on to discuss his concerns about outsourcing, stating “handing that over to somebody who doesn't necessarily know your behaviour system, doesn't know your children as well. I think for me that's what we're here to do and as part of the curriculum you should be taught by the teachers”.

When discussing outsourcing, Richard refers to a concept that Lair (2019) terms ‘dis-embedding’, whereby a subject becomes extracted from a curriculum and placed within another environment. In doing so, the subject becomes detached from the curriculum being taught by the generalist teachers. Lair (2012) explains that outsourcing allows an organisation the freedom from performing tasks that it does not wish to or cannot perform. In doing so, outsourcing provides an organisation with the flexibility to concentrate on the core elements of their business whilst handing over responsibility for peripheral activities. However, there have been warnings that outsourcing is, by its very nature, a process of dependence, whereby there is a loss of internal capabilities, which can subsequently lead to

a loss of control (Lair, 2019). A loss of control and involvement in the teaching of PE could, it is suggested, lead to less confident teachers having less of an idea of the potentials of PE and how it relates more widely to education and the curriculum (Griggs, 2010). These questions of confidence and competence of teachers present a very real challenge for head teachers. It is therefore imperative that head teachers carefully consider effective use of the PE and School Sport Premium to support the long-term development of staff in PE.

Impact of Neoliberalism on PE

As previously mentioned in this chapter, the impact of neoliberal campaigns is increasingly being felt in schools. Neoliberalism is simplistically understood as the shifting of power from government control to an institute and thus providing choice. However, neoliberalism is not simplistic and is, in fact, often complex and contradictory (Macdonald, 2014). Although 'choice' is generally met with enthusiasm in schools, it is often diminished by governance, that ultimately deems what are good and bad choices. Greany and Higham (2018) term this form of control as 'coercive autonomy', whereby schools are handed operational powers whilst still being closely monitored from above.

Neoliberalism relates to Research Question One, as it was apparent in this research that external forces were influencing whether and how PE is taught in primary schools. This was evident for the outsourcing of PE and coercive nature of high stakes testing, which prioritises what is taught (Macdonald, 2014). Sam highlighted this point when asked if the pressure around school inspections was felt universally by schools, explaining that he had previously taught in a school judged to be 'outstanding' which subsequently went long periods of time without an inspection.

School Inspections in England are carried out by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Following an inspection, schools are graded between 1 (outstanding) and 4 (inadequate) and, in exceptional circumstances, may be placed in Special Measures. The outcome of an inspection dictates how soon a school will be inspected again. A school in Special Measures is subject to ongoing intervention and monitoring by Ofsted and hence will be more intensely and regularly inspected. Sam stated that his previous school had more scope to focus on the things the school community felt to be important, whereas his current school was in a very different situation and had been deemed to 'Require Improvement' (RI) for ten years. Additionally, he said the school could have been further penalised with a 'Special Measures' judgement five years ago but had opted to work with an academy of schools. This had helped it to avoid being awarded the lowest inspection rating. Sam expressed concern that a school deemed not to have made good choices was being penalised by the state and subsequently had fallen out of favour with the community, thus leading to a reduction of resources available to the school. Significantly, it is claimed that the current high stakes environment has led to 'constrained professionalism', whereby the success of the organisation is placed above that of individual children. Greany and Higham (2018:34) state that, as a result, schools feel increased accountability pressure to make tactical decisions related to their performance measures, such as the annual student census. The implication of accountability pressures for Sam meant that, whilst he had always had a keen interest in PE, he had handed the management of PE to an external coach. He felt that his focus needed to be on the staffing and budget challenges, the monitoring of several curriculum areas and assuming the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

However, in 2019, a School Inspection Framework update stated that Ofsted's "role is to complement, rather than intensify, the focus on performance data and measures" (2019:1). Moreover, "Inspectors will use published, national performance data as a starting point in inspection, but data is only ever that, a starting point". The Inspection Framework update did, however, concede that inspection practice had contributed to an imbalance in the accountability system, and that Ofsted intended to return to their role of complementing rather than intensifying the focus on achievement and progress measures.

Valerie, the head teacher at a school that was graded highly by Ofsted following their last full inspection (2006), spoke about the freedom they have to redesign the curriculum. Additionally, Valerie felt that the monitoring of the PE and Sport Premium provided the school with an extra set of eyes through which regularly to review the development of PE. However, it was evident in December 2020 that this shift in emphasis was not being felt by Sam. Sam explained how the performance measures in core subjects, including English, mathematics and science, carry high stakes. As a result, schools struggling to meet the national standards place increased emphasis on (and devote more time to) the teaching of the core subjects. Consequently, foundation subjects including PE become marginalised and this impacts on the teachers' perceptions of the value of different curriculum areas (Richards et al., 2018).

Inspection experiences have undoubtedly impacted on the choices made in Sam's school and the way in which PE is taught. However, he is optimistic about the future, stating that "the new framework is a step in the right direction". This was a sentiment shared by all of the interview participants. Richard was particularly pleased about what he termed a 'shift'

in Ofsted's priorities. He said, "You know, they're emphasising the breadth of the curriculum and the quality across all the curriculum being really important so I think I agree with that, and I think that's what we're trying to do at our school".

The current inspection framework promotes a broad, balanced curriculum and states that the focus of inspections is no longer on individual teachers or lessons but rather the way in which the curriculum intent is being implemented and the overall quality of education, behaviour and attitudes (Ofsted, 2021). Additionally, Ofsted have reinforced the importance of developing knowledge and understanding rather than the learning of disconnected facts. A 2019 inspection update expressed the importance of schools' understanding that, 'knowledge is stored as a complex, interconnected web or 'schema'. Every time a pupil encounters a word they have previously learned, but applied in a new context, it adds to the complexity of their understanding of that concept. In other words, they develop a deeper understanding of that concept and enhance their capacity to use that concept in their own thinking' (Department for Education, 2019:5). It is, therefore, important that the contribution of PE and its connection with the curriculum are clearly articulated if it is to fulfil its potential and secure its position within the curriculum. This, therefore, raises questions about the role of outsourcing and external providers as well as the role that policy has played in further blurring the boundaries between PE, physical activity and sport (Petrie et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial that head teachers ensure pedagogical practice in PE is aligned with other areas of the curriculum.

PE as sport

It is argued that, since the introduction of the PE and Sport Premium in 2013, there has been an explosion of sports coaches in primary schools (Jones & Green, 2017). Whilst, primarily, the aim of the PE and Sport Premium was for schools to upskill generalist teachers and enhance their extra-curricular sports provision through the employment of coaches, it quickly became clear that outsourced coaches were, in fact, displacing teachers from the curriculum. A survey carried out on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE, 2014:37) found that over 78% of schools reported using external sports coaches to deliver PE within the curriculum. The report states that:

after the introduction of the PE and sport premium, almost three quarters (73%) of schools reported there had been a change in who delivered curricular PE lessons. Of those who reported a change, the use of a class teacher dropped from 94 per cent to 83 per cent and use of external sports coaches rose from 38 per cent to 78 per cent.

Moreover, the report observes that 96% of head teachers were involved in deciding how to use the PE and Sport Premium, thus indicating the increasingly dominant model of outsourcing PE being driven by head teachers. The degree to which these choices are influenced by the head teachers' understanding of the purpose of PE, policy, neoliberal reforms or the efficacy of the staff is unknown. It is evident that the outsourcing of PE has become a prominent feature and that marketisation is having a considerable impact on who teaches it. As a consequence, the traditional model of PE being taught by generalist teachers is being diminished. Kirk (2010) claims that as a result of coaches' involvement in the teaching of PE, the educational value of PE is being narrowed to focus on the performance outcomes within PE, termed 'PE as Sport Techniques'.

Throughout the pilot study for this research and the main study, 'PE as sport' has remained a dominant discourse. The participants repeatedly related questions about experiences of PE and the purpose of PE to sport. When asked to reflect on his personal experiences of PE and the way in which PE is now taught, Daniel said, " I think we're conscious of having that variety because not every sport will suit everyone so if all you ever do [in school] is football then if you don't like football, you're kind of a bit [disadvantaged] ... so you've got that spread of different sports". Daniel's view of PE as sport is reinforced by the National Curriculum for PE (DfE, 2013), which places emphasis on competitive sport and further highlights concerns that PE is in danger of becoming a doing of sport, fitness, physical activity and/or obesity prevention (Quennerstedt, 2019a).

Whilst the rationale and value underpinning these activities are valid, they raise questions about both the educative value of PE and, importantly, the way in which PE is constructed. An example of this was seen during the Covid-19 pandemic through the explosion of online fitness-orientated resources, such as 'PE with Joe' (The Body Coach TV, 2019). This raised questions about the relevance of PE in schools and the degree to which the current models of PE engage children. The surge of digital influencers has highlighted the need for educators and academics to be reflexive to ensure that PE maintains relevance and meaning, asserting its unique position within the curriculum.

Biesta (2016:1) states that, "education is not about filling a bucket but about lighting a fire" and goes on to say that "students are not to be seen as objects to be moulded and

disciplined, but as subjects of action and responsibility". Therefore, if PE experiences in school are to have an impact on children's health and motivate them to become lifelong participants, PE must endeavour to create meaningful, enduring memories, that inspire growth and further activity. Quennerstedt (2019b) suggests that the dominant sporting discourse needs to be examined to identify practices that are mis-educative and reinforce stereotypes that are often narrow and gendered and where some children are marginalised due to not fitting in with these norms. Furthermore, there needs to be examination of how the school leaders and those delivering PE subscribe and reinforce these norms and the role they play in reproducing practices. In this regard, head teachers have the "power to change and the power to preserve" (Quennerstedt, 2019b:616).

In summarising this section on the purpose of PE in primary schools, it has been established that head teachers fundamentally consider that the purpose of PE was to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and inspire positive health practices. In part, this has been driven by morally normative notions of health and fitness and concerns about children's body weight. Although it is well established that generalist teachers are best placed to teach primary school children due to their understanding of the students' needs, this study indicates that head teachers do not believe that teachers have the knowledge and skills required to teach PE confidently. Additionally, the neoliberal policy and accountability pressures have led to the marketisation of PE and its outsourcing is becoming widely accepted. It is argued that, as a result of the pressures placed on schools, PE has been marginalised and seen to be subordinate to core subjects, such as English and maths.

The following section discusses research question two, which examines the factors shaping the head teachers' conceptualisation of PE. In doing so, the role of agency and teacher socialisation are considered, along with the role that the head teachers play in shaping the wider ideologies of what is valued and what should be taught in schools.

Research question two: What factors have shaped head teachers' conceptualisations of PE?

This question was designed to establish the factors that have shaped, and continue to shape, the head teachers' understanding of PE. Given the primary head teachers' responsibilities and influence over the curriculum design and implementation, it is important that the factors shaping the head teachers' conceptualisations are considered. In doing so, this will build on the work of Pajares (1992), to increase our understanding of the complex way in which beliefs are constructed and the influence of past experiences on present and future behaviour.

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory suggests that people are active agents who exercise their influence through different types of agency that are rooted in corresponding types of efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1977) claimed that beliefs are influenced by past experiences and that these events guide the way in which new information is viewed, the general expectations about the outcomes and the beliefs an individual hold in relation to self-efficacy. Subsequently, Crum (1990) suggests that the experiences of students can prove to be more influential than teacher education and can perpetuate a non-teaching

ideology, while Morgan and Hansen (2008:374) claim that “PE programmes experienced by teachers appear to be important in determining levels of PE teacher efficacy”.

Having considered the factors that impact on the head teachers’ beliefs and conceptualisations of PE, including the neoliberal agendas, performativity and policy, as previously discussed, it is necessary to explore the complex ways in which their past and present personal and professional experiences guide how head teachers conceptualise PE, and the impact of the wider conceptual context of agency. This is related to the need to examine the relational nature of the social structures and practice and includes the necessity to consider the role of prior schooling experiences, initial teacher training, experiences of teaching PE and perceptions of efficacy. It is claimed that, in order to “better understand teachers’ behaviour, a perspective focused on the things and ways that teachers believe” is required (Pajares, 1992:307). Furthermore, Pajares (1992:307) claims that the beliefs held by teachers influence how they behave in the classroom and that an understanding of the belief structures of teachers and trainee teachers is essential for improving Initial Teacher Training and teaching practices.

Conceptualisation

Before discussing the results in relation to research question 2, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of conceptualisation in relation to this research. Conceptualisation is defined as the way in which an idea of something is formed in your mind (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2021), a definition which suggests that conceptualisation is both an individual and active process and the way in which we interpret events and experiences are based on our own cultural and experiential backgrounds (Rhynas, 2005). Additionally, it is proposed that

conceptualisation is the way in which individuals explain or describe things they observe or experience in the social world and this process helps them to make sense of the world (Rhynas, 2005). Consequently, exploring the ways in which the past and present experiences of the head teachers guide how they act and the decisions they make is vital for the positioning of and development of PE within the curriculum.

Teacher socialisation

To investigate the multiple factors that have shaped the head teachers' conceptualisations, the results of this research have been considered, drawing on a model of occupational socialisation which was introduced in the literature review. Socialisation is the term that is broadly used to explain the process through which individuals learn the norms of a particular setting/occupation, which in this case is related to education, and specifically primary schools. Although there are various models of socialisation, Lawson's (1983a & b) model of socialisation in PE has been used to guide this discussion, as it was intended to be used to examine the experiences of specialist PE teachers. This model has been used as a framework to examine the cumulative role that childhood PE experiences and teaching experiences play in shaping generalist primary school teachers' conceptualisations of PE.

The three phases of socialisation to be discussed are acculturation, professional socialisation and organisational socialisation. Figure 6.2 shows how these phases connect with the main themes that were used to gather and analyse the data for this research. Initially, a conceptual model of teacher beliefs and practices was used to shape the design of the data collection (Borg, 2003). The model identified five elements that influence teacher beliefs and practices. These included personal schooling experiences, professional coursework/ITT,

contextual factors/policy and teaching experience. These five elements influenced the design of the online questionnaire and interview schedule. Once the data had been collected, four prominent themes emerged to form the initial coding frame. These can be seen in the ‘theme’ column in Figure 6.2. Within these themes, eight sub-themes were identified which addressed the two main research questions, and together these themes were used to analyse the data. As the process of analysis developed, it soon became apparent that the themes corresponded with the three stages of socialisation identified in Lawson’s (1983) model of socialisation in PE. These can be seen in the stages of socialisation column in table 6.2. The three stages of socialisation are used to discuss the results of this study in order to address the two main research questions.

Theme	Subtheme	Stages of Socialisation
Personal experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Childhood experiences ● Current personal experiences 	Acculturation -influence of childhood experiences in PE
Teacher training experiences and self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initial teacher training ● Self-efficacy 	Professional socialisation -impact of initial teacher training
Contextual factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal factors ● External factors 	Organisational socialisation -learned models for how PE is taught in line with school expectations and the national curriculum
Current professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How PE is taught ● Perceived efficacy of staff 	

Figure 6.2 Relationship between the research themes and the stages of socialisation.

Acculturation

Acculturation, the first stage of ‘socialisation’, commences at an early age and has a powerful influence on the way in which individuals are socialised into teaching prior to

commencing their teacher training. It is maintained that childhood experiences influence trainee teachers' understanding of particular subjects and practices, and these subsequently play a powerful role in determining how teachers develop their educational belief structure (Pajares, 1992:310). The learning experiences that shape beliefs about PE include those in school, with coaches and other significant individuals (Richards et al., 2014). Furthermore, 'belief systems' unlike 'knowledge systems', tend to be less flexible and open to change and, subsequently, they tend to be far more influential than knowledge when determining how teachers behave and respond to challenges.

The results of this research showed that the majority of participants who completed the quantitative survey had positive experiences of PE in primary school, and over 60% of these participants felt these experiences had a positive impact on their confidence to teach PE. Whilst these results are encouraging and in line with the responses of the interview participants, it is important that the more nuanced qualitative data are taken into account when considering the conceptualisations of PE .as it is suggested that PE is a social construct with a range of practice and is defined by what is done in its name (Kirk, 2010:114).

This is aligned with previous research carried out by Morgan and Bourke (2008) which examined the personal PE experiences of non-specialist, pre-service and in-service primary school teachers in an attempt to establish the influence of these experiences on the confidence of those teaching PE. The logic of this study was based on an assumption that the quality of PE delivered in primary schools was associated with the teachers' confidence to teach PE. The results of this study indicated that teachers who reported low level confidence about teaching PE had memories of poor-quality PE lessons at school. However,

those who had positive memories of PE had a positive attitude towards teaching PE and confidence in their ability to teach effectively.

Lortie (1975) describes an 'apprenticeship of observation', whereby trainee teachers commence their training having observed the profession for many years as school children themselves. As a consequence of this experience, trainee teachers have a partial view of the profession which, on the whole, is largely unanalysed but serves to provide a default option for practice. This is reflected in the responses of all of the interview participants through their descriptions of their childhood primary PE experiences as sport, largely recalling PE lessons comprising the playing of games and competitive activity. For example, when Sam was asked about his childhood PE experiences, he said "I don't actually remember being taught very much.... that's not to say that there wasn't explicit teaching, I just wasn't aware of it necessarily". Additionally, Daniel recalled playing games and said he did not recall a lot of explicit teaching. He stated "when I was at primary school, and we're talking back a long way now! It seemed to be just playing games, that's what I remember". Furthermore, Daniel said "It was very much here's a bat, here's a ball, we're going to play cricket, this is how you bowl, right, off you go, let's play cricket sort of thing". Whilst both Sam and Daniel recall positive experiences of PE, it was evident that this was, in some way, at odds with their perceptions about what high quality PE lessons should look like. Lawson (1983a) contends that, during the process of socialisation, teachers can go through a complex personal negotiation between their beliefs and practice. This can be due to the negotiation between personal beliefs and the values regarded as important in schools or through experience.

In contrast to these positive childhood PE experiences, Sarah recalled not being very good at PE. She said “I remember always being picked last for the team because I'm not sporty at all. I'm not very - I'll tell you what, I think I like to be the best at what I do so I'm not very good at PE so then I kind of just sort of stepped back from it a little bit”. Although Sarah's childhood experiences were not altogether positive, she still felt important lessons were learnt during PE. “I think competitive sport is still really important because I think it's important to learn to fail and I didn't fail in my academic subjects but maybe I did fail a bit in PE and that's a life lesson, isn't it?” In addition to recalling her childhood PE experiences, Sarah also discussed the role sport played in forging a special bond with her father. Sarah said “my experiences were so, well, not bad but they were not strong as a child ... sport was the bond between me and my dad ... I think everyone within my family would say I had the best relationship with him because we did that together”.

It was interesting to hear how the primary PE experiences of the participants varied.

Although Sarah did not recall positive childhood PE experiences at school, she did speak positively about the way in which sport helped her to nurture her relationship with a significant other. This serves further to illustrate the broad, individual nature of conceptualisations and the way in which varied experiences can have a powerful influence on beliefs about PE and the way in which individuals are socialised into teaching. However, it is important to note that positive childhood experiences during the process of acculturation do not necessarily reflect positively on teachers' confidence to teach PE. For example, Carney and Chedzoy (1989) reported that, although a trainee teacher had positive experiences of teaching gymnastics at university, they rejected this experience in place of negative childhood experiences and still perceived gymnastics as threatening.

Professional socialisation

Professional socialisation, the second stage of the socialisation of teachers, refers to the process of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) that nurtures the development of knowledge and skills that are required to teach effectively (Lawson, 1983a:4). Lawson (1983a) suggests that this stage in the process of socialisation is weak by comparison to the acculturation stage. For example, it was found that, if the trainee teachers' beliefs had been shaped by childhood experiences that are not in line with their professional socialisation or mentors in school, the effects of professional socialisation can be 'washed out' (Richards & Gaudreault, 2018). However, there are factors that can enhance the impact of teacher training on the perceptions and actions of trainee teachers.

The research participants' perceptions about the quality of their ITT varied greatly. Whilst 38% of the questionnaire participants agreed with the suggestion that they had received high quality PE training, 50% disagreed. Additionally, two of the interview participants considered that their teacher training experiences were limited, one felt it was fun and two felt it was good. Richard commented on his limited teacher training experiences, "I think the training around PE on the PGCE was limited, very limited, I don't think there was much exposure to it. I think the development of me as a PE teacher very much happened when I started teaching. I don't think the PGCE was particularly good at preparing me for that".

In contrast, Valerie felt her teacher training was "pretty good". She said, "I remember it being really effective, I just think there wasn't enough of it, but I guess that is just the nature of the beast, particularly with primary". However, it was interesting to hear Valerie recall a less positive experience when attending a sports-based training course during her teacher

training. She said, “I think you have to learn in teaching about what not to do as well ... I did some Football Association coaching, and I absolutely hated it and on reflection afterwards I thought why did I hate that so much? It was all of the things that you perhaps wouldn't do as a teacher”. Although Valerie felt her coaching course was high quality in terms of its knowledge and content, she felt it did little to assist her with the development of the pedagogical skills that needed to be developed in order to teach effectively.

Valerie’s preference for pedagogical discourse over sport contrasts with what Powell (2015:77) calls ‘PE is the same as coaching sport skills’ discourse and research carried out by McEvilly (2021). McEvilly’s (2021) research asked trainee PE teachers who they believed should teach PE in primary schools. Many of the trainees involved in the study had varied experiences in terms of who taught them PE when they were at primary and secondary school. Most of the participants had PE teachers at secondary school but had experienced outsourced PE in primary school. When asked who they considered should teach PE in primary school, the consensus was that it should be taught by specialist PE teachers or coaches (if the funding is limited). Furthermore, it was felt that generalist primary school teachers lacked the content knowledge to develop skills effectively, enhance performance and provide opportunities to try different sports. Similarly, this perspective was shared by Sam, who did not consider that he received sufficient Initial Teacher Training in PE but nonetheless felt “fairly well equipped to teach games because I'd played games”. As a result of Sam’s perception of his insufficient primary teacher training in PE, he had employed a coach to support his generalist teachers.

Randall and Griggs (2021) draw on the findings of a national study that examined the opportunities of 1,200 English primary preservice teachers' opportunities to teach PE (many of whom were undergraduate students) and identified that nearly half of the research participants were unable to teach PE during their school placements. They stated that:

'for those who were able to teach, opportunities were often discrete and variable, dependent on who the curriculum deliverer was in the school. If an 'outsourced' approach to PE continues, enabled by high levels of investment from Government, this data suggests that it is likely primary educators will continue to be absent from the teaching of PE' (Randall & Griggs, 2021:505).

In conjunction with the reduced hours of PE training within both undergraduate (an average period of 12 hours training) and postgraduate (as little as four hours training) teacher training, this helps to explain why many primary generalist teachers feel insufficiently prepared to teach what is perceived to be one of the most challenging curriculum subjects to teach (Capel & Blair, 2008).

Organisational socialisation

Organisational socialisation, the final stage of socialisation, refers to the process whereby a teacher first enters the workforce and starts 'learning the ropes', developing an understanding of the knowledge and skills that are valued by the employing schools (Curtner-Smith, 1999). This period of socialisation is extended and spans the time from when teachers enter the profession until they leave it. Consequently, individual teachers encounter a varying array of circumstances and conditions as they progress through their career and negotiate between values regarded as important for teaching PE and those valued and rewarded by their own school (Elliot et al., 2011). Therefore, this period of

negotiation implies a process of cultural transmission whereby the teacher adapts from being an outsider to being an insider within the organisation. The perceived worth of PE is revealed to the teachers through the number of resources dedicated to the teaching of PE and the time allocated to it within the curriculum (Elliot et al., 2013). This is, of course, influenced by the decisions made by the head teachers.

The head teachers involved in this study had been teaching for between ten and 23 years at the time of the study and has held a position as head teacher for between one school term (four months) and 12 years. Amongst them, they have a wealth of experience, and have worked in a number of diverse settings, both within the region where the study was conducted and beyond. Over 90% reported that they regularly taught PE and almost all of the participants described teaching PE as enjoyable. Despite the fact that over half stated that their initial teacher training did not prepare them to teach, the majority felt they were competent teachers of PE. This implies that, although their preparation to teach was limited, they were provided with an opportunity to develop their skills once teaching and/or had prior personal experiences and skills that they could call into play.

When asked if most PE lessons were taught by generalist teachers, only 60% of the questionnaire participants strongly agreed. However, the data indicated that head teachers who felt adequately prepared to teach PE themselves were more inclined to have generalist teachers teaching PE in their school. In cases where PE was not taught by generalist teachers, the reasons given included a lack of time, space and teacher competence. These perspectives reflect what Jess et al. (2017) call the 'broken' narrative, which has focussed on a number of 'interrelated factors' that are said to inhibit teachers from providing quality PE

in schools. Inadequate teacher training, insufficient time and interest and low levels of teacher confidence are highlighted as barriers. However, it is suggested that wider ideologies of what is valued and what should be taught in schools play a fundamental role in how the curriculum is enacted and conceptualised in schools (Gray et al., 2021).

Ideologies that are valued and advocated by government support reflect the beliefs and values of society which create a set of truths that subsequently influence practice. Examples of this include the public health discourse and the dominant force of sport, which has been accused of having a negative impact on teachers' perspectives of PE (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011). Additionally, Gray et al. (2021) suggest that, as a result of a lack of guidance for teachers about how and what should be taught within the English national PE curriculum, teachers have become "heavily reliant on obtaining knowledge and understanding of pedagogy from external sources". For example, Valerie felt that an overreliance on published schemes of work was an issue for early career teachers. She said "What can then happen is teachers early in their career become quite reliant upon a script and then (...) they no longer develop as individual teachers. As a senior leader you have to then go back and unpick it and get back to basics. So, I think that's a challenge".

Additionally, when asked about the biggest challenges related to the teaching of PE in Richard's school, he stated it was Continual Professional Development (CPD). He said that, if time and money were not an issue, he would invest in more professional development for his teachers, as their opportunities to access training courses were limited. He stated that "Those kinds of things seem a very distant thing from the past. It doesn't seem to be things that happen much these days and I think staff need that because it is a niche subject, you

need to be able to practise and to see it done well". Richard stated that he had previously employed coaches to cover PPA and teach PE. However, he said he felt PE should be taught by teachers, as it is part of the curriculum.

Research carried out by Ni Chroinin and O'Brien (2019) did, however, see value in the use of external providers. This research examined the lived experiences of primary school teachers working with external providers across a range of subjects, including PE. They found that, when the relationship between the external provider and classroom teacher was based on collaboration rather than as a replacement (or with the teacher as a support), the teaching was enhanced. This was, however, dependent on the teachers having sufficient competence and confidence to engage in meaningful collaboration and learning conversations with the external providers, which was additionally dependent on time being provided for these conversations.

With respect to collaboration, Sam discussed the effectiveness of a relationship his school has developed with a particular external provider. He previously employed external providers to deliver PE during the teachers' PPA time because "we know our teachers aren't very good at it ", but he disliked 'outsourcing PE' and felt teachers should be involved. Sam now employs an external provider who works regularly in collaboration with his teachers. Sam explained how the coach "sits down with the other teacher before the unit of work and plans it as if it was an English unit or as if it was a maths unit and there'd be the same expectations. Then she will then go in and deliver the first lesson and then ... and then she might observe which is kind of what you do with NQT in English or maths or sciences or anything else". Ideally, Sam thinks teachers should be teaching PE. However, as a result of

the high staff turnover, he does not feel there will be a time when an external provider is not needed to supplement and support the teaching of PE.

Sam's experiences highlight the concerns of Jess, McEvilly and Carse (2017:647), who believe that so long as a one-dimensional, top down, 'quick-fix' approach to CPD persists, long term change will be inhibited. Instead, they suggest a long-term, situated approach to investigating the needs of teachers and schools is required in order to initiate long-term change. This process would require a 'bottom-up' approach to change and would be reliant on the active involvement of the head teachers in collaboration with the policymakers, local authorities and universities. Jess, McEvilly and Carse (2017:648) concede that this level of involvement from teachers and head teachers is unlikely to occur due to a lack of school capacity. However, Randall and Griggs (2020) warn that, so long as a quick-fix, outsourced approach to the teaching of PE is maintained, preservice teachers will continue to have limited or no opportunities to teach, and subsequently PE as a curriculum subject will be further obscured by the external agendas. It is, therefore, important that the voice of the head teachers is present at debates related to the role and place of PE within the curriculum. This will help to highlight the extent to which neoliberal policies impact on the way in which PE is conceptualised and the greater ramifications of outsourced delivery.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Introduction

Building on Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice, which examines how past and present experiences guide how individuals act, and Bandura's theory, that behaviour is predicated on beliefs, this study highlights the important role primary head teacher beliefs play in shaping how PE is conceptualised and taught in primary schools. Furthermore, it reinforces the existing knowledge of the influential role of occupational socialisation on the teaching profession and the significant role early experiences play in shaping beliefs and perceptions about the purpose of PE. Lawson's model of socialisation (1983a, 1983b) was applied in order to frame the findings of this study, which has not previously been done within the context of head teachers' beliefs and practices. As a consequence, this research highlights the way in which socialisation influences how head teachers respond to policy directives and the role neoliberal policies have played in the creation of a wider outsourced PE workforce within the curriculum. Furthermore, this research has shown the influence of socialisation on how head teachers interpret policy and the ways in which policy enactment has served to reinforce the sport and fitness-based ideologies. Although it is easy to make judgements about the way in which PE policy is enacted by head teachers, it is important to acknowledge the often-conflicting messages that accompany policy directives and the high stakes, messy educational ecosystem which they have to navigate. These findings have wider potential applicability and could be investigated in relation to other marginalised curriculum areas such as music.

Significantly, this research demonstrates the impact of the early acculturation stage of socialisation and the enduring influence of the head teachers' prior experiences and beliefs about PE on the way in which they interpret and enact policy. Understanding how beliefs and experiences impact on practice is critical in order to develop an educationally sound and coherent future for PE that provides meaningful learning opportunities for pupils. Additionally, this research considers the organisational socialisation of teachers in PE, illuminating the contextual factors that have led to the normalised practice of outsourcing PE in primary schools. This practice is shaping what is taught in the name of PE and who is teaching PE within the curriculum. As a consequence, the education experiences of pupils in PE are frequently handed to external providers, namely sports coaches. Furthermore, this research highlights the professional socialisation of teachers and the challenges perceived by head teachers associated with low levels of staff efficacy. Head teachers highlighted limited initial teacher training opportunities as a reason for low levels of teacher efficacy amongst current and preservice generalist primary teachers. Again, findings related to acculturation could have wider application in relation to headteacher responses to other curriculum areas.

In order to extend this area of research, further research into head teacher perceptions about the long-term impact of outsourcing on the curriculum being taught and the impact it has on the development and socialisation of early career teachers would be valuable. This would further reveal how early experiences of teaching impact on teachers' judgements about their ability to succeed, and what Bandura (1997) describes as self-efficacy.

As explained in Chapter One, the aim of this research was to investigate the physical education beliefs of primary school head teachers and consider the significant ways in which head teachers' personal and professional experiences shape their beliefs about PE and how it is conceptualised in schools. The two main research questions were:

- What do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools?
- What factors have shaped head teachers' conceptualisations of PE?

The literature review in Chapter Two recognises that this research contributes to an identified knowledge gap with respect to the lack of representation of primary head teachers' views in relation to PE. It was established that, in order for PE to secure its unique position within the curriculum, the beliefs of head teachers are pivotal regarding the choices schools make and the value afforded to each subject area within the curriculum. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the extent to which the aim of the study has been achieved, draw conclusions, highlight the contributions to knowledge and practice, state the implications for professional practice and suggest areas for future research (Burke & Welsch, 2018; Southworth, 2002; Borg, 2001).

Moreover, the literature review explains that, despite the growing momentum, both nationally and internationally, to protect the unique position of PE within the curriculum (Harris, 2018; Kirk, 2013; Penney et al., 2009), PE remains in a precarious position, at the margins of the curriculum. It is argued that PE has become increasingly disconnected as a result of the shifting policy and, as a consequence, researchers contend that the educational value of the subject has been diminished (Carse et al., 2018). However, whilst it is

recognised that head teachers play a critical role in defining, interpreting, and enacting PE in primary schools, their perspectives have largely been underrepresented (Ni Chroinin et al., 2019).

To address the research questions and develop an understanding of the relationship between head teachers' beliefs, and the role these play in conceptualising PE, a constructivist stance was applied in this study within an interpretivist paradigm. Hence Chapters Three and Four, in considering the methods and methodology, recognise that humans shape meaning from their own experiences. Moreover, through an interpretivist framework, the subjective experience of the head teachers was explored in order to gain a better understanding of how their beliefs have been shaped. Subsequently, a mixed method approach was adopted to achieve a more detailed understanding of the research area and, as a consequence, how to gather multiple sources of data, so the research conclusions were reinforced by multiple, rich sources of information.

Summary of the findings

In response to Research Question One, "What do head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE in primary schools?", four main themes emerged. These themes emerged clearly from both sets of data, and focussed on:

- health and emphasis on physical activity and physical fitness
- resilience and mental wellbeing
- fun and meaningful PE
- PE as Sport

The following section identifies the relational nature of these themes and draws these together to form and justify the conclusions.

Health inequalities

The findings of this research clearly indicate that the participants believe a key purpose of PE is to address concerns about the state of children's health, promote healthy practices and foster an appreciation of healthy lifestyles. The participants' concerns for children's health were heightened as a result of the perception that the children had been largely inactive during extended periods of home schooling as a result of Covid-19. Additionally, the participants felt the children were generally less active than they themselves had been as children which, it was claimed, was as a result of the modern lifestyle choices. The modern lifestyle factors cited as impacting on children's health included less freedom for children to roam, fewer families choosing to travel actively to school, reduced opportunities and spaces to play outdoors and the increasingly sedentary behaviour. Additionally, the participants felt that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and lifestyle choices, children were less active, making it more important that schools provide children with inclusive opportunities to be active physically.

The research participants' concerns about children's health are in line with the findings of the recently released 2021 Child of the North report. This report highlights the health inequality between children in the north of England (where this research is located) and the rest of the country (Pickett et al., 2021). Amongst the many health inequalities mentioned, the report highlighted the fact that children from the most deprived areas of England are more than twice as likely to be living with obesity, are less active than children living in

other parts of the country, have less access to green spaces and are more likely to express concerns about feeling lonely. Additionally, the percentage of children (aged five to ten years) with a probable mental health disorder within the region where the research is located jumped by over 10% between 2017 and 2020. These statistics serve to validate the perceptions of head teachers.

This study reveals that the participants' personal beliefs about the physical and mental benefits of physical activity and concern for children's health, are reflected in their beliefs about the purpose of PE and in some cases who they consider is best qualified to teach PE. Therefore, greater clarity about the contribution and purpose of PE and physical activity is needed in order to ensure the educational benefits of PE are realised and to support head teachers to create a positive movement culture in school that supports the holistic development of children.

Childhood obesity

In addition to concerns about children's increasingly sedentary lifestyles, this research also identified participant concerns about the increased levels of childhood obesity. The participants believe that PE has a role to play in addressing health-related issues, as illustrated by Daniel when he remarked, "It's become a more important thing over time I think, you know, the thought about children being overweight and all of that and making sure children are healthy, I think that's come in". Whilst the perception that PE can contribute to healthy lifestyles is widely accepted in the literature within the field of primary PE, the dominant ideology of healthism is not. A significant amount of literature on the benefits, tensions and relationship between PE and health has been produced in recent

years (Bailey et al., 2009; Teraoka & Kirk, 2021). The literature presents a warning that there is a tendency for the messaging in schools to reinforce the societal concerns and ideals connected to body mass, aerobic capacity, and body shape (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014). It is claimed that this notion of health is damaging, as it can construct particular health truths for children (Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2015).

This research clearly illustrates that the head teachers believe a health focused conceptualisation of PE is required if PE is going to meet the needs of children both now and in the future. However, my analysis reveals that careful consideration of the unique subject goals of PE is needed in order to protect the future educational integrity of PE; otherwise, PE is at risk of becoming more fitness focused. This would place PE in an even more precarious position within the curriculum and potentially serve to alienate further some children through a narrowing of the objectives. Therefore, it is essential that professional learning for generalist primary teachers addresses the concerns about children's health, whilst reinforcing the unique educational goals of PE through enjoyable, developmentally appropriate activity. Without this, the place and educational integrity of PE are at risk of being further side-lined.

Health intervention and inspiring healthy practice

In addition to childhood obesity and the increasingly sedentary lifestyles, the findings of this research suggest that head teachers believe the main benefit of PE is the development of stamina, strength, and fitness. Furthermore, the participants in the study drew a direct

connection between fitness and stamina, and the development of health and wellbeing, which they described as the main purpose of PE.

This goes some way towards explaining the reasons behind the increasing prevalence of intervention-based approaches in schools to address concerns about health. Quick-fix interventions, such as the Daily Mile, have grown in popularity. Since the inception of the Daily Mile programme in 2012, it is estimated that 12,000 schools in 79 countries are now implementing this programme. The popularity of this programme is undeniable. However, studies examining the positive impact of the Daily Mile have, on the whole, been based on measures related to body composition and physical fitness while the long-term impact on behaviour and motivation has not been established. Despite a lack of robust evidence to support the positive impact of interventions such as the Daily Mile, government policy continues to legitimise this practice through funding, such as the Primary PE and Sport Premium (Ward & Scott, 2021).

My analysis of the findings is in line with the view of Quennerstedt (2019a), who asserts that, in order to develop a credible health-based approach to PE, an alternative conceptualisation of health is needed so that we can move away from a simplistic 'cause and effect' solution. Furthermore, I argue that a re-envisioning of health in PE is required to create a more positive, inclusive approach, that will encourage health practices in all children. This perspective is supported by Cale and Harris, (2009a; 2018) who highlight the importance of the notion that physical activity is for all, and for life, and that everyone can benefit from physical activity. Thus, it establishes a measure of excellence as the maintenance of an active way of life rather than a narrow measure linked to performance or

body shape. This is reinforced by Howells (2021), who states that teachers need to be supported in learning about children's physical activity levels so that they can support children to meet the recommended daily activity levels and enable them to become more autonomous. Moreover, based on my own experiences of teaching PE, the best way in which to create inclusive, rewarding, positive and meaningful experiences for children requires a move away from practices that expose children to comparisons with others, are performance orientated and include monotonous or repetitive drills. Quennerstedt (2019a) reinforces this view, stating that teachers need to create learning conditions that inspire children and a recognition that health is something we do rather than something we attain.

Notably, the findings of this study add weight to the need to reconceptualise PE under a more educationally-sound, health-based approach. Consequently, I argue for a shift in education and health policy and practice towards a conceptualisation that aligns with a holistic approach similar to the Māori concept of Hauora. Hauora is a Māori philosophy of holistic wellbeing which forms the foundation of the New Zealand PE curriculum and embraces health through the creation of four walls. These four walls comprise spiritual, mental/emotional, physical, and social wellbeing, which together form a house. This house holds values that include compassion, identity, belonging, and an ability to move and care for the body. The underlying emphasis of this model is one of meaningful collaboration and responsibility. However, it is argued that, increasingly, the policy initiatives in New Zealand are influencing schools' practice and undermining the concept of Hauora, through sports-based initiatives that celebrate elitism and promote the measurement of physical behaviour (Stevens et al., 2021). Although this concept is being undermined in New Zealand, I believe

it has value in addressing the wider health and wellbeing concerns that were articulated by the head teachers who participated in this research.

The findings presented in this research lead me to conclude that, if PE is to secure its place within the curriculum and remain relevant to school leaders, an emphasis on healthy lifestyles is needed. However, I believe it is important that both the potential of PE practice both to benefit and to harm are considered alongside a recognition that concerns about health have contributed to a deficit-based view of health. The perception that children need fixing has been further exacerbated during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the notion that children need to 'catch up' or are falling behind (The British Psychological Society, 2021).

Instead, PE needs to be framed in a way that embraces a salutogenic notion of health, whereby health is considered a dynamic process that adopts a strength-based approach. This approach flips the common rhetoric of focusing on the negative perceptions of children's health as broken towards a focus on what we are trying to achieve in a meaningful way. In doing so, a salutogenic approach to teaching PE actively prioritises making sense of tasks, and ensuring children understand the wider physical, social, mental and emotional benefits of leading active lifestyles (Klein & Vogt, 2019). This strength-based approach recognises children's assets and strengths and equips them with the skills and critical ability that will enable them to develop a positive, inclusive relationship with health, movement, and their body. Therefore, rather than looking for interventions to address the perceived broken state of children's health, a more open-ended approach to the teaching of PE needs to be created to provide children with diverse, inclusive opportunities that will

enable them to develop the knowledge and skills required to become critical, active transformers (Quennerstedt, 2019b).

PE as sport

The findings of this research show that the head teachers' beliefs about the purpose of PE are informed to a considerable extent by their own experiences of PE and socialisation in sport. Richards (2015) claims that these subjective theories of PE are enduring and serve to inform both how PE is taught, and the value attached to it. It is, therefore, understandable that the outsourcing of PE has become so prevalent in primary schools since, if a narrowly defined notion of PE as sport is accepted, it is easy to understand why it is considered appropriate to entrust an area of the curriculum to sports coaches.

It was evident during the research that the participants inadvertently translated questions about PE into reflections of sport. This conceptualisation of PE, identified as 'PE as Sport Techniques', has served to isolate PE from the other curriculum subjects and resulted in it becoming less relevant to children and the choices they make beyond the school gates.

Ward and Griggs (2018:404) maintain that this conceptualisation of PE has been reinforced through curricular guidance and successive subject inspections, which have reinforced an over-emphasis on technical competence in order to engage in competitive games.

Furthermore, this has been compounded by top-down performance and competition-focused funding streams (Richards, 2015). Additionally, it is argued that the discourse of learning skills in order to play sport remains a resilient, dominant perspective of PE (Ward & Griggs, 2018).

Outsourcing PE

Based on the findings of this research, a deeper understanding of head teachers' beliefs about the purpose of PE has emerged and will serve to enhance further our understanding of how policy influences the choices head teachers make in relation to who teaches PE. Therefore, this research has served to provide a voice for head teachers, which has been largely unheard in relation to primary school PE. Chapter Two highlighted the prevalence of the outsourcing of staff to teach PE in primary schools, resulting in the repetitious teaching of sport. This has been described as a deliberate attack on PE, that has served to undermine its educational value (Quennerstedt, 2019b). There is a need to reclaim the E in PE in order to secure a more educationally focused future, that is in line with a more contemporary view of education, that values holistic, connected and collaborative forms of learning (Jess, 2021). However, to do so, the adequacy and preparation of primary teachers to teach PE need to be evaluated.

It is evident from my research that the head teachers believe that the staff efficacy is low as a result of their poor preparation to teach PE during their Initial Teacher Training. Whilst it is very easy to point the finger at the damage caused by a poorly conceived policy and outsourcing, the findings of my study highlight the role ITT has played in the exposing of PE to the external market. Bandura (1997) highlights the importance and influence of positive early experiences on self-efficacy and individuals' belief in their capability to succeed. Therefore, positive ITT experiences and opportunities to teach PE in schools is essential for developing teachers' sense of self-efficacy.

Additionally, it is claimed that research has done little to impact on policy and practice and, instead, it is the wider ideologies of government that continues to convey messages about what is valued and what should be taught (Gray et al., 2021).

In addressing Research Question Two, 'What factors have shaped head teachers' conceptualisations of PE?', my research reveals three key factors that have shaped and continue to shape the head teachers' conceptualisations of PE, namely:

- childhood experiences of PE
- limited Initial teacher training and opportunities to teach PE during placements
- perceived lack of efficacy of the staff and outsourcing of PE

Childhood experiences of PE

Childhood experiences emerged as a key factor in the research participants' conceptualisations of PE. Frequently, the participants reflected on their own childhood experiences when articulating the purpose of PE and compared their childhood experiences to those of the children within their school. For example, Daniel recalled:

When I was going to primary school it was a good half an hour walk from the house to the school. You were then out in the yard doing whatever at breaktime, very physical, running around. Every game you played after school was out on the streets or doing something physical, a ball up the woods or whatever so you were very physically active. Whereas the children we teach now, many of them, you know, they're brilliant at playing football on a computer game but they don't necessarily play football so much outside and families don't let their children play out as much. I think it's really important to try and have somebody promoting the health and wellbeing side through that.

Furthermore, this example also highlights a commonly held deficit view of children's lifestyles. It was evident that many of the participants believe that children are less active than they themselves were as children. Blame was frequently levelled at children's sedentary media consumption, such as the playing of video games and a tendency among parents to limit children's independence and active travel as a result of safety concerns. I argue, however, that the potential influence of schools is equally compelling now as it was when the participants were at school. Therefore, rather than levelling blame at society, I suggest a more nuanced understanding of the physical motivations and interests of children is required to create a more contemporary, meaningful conceptualisation of PE.

Teacher socialisation

To investigate the factors that shaped the head teachers' conceptualisations of PE, a theoretical model of socialisation was used to analyse the head teachers' experiences. Lawson's model of teacher socialisation (1983a, 1983b) was applied to investigate three distinct stages of socialisation. Lawson (1983a:4) identifies these stages as acculturation, professional socialisation and organisational socialisation and, through his model, describes how the beliefs, attitudes and practices of teachers are shaped by their personal, professional and organisational experiences. The application of Lawson's model enabled me to unpack head teachers' experiences of PE, the socialisation process they have encountered at various stages in their career and the way in which this has served to shape conceptualisation and beliefs about PE.

Initially, my research examined the influence of the acculturation stage of Lawson's model of socialisation. It was evident that childhood experiences play an important role in shaping

how head teachers conceptualise PE. Regardless of whether their experiences were positive or less so, the influence of childhood experiences persists. These early dispositions are enduring and influence the motivations of teachers as they enter the profession, along with expectations about the skills required to be an effective teacher. An awareness of the influence of childhood experiences is not a new phenomenon. However, in the light of the prevalence of outsourced teaching in the past ten years, this awareness is crucial. This research demonstrates that it is conceivable that the next generation of teachers is entering the profession with an expectation that PE is an outsourced area of the curriculum, taught by sports coaches. Griggs (2010) suggests that prolific outsourcing could lead to an impoverished conception of primary PE and a readiness to hand the teaching of it over to individuals outside the teaching profession. Whilst the long-term impact of outsourced PE provision is the subject of debate, it is conceivable that the lived PE experiences of future teachers during the acculturation stage of socialisation may be influenced by coaches rather than teachers. This will contribute to how PE is conceptualised in the future, namely the delivery of fitness and sport-based activities.

Professional socialisation within Lawson's model of teacher socialisation (1983a, 1983b) was used to examine the impact of the head teachers' initial teacher training on self-efficacy regarding PE and the values, skills, and knowledge they deem valuable for the teaching of PE. This research project identified that head teachers frequently perceive primary teachers as lacking the necessary confidence and competence to teach PE. It is claimed that the lack of preparation of generalist primary teachers is a result of the limited time dedicated to training within ITT and the lack of opportunities to teach PE during training placements (Jess et al., 2017). Moreover, this research identified a correlation between head teachers who

felt adequately prepared to teach PE and those who entrusted the teaching of PE to generalist teachers. Thus, the quality of PE teacher training is an important factor that influences the decisions the head teachers make in relation to PE training opportunities for pre-service teachers and also the PE practice and perceptions of generalist teachers. This is unsurprising, given that there has been a steady decline in the amount of ITT PE training provided in the last 20 years, which has been described as little more than a token gesture, leading to many early career teachers feeling ill-prepared (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012).

The preparedness of teachers to teach PE has attracted much attention and criticism in recent times, which has resulted in an increased amount of research within the teacher education community (Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012; Cochran-Smith, 2004a). It is claimed that the professional development for generalist primary teachers in PE is “often too brief, superficial, inaccessible and inconsistently delivered” (Smith & Thomas, 2006:77).

Furthermore, the training for generalist teachers tends to be disconnected from practice within the school and, due to a typical ‘quick-fix’ approach, professional development has been found to have a limited impact on teachers’ practices (Jess et al., 2017).

Additionally, it is suggested that primary teachers tend to replicate their personal PE experiences, which are usually sport orientated. In this study, 31% of the head teachers who participated in the quantitative study stated that the reason for outsourcing PE was the low teacher confidence, which could serve to reinforce further a sports-based ideology. Morgan and Bourke (2008) state that self-efficacy is a key feature that influences teachers’ ability to teach high quality PE confidently and overcome the barriers to teaching. However, the training for primary teachers has tended to lack depth, relevance and coherence (Harris et

al., 2010). Further compounding the concerns about the limited impact of professional development for teachers is the use of sports coaches to upskill teachers. This is clearly problematic and will do little to challenge the practice, which is dominated by sport, and secure the place and legitimacy of PE within the curriculum.

Chapter Eight: Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

Introduction

In reflecting on the contribution of this research to knowledge within the field of primary PE, it has been established that, in order to support the development of a clear, coherent future for PE within the curriculum, it is vitally important to develop a better understanding of the beliefs and experiences of head teachers. This research clearly indicates that the participants believe a key purpose of PE is to address concerns about the state of children's health, promote healthy practices and foster an appreciation of healthy lifestyles. The findings add weight to the need to reconceptualise PE by adopting a more educationally-sound, health-based approach. Moreover, if PE is to secure its place within the curriculum and remain relevant for school leaders, an emphasis on healthy lifestyles is required. However, the current conceptualisation of 'PE as Sport Techniques' is serving to isolate PE from the other curriculum subjects and is becoming relevant and engaging for children.

In addition to reinforcing the concerns about the impact of neoliberalism on the position of primary PE within the curriculum, the research clearly indicates that head teachers believe the ITT in PE is insufficient and fails adequately to equip teachers with the confidence and competence to teach PE. As a result, outsourcing PE and the employment of unqualified teachers has become a widely accepted approach to teaching primary PE. Whilst this is noteworthy, it became apparent, through the application of Lawson's model of socialisation (1983a, 1983b), that beliefs about PE are developed at various stages of a teacher's socialisation, and head teachers play an influential role in the development of teachers' conceptualisations of and beliefs about PE. Whilst the research reveals that primary head

teachers believe PE is an important part of the curriculum, it highlights the influential impact of early socialisation in PE on the beliefs of head teachers. Moreover, the research has shown that early socialisation in PE is greatly influenced by the quality of the ITT PE and early career experiences. These early experiences persist throughout a teacher's career and impact on the beliefs and decisions of the head teachers.

Significantly, this study provides an evidence base to inform my work within and beyond my university, lobbying for an increase in the number of PE teaching hours across the generalist primary teacher training programmes. This evidence provides a strong platform from which to argue the need for more extensive PE training for primary generalist teachers and a further consideration of the division of hours across the subjects, within ITT courses.

Significantly, the findings of this research coincide with the government's review of the initial teacher training (ITT) market. As a result of the Market Review (DfE, 2021), institutions are examining how they intend to deliver the ITT core content within their curriculum and demonstrate a broad, balanced curriculum offer. This review provides an opportunity to campaign for the greater prominence of PE training both within the university and during school placements.

Summary of the contribution

This research has shown how a culmination of insufficient initial teacher training, inadequate in-service training and the current complex neoliberal agenda present significant challenges for current and future primary head teachers. However, I am optimistic that head teachers are motivated to engage in change agendas and explore the reconceptualisation of PE, if they feel it aligns with their beliefs about PE and the needs of

their pupils. To achieve this, it is important that, within the academic field of primary PE, the conceptual debates about the wider educational purpose and place of PE and health within the curriculum are articulated in order to create pedagogies that create viable alternatives for schools. Additionally, it is important this is communicated to head teachers in a way that is accessible, relatable and realistic, recognising the challenges facing head teachers. It is my intention to create opportunities to speak to head teachers about the potential of PE within the curriculum in order to help them to make informed choices about how PE is taught.

Recommendations

The findings from this research and engagement with literature in the field, have led to the development of the following recommendations.

Recommendation One:

All generalist primary trainee teachers should have access to high quality PE training together with opportunities to teach PE during their Initial Teacher Training.

There was a strong correlation between head teachers who reported positive prior personal experiences and those with high levels of self-efficacy in PE. However, over half of research participants did not feel they received high quality Initial Teacher Training and stated that generalist teachers often lack subject knowledge and confidence in teaching PE. The confidence and competence of teachers presents a very real challenge for head teachers.

- It is imperative that ITT providers provide students with sufficient time and opportunities to develop and demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge in PE. Currently the ITT Core Content Framework does not detail the content to be

covered across the various subject training routes for ITT. Therefore, I recommend the development of supplementary primary PE guidance for ITT providers to help secure the place (and time) of PE within primary ITT and to ensure that trainee teachers not only 'learn that' but have opportunities to 'learn how to' teach PE.

- In order to assist with the preparation and training of trainee and early career teachers, I recommend that head teachers facilitate opportunities for the regular teaching of PE.

Recommendation Two:

Professional learning opportunities and materials should be developed to support headteachers to consider the unique contribution and educational value of PE. Additionally, head teachers should ensure pedagogical practice in PE is aligned with other areas of the curriculum and taught by a qualified member of staff.

Head teachers play a vital role developing and leading a school culture that models positive health practices and motivates learners to become lifelong participants. Therefore, it is imperative that head teachers consider the unique contribution and educational value of PE and are able to clearly articulate the purpose of PE to ensure it is taught in a way that is educative. Head teachers need to understand the ways in which a dominant sporting discourse can be mis-educative and reinforce stereotypes that can leave some children feeling marginalised due to not fitting in with these norms. Establishing a learning environment underpinned by effective pedagogy is fundamental in order to create meaningful PE lessons that impact on children's attitudes and motivation to be physically active.

The head teachers' standards state that head teachers ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught' (DfE, 2020). To enable head teachers to do so and confidently articulate the educational value and contribution of PE, research informed resources need to be developed to support the professional development of head teachers. This could include the development of resources to supplement National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) training, focused on curriculum development and leading and improving teaching or materials. Additionally, these could inform training such as the National Association of Head Teacher (NAHT) Discovery Pathway. An example of how this might link to the NPQH framework include 2.1.1 Analyses research into, and examples of, domestic and international teaching strategies/ pedagogical approaches and applies findings to own plans.

Recommendation Three:

Requirement for head teachers to evidence effective use of the PE and School Sport Premium to support long-term sustainable development of teaching staff. Over two thirds of participants said that national policy influences how and what is taught in school. The participants agreed that there was a shift in inspection emphasis towards personal development and a broad, rich curriculum, which they felt had a positive impact on the teaching of PE, along with the PE and Sport Premium. However, despite unprecedented levels of national funding, PE has been resistant to change. Increasingly, neoliberal practices in schools, including performativity, have led to PE being led by sports coaches and as a result, PE has become sport based and detached from the curriculum.

- After ten years of PE and Sport Premium funding, head teachers should be able to demonstrate the impact of funding against key indicator 3: Increased confidence, knowledge, and skills of all staff in teaching PE and sport (DfE, 2021). Additional guidance in the Ofsted inspection handbook should assist head teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of training and support intended to increase teachers' confidence and competence to teach PE and indicate how interventions will lead to long term sustained development.
- The nationally recognised Evidencing the Impact of the Primary PE and Sport Premium website reporting tool should be adapted to reflect 10 years of funding and explicitly ask schools to report on the sustainable development of teaching staff.
- This point could be used as an example in NPQH resources related to the NPQH Framework criteria 5.3.1 Analyses school's resourcing challenges in terms of finances, staffing, teacher workload and educational resources, and designs plans to address these.

Limitations

As with any research, there are inevitably limitations that impact on the study. Whilst the personal learning journey I have been on over the past four years has been exciting and informative, it has also, on occasion, been frustrating. Frustration arose not only as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic but also, with hindsight, I realise that there are a number of things I could have done differently, as noted below.

The number of participants interviewed in this study was limited to five as a result of a reluctance to follow up on invitations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interview participants were contacted twice before it was decided that the sample size was sufficient. I recognise that the decision made as a result of the COVID-19, imposed some limitations on this study.

The research set out to represent the views of head teachers and, although this was conducted accurately and in context, I acknowledge that the research design may have impacted on some of the participants and the way in which they responded to the questionnaire and interview questions. The careful articulation of the position and qualification of those teaching PE would have enhanced the participants' ability to articulate the PE teaching model used in their schools.

Moreover, the online questionnaire made reference to internal and external teachers of PE but, with hindsight, should have asked if the school had employed a member of staff to teach PE who was not the class teacher and did not have QTS. I realised there were instances where a sports apprentice had been hired by the school, but the questionnaire did not specifically ask if an internal member of staff without QTS regularly taught PE. Whilst the interviews helped to elicit this information, it would have been both interesting and enlightening to have gathered this knowledge from both sets of data.

Additionally, the way in which some of the questions on the questionnaire were posed made it difficult to aggregate the responses during the data analysis. Some questions were positively phrased, whilst other were not. Whilst I consider that my research instruments were strengthened as a result of conducting a pilot study, I am aware that I failed to test the

measurement tools that were used to interpret the data. Consequently, the process of analysing the quantitative data took longer than expected and impacted on the timescale for the completion of the qualitative data analysis.

A mixed-methods approach enabled me to gather data on both a large and small-scale. Whilst this proved effective, the timing of the interviews coincided with considerable organisational challenges in schools as a result of the shifting COVID-19 restrictions. This resulted in my decision to interview only the five participants who immediately offered to be involved in the study. I did not feel it was appropriate to pursue participants who did not immediately volunteer. As a result, this may have narrowed the perspectives of the head teachers. It, therefore, would have been valuable to extend the study but, due to the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this did not seem a viable option. However, I intend to continue to explore the role that head teachers play in shaping primary school PE.

Finally, I acknowledge that the position and profile I have within the city where the research was conducted constituted a potential limitation. Whilst steps were taken to limit the impact of my insider position, it is important to acknowledge the participants' knowledge of my role in teacher education and passion for PE in primary schools.

Implications for practice

Having reflected on the contribution of my research to the academic field of primary school PE (whilst acknowledging the limitations), the following sections consider the implications for my own practice with respect to the initial training and professional development of

generalist primary teachers. Additionally, I will detail the next steps related to the dissemination of the findings associated with this research and my plans for future research.

Since becoming an ITT lecturer nine years ago, I have seen the number of hours of PE training decline, along with opportunities for trainees to observe and teach PE during their placements in school. Every year, I struggle to prioritise the content of the training I deliver in order to fit it into the six to twelve hours typically allocated to the training of generalist primary teachers to teach PE. This amount of time does little to equip a generalist teacher with the confidence and competence to teach high-quality PE. Within my institution, I intend to continue to push for an increased emphasis on PE within the modules and placements in schools. Given that the opportunities to teach PE vary during the initial teacher training, I intend to produce specific guidance for school mentors to reinforce the importance of providing opportunities for trainee teachers to teach PE. Guidance will be provided for mentors and trainee teachers in the school placement booklets, to highlight the importance of opportunities to observe good teaching practice in PE and to plan, teach and assess PE in line with the expectations in other areas of the curriculum.

Moreover, this research and the training materials that will be produced for the trainee teachers and mentors within my institution will be shared with members of the English Primary PE Teacher Education Network. In so doing, this will serve to support my Primary PE ITT colleagues who are engaged in similar discussions in universities across England. It is hoped that my colleagues will use this research and training resources to support market review discussions in their own institutions and will assist in lobbying for positive change in the national primary teacher training programmes. Furthermore, it is my intention to

engage in further research within the field of primary PE through publications, professional blogs and presentations at conferences, both nationally and internationally.

Significantly, the evidence in this thesis points to inadequacies in the traditional forms of continued professional development in PE, leading to calls for more effective ways of developing teachers' competence to deliver high-quality PE. This research shows that the professional development for generalist primary teachers tends to be led by coaches.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the training led by outsourced providers tends to be sport-focused, involving physical skills and drills. This does little to address pedagogical practice and inclusion or highlight the contribution of PE within the curriculum. Sharing my research findings with the local authority through my involvement in a citywide Primary PE strategy group, who play an influential role in shaping the local provision of training for teachers, will enable me to engage further with the professional development of teachers. Given that, currently, a significant amount of PE training within the authority is led by coaches, I intend to explore opportunities to support and develop training opportunities and materials for generalist primary teachers.

Next steps and future research

In reflecting on the implications and learning as a result of this research, the following section identifies proposals for future research and plans to impact on policy and practice.

These are broken down into three broad themes; namely, the next steps related to research, the next steps related to policy and the next steps related to practice.

Next steps related to research

With the international primary PE research community:

- Through my involvement in the European Primary Physical Education Network (EPPEN) network, I plan to share my research findings with colleagues involved in Initial Teacher Training across Europe. This will provide me with an opportunity to share my knowledge and practice with colleagues in the field and help to identify links with colleagues with similar research interests as well as future research opportunities.
- I plan to contribute to the international debate and thinking about primary PE through publications in international research journals, speaking at international conferences, such as the International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education (AIESEP), and contributing to popular podcasts related to the field of primary PE.
- As a result of this study, I also intend to develop a greater understanding of the way in which educational policy is informed, developed and enacted in PE and the wider curriculum, in international settings.

With the national primary PE research community:

- I plan to share my research findings with the national primary research community through publications in professional journals, such as 'PE Matters' and speaking at national PE and sport conferences and events, including the national Association for Physical Education (AfPE) conference.

- I also plan to share my research findings with members of the English Primary PE Teacher Education Network to help contribute to the national debate on ITT and identify links for future research.

Future research interests:

- As a result of this research, I intend to develop an understanding of the ways in which primary head teachers' beliefs about PE differ in international settings and the way in which policy impacts on how and what is being taught in schools.
- This research established that, increasingly, primary PE is being outsourced and taught by adults other than teachers. As a consequence, it is claimed that the educational value of PE is being diminished. I would like to examine this area further to establish external and internal PE coaches' beliefs about the purpose of PE.
- I also plan to connect with researchers working in the primary PE field in New Zealand to discuss my research and own reflections of Hauroa and the way in which I have contextualised it through my teaching in the UK. I will contact Physical Education New Zealand, Te Ao Kori Aotearoa and known researchers to identify opportunities.

Next steps related to policy

Influencing national policy:

- Through my involvement in the All Party Parliamentary Group for a Fit and Healthy Childhood, I will use my research to contribute to the national debate and lobby for thoughtful investment in PE within the curriculum. I will also raise awareness of the ways in which the national policy is undermining and displacing primary PE.

- Through my profile and involvement in the national PE community, I will use my research to raise awareness of head teachers' beliefs about PE and the ways in which outsourcing is influencing what and how PE is being taught.

Influencing local policy:

- I will disseminate my research findings with local and regional primary school head teachers and PE subject leaders through attending and giving presentations at PE conferences and network meetings in the north of England. I will use these opportunities to lobby for the protection of the place of PE within the primary PE curriculum and raise the awareness of the unintended consequences of outsourcing.

Next steps related to practice

Within the national field of Primary Initial Teacher Training:

- I aim to share my research with members of the English Primary PE Teacher Education Network to support the institutional debates related to course and curriculum design.
- I plan to share the materials produced for the trainee teachers and mentors within my institution with members of the English Primary PE Teacher Education Network.

Within my local authority:

- I will disseminate my research findings with the local authority Primary PE strategy group, to inform future professional development opportunities for teachers within the city.

- I plan to help to shape and deliver educationally-sound primary PE training programmes to support the development of teachers.
- My aim is to share my research findings with primary head teachers within the local authority to raise awareness of the importance of teacher socialisation.
- I will discuss with head teachers the wider educational purpose and place of PE and health within the curriculum in order to stimulate discussion about the impact of outsourcing and viable alternatives for schools.

Within my teacher training institution:

- I will push for an increased emphasis on and more time to be devoted to developing the knowledge and understanding of PE within the primary school ITT routes.
- I aim to provide guidance for trainee teachers and school-based mentors to promote the importance of opportunities to teach PE during school placements.

Chapter Summary

In considering the extent to which the aim of this research project was successful in investigating the Physical Education beliefs held by primary head teachers, it is evident that primary PE has become increasingly complex and has attracted the attention of multiple stakeholders, both within and outside education. Consequently, head teachers find themselves navigating through a maze of policy and initiatives whilst managing the fundamental changes and increased accountability that has accompanied the recent neoliberal agenda. As a result, head teachers are tasked with making difficult decisions in order to raise the standards in the priority subjects whilst at the same time ensuring value

for money. Therefore, head teachers, who have often had very little formal training in PE, are tasked with trying to articulate the purpose and curriculum goals of PE to staff members who often feel underprepared and lack confidence. In order to support the next generation of head teachers, it is evident that consideration should be paid to the ways in which PE is taught in order to educate the teachers of tomorrow; namely, the children. Additionally, it is essential to review the way in which generalist trainee teachers are prepared to teach PE in primary schools and provide more opportunities to enable early career teachers to develop their practice.

When reflecting on this study and my personal journey, I have become acutely aware of the extent to which my own personal experiences have shaped my beliefs about PE. It could be assumed that this study emerged from an awareness of my own professional socialisation. However, this was not the case. As I delved deeper into this research and started to examine my own beliefs about PE, the extent to which my childhood and early career experiences influenced my conceptualisation of PE became apparent. As a trainee teacher, I had a passion for PE that originated from my own positive experiences while at school and a love of sport. During the final year of my teacher training in New Zealand, a new PE curriculum was launched, and the concept of Hauora was introduced. I understood this concept on a superficial level, but it did not pervade into my practice. Instead, I reimagined my personal experiences. Through experience, my practice developed. Over time, I have benefitted from opportunities to question the learnt models of teaching PE, network with academics and research within the field and, significantly, inform my practice through my own research. It is only now that I recognise just how influential the early stages of my own

professional socialisation have been and how deeply rooted are my own values in the concept of Hauora.

I have now been teaching in England for twice as long as I taught in New Zealand, yet, only now, do I recognise how fundamental Hauora is to my beliefs and conceptualisation of PE. The four dimensions of taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing), taha hinengaro (thoughts and feelings), taha tinana (physical) and taha whanau (family) became evident from the data collected from English head teachers and I can see the emphasis of symmetry through the development of the four dimensions of Hauora in current thinking, which emphasises the importance of meaningful PE. This study, initiated by my love of PE, concerns the trajectory in which I felt primary PE was travelling and an awareness of the significant neoliberal pressures being imposed on schools. What I did not expect was that, through this study I would examine my own practice and gain a better understanding of the journey I have been on and my own philosophical beliefs about PE.

Concluding comments

This doctoral research has exceeded my expectations and challenged me in ways I could not have anticipated. My love of PE gifted me with an identity and confidence that sustained me throughout school and subsequently fuelled my ambition to teach. Throughout my schooling, undergraduate and master's study, I encountered obstacles related to my own learning and confidence to write, that I chose to ignore. However, as my desire to have a voice within the wider PE community grew, during my doctoral study, I confronted these challenges. For this, I am incredibly grateful. Whilst my intention was always solely to reach my EdD finish line, I am now excited to see how I can use my newfound voice to inform my own practice, have a positive impact on my local community and add to the growing

number of academics within the field who are fighting to protect the place and integrity of PE within the curriculum.

I am incredibly grateful to those who participated in this study and also to the head teachers who took part in the pilot study and played an important role in shaping this research. The generosity of head teachers to devote time to supporting the development of practice never ceases to amaze me, but never more so than during the COVID-19 pandemic, when, despite the huge pressures and time constraints, the head teachers willingly offered their time to support this research, for which I am deeply grateful.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Physical Education in Primary Schools: an investigation of head teacher's beliefs

Researcher: Sarah Williams

Supervisor: Dr. Gill Adams

Interview Date:

Name or participant:

School name:

Introduction: I have designed this project as a result of my desire to develop a better understanding of what head teachers believe to be the purpose of PE. Furthermore, I hope to understand how your personal experiences have shaped those beliefs and the role these play in shaping PE in your school.

Background:

1. Can you tell me how many years you spent teaching and how long you have been a head teacher?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your school memories and the lasting impression you have of PE in primary school?
 - a. *Do you feel these experiences have in any way shaped your beliefs about PE?*
 - b. *How did you feel about yourself in PE and did you think it was important to be good at PE?*

Teacher training:

3. How did you train to teach and what year did you graduate?
4. When you think about your initial teacher training experience, do you think it impacted on the beliefs you already held about PE?
 - a. *Can you tell me a little about that?*

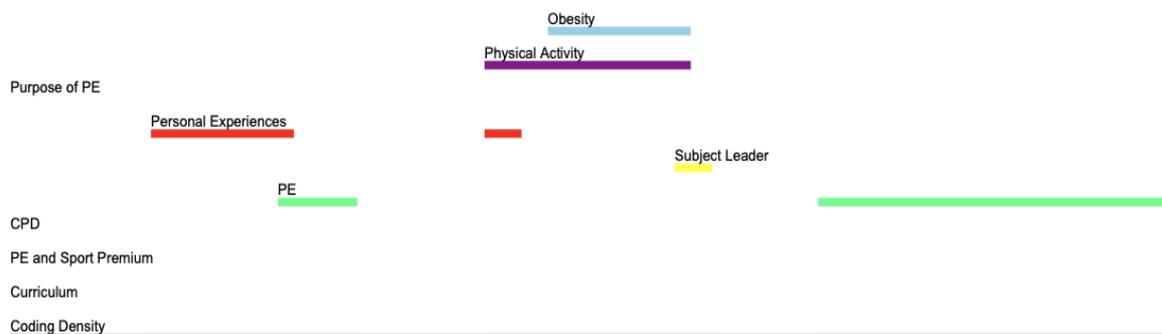
Your role as a classroom teacher:

5. Did you regularly teach PE and what do you think was your main goal?
6. Do you think the culture or values within a school have ever impacted on how you teach PE- either positively or negatively?

7. Purpose of PE and your role as Head Teacher:

8. What do you believe to be the main purpose of PE (feel free to elaborate)?
9. What do you think has had the biggest impact on your beliefs about the purpose of PE?
 - a. Does national policy influence what you believe to be the purpose of PE?
10. How much freedom do you think head teachers have to design the curriculum and what impact does this have on PE?
11. How is PE developed in your school and what is your role in this?
12. How does curriculum planning in PE compare to other subjects?
13. How do you think PE should be taught?
 - a. Should PE be delivered within the curriculum and as a standalone subject?
 - b. Who is best placed to teach PE lessons within the curriculum?
14. What are the biggest challenges in your school in relation to the teaching of PE?
 - a. If time and money weren't an object how would PE differ to what you do now?
15. Do you think your perspective in relation to PE has shifted since becoming a head teacher?
 - a. Do you think your staff are influenced by your beliefs about PE?

Appendix B: Example of qualitative data NVivo Coding



Did you feel it was important to be good at PE? Did you feel it was something that was valued and part of the curriculum?

R: In terms of as me as a child are we talking?

Yeah.

R: I don't recall any sense of there being whether you were good, it was just inclusive. Everyone was doing it and everyone was enjoying it. I don't recall there being any sort of, oh, these are the good people so they play over here and you can play over there, it just seemed to be a game and it was a very inclusive game and everyone had a good time so you might not have developed in the sense of becoming a more skilled cricketer or footballer or anything but you enjoyed playing it. It certainly made me enjoy sports and wanted then to do sports. It didn't put me off. Sometimes I think when we're teaching now the kids just want to play a game but you're going through this structure and, you know, we're doing the skills bit now and then we might play a game at the end and the kids sometimes just want to play the game. I don't know which is better.

Yeah, so it's a bit more of a carrot at the end of it rather than the purpose of it. Yeah. Do you think that - Obviously there were positive experiences for you. Do you think that has impacted on your own values about the purpose and place of PE in primary schools?

R: It certainly made me enjoy sports and value what you get out of playing sports and doing sports. I think nowadays a lot of our children are so sedentary in what they do I think it's become more important in some ways to have some physical activity throughout the school day. When I was going to primary school it was a good half an hour walk from the house to the school, you were then out in the yard doing whatever at breaktime, very physical, running around, every game you played after school was out on the streets or doing something physical, a ball up the woods or whatever so you were very physically active, whereas the children we teach now, many of them, you know, they're brilliant at playing football on a computer game but they don't necessarily play football so much outside and families don't let their children play out as much. I think it's really important to try and have somebody promoting the health and wellbeing side through that.

Is that a recent shift that you've noticed or is it during your time teaching you've noticed a bit of a contrast between your own experiences and those of children?

R: I think, like I say, when I was a child going to school and playing sports at school it was about - it never occurred to me I suppose that it was a lesson. It was, oh, it's games as it was called and we went and played some games. It seemed like a bit of fun, everyone was having a good time, we were outside, we were doing something. Now there's more structure to it so it can be - it's less just fun for everybody, now it's another lesson within the day and there's a structure to it. Like you'd have a structure to a maths lesson or a literacy lesson, you've now got that structure to a PE lesson and, you know, I've done PE lessons where you explain to kids before you go outside, 'what we're going to today is this and this is the reason we're doing it and this is the learning objective and we're going to develop this or whatever.' No one ever did that when I was at school, you just went, 'right, get changed, it's games' and you got changed and hurried out to the field and played for an hour or two. Now it's much more of a structure and some children like that I suppose but it switches some children off. I can remember taking groups out for lessons and there'd always be two or three, you'd have to really be cajoling to join in, you know. They do the bits where it was perhaps more structured where you were doing the warm-up or you got in pairs or small groups practicing the skill but as soon as you put them in to a game and we're now going to use all this, they would sort of just stand at the furthest edges of the field not really engaging because they didn't really like doing it. So yeah.

Appendix C: Online Questionnaire

Project Title:

Physical Education in Primary Schools: an investigation of head teachers beliefs

This project has been designed to investigate the Physical Education beliefs held by primary head teachers. It is concerned with understanding the subjective experience of primary head teachers and seeks to gain a better understanding of how their beliefs and have been shaped and the impact these have had on their practice. The research will serve to strengthen understanding of existing knowledge in relation to the role of school leaders in conceptualising PE.

Information about participants in this study will be kept confidential and data will be anonymised. Findings from this study are intended to inform the researcher's Doctoral study and will be used in final thesis and may be used in subsequent publications. Participants will remain anonymous and data will be stored securely on Sheffield Hallam University's storage system for a period of 5 years when it will be destroyed.

Section one-Your Schooling

- *In this section please reflect on your childhood school experience and tick the box that is most relevant*

1) As a child I enjoyed my primary school PE experiences				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
2) As a child I enjoyed my secondary school PE experiences				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
3) As a primary school aged child I frequently participated in sports activity outside of school				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
4) As a secondary school aged child I frequently participated in sports activity outside of school				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
5) As a primary school aged child I frequently participated in competitive sports				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
6) As a secondary school aged child I frequently participated in competitive sports				

Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
7) My childhood experiences have shaped my beliefs about the teaching of primary PE				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
8) My childhood experiences had a positive impact on my confidence to teach PE				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
9) My childhood experiences had a negative impact on my confidence to teach PE				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
10) As an adult I regularly participate (typically 3+ times a week) in informal physical activities such as walking and cycling for travel				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
11) As an adult I regularly participate (typically 3+ times a week) in fitness activities such as running, weights training, dance classes and yoga				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
12) As an adult I regularly participate (weekly) in sporting activities such as netball, 5-a-side football, golf				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
13) Physical activity is a priority for me				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
14) Please describe the that impact on your physical activities				

Section Two-Your Teacher Training Experiences

- In this section please reflect on your teacher training experience and tick the box that is most relevant

15) How did you train to teach?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Graduate (typically 2-4 year degree) • Post Graduate (typically 1 year) • QTS only route 				
16) If you completed a PGCE what was the subject focus of your undergraduate degree?				
17) Did you specialise in PE during your initial teacher training?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 				
18) I was provided with high quality specialist PE training during my teacher training				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
19) I had an opportunity to teach PE teaching during my teacher training placements				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
20) My initial teacher training experience positively impacted on my confidence to teach PE				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
21) My initial teacher training experience positively impacted on my competence in teaching PE				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
22) I felt adequately prepared to teach PE following my initial teacher training				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree

Section Three- Your Role as a Teacher

- *In this section please reflect on your experience as a primary school teacher and tick the box that is most relevant*

23) How many years did you spend teaching prior to your first appointment as a head teacher?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 years • 3-5 years • 6-10 years • 11yrs+ 				
24) I regularly taught PE during my first few years teaching				

Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
25) I enjoyed teaching PE as a classroom teacher				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
26) I attended additional PE training during my time as a classroom teacher				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
27) I received team teaching/mentoring support in PE during my time as a classroom teacher				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
28) I would describe myself as a competent teacher of PE				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
29) As a classroom teacher, expectations for teaching and learning in PE were in-line with other curriculum areas				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
30) Please tick the five most important factors that impacted on your teaching of PE as a classroom teacher				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time made available within the curriculum • PE equipment • Space-both indoor and out • Planning resources • Your confidence • Your competence • Behaviour management • Parental choice • Community culture • Support staff • Pupil enjoyment in PE • Pupil attainment in PE • Pupil attainment in other subjects • Assessments such as SATs • Pupil health • School Ofsted rating • National policy 				

- Teacher release/PPA
- Other_____

Section Four-Your Role as A Head Teacher

- *In this section please reflect on your experience as a head teacher and tick the box that is most relevant*

31) How many years have you held the post of head teacher? (include your current and previous head teacher posts)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 years • 3-5 years • 6-10 years • 10yrs+ years 					
32) How many years have you been in your current head teacher post?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 years • 3-5 years • 6-10 years • 10yrs+ years 					
33) The majority of PE lessons are taught by qualified generalist primary school teachers in my school					
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	
34) The majority of PE lessons are taught by a qualified specialist PE teacher with QTS					
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	
35) The majority of PE lessons are taught by an external provider without QTS					
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	
If the majority of lessons are taught by an external provider without QTS please indicate the reasons for doing so					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost • Availability • Expertise • Other (please explain below) 					
36) Have you employed PE specialist (with or without QTS) as a result of low classroom teacher confidence in PE?					
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	N/A
37)					
38) Have you employed PE specialist to provide additional PPA capacity?					

Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	N/A
39) The majority of teachers in my school are confident teaching PE					
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	
36) The majority of teachers in my school have the skills to teach PE competently					
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	
37) On average how time does each class in your school spend in PE lessons each week?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-45minutes • 45-60 minutes • 60-90 minutes • 90-120minutes • 120 minutes + 					
38) Please tick the five most significant factors that influence the delivery of PE in your school					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time available within the curriculum • PE equipment • The cost of PPA cover • Space-both indoor and out • Teacher confidence • Behaviour • Inclusive practice • Parental choice • Teacher competence • Links with community sports organisations including school sports partnerships • Availability of staff to cover PPA • PE and School Sport Premium funding • Ofsted rating • National policy such as the obesity strategy • Other _____ 					
39) I have supported PE training (either inset or mentoring) for teaching staff in the past 2 years					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 					
Please briefly elaborate on your above answer and explain the reasons behind this decision					

40) PE is part of the school development plan/improvement priorities					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p>lease briefly elaborate on your above answer and explain the reasons behind this decision?_____</p>				
41) National policy influences how and what is taught in PE in my school (e.g Obesity Strategy)				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
42) The Ofsted framework influences how PE is taught in my school				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
43) The majority of our parents/caregivers value PE within the curriculum				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
44) The majority of our parents/caregivers support competitive sport				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree

Section Five-Questions related to Covid-19

45) As a result of Covid-19 the school curriculum has been reduced				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
46) As a result of organisational Covid-19 arrangements the amount of time dedicated to PE has reduced				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
47) As a result of Covid-19 related change in school, external providers no longer deliver PE				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
48) As a result of Covid-19 the amount of time dedicated to PE and physical activity in the school day has been increased				
Strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree or disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree

Section Six-Purpose of PE

49) Please tick the five statements you feel best reflect the purpose and benefits of PE:

- inspires pupils to succeed
- Promotes competitive sport
- Encourages school attendance
- Encourages positive behaviour
- Promotes creativity
- Develops opportunities for pupils to become physically confident
- Promotes healthy eating
- Builds character and resilience
- Develops communication skills
- Provides aesthetic learning opportunities
- Develops movement competence
- Develops stamina and strength
- Builds physical fitness
- Positively impacts on attention span and mental alertness
- Supports mental and emotional health
- Addresses obesity
- Encourages decision making
- Develops knowledge of a range of sports
- Develops tactical understanding
- Impacts on cognitive functioning and academic attainment
- Supports physical literacy
- Promotes physical mastery
- Reduces pupil stress and anxiety
- Promotes joy
- Builds self esteem
- Provides a sense of achievement
- Promotes tolerance and inclusion
- Tool for whole school improvement
- Helps children to develop respect for their own body and others'
- Provides an emotional experience
- Promotes daily physical activity habits
- Develops life skills such as swimming and cycling
- Promotes adventure and enquiry
- Positively impacts on literacy and numeracy skills
- Promotes outdoor learning
- Promotes healthy lifestyles
- Teaches personal and moral responsibility

50) Please feel free to share any final thoughts regarding your personal beliefs and/or the PE practice in your school.

Please insert your email address if you would be happy to be contacted to participate in a subsequent interview.

Thank you for participating in this survey. Completion of this survey indicates that you are happy for your responses to be included in this research study. Information about participants in this study will be kept confidential and data will be anonymised. Once this survey is submitted it cannot be withdrawn from the study. Close this tab if you are no longer happy to be included in the study.

Appendix D: Example of quantitative data extracted from SPSS (copy of coefficient regression table for Dependent Variable 1)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-1.188	1.653		-0.718	0.478					
PriorPersonalExperience	-0.008	0.138	-0.021	-0.061	0.951	0.090	-0.011	-0.009	0.179	5.578
PriorPersonalBehaviour	-0.087	0.083	-0.312	-1.053	0.300	-0.027	-0.183	-0.149	0.228	4.393
CurrentBehaviour	-0.012	0.101	-0.024	-0.122	0.903	0.016	-0.022	-0.017	0.529	1.890
CurrentAttitudes	0.134	0.149	0.204	0.900	0.375	0.293	0.157	0.127	0.389	2.569
PreviousPETraining	0.079	0.038	0.315	2.046	0.049	0.386	0.340	0.290	0.847	1.180
SelfEfficacy	0.391	0.363	0.230	1.075	0.291	0.298	0.187	0.152	0.439	2.279
PriorTeachingExperience	1.549	0.816	0.306	1.898	0.067	0.376	0.318	0.269	0.772	1.296
PercievedTeacherConfidence	-0.256	0.473	-0.152	-0.543	0.591	0.106	-0.095	-0.077	0.257	3.896
PercievedTeacherSkills	0.104	0.509	0.059	0.204	0.840	0.073	0.036	0.029	0.237	4.226

Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet

Project Title:

Physical Education in Primary Schools: an investigation of head teacher's beliefs

Researcher: Sarah Williams

Supervisor: Dr. Gill Adams

What is the purpose of the study?

Building on a recent pilot study, this project will investigate the Physical Education beliefs held by primary head teachers within a large city in the north of England. The research will generate a meaningful understanding of the factors that have shaped participants' beliefs in relation to PE. It will serve to strengthen understanding of existing knowledge within the field and fill an established gap in the body of knowledge in relation to the role of school leaders in conceptualising PE.

Why have you been invited to take part in this study?

You have been invited to participate in this study alongside all other primary Head Teachers working within the city in which your school is located.

Do I have to be involved?

Participation is entirely voluntary. A copy of the study information sheet will be provided for your consideration and records, along with a signed consent form. You are invited to participate in the study but have the option of removing yourself from the study without justification, up to 7 days following your participation. Furthermore, if you are uncomfortable with any of the questions posed you can freely choose not to respond.

What will I be required to do?

You are invited to complete an online questionnaire at your convenience prior to the 20th of July 2020. The questionnaire can be completed electronically and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

How will this data be used and are there any possible risks in taking part?

Information about participants in this study will be kept confidential and data will be anonymised. Findings from this study are intended to inform the researchers Doctoral study and will be used in final thesis and may be used in subsequent publications. Participants will remain anonymous and will be referred to as head teachers from within the region however individual contributions will be anonymised. Data will be stored securely on Sheffield Hallam University's storage system for a period of 5 years when it will be destroyed.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Participants will have an opportunity to share their own experiences and reflect on some of the factors that impact on the development and delivery of PE within primary schools. Through participation in this research it is envisaged that participants will examine practice and contribute to the development of primary PE within the city and beyond.

How can I find out about the results of the study?

Participants will be provided an opportunity to attend a dissemination event at the end of the study and will be provided with a research summary on completion.

If you require any further information or have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor.

Sarah Williams: sarah.williams@shu.ac.uk

Dr. Gill Adams: g.adams@shu.ac.uk

This document explains why the researcher is carrying out this research project and sets out what will be involved for participants. The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest**. A full statement of your rights can be found at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notice-for-research>. However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Convenir number ERxxxxxx. Further information at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>

Details of who to contact if you have any concerns or if adverse effects occur after the study are given below

<p>You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• you have a query about how your data is used by the University• you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)• you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data <p style="text-align: center;">DPO@shu.ac.uk</p>	<p>You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated <p style="text-align: center;">a.macaskill@shu.ac.uk</p>
<p>Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555</p>	

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Physical Education in Primary Schools: an investigation of head teacher's beliefs

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

	Yes	No
1. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.		
2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.		
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher.		
4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.		
5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.		
6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for any other research purposes.		
7. I consent to be contacted by the researcher following the interview, if further clarification is required.		

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Contact details: _____

Researcher's Name: Sarah Williams

Researcher's contact details:	Supervisors contact details:
Sheffield Hallam University Faculty of Social Science and Humanities Charles Street Building Level 5, room 12.5.10 Sheffield Hallam University S1 2NH e-mail: sarah.williams@shu.ac.uk Tel: 0114 225 3119	Sheffield Hallam University Department of Teacher Education, Sheffield Institute of Education Room 10105, Arundel Building, Howard St, S1 1WB e-mail: G.Adams@shu.ac.uk Tel: 0114 225 6015

Appendix G: Data Management Plan

1. What data will you collect or create?

This doctoral project will apply a mixed method approach, involving collection of quantitative and qualitative data to gain a detailed understanding of the research area. It will include an online questionnaire which will be distributed to all 140 primary head teachers within the city. Following completion of the quantitative phase of data collection, eight head teachers will be invited to participate in an individual interview.

Voice recordings will be collected during the face to face semi structured group interview and mp3 audio files will be recorded on a personal voice recorder which is stored securely in the researcher's residence. Recordings will be transcribed onto MS Word document and safely stored on an encrypted pen drive before being securely stored on the Q drive. Consent forms will be held on an encrypted pen drive which is securely stored in a locked cabinet at the researchers residence. Sound files will be deleted from the voice recorder once transcriptions are complete.

Questionnaire data will be administered and gathered via a password protected Qualtrics account and once data has been gathered it will be securely stored on an encrypted pen drive before being transferred to the Q Drive.

2. How will your data be documented and described?

Questionnaires:

- A copy of the online questionnaire will be downloaded and stored as a record. Once data has been gathered it will be securely stored on an encrypted pen drive before being transferred to the Q Drive.
- Participants will be asked to provide consent prior to the start of the questionnaire and this information will be saved on an encrypted pen drive and which is securely stored in a locked cabinet at the researchers residence.
- Individual responses will be downloaded on the closing date and files will be deleted from Qualtrics once data has been fully and securely downloaded.
- A copy of the downloaded files will be pseudonymised and saved on an encrypted pen drive before being transferred to the Q drive.

Individual Interviews:

- Audio data will be transcribed verbatim onto MS Word files and stored alongside the interview questions on the Q Drive.
- Field notes will be captured immediately following the interview, avoiding personal identification of participants and these will be stored securely in a locked cabinet at the researchers residence.

- Typed notes and audio files will be stored on an encrypted pen drive and kept in a locked cabinet at the researchers residence.
- Participant consent will be securely stored on a sperate encrypted pen drive as an electronic file.

Data files will be labelled according to study, file type and date *eg. Pilot Participant Questionnaire Questions-May 2020.*

Files will be safely stored in encrypted folders identifying the purpose of the files (main study questionnaire data)

3. How will your data be structured, stored, and backed up?

Written consent will be gained from the participants prior to interview and within the questionnaire. Original records of consent will be securely stored by the researcher on an encrypted pen drive. This will be achieved through the creation of electronic files of consent forms. Consent files will be stored separately to data to avoid privacy being compromised. Any information that could be used to identify the participant, institution or anybody else mentioned during the interview or in questionnaires will be pseudonymised during the transcription process.

All data will be recorded electronically and stored on encrypted pen drives sperate to consent forms. All working files will be securely stored via two password encrypted processes on a personal computer. This includes login password and separately encrypted files. Once working files are complete they will be transferred on to the Q Drive.

4. How will you manage any ethical issues?

Consent will be gained prior to the study via participant information sheets and written consent. Consent will be stored with the data for a period of 10 years, initially via an encrypted pen drive and latterly via the Q Drive.

Audio files will be securely stored via 2 phase encrypted files and quickly transcribed and pseudonymised. Field notes will be written in full and pseudonymised at point of review by the researcher. These files will be securely stored on an encrypted pen drive and locked in a cabinet at the researcher's residence before being uploaded to the Q Drive.

A participant information sheet will be provided and consent will be obtained from all participants prior to the study. The information sheet will clearly state the right of all participants to withdraw from any part of the study or retract content up to 14 days following an interview and 7 days following the deadline for completion of the questionnaire. Participants will be provided with the researchers contact details so they can withdraw from the study via email limiting fear of being challenged.

5. What are your plans for data sharing after submission of your thesis?

Data gathered will be used primarily to inform a doctoral thesis however, the results may be disseminated via conferences and publications. It is not intended that the data will be used by other researchers however many be called on by the researcher in future publications. The thesis will be placed on SHURA.

6. What are your plans for the long-term preservation of data supporting your research?

All data will be stored on an encrypted pen drive for the duration of the Doctoral research programme (approximately 5 years). Following the completion of the thesis, data will be stored on the Q Drive and the thesis will be available via SHURDA for a further 10 years.

Appendix H: Example Reflective Research Diary

<p>Name: Participant C</p>
<p>Date: 3/12/2020</p>
<p>Prior working relationship: Participant hosts students from one of my courses. Otherwise limited prior knowledge however participant was aware of my job role and the focus of my research</p>
<p>Time of day: 2pm</p>
<p>Setting: Participant sat in office speaking over Zoom via laptop. No technical issues or distractions.</p>
<p>Was participant interrupted or was time constrained? No interruptions and did not appear to be short on time</p>
<p>Did the interview flow naturally and were many prompts offered? Very easy conversation to commence the interview. Participant was friendly and enthusiastic about the research and opportunity. Participant thought their responses to the questionnaire would lead to them being selected rather than demographics. The participant was unguarded and emotional when talking about childhood and family. Some prompts were offered but generally the participant spoke in depth and at ease.</p>
<p>General impression based on responses to questions Very positive about PE. Was involved and very hands on with regard to the development of PE. Supported subject lead and felt qualified to make choices about provision. Enjoyed teaching PE and felt it was particularly important when building connections with children, particularly boys. Not 'sporty' but sport was important to family and in relationships. Values PE more now they see the impact sport has had on own children. Felt resourcing was important to support the development of staff-planning and assessment. Should be monitored in line with other subjects-is this also the case with coach delivering fitness activities? Felt health consideration were important and hires a PT to deliver fitness lessons. Questions were all answered in full.</p>
<p>Any questions raised on reflection Would like to have dug deeper into how fitness orientated PE could have impacted on their experience and enjoyment of PE as a child.</p>
<p>Any considerations for future interviews Be aware of the possibility of emotions to be raised when talking about family.</p>
<p>Anything I would do differently? Continue to be aware of the balance between putting participants at ease whilst avoiding too much chat and informality.</p>

Any key themes emerging or points of interest?

Really interested to hear about rationale for fitness-based activity/HIIT and the educational value of these activities.

Final thoughts:

Keep an eye on time

Keep focused on interview schedule