



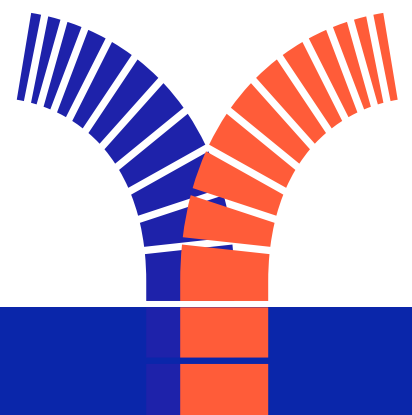
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Top 10 Tips for Effective PE Leadership – *Secondary*

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Top 10 Tips for Effective PE Leadership

Secondary

Whether you're stepping into the role for the first time or have been leading PE for several years, your priorities will look different – and that's okay. If you're new to the role, your starting point is to get to know your school's context and purpose. That means listening to pupils, staff, senior leaders and families. Your early focus will be on identifying what's already in place, where the gaps are and how PE can play a bigger role in your school's culture and priorities. If you're more experienced, the challenge often shifts to sustaining, evolving and

balancing – making sure your PE, schools sport and physical activity (PESSPA) offer remains high quality, inclusive and responsive to changing needs.

To support this journey, the tips below are ordered to reflect a progressive pathway from laying the foundations of purposeful, inclusive practice to influencing the wider school culture and strategic leadership. Whether you're just starting out or deepening your impact, this framework is here to guide, support and inspire your approach.



01 Start with purpose

Begin by agreeing a clear, shared purpose for PE – this could focus on positive experiences, inclusion, pupil voice or wellbeing.

Involve your whole team in shaping the vision. Shared ownership builds buy-in and leads to more consistent practice.

Run a quick SWOT analysis to reflect on current strengths and identify areas for improvement. Celebrate what's going well and get excited about the opportunities to make PE even better.



02 Align with whole-school priorities

Make sure your PE vision connects directly to whole-school priorities – whether that's curriculum equity, attendance, character development or wellbeing.

It's also important to consider how PE aligns with your school or Trust's core purpose and values. For example, if your core purpose is improving outcomes for students, PE plays a vital role by creating happy, healthy young people. In PE, you help build the physical and emotional environment where students thrive, feel they belong and are ready to succeed.



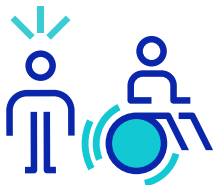
03 Champion high-quality PE

Lead the design and delivery of a high-quality, progressive and inclusive PE curriculum that supports physical literacy and meets national curriculum aims.

At the top level, this means co-creating your core PE curriculum as a team. When staff are involved in planning, it helps build unity and ensures consistent messaging – especially when teaching activities that some students might not initially enjoy or see the purpose of.

Model what high-quality PE looks like, from schemes of work and lesson planning to delivery. Celebrate excellent practice and create regular opportunities to share what works within your department or Trust.

Remember to revisit expectations around lesson planning and delivery at regular points throughout the year – this keeps quality and consistency front of mind.



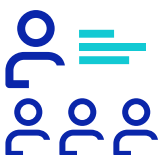
04 Prioritise inclusion and equity

Make PE a place where every student belongs and are valued and supported on their own journey. Grouping matters. Setting can motivate some but alienate others, so keep this under review.

Use displays, assemblies and role models to show PE is for everyone. Track participation and actively invite students to events – not just the usual suspects.

Examples from Redhill Trust:

- **PE Pride Picnic** – open to all, celebrating LGBTQ+ inclusion
- **Trust Games** – events for students less likely to represent school sport
- **Inclusive School Games** – accessible, entry-level sport for all.



05 Listen and respond to pupils

Involve students in shaping your curriculum and enrichment offer – their voice should drive improvement.

Show them their feedback matters by talking about changes in lessons, sharing survey results on displays and updating parents. This builds trust and boosts engagement.



06 Support and develop staff

Say yes to CPD as often as you can and make sure learning is shared across the department. When formal CPD isn't available, create your own opportunities – this could be a PE afternoon for reflection and planning, or running something like a handball referee course in-house. By doing this, you'll build a culture where CPD is valued and ongoing development becomes the norm.



07 Promote a physically active culture

Championing PE across school can be tough, especially where it's not seen as a priority. Be ready to protect core PE time, co-curricular events and leadership opportunities – these make a real difference to students' experiences.

Plan for the whole academic year – highlight when staff may need time out to run opportunities and link this to school or Trust values to build wider support.

When offering leadership roles, think carefully about students' other commitments to ensure the experience benefits them, not overwhelms them.

Finally, celebrate success loudly – share the great work happening in PE with parents and the whole school to help build a positive culture around PE and school sport.

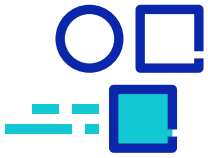


08 Plan and evaluate with purpose

Use your time and resources wisely. Set clear goals and regularly review progress through a physical literacy lens.

Set aside time each half-term to revisit your department improvement plan. Reflect together on what's going well, what still needs work and celebrate success along the way.

This keeps everyone focused, accountable and moving in the same direction..



09 Organisation

One of the biggest areas I focus on when coaching new PE faculty leaders is organisation.

Key elements include:

- Top-level planning: curriculum plans, schemes of work, PE development plans, timetables (staffing and half-term activity plans)
- Clear key deadlines for the year, plus realistic soft deadlines for staff and students
- Planning and staffing co-curricular opportunities effectively
- Weekly 'Look Ahead' sheets sent every Friday to map out the following week's cover and absences – especially important for co-curricular activities.



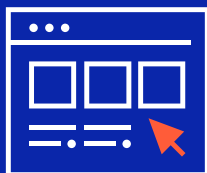
10 Keep evolving

Lead innovation – stay connected to sector guidance and research, reflect on emerging needs and drive continual improvement in your department. You'll likely have a couple more free periods than your PE colleagues – use this time to be innovative and reflective. Your passion and enthusiasm are the magic ingredients that spark and sustain a positive PE culture. With many demands on your time, staying disciplined to nurture your own enthusiasm is vital.

Collaborating with colleagues and external organisations can also help keep your spirits high when day-to-day pressures feel overwhelming.

As you evolve, help others on the journey too. Share your effective leadership story with SLT, governors, staff, your local community and with us at the Youth Sport Trust. By showcasing what's working in your setting, you can inspire and support others across the network.

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