

Grooming champ

The Sports Colleges Conference, organised by the Youth Sport Trust, celebrated its 10th anniversary this year

At this year's Sports Colleges Conference, held in Telford in March, Prime Minister Tony Blair praised the country's growing network of sports colleges for significantly improving whole school standards and creating more opportunities for young people to develop through PE and sport.

The annual two-day conference, organised by the Youth Sport Trust, is this year celebrating the 10th anniversary of the first designated sports colleges in 1997.

The Prime Minister said the school sport movement was helping to 'transform the landscape of schools over the past decade', and added: 'With a rapid extension of the specialist schools movement, the introduction of Academies and, in the near future, the new Trust schools, we've brought institutional diversity to the system.'

From just 11 sports colleges in 1997, the number of sports colleges has now grown to 422 – around one in every 10 secondary schools in England.

The research document 'Know the score',

'From just 11 sports colleges in 1997, the number has now grown to 422'

published by the Youth Sport Trust, reveals how sports colleges are enhancing young people's opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports as well as raising the standards of teaching and learning of PE and school sport.

Sports colleges, secondary schools which place PE and sport at the heart of the curriculum, play a key role in the national school sport strategy's prime objective – a joint Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) target – to increase the numbers of young people taking part in school sport.



PM Tony Blair... praised sports development in the UK over the last 10 years.

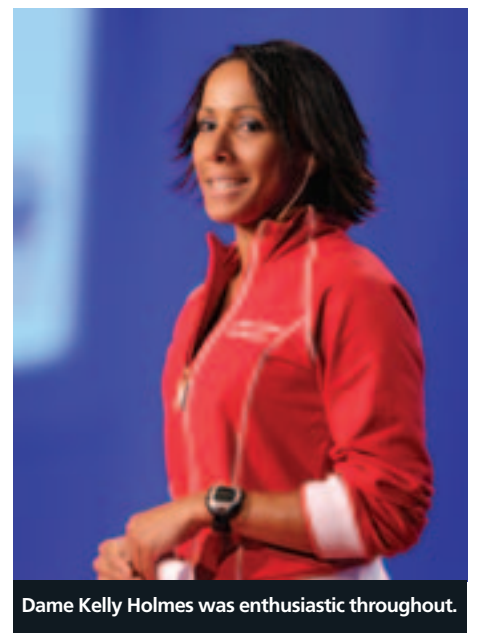
The 2007 Sports Colleges conference is a celebration of how these schools and the school sport partnerships they support are continuing to drive improvements in education and provide more opportunities for young people to learn and develop through physical education and sport.

And when it comes to exam results, it's not just about having more pupils than average gaining a GCSE in PE. Since 1998, the overall rate of improvement in pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C has been higher in sports colleges than the national average. Every year for the past five years, sports colleges have either performed better than or equalled the national average in terms of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C. The longer sports colleges are designated, the bigger the increase in their GCSE performance.

Away from the classroom, sports colleges and school sport partnerships – including primary, secondary and special schools – are enjoying similarly outstanding success. In September 2006, the school sport network received a huge boost when a national study found it had greatly increased the numbers of young people taking part in high quality PE and school sport.

The 2005/06 School Sport Survey of more than 16,800 schools in England revealed 80 per cent of

pupils within school sport partnerships are participating in at least two hours of high-quality PE and school sport – five percentage points higher than the Government's 2006 target. That figure represents an increase of 29 per cent since the first survey two years ago.



Dame Kelly Holmes was enthusiastic throughout.

ions for 10 years



Keynote speaker Justin King of Sainsburys.

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with education those young people who are most at risk of opting out of school life.

Sports colleges are using the positive personal values of sport to instil confidence, self-esteem, teamwork and discipline among young people, leading to increases in educational attainment.

Sports colleges are also helping to form stronger links between schools, local sports clubs and whole communities. Steve Grainger, chief executive of the Youth Sport Trust, said: 'We are delighted to see that sports colleges are continuing to go from strength to strength since the first 11 were designated in 1997.'

'What is clear over the past 10 years is just how much of a huge impact physical education and sport can have on inspiring our young people to succeed and reach their potential – not just on

playing fields and running tracks, but also in the classroom.

'The Youth Sport Trust is fully committed to helping the school sport network build on the fantastic results that have already been achieved and we look forward to the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead.'

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell, said: 'School sport has been one of the Government's biggest success stories. We have invested £1.5bn to transform school sport in the five years to 2008 with sports colleges playing a crucial role in our strategy.'

'With their focus on promoting excellence in physical education these schools have helped increase substantially sport participation among young people and help strengthen community sport'

With the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games coming to London in just five years, the opportunities to use the power sport has to inspire and motivate young people are growing. Sport is helping to tackle issues of inclusion and re-engage

Honouring innovation in sport provision

Sports colleges across the country have been honoured in the Youth Sport Trust Innovation Awards, which recognise outstanding achievement in enhancing the provision of PE and school sport.

Olympic gold medallists Kelly Holmes and Darren Campbell presented the awards alongside Britain's most successful Paralympian Tanni Grey-Thompson, Education Secretary Alan Johnson and Sports Minister Richard Caborn at the Telford International Centre.

The prestigious annual Innovation Awards celebrate the work of the country's 422 sports colleges in six categories.

Dame Kelly Holmes said: 'Schools are often where young people form the attitudes towards PE and sport, which stay with them for life, and can also play a huge role in helping find and nurture the talented sports stars of tomorrow. That is why sports colleges are doing a great job in creating new and exciting ways of engaging young people through PE and sport. It is really important as it can help them learn, develop and reach their potential both now and throughout their lives.'

Steve Grainger, chief executive of the Youth Sport Trust, said: 'We would like to congratulate all the sports colleges that have been successful in this year's

Innovation Awards. Through our close partnership with the country's growing number of sports colleges we are able to support them in their development and implementation of a range of exciting and innovative programmes, which get more young people involved in, and benefiting from, all the different aspects of PE and school sport.

'The Innovation Awards are a fantastic opportunity for us to recognise some of the programmes and initiatives which really stand out and we wish all the winners and 'highly commended' sports colleges continued success in the future.'

The Sainsbury's Award for improving and enhancing the health of your young people

Winner – The Manor School, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire
Highly commended – Wexham School, Slough, Berkshire

The PGL Award for improving achievement through PE and sport

Winner – Corpus Christi Catholic Sports College, Preston, Lancashire
Highly commended – Arbour Vale School, Slough, Berkshire

The Norwich Union Award for improving participation in PE and sport

Winner – St Aidan's County High School Specialist Sports College, Carlisle, Cumbria
Highly commended – The Manor School, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire

The School Trends Award for engaging young people through Information Technology

Winner – Perins School – A Community Sports College, New Alresford, Hampshire
Highly commended – The Coseley School and Sports College, Bilston, West Midlands

The Minister for Sport Award for communication

Winner – Budehaven Community School, Bude, Cornwall
Highly commended – Netherhall School Specialist Sports College, Maryport, Cumbria

The BSkyB video Award – using the power and inspiration of sport to ensure every child matters

Winner – Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School – A Specialist Sports College, Liverpool, Merseyside
Highly commended – Evesham High School, Evesham, Worcestershire.