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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

6 June 1984

Dear Patrick

SURVEY OF SHARED AND EXTENDED USE OF SCHOOLS

You will recall that in the discussions leading up to the preparation last year of the draft joint circular (in the event abandoned) on sport and recreation, reference was made to the sample survey being launched by the Department to follow up that of 1978-79 on the shared and extended use of schools and to establish the current position. The results of the survey, covering use in the summer holiday and autumn term of 1983, are now being analysed with a view to publication, as in the case of the earlier survey, as a DES Statistical Bulletin. I would expect this to make a useful contribution to putting across the message on the dual use of facilities, with which we both continue to be concerned.

You may be interested to have an advance indication of the main findings which are emerging from the analysis. It is encouraging and reassuring that the levels of use recorded in 1978-79 have been maintained or improved. The main findings so far are as follows:

- i. There has been an overall increase in the regular use made of both primary and secondary schools during term-time and the summer holidays. 79% of all schools were regularly used during term-time and 23% during the summer holidays, as compared with 71% and 21% respectively in 1978-79.
- ii. There has been a particularly marked increase in the regular use of primary schools during term-time - 75% in 1983 compared with 65% in 1978-79.

/iii. The

Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
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- iii. The level of regular use of schools during the summer holidays has also increased very slightly to 19% of primary schools and 40% of secondary schools (previous figures were 17% and 39% respectively).
- iv. During term-time, the most regular users of both primary and secondary schools were the school children themselves in extended use of the schools. School children were still the major users of primary schools during the summer holidays while, for secondary schools, the most common users over this period were organised groups and societies.
- v. The facilities most commonly used in term-time were halls in primary schools and specialist sports spaces in secondary schools. During the summer holidays, specialist sports spaces were most commonly used in both primary and secondary schools.
- vi. In line with this, the survey indicated that sports users were the group most likely to make regular use of primary and secondary school premises. Parent/teacher groups were most likely to make occasional use of premises.
- vii. Although less use was made of primary than of secondary schools, the levels of use in primary schools were directly related to the number of facilities available, and the greater use made of secondary schools was
 - * explained by the number and type of the facilities available in those schools.

Other results of the survey suggest that while there are physical and financial obstacles to greater use of school premises by the community, the availability of adequate alternative facilities nearby - affecting demand - was also seen as a limiting factor. The three most serious limiting factors in primary schools were inadequate storage space, unsuitable furniture, and availability of adequate facilities elsewhere. In secondary schools, the single most important limiting factor was the fact that grassed playing fields were already used to full capacity and could not sustain greater use. Other obstacles arose from inadequate storage space, cleaning, supervision, availability of adequate facilities elsewhere, and charges to users.

I intend to summarise the salient statistical points from the above in a short written answer to a Parliamentary Question expected to be put down very soon. The text is enclosed. The Department will thereafter wish to consider the scope for further expanding the use of school premises. On this, firm conclusions about possibilities must await the fuller collation of information from the results. I shall be arranging for discussions with the local authority associations in due course in the light of the material from the survey. Officials here will keep yours informed, and in the immediate future will let them know when the PQ is to be answered. They may like to bring it to the notice of the Sports Council, as mine expect to be doing in the case of the local authority associations.

In view of the previous interest in this subject I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to Peter Rees.

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Suggested Written Parliamentary Question and Answer

QUESTION

To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether the results of his Department's follow-up survey of the shared and extended use of schools are now available; and if he will make a statement.

ANSWER

The first results of the 1983 follow-up to the 1978-79 survey of shared and extended use have now become available and suggest that levels of use have been maintained or improved. They show that 79% of all schools were regularly used during term-time and 23% during the summer holidays in 1983, as compared with 71% and 21% respectively in 1978-79. There has been a marked increase in the regular use of primary schools during term-time from 65% in 1978-79 to 75% in 1983. Sports users continue to be the group most likely to make regular use of both primary and secondary school premises. The full results of the survey will be published in the form of a Statistical Bulletin later this year.

06 JUN 1984



05 JUN 1984





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My ref:

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27 June 1984
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Dear Keith,

SURVEY OF SHARED AND EXTENDED USE OF SCHOOLS

Thank you for your letter of 6 June about your Department's follow-up survey of the shared and extended use of schools. The preliminary results look interesting and I look forward to seeing more detailed findings in due course. While it would, of course, be wrong to seek to draw firm conclusions at this early stage, there are two points I think I would like to make.

The first is that apparently over 20% of all schools do not open at all outside school hours and - more worryingly - 77% of schools remain locked up all through the summer holiday. Secondly, I shall be particularly interested to see the extent to which your survey indicates an increase in the use of schools by the wider community, as opposed to simple out of hours opening. It is the encouragement of this wider use which is my concern, and the Government's; I suspect that the more detailed findings of your Department's survey will indicate that there is a great deal still to be done in this area.

As I think you know, the Sports Council are in the process of producing a booklet setting out the advantages to the Community, as well as to schools, of shared use, and have money available in their grants programme this year to assist with the implementation of schemes. My officials will be in touch with yours very shortly about this.

Yours ever
Patrick

PATRICK JENKIN

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP

27 JUN 1984

