

Athletics in Key Stage 3

The following are suggestions as to how athletics may be introduced to pupils in Key Stage 3 as a progression from the suggestions elsewhere for Key Stage 2.

In school the aim must be to develop the pupils' enjoyment, interest, and skill level in athletics events. Each pupil can measure personal achievements at all levels through the ESAA Award Scheme as well as consideration of the appropriate standards listed in the centre pages of the Handbook.

It is important that pupils should experience a developing, safe, yet challenging experience of athletic events as they progress through the Stage. Competition is an integral part of athletic events and can be developed through team activities as well as in individual events. This can and should be encouraged with all individual efforts contributing to the group's achievements. Care should be taken to graduate the experience of the pupils so that the events, distances, heights and impedimenta constitute a progression as is suggested below.

The experience and structure of formal athletic competition needs to be introduced in ways that do not overwhelm pupils. Team encouragement for an individual's effort gives athletics one of its special characteristics. Pupils should be made aware of the appropriate warm up and training activities for different events.

Note also that the Rules of UK Athletics specifically restrict athletes in this age group from taking part in certain events. These restrictions are noted in bold type in the appropriate section of the text. A failure to comply with these restrictions may place the teacher or coach in a difficult position if injury were to be sustained by a pupil engaged in one of the events not recommended for the age group.

SAFETY

In all athletic events and activities SAFETY is of paramount importance and teachers must be vigilant at all times. Reference should be made to the Safety Measures outlined elsewhere in the Handbook.

EVENTS

Sprints– Sprinting allows the maintenance of maximum speed over a short distance and that distance needs to be progressive. The suggested distances for each year in the Key Stage are:-

Boys			Girls		
Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
75m	80m		75m	80m	80m
	100m	100m		100m	100m
150m			150m		
	200m	200m		200m	200m
	300m	300m		300m	300m

Related activities – Alternate running and walking, over time extending the period of running and reducing the period of walking.

Cross Country – It is essential if cross country running is to be undertaken to ensure that the course used is safe from hazards. The course should be well marked or easily identified and there should be an adequate number of people situated around the route. Footwear should be appropriate to the underfoot conditions.

In race conditions the start should be sufficiently wide to cater for the number of runners taking part. Ensure that the course does not narrow drastically in the early stages to avoid over-crowding.

Base provision should include first aid and emergency transport, whilst a facility for washing and changing should be available whenever possible.

It is difficult to advise maximum distances since cross country courses will vary considerably in the severity of their terrain but the following should not normally be exceeded:-

BOYS			GIRLS		
Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
2500m	3000m	3500m	2500m	3000m	3500m

FIELD EVENTS

JUMPING

High Jump – Special care must be taken in providing suitable take off and landing areas.

Gymnastic mats do not constitute a suitable landing area unless they are at least 5m x 2.5m and are held together with a suitable cover and the density of the landing area is sufficient to prevent jarring on landing. Specially manufactured beds are strongly recommended, especially if any kind of “flop” style is going to be allowed. Loose crash mats without a cover are positively dangerous and should not be used for any form of jumping.

Different techniques used in high Jump can be taught but all require appropriate landing areas and should not be attempted if the these areas are in any way deficient. Each pupil should be encouraged to adopt whichever technique they prefer and can gain most success with.

High jump metal bars should normally be circular in cross section but elastic can be used for practice purposes.

Pole Vault – This must only be attempted with appropriate equipment and landing areas. The minimum size of the landing area should be 5m x 5m and the planting box must be kept in good repair. **The event should only be introduced, taught and supervised by properly qualified teachers or coaches.** As with High Jump, where metal bars are used these should be circular in cross section. Alternatively, elastic can be used during practice sessions.

Long Jump – Pupils should be encouraged and coached to take off from a board, jumping into a safe landing area. The sand should be well dug

throughout its length and clear of any sharp objects. The sand must be regularly raked with the sand being brought back into the centre of the pit from the outside edges. Special care should be taken to ensure that the jumping board remains flush with the surface of the run up.

Triple Jump

As with the long jump, the sand in the landing area must be kept well dug and the take off board kept flush with the run up. Activities that encourage a regular pattern of movement from hop to step to jump should be practised. A marked huge effort in the hop phase can have a jarring effect on joints.

Jumps

BOYS

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
High Jump	High Jump	High Jump
Pole Vault	Pole Vault	Pole Vault
Long Jump	Long Jump	Long Jump
	Triple Jump	Triple Jump

GIRLS

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
High Jump	High Jump	High Jump
Pole Vault	Pole Vault	Pole Vault
Long Jump	Long Jump	Long Jump
	Triple Jump	Triple Jump

THROWING EVENTS

These can be divided into the events below but all must recognise the overriding importance of SAFETY in relation to throwing events in general. Special attention should be given to the precautions identified in the Safety Measures guidelines elsewhere in the Handbook. The Hammer, in particular, should be conducted only in a strictly controlled situation and **must** take place from an **appropriate cage at all times**.

Pupils should be introduced to each of the events gradually. There are many variations and "practice" implements that can be used as a lead-up to the "proper" impedimenta. Teachers should be aware of the recommended weights of implements as listed below.

Throws

BOYS

Event	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Ball	Cricket ball	Cricket ball	N/A
Shot	2.72 kg	3.25 kg	4.0 kg
	3.25 kg	4.0 kg	
Discus	0.75 kg	1.0 kg	1.25 kg
	1.0 kg	1.25 kg	

Javelin	400 g	400 g 600 g	600g
Hammer	N/A	3.25 kg 4.0 kg	4.0 kg
GIRLS			
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Ball	Rounders Ball	Rounders Ball	N/A
Shot	2.72 kg	2.72 kg 3.25 kg	3.25 kg
Discus	0.75 kg	0.75 kg 1.0 kg	1.0 kg
Javelin	400 g	400 g 600 g	600 g

Where two different specifications are given for a particular event and age group the lower weight might be considered appropriate for general class instruction with the heavier reserved for those showing a good grasp of the technique of the event.

JUDGING

Pupils should be encouraged to learn the basic rules that apply to each of the events to which they are introduced. Teachers also should make themselves familiar with the relevant rules of the events and try to give pupils insight into how an athletics competition works. Pupils should be encouraged to measure each other's performances accurately, be that with a tape measure or a stop watch.

COMPETITION

There are many and varied ways to organise an athletic competition but during the planning teachers must be aware of the need to give adequate rest periods between rounds of any given event. Consideration should also be given to the desirability of keeping well apart in the programme different events which a given individual might reasonably expect to contest.

In Year 7, in particular, consideration should be given to employing the newly created ESAA "Miniathlon" as the basis for competition. The emphasis in this age group should be on diversity of activity and an absence of specialisation on a single event or group of events. It should also be encouraged as a general principle throughout the Key Stage. For details of this initiative contact Mr Derek Hayward, PO Box 9, Wem, Shropshire. SY4 5WW or visit the Association's Web Site on www.esaa.net.

Above all, teachers of athletics should make the activities enjoyable, challenging and rewarding at what ever level of performance the pupils are operating. There is enough variety to cater for many tastes and the ESAA Award Scheme can be used at all stages of development to encourage and measure individual progress and achievement.