

**Effective Pre-school, Primary and
Secondary Education 3-14 Project
(EPPSE 3-14)**

**What Makes a Successful
Transition from Primary to
Secondary School?**

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a sub-study on transitions undertaken as part of the Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education 3-14 (EPPSE 3-14 project) a major longitudinal study investigating the influence of pre-school, primary and secondary school on children's cognitive and social/behavioural development in England. The transitions sub-study of more than 500 children and families sheds light on current transition practices and highlights what helps and hinders a successful transition. It takes into account the influence of child and family background characteristics such as socio-economic status (SES) and gender. It suggests how the transition experience could be improved to enhance the smooth continuity between primary and secondary school.

By adopting a mixed methods approach, the study investigated the issues related to transition for four distinctive groups: Local Authorities, children, parents and schools. Officers in six Local Authorities were asked about the way transition was dealt with in their Authority. Children in their first term at secondary school completed a questionnaire on their thoughts and experiences of transition, and the study also sought their parents' opinions in order to illustrate the whole family's experience.

Finally, there were twelve case studies selected from the respondents of the questionnaire because of their positive experiences of transition. These involved interviews with the children and their primary and secondary teachers. This provided further details of the systems in place that support the transition processes between school phases.

The sample was drawn from children and families in the wider EPPSE project. 1190 children from the EPPSE sample made a transition at the end of the 2005-06 academic year. Responses were received from 550 children (a 46% response rate) and 569 parents (a 48% response rate) from across England drawn from 6 Local Authorities (Shire County, Inner London borough, Midlands/Metropolitan region, East Anglia area, and two authorities in the North East). Children were recruited to the case studies using stratified selection to get a balanced mix by region, gender, socio-economic status (SES) and ethnicity. A wide range of data, already available from the main EPPSE study was used to complement the analyses.

The aims of the project were:

- To explore transition practices and identify successes and challenges in the six Local Authorities who were part of the original EPPSE study (www.ioe.ac.uk/projects/eppe).
- To explore the processes that support pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools and to identify any hindrances to successful transition.
- To explore the experiences and perceptions of both pupils and their parents of the transition process.
- To identify any background characteristics of pupils and families that are associated with more positive transitions.
- To describe the specific practices that lead to positive and negative transitions (as reported by pupils and parents).

Key findings

- A range of practices were employed by schools which helped to support children's transitions including: the use of 'bridging materials'; the sharing of information between schools; visits to schools by prospective teachers, children and their parents; distribution of booklets; talks at the schools; taster days and other joint social events between schools.
- Most children (84%) said they felt prepared on entry to secondary school. Many believed that their family and/or teachers helped them to prepare by addressing worries, reassuring and encouraging them, explaining what to expect and how secondary school works, and by giving advice and tips on how to cope at their new school. A noteworthy minority, 16 per cent, did not feel prepared when they changed schools, but only 3 per cent of children were worried or nervous a term after starting their secondary school.
- The data analysis revealed five aspects of a successful transition. A successful transition for children involved:
 - developing new friendships and improving their self esteem and confidence
 - having settled so well in school life that they caused no concerns to their parents
 - showing an increasing interest in school and school work
 - getting used to their new routines and school organisation with great ease
 - experiencing curriculum continuity.
- Children who felt they had a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in were more likely to have a successful transition. This included help with getting to know their way around the school, relaxing rules in the early weeks, procedures to help pupils adapt, visits to schools, induction and taster days, and booklets.
- If children had experienced bullying at secondary school, had encountered problems with dealing with different teachers and subjects or making new friends, then they also tended to experience a negative transition.
- Low SES (socio-economic status) has been found to have an association with less positive transitions for children.

Current transition practices

The Local Authorities were responsible for the secondary admissions procedure, and issued information on this to schools and parents. The primary schools shared information on Key Stage 2 results, attendance and special educational needs of individual pupils with the secondary schools. The interviews with the six LA officials revealed that secondary schools do not appear to 'trust' the data on children provided by primary schools at Year 6 level, and this leads to a system of baseline re-testing of all children at Year 7. Guidelines on good practice, opportunities for training and formal systems to evaluate training and practice differed enormously between the six Local Authority areas. Choice Advisors, a new Government initiative being delivered in some areas, provide impartial advice and support to parents.

There were some interesting initiatives to ensure that children and their parents knew about secondary schools and felt comfortable with the process of transfer. These included information booklets about the secondary schools, open days, talks by the secondary teachers, and meetings with other children and staff. Visits to secondary schools were for whole classes at primary school or for families, where they could see examples of work, and sample lessons. There were also visits by Year 7 teachers to feeder primary schools to help familiarise children with the teachers they would meet. Some schools structured the first day of Year 7 so that the children were the only pupils at the school and could experience the space and facilities without other pupils around.

To help curriculum continuity, some schools used 'bridging materials' where the same work books were used in both Years 6 and 7. There was some sharing of information on the skills and understanding pupils had achieved and on the style of lessons, for example, through the visit of Year 7 teachers to Year 6 classrooms to watch the class work and talk to individual pupils. Secondary school teachers initiated most of the contact.

In the schools attended by children in the study, there were various strategies used to support children in their transition to secondary school. Most children (82%) attended open days. These included tours of the school, head teacher talks, and meetings with other teachers and children. The majority of children said that their primary school teacher had talked to them about having more than one teacher in Year 7, behaviour and discipline, and changing classrooms between lessons. Half of the children had also been informed about having new subjects, and not being with the same pupils in all lessons. In many cases (63%), a Year 7 teacher would have also visited the primary school during which they would have talked to the class/small group (68%), watch the class working (18%), taught the class (17%), talked to individual pupils (13%) and/or talked during assembly (12%). Most children (81%) had also paid additional visits to their new secondary school. Many children had also visited their new secondary school for special lessons, evening meetings for parents and children and attended joint events. Only seventeen per cent of the parents mentioned that their child had been assigned an older pupil as a mentor in secondary school.

Key Features of a Successful Transition

According to LA officers, a successful transition was one where the process was managed smoothly – with parental choices received on time, most parents getting their first choice of school and few appeals.

The analysis of the survey responses of children and their parents was used to identify children who had experienced a successful transition, in terms of the following five factors: children had greatly expanded their friendships and boosted their self-esteem and confidence once at secondary school; they had settled so well in school life that they caused no concerns to their parents; they were showing more interest in school and work in comparison to primary school; they were finding it very easy getting used to new routines; and/or they were finding work completed in Year 6 to be very useful for the work they were doing in Year 7.

One of the main features affecting a successful transition included whether or not children had received a lot of help from their secondary school. The sort of help that secondary schools could provide to their new pupils included help with getting to know their way around the school, relaxing rules in the early weeks, procedures to help pupils adapt, visits to schools, induction and taster days, and booklets, offering adequate

information, encouragement, support and assistance with lessons and homework. The vast majority of children had been taught by their secondary schools how to use reference sources (90%), how to revise (87%), how to make notes (80%), and how to write an essay (77%). The majority of parents (80%) reported they had received enough feedback from the school about their child's progress and behaviour.

Other things that promoted a positive transition among children included: looking forward to going to secondary school; the friendliness of the older children at secondary school and those in their class; having moved to the same secondary school with most of their primary school friends; having older siblings who could offer them advice and support; and finding their new school work interesting.

Eighty four per cent of children had felt prepared for moving to secondary school, and after spending a term at their new school nearly three quarters of the children said they felt happy. However, there were children – albeit a minority – who did not feel prepared.

What hinders a successful transition?

Local Authority officers felt that parents not understanding the admissions process, or trying to 'subvert' the system (e.g. pretending to live in an area to get a better chance of a school place) caused problems. In urban areas problems may also have arisen where neighbouring authorities had different procedures – which often caused confusion among parents. There was also some concern about the National Pupil Database, which some LA officers reported as not being sufficiently up-to-date and occasionally holding duplicate records.

For children, analysis of the survey showed that experiences of bullying, worrying about their ability to do the work or about having new and different teachers for subjects, or worrying about whether they can make friends, were all associated with a poor experience of transition. It is worth mentioning, that approximately 3 in every 10 children had some or many experiences of bullying according to their parents. Of the 165 parents who reported their children to experience some or a lot of problems with bullying 63 per cent of these children did not expand their friendships and did not boost their self-esteem and confidence; 72 per cent of these children did not settle well and were of particular concern to their parents; and 66 per cent of children did not get used to the new routines with great ease.

Transitions for vulnerable children

Overall, children with special educational needs (SEN) or those from other vulnerable groups did not experience a less successful transition than other children. However, the survey data did highlight some interesting findings. Children with SEN, approximately 20 per cent of children in the sample, were more likely to be bullied – which is a key inhibitor of a successful transition. Out of the 110 children with SEN in the sample 37 per cent had problems with bullying compared with 25 per cent of children without SEN who had problems with bullying. On the positive side, children with SEN and other health problems were experiencing greater curriculum continuity between Years 6 and 7. It may be that the earlier and more individual transfer process that these children experience has prepared them better for the move and the work they will do in Year 7.

Of the 102 children living in low SES households 72 per cent did not get used to the new routines with great ease and 58 per cent did not settle in very well. In comparison, of the 186 high SES children, 50 per cent did not get used to the new routines with great ease and 39 per cent did not settle in so well that they would cause no concern to their

parents. However, children of low SES did look forward to secondary school, which had a positive effect on them developing an interest in school and school work.

Conclusions and implications

This study was commissioned in light of concern about the transition experiences of children moving from primary to secondary school. Most of the children in the study had a positive transition experience, but a noticeable minority did not.

For children, parents and schools the factors that identify a successful transition can be summarised as social adjustment, institutional adjustment and curriculum interest and continuity. This report highlights a number of influences that shape children's transfer experiences and the likelihood of a successful transfer.

Social adjustment

The research identified that one important indicator of a successful transition was the extent that children have more and new friendships and report higher self-esteem and greater confidence after their transition to secondary school. The research suggests there is a need to help children develop their social and personal skills (friendships, self-esteem and confidence). Secondary schools could involve older children to help Year 7 children settle and this strategy may alleviate children's and parents' worries as well as reduce incidents of bullying. It is appropriate to develop clear systems to identify bullying and offer guidelines for Year 7 tutors, in order to refer those who appear to have problems after transfer to a support system or a scheme of "buddies". Older children in the school could assume the role of "an older sister/brother" since children with older siblings adjusted better in this regard. Using the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum to develop these skills, as well as using the period after the KS2 national assessments as a key period to help prepare children could help both in the transition process, as well as the PHSE skills of older pupils.

Institutional adjustment

The survey showed that settling well into school life and getting used to new routines were two important elements of a successful transition. These aspects can be improved by encouraging children in the same class to work collaboratively and help each other even if they are not always together in the same lessons. Most secondary schools are structured around a "form" system. Whilst this is usually used as a "registration" group and as a PSHE group, heads of Year could use this time more constructively to enhance children's social skills and self-esteem. A possible way forward may be to establish smaller "tutor/focus" groups with the "form".

The most successful schools, as identified from the case studies, were those with very close links and co-ordination between primary and secondary schools. A variety of opportunities for induction, taster days and visits between schools appear to improve the transition experience for children. Choice Advisors targeting families that may need additional help seems to be helpful in the areas where they have been used, however, the initiative was not yet widespread.

Curriculum interest and continuity

A child's curriculum interest and continuity were two further indicators of a successful transition. Children need to understand what is expected of them in secondary school, be prepared for the level and style of work, and be challenged to build on progress at primary school. This helps to ensure a growing interest in school and work. Teachers reported wanting more information and a better understanding of the different

approaches to teaching between primary and secondary schools. Parents also want to see schools better preparing their children for the work expected of them in secondary school. Interestingly, the study found that children with health problems actually reported higher curriculum interest and continuity which may be related to focused support for these children at the point of transfer.

The main responsibility of the Local Authorities was the administrative process of admissions. Their major concern was to provide good clear information to parents at an early stage, have statutory deadlines for the process met and have as few appeals as possible. However, where the Inspectorate/Advisory team had a stronger role/interest in the process, there was a higher likelihood of innovative curriculum practices and continuity (such as working on the same texts in Year 6 and Year 7). The Inspectorate/Advisory service had a key role in promoting good communication and sharing good practice between clusters/pyramids of schools. The Inspectorate/Advisory service might be encouraged further in such practices and in taking a more active interest in the pupil's experience of transition. Creating strategies and ideas for the Inspectorate/Advisory service to help promote curriculum continuity could be beneficial for ensuring pupil's interest and avoiding the learning 'dip' associated with Year 7.

To ensure that children's transitions are successful (and improved where needed), all three areas (social adjustment, institutional adjustment and curriculum interest and continuity) need to be taken into account when planning transition strategies at Local Authority and school levels.

Links with EPPSE Research

This research brief is based on a report which concentrates on the transition experiences of children who are taking part in the longitudinal EPPSE project. There will be opportunities in the future to follow their progress over the next few years, and relate this to their early years. As the EPPSE project will continue to track children's development into KS3, the findings from the Transition project will complement the model of analyses for children's developmental progress at age 14 (Year 9). This will be achieved by using the current findings on a sub-sample as potential predictors to explore cognitive and socio/behavioural development in Year 9.

Chapter 1. Background to the Transition study

1.1 Overview

Two words 'Transfer' and 'Transition' are used interchangeably to refer both to the children's move out of one school system and into another, or within the same school between different years. In this study the term 'Transition' is used to address children's move and adjustment phase from primary to secondary schools.

Regardless of the term adopted, the issue of transition from early years to primary school and then to secondary education has been the focus of much research (For example, Graham and Hill, 2002 and Galton, Gray and Ruddock, 2000). A review of the literature has highlighted several common themes concerning transition from primary to secondary school and these are summarised below.

Alston, Sammons and Mortimore (1985) carried out a similar study to that of the EPPSE Transition project that guided the creation of the questionnaires for the current study. The four year longitudinal study in the Inner London area explored the transition experiences of children from 50 primary schools. Approximately 1600 pupils took part in the study which explored their attitudes, behaviour and attendance before transition and during their first two terms at secondary school. The longitudinal study produced many research bulletins, however only four of which are of specific relevance to the EPPSE Transition project. Bulletin 6 focused specifically on the pupils' early experiences of secondary school and the data was obtained during the pupil's first term in Y7. The study explored the pupils' attitudes towards secondary school and their experiences during their first term. The results showed that the majority of Y7 pupils had settled well and had a positive attitude towards their new school. A high proportion of pupils also reported that they were satisfied with the level of work that they were doing. Although some pupils showed some apprehension concerning secondary school, the majority seemed to settle well and were happier at secondary school than what they had originally expected.

Bulletin 8 of the study, focused specifically on pupils' views of secondary school after their first two terms in Y7. The information was obtained by using a questionnaire and explored whether any changes had taken place during the first two terms of secondary school in reference to the pupils' experiences of secondary school. Again, the results support the idea that pupils had settled well into Y7, however, their attitudes about their secondary school were slightly less positive than they had been at the end of the pupils' first term at the school. Over half of the pupils reported that they were satisfied with the level of their school work; however, the proportion of pupils finding the work boring had increased since the end of the first term. The overall picture presented by Bulletin 8 is one of successful transition and positive attitudes towards secondary school.

Two further research bulletins in this study concerning parents' views before and after transition are also relevant to the EPPSE Transition project. Bulletin 3 focused specifically on parents' views and perceptions of the transition process before it occurred. One thousand six hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to the parents of children from 48 primary schools. Fifty-one per cent of the sample completed and returned the questionnaire. Findings from the study suggest that 'parental encouragement' is a significant factor for children who make a successful transition from primary to secondary school. The majority of parents in the study were generally satisfied with the arrangements for the upcoming transition process and few said that they had worries about their child's transition to secondary school. Parents who were unhappy with the primary schooling, who had a negative transition experience and who held a negative view of the available secondary schools were found to be less likely to promote a positive attitude towards education in their children.

Bulletin 9 explored parents' views concerning transition after it had occurred. Questionnaires were distributed to parents of over 1400 pupils and over 60 per cent were completed and returned. The parents were asked about their opinions concerning their child's adjustment

during the first two terms of their new school (for example, in reference to schoolwork and homework). In general, parents felt that their child had settled well into secondary school and showed more interest than they had at primary school. However, approximately one in six of the children had refused to go to school at least on one occasion. In general, parents appeared to be satisfied with the quantity and level of difficulty of their child's homework. Although the majority of parents were satisfied with the links between home and school, more than half of the parents said they would like more contact with their child's secondary school. The Bulletin concluded that generally most parents were happy with their child's transition and with the school itself.

1.2 Secondary teachers' underestimating Y7 pupil's academic capabilities and the presence of an academic 'dip' post transition

Fouracre (1993) undertook a case-study on a Scottish secondary school and its five associated primary schools. The aim of the study was to examine pupils' expectations of the transition from primary to secondary school by using a variety of tests, questionnaires, essays and group discussions. Areas of interest in this study included the general mismatch between pupils' perceptions of progress after transfer, and their actual progress, as well as the mismatch between pupils' expectations of life and work in the secondary school and the reality of this.

Interesting findings were obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire:

- 69 per cent of the Y6 pupils were pleased with their progress in general at primary school.
- After transfer, this had risen to 78 per cent - however, the tests of basic skills (such as spelling and punctuation) actually showed a drop in progress after transfer. This indicates a mismatch between the pupils' perceptions of and their actual level of progress in Y7.
- 84 per cent of Y7 pupils expected to get more homework at secondary school.
- 80 per cent of Y7 pupils expected the work in secondary school to be harder than it was. This response tallies with the perception that, although the primary pupils thought the secondary teachers would expect more of them, in practice, after transfer the numbers believing this had fallen, with more now unsure.
- Teachers at secondary schools appear to be underestimating Y7 pupils' academic abilities.

Fouracre (1993) suggests that there is a clear academic discontinuity between primary and secondary school, with teachers underestimating Y7 pupils' abilities. The results also indicate that there is a general mismatch between pupils' expectations of life and work in secondary school, and their actual experiences.

The idea that secondary teachers are underestimating Y7 pupils' academic capabilities also appears to be supported by the findings of Galton, Gray and Ruddock (1999). This study aimed to explore the idea that pupils suffer a 'dip' in their academic progress after transition, and to identify any successful strategies for raising and maintaining standards across transition. A number of case studies revealed that work set by teachers for Y7 pupils underestimates their capabilities. The findings also support the suggestion of an academic 'dip' post transition as the results highlighted some cases where Y7 pupils' learning appeared to stagnate or regress. A reported two out of five pupils failed to make progress during their first year after transition. Once again, this stresses the problem that secondary teachers are not academically pushing their pupils sufficiently and poses the question about whether or not the transition period is successfully preparing pupils academically for Y7.

However, Galton, Gray and Ruddock (1999) did find that during the past twenty years there has been a marked improvement both on transfer and transition issues. Nonetheless, the authors recommended the need for:

“Attention to transitions as well as transfers; evaluating the impact of present transfer and transition strategies; giving attention to pupils’ accounts of why they disengage or under perform at these critical moments; recognising when and how different groups of pupils become ‘at risk’ and achieving a better balance between academic and social concerns at various points of transfer and transition”.

What are schools doing about transition? The authors identified five main categories of activity: Administrative approaches, pupil-centred approaches, curriculum continuity approaches, pedagogic approaches and approaches which give priority to exploring and explaining the purpose and structure of learning in the new setting.

Galton, Gray and Ruddock (2000) carried out case-studies on nine LEA’s, interviewed 50 primary heads, analysed KS data for over 3,000 pupils and studies 25 schools. The study was concerned with factors that affect pupils’ progress between the ages of 7 and 14, in particular, the transition from primary to secondary school. This study built on the previous study reviewing transition (Galton, Gray and Ruddock, 1999), which concluded that schools’ arrangements for transition were mainly working well, but also highlighted the need to understand more about ‘dips’ in attitude, engagement and progress at key transition points and the post-transition period. The findings from the study suggest that during transition, schools are paying increased attention to curriculum and pedagogic issues, however, both pupil attitudes and progress (especially in English and Science) suggest that pupils are still insufficiently challenged in Y7. One of the pupils in the study reported that in Y7 Science, pupils spend much of their time copying out details of experiments, suggesting that perhaps Y7 pupils are not being sufficiently pushed academically. Galton, Gray and Ruddock (2000) suggest that schools should direct their attention to the academic (as opposed to social) dimensions of transition to sustain pupils’ progress.

Kirkpatrick (1992) reports a study with similar findings to the above studies. Over a twelve month period researchers interviewed a sample of Western-Australian children, exploring their expectations prior to transition and their experiences and perceptions when they entered secondary school. The research from this study suggests that the transition to secondary school is accompanied by a decline in pupils’ academic performance and attitude towards school. Y7 pupils were reported to have made little improvement during their first year at secondary school and in some cases pupils’ academic performance actually declined. Pupils reported that the work they were doing in their first year at secondary school was no more difficult (and at times easier) than the work they had been doing at primary school. The researchers suggested that changes in the size and structure of the secondary schools compared with the primary schools may have contributed to the decline in academic performance and motivation. However, other causes suggested are: a lack of academic challenge presented by secondary teachers, peer pressure to not appear ‘too academic’, an increasing sense of boredom and lack of effort by the pupils when repeating work already done in primary school.

The above studies all present similar findings, suggesting that secondary teachers are underestimating Y7 pupils’ academic capabilities and hence this can contribute to the presence of an academic ‘dip’ during pupils’ first year at secondary.

1.3 Socio-cultural factors affecting transition

Graham and Hill (2002) conducted a quantitative study examining the experiences and views of black and minority ethnic children in comparison with those of white children during transition. Between 2002 and 2003, children in the Glasgow area who were moving from Y6 to Y7 completed a school-based questionnaire about their transition from primary to secondary school. Results from the questionnaire were supplemented by a small number of focus groups with children and data obtained from teachers and school reports. Overall, results from the focus group and questionnaire found that for some children, the transition process was viewed as negative and these children were found to be disproportionately from minority ethnic backgrounds. More than 77% of the sample agreed that transition is more difficult for pupils who

speak a language other than English at home. The secondary school teachers also reported that for some Muslim children, their religion posed a problem in relation to integrating with classmates, hence affecting the success of their transition. Children of an Asian background were also less likely than white pupils to feel that they had improved academically once they had arrived at secondary school.

Overall this study found that minority ethnic pupils were more likely than white pupils to feel that they had difficulties 'fitting in', suggesting that socio-cultural factors affect the success of transition for children.

1.4 An in-depth review of the literature

A systematic literature review carried out by the University of New Zealand (McGee, Ward, Gibbons and Harlow, 2004) attempted to shed light on what is known about transition between primary and secondary schools. The study highlighted issues found in previous studies relating to the impact of transition both upon children's academic performance and their adjustment to secondary school as well as any impacts on different groups of pupils. Eight themes have been identified: academic attainment, social adjustment, linkages between schools, organisational issues, pupil perceptions, cultural factors, socio-economic factors and gender differences. The summative points below are an indication of the range of issues arising from transition.

Academic attainment

- Following transition to secondary school, pupils tend to suffer decreases in academic achievement.
- Academic attainment in the first year at secondary school seems to be related to pupils' decreased interest in academic activities and an increase in non-academic activities in the middle years.

Social adjustment

- Transition is stressful – having adequate information and social support activities that help pupils to form friendship networks are crucial factors in coping.
- Increased self-esteem can aid academic motivation.

Linkages between schools

- Continuity of curriculum suffers on transition. Few secondary schools have sustained linking arrangements focused on the learning progression of individual pupils.
- Teaching expectations often differ between primary/intermediate and secondary school. Previous experience or achievement is often disregarded by secondary schools.

Organisational issues

- The difficulties some pupils have in moving from the primary to secondary school structure have been found to be temporary.
- Prior to transition, pupils need to be held more responsible for their learning, to be taught about strategies for learning on their own, and to be provided with a more challenging curriculum, with clear goals of academic achievement.

Pupils' perceptions

- Primary pupils view transition positively.
- At-risk pupils need intervention prior to transition.

Cultural factors

- Transition can pose specific problems and concerns for pupils who do not belong to the majority culture.
- Teachers and pupils have different perceptions of where problems lie. Pupils tend to think there is a problem with delivery of programmes; teachers tend to think that the pupils bring problems with them.

Socio-economic factors

- SES is a factor that may lead to poor achievement. Secondary schools with low SES pupils generally have programmes in place to support pupils at risk.
- Family support is linked to achievement after transition and the influence of effective parents is cumulative.

Gender differences

- At the time of transition, girls' attitudes towards teachers and learning are different from those of boys. The tendency to 'teach the boys' because they need more help or make more demands is considered unfair and exploitative by some researchers (McGee, Ward, Gibbons and Harlow, 2004).

Finally, the National Assembly of Wales, reported on evidence from the Estyn's Annual Report 7 (2002-03) that confirm that the progress pupils increasingly make at primary school is not always maintained after the move to secondary level. The report stated that there is clear evidence that effective collaboration between primary and secondary schools can bring immense benefits in attainment at Key Stage 3. Schools employ a variety of methods including the introduction of dedicated lead practitioners in literacy or numeracy, regular meetings between leadership teams; better use of specialist teams at KS3. Whatever the method, the effect is to introduce greater continuity between the two settings leading to improved results for 11 to 14 year olds.

The current study attempts to build on previous findings such as the above, in an attempt to shed further light on effective practices and factors that influence transition, and to explore the continuity between primary and secondary school. It doing so it addresses the following aims and research questions.

Chapter 2. Aims and methods

2.1 The aims of the Transition study were:

- 1 To explore any issues that support pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools;
- 2 To identify any hindrances that affect this process;
- 3 To explore the experiences and perceptions of both pupils and their parents of the transitional process;
- 4 To identify any associations between the background characteristics of pupils, families, schools and Local Authorities (LA) that may lead to more positive transitions;
- 5 To describe the specific practices which lead to positive and negative transitions (as reported by pupils and families).

2.2 Research Questions addressed in this report

The overarching question of the study was, 'What is effective practice with regards to transition from primary to secondary schools?' The following research questions explored the factors that influence transition in reference to child, home, school and LA characteristics.

- What were the factors influencing children's choice of secondary school?
- How and by whom were children prepared for secondary school?
- How and if, the children settled in their secondary school?
- How does transition to secondary school affect particular sub-groups of pupils, e.g. disadvantaged, EAL, SEN?
- How work levels compared between primary and secondary school according to children?
- How children view their secondary school with reference to subjects, teachers and friendships?
- What recommendations do children make for improved transition?

Home

- What were the factors influencing parental choice of secondary school?
- How parents view the application process and how successful they were with this? Does this affect transition experiences?
- How parents view the transitional process? Does this relate to demographic characteristics of the family?
- How did parents prepare their child for secondary school?
- How do parents feel their child has settled in and which factors influence that?
- What recommendations do parents make for improved transition?

Area/ School

- What are the structures that support transition within Local Authorities?
- Are there any area (LA) differences, for example urban v rural?
- How useful to children/parents was the LA information about secondary schools?
- What are the most successful elements of the current system and what would they like to see changed?
- What are the school factors associated with positive or negative parental and child views of the transitional process?
- How did the primary school prepare children for transition?
- How did the secondary school induct and continue to support its new pupils?

2.3 Sample

The total target sample for this study was 1,190 children. The majority of these n= 1,102 or 92.6 per cent were from Cohort 3 of the EPPSE sample and the remaining 88 children were from Cohort 2 (7.4%) who were attending middle school. Children from Cohort 3 were evenly distributed across the 5 EPPSE regions and constitute a broadly representative sub-sample of the full EPPSE sample (see Section 2 of this report). The fieldwork was carried out while children were in their first year of secondary school (Year 7).

As the first response rate was unexpectedly low a number of measures, including a postcard reminder and a resend, were implemented to improve this. This was supplemented by targeted telephone interviews to selected groups (e.g. low SES) in regional clusters.

The total response rate was 550 children (46%) of which 93.5 per cent were from Cohort 3 and 6.5 per cent from Cohort 2. An additional 569 questionnaires were returned by the parents (48%) and the rate for corresponding questionnaires (from the same family) was 44 per cent. Although this response rate was below the initial estimation, it is important to highlight that this may be due to the absence of incentives and the fact that children had moved on to secondary schools which had implications for their free time. It may also relate to the fact that the initial mail-out was close to Christmas. Table 2.1 summarises key demographic characteristics of the whole EPPE sample, the target and achieved sample of the current study.

2.4 Data collection

The children and families in the EPPE sample have co-operated for the last 8 years in data collection that is designed to be non-intrusive (does not make unreasonable demands on their time), easy to complete and is interesting.

Three types of data collection were used in the current study: interviews with Local Authority officials, survey of children and families, and 12 selected case studies of children and their primary and secondary teachers responsible for transition in their schools.

A. In depth interviews with officials in 6 LAs responsible for transition took place. The interview explored their practices and views of transition as described at area level: (Shire, North East, West Midlands, Inner London and East Anglia). This included specific practices and their methods for evaluation (Appendix 2). The areas chosen were the ones from which the recruitment of the original EPPE Sample took place.

B. During their child's first term in secondary school a parental questionnaire was posted to explore how families chose, applied and prepared their children for secondary school. In addition, it investigated factors that influenced their decisions and their views on how their family and their child/ren experienced transition (Appendix 3).

C. Separate questionnaires were also sent to pupils during their first term at secondary school to explore their views on secondary transition and their perceptions of any special programmes/support given both at primary and secondary school (Appendix 4).

In addition, twelve selected case studies of pupils in Year 7 who experienced and reported in their questionnaire good transition between their primary and secondary schools were undertaken. The case study data was collected by semi-structured interviews with the children and both the Year 6 and Year 7 teachers who have responsibilities for transition. Children were selected by using a stratified sample of those who reported positive experiences to ensure that equal numbers of boys and girls, socio-economic status (SES) and region were represented (Appendices 5-7). Two of these case studies were selected to present in detail in this report, paired their primary and secondary schools (Appendix 8).

An overview of the data collection procedures is presented in Appendix 9.

Chapter 3. Interviews with the six Local Authorities

3.1 Setting the context

Interviews on the subject of transition issues were undertaken with six local authority officials. It is important to note that in many local authorities, there are not dedicated ‘transition workers’ and responsibility for transition may fall within the broader remit of the Admissions Team. Some officials were only able to talk on a more general level about admissions, rather than about specific transition issues. Additionally, much of the work relating to transition takes place at a school level, and local authority officers may not be aware of the extent of these initiatives.

3.2 Transition: roles and responsibilities

The picture that emerged from the interviews with local authority officials was a complex and varied one: clearly, authorities approach the issue of transition in their own unique ways. Similarly, while some areas had a clear understanding of issues relating specifically to transition, for other authorities, transition issues appeared to be subsumed within the broader general category of ‘admissions’. Descriptions of the roles occupied by local authority officials supporting the transition process varied. Some local authority officials had a responsibility for transition within their wider remit as admissions officers; others responsible for transition were located in Student Support Services, Children’s Services or were part of the School Improvement Service. Co-ordinating admissions, and overseeing primary to secondary transfers were tasks associated with the transition process, but some local authority officials also considered it their role to include other activities such as the dissemination of best practice, and the development of policy and strategy.

3.3 Positive experiences of transition

Different examples of positive experiences of transition were reported by local authority officials, although sometimes these related to the admissions process as a whole, rather than specifically to transition. Being able to respond appropriately to enquiries from parents, providing information, and online information in particular, for parents about the choices available to them seemed to be a core feature of the positive experience. Although the online admissions process was not always easy for staff, it was acknowledged that this was very helpful for parents. Other useful developments cited included the purchase of ‘mapping’ software enabling local authorities to systematically measure distance from school, in order to determine catchment. Specific transition activities for children, and linking systems with neighbouring authorities were also mentioned. Dedicated ‘Choice Advisors’ in the local authority who helped parents through the process, working alongside schools and parents to enable parents to make ‘realistic’ choices were perceived as positive by some areas. Others, however, considered that Choice Advisors might be duplicating the work already undertaken by Admissions Officers. Unsurprisingly, the issues facing local authorities varied depending on whether they were in urban or rural areas. Within a large city, the issues were more around communication between neighbouring boroughs (where children might attend schools in a number of adjacent boroughs). It was acknowledged that in large rural regions, there might only really be one school choice available to parents at a “sensible distance” for parents.

Obstacles and barriers to a successful transition

A range of obstacles and barriers to the smooth transition process was cited. These challenges fell into three broad areas: those relating to parents, those relating to local procedures, and those relating to national and local data (the Central Pupil Database and data held at local authority level). In relation to parents, some made unwise applications to certain schools; while some made assumptions about automatic places and these took time to resolve. Parents who moved around a lot posed a significant challenge to the system: it was difficult to track them, and existing procedures (such as a system of automatic notification when this happened) were felt to be of limited use. When parents moved there was an additional knock-on effect, in some authorities, of investigating and checking addresses. ‘Casual admissions’ (when parents have just moved into an area) create additional administrative procedures. While many parents may

move legitimately into an area, other parents may claim to have moved before the date for choosing a school, and these investigations generate extra work and administration.

'Hard to reach' parents (who are likely to be among those who move around a lot), and parents who were less competent at filling out the forms also posed a challenge. It was acknowledged that the current application system is mainly a paper-based process, although many local authorities strive to make these forms as clear and simple as possible for parents. While some local authorities clearly work hard to encourage primary schools to help parents with the form-filling process, this is not always easy. Dedicated 'choice advisors' were felt to smooth the process, and a number of authorities had appointed, or were in the process of appointing, these advisors. Being able to acquire early decisions about school choices from parents was also considered desirable.

In some areas, local 'preference' systems were felt to be at odds with systems in neighbouring areas. For example, in one local authority, parents were allowed to specify six choices of equal preference while other authorities nearby used a 'first preference' system. It was hard to get the figures to 'add up'. Another area allowed parents to specify three preferences.

Some authorities cited the Central Pupil Database as a barrier to the transition process, as this was not felt to be up-to-date, and there were many duplicate records in existence. In one area, the LEA reported the need to ensure that data held on children who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) was up-to-date, as these children had certain entitlements which affected the transition process. For example, children eligible for FSM were entitled to free travel to the three nearest schools within 2-6 miles, as well as the nearest faith school within 2-15 miles. A suggestion was made that by combining information relating to school preference, FSM, distance, and transport in the same piece of software, this would in turn cut down on the amount of administration involved in organizing places for children eligible for FSM.

Recent changes affecting the transition process

Some recent changes at both local and national level affected the transition process. The Education Inspections Act, as well as the 2002 Education Act were cited as legislative changes which impacted on the process. The duty imposed on Local Authorities to co-ordinate admissions had a significant impact, leading to the creation of admissions forums and reports. Developing admissions criteria and procedures first, and considering these processes alongside parental preferences were other changes mentioned. The new duty to provide transport between home and school for certain groups was also cited. There might be different challenges involved in dealing with Voluntary aided and Foundation schools. Many authorities also cited changes to the 'preference' system, but these varied by area with a trend towards specifying a greater number of preferences (e.g. three and above) rather than fewer preferences. This was felt to give parents greater choice and satisfaction as well as more flexibility. Advances in information systems were key changes, in particular, the development of online procedures for admissions which were gaining in popularity among parents.

3.4 Key features of a successful transition

There were differences in the ways that local authorities identified the key features of a successful transition. Local partnerships, and having a good relationship with 'feeder' schools were felt to be important, although the point was made that it was not always easy to define which schools were the feeder schools (for political, rather than geographical reasons). It was also felt that a key issue was ensuring that there were enough school places available locally, so that children could attend their own local schools. There was also the acknowledgement that many schools do not appear to 'trust' the data on children provided by schools at Year 6 level, leading to a system of baseline re-testing all children at Year 7 which might be unnecessary. Other local authorities identified the need to work closely with parents at all stages of the process: making sure that parents were encouraged to apply in good time for places, and that the parent literature was easy to understand. In some areas, reminder letters are sent which could help to identify those parents who might need additional support with the transition process.

Good practice and training for transition

Some local authorities reported the existence of guidelines on good practice, but it varied enormously. In some areas, guidelines were available for Head teachers as well as any staff responsible for Year 6 children. Other areas had plans to create such guidelines in the future. However, in some areas no formal written guidelines were in place, although there were many examples of good practice actually happening. These ranged from induction days and information transfer between schools, to dedicated projects in some areas where primary school children spent a significant amount of time in their future secondary schools.

The opportunities for training on transition available to local authority officials also varied considerably. In some areas there was no training offered by the local authority: training was considered to be the responsibility of the individual clusters of schools. Other training opportunities were linked to the status of the school. Examples mentioned, included, training opportunities offered to those working in Academies, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools. Very few authorities appeared to have training specifically on transition delivered centrally: in the one case cited, this was offered for Year 6 and Year 7 teachers. Some local authorities appeared to offer opportunities (advice, briefings etc) on the admission process in general, but not on the transition process. Advice was offered, and draft letters were provided for schools, but transition-specific issues appear to be dealt with at a school, rather than a local authority level. However, there was an understanding on the part of local authorities that they needed to make themselves available for schools to contact them for advice. There did not appear to be any formal systems for evaluating any training provided: however, again it is possible that this was occurring at a school level. In one area, it was observed that if it was felt that the transition process did not appear to be smooth enough, the School Improvement team became involved to work with schools around transition issues.

3.5 Transition events and other initiatives

Local authorities with dedicated 'Choice Advisors' were more likely to attend secondary school open evenings, although in some areas, members of the local authority admissions team endeavoured to attend most school open evenings. In some areas the support offered by Choice Advisors were targeted to those schools and those parents who required additional help. Most schools had open evenings, and in one authority, an annual schools exhibition was held at which other services (such as SEN services, Connexions and information relating to Educational Maintenance Allowances).

Good links between feeder primary schools and their secondary schools were felt to be the key to the success of the transition process. Specific transition events were held in many areas. Based upon the interviews with local authority officials, most schools appeared to offer 'taster' days, however, in the majority of cases these were organised by the schools and the local authority played no role in organizing these. The assumption was that this was a school-based role. It was noted that having more than one preference could complicate the induction process. If children wanted to go to more than one school they might need to attend a number of different taster days. Although these might not be organised centrally, in some authorities schools tried to have the taster days on the same day. For example, in one area, all Year 6 pupils attended a taster in their new school on the first Wednesday in July. With visits co-ordinated across schools, some primary schools used the opportunity to hold their own taster days for the new reception intake. Some areas offered additional transition events: for example 'demo lessons' were offered in one area, but these were restricted to schools which were part of an Education Action Zone initiative. Others were targeted at specific groups, for example, 'looked after' children. In another area, Year 6 pupils attended their future secondary school for after-school science activities, and feedback suggested that this made the children feel much less nervous about the transition process. In other areas, visits made by secondary school staff to primary schools depended on whether it was a faith school or not: secondary school staff might visit all the church primary schools, regardless of whether or not they were considered to be 'feeder' schools. RC secondary schools in other areas might 'promote themselves' to RC primaries in other areas.

Some local authority areas employed dedicated 'transition workers' to work with Year 6 children. These workers visited a number of primary schools, talking to parents and children about the process. Other strategies used by schools included trying to ensure continuity between workbooks (for example, using the same workbooks in Year 6 and 7). One local authority mentioned that the same novel was studied across the area, in both Years 6 and 7. Only one of the six local authority officials interviewed mentioned the transition materials provided by the DfES (now DCSF). There were some specific initiatives within schools that may have been introduced for other reasons, yet were coincidentally helpful for those moving to secondary school. These included courses for MFL run in primary schools. The 'cluster system' (grouping a secondary school with a number of primary schools that served the school) was a core element of the transition process. One area mentioned that each secondary school had a grouping of between 6 and 8 primary schools.

Some schools used the transition events to offer additional advice and information to parents. One area had used the occasion to focus on healthy meals and the '5 a day' approach; others had distributed leaflets on, for example, bullying, homework and parenting teenagers. As these were organised on a school level, local authorities were quite possibly not aware of the extent of support and information offered. Schools clearly have a considerable degree of freedom, in many areas, to manage the transition process in whichever way they feel will be most effective. However, in consequence it may be difficult to monitor the nature and extent of transition activities offered.

Sharing information on children and providing information for parents

With regard to the level of information on individual children passed between primary and secondary school, most schools passed on information on KS 2 results (in some this was for core subjects only). In one area, 'best practice' dictated that this should be for all subject areas. SEN information was also passed on, as was, in some cases, information on attendance. If this was felt to be a particular problem, this might be shared with Education Welfare Services. There did not appear to be pro-formas at local authority level for this information-sharing: responsibility existed at school level. More uniform procedures existed in relation to specific groups, for example, 'looked after' children. SEN children might have specific meetings set up in advance to determine the best location for a child. In one area, there was clearly a great deal of discussion at school level concerning pastoral groupings, SEN and EAL, and this may have been happening in other areas, but at the school level. It was acknowledged that sharing medical information was problematic due to Data Protection issues, and observed that greater collaboration with health services would benefit schools in the arena of information-sharing. It was pointed out that with regard to issues such as the electronic transfer of KS2 results, this may not be straightforward as primary and secondary schools may not have the same data systems, which could create difficulties in the transfer of data. Similarly, PLASC data was not always updated which could pose problems for schools.

Information provided by local authorities to parents and children about transition varied. Most parents received booklets from the local authority (often produced in several different languages and formats) and in some areas, more personalized 'packs' for families were created. Information specifically for children was not mentioned. In one area, the information booklet had recently been sent for the first time as a CD Rom (with a commitment to provide a hard copy, if parents needed it). Although this had greatly reduced the number of hard copies required, schools had not been in favour of this as they said that not all parents would have access to it. Some local authorities had also collected feedback on information supplied; most commonly this took the form of a short survey or questionnaire in the parent booklet. There were some systems to evaluate transition processes, but these did not follow a uniform structure and mostly seemed to focus on feedback from parents. On the whole, local authorities were not aware of schools' own internal processes for evaluating, although if this was felt to be an issue, it might be collected by the school improvement team. Children were not asked for feedback, with the exception of one area which offered an exhibition for schools and invited questionnaire feedback from children

using laptops. Some information on transition might also be captured as part of a Parents Perception Survey, and teacher feedback might be included in the annual consultation.

3.6 Local authority support on transition offered to schools

There was some specific support offered to schools by local authorities: in areas with Choice Advisors, they undertook this role. 'Active Learning Mentors' who supported those who were especially vulnerable were also mentioned. If there was an existing issue which was likely to merit additional support (such as SEN or attendance), extra support might be offered by the SEN Parent Partnership team, or Education Welfare Service. If the school itself received additional support (for example, from the School Improvement Team), support for transition might also be provided as part of this package. Interpreters might also be offered to those who need it. One local authority commented that the current admissions team gave a lot of support to schools, providing, in effect, the same service as a Choice Advisor, yet this was not recognised by the DCSF. A new Choice Advisor was to be appointed, to work at "arms-length" and it was felt that this did not acknowledge the hard work undertaken by the admissions team over the past years, who supported parents through a very complex process. A general comment made by one area, in relation to support offered, was that schools varied greatly in their perception of Year 7 children. Some schools work very hard to make sure that Year 7 pupils are regarded as children who may still want to play at playtime: other schools perceive them as young adults, needing less support.

Ethnic minority children and SEN

Few local authorities reported having specific systems in place to support ethnic minority families, although it is possible that these existed at a school level, and local authority officials were just not aware of them. In some cases, translators were available to work with families in the community and help them fill the forms. Specific groups might be targeted, for example, looked-after children. In one local authority, with many children of low SES, support was described as being 'reactive'. One area mentioned hosting 'Turkish' and 'Bengali' nights arranged for Turkish and Asian communities with language barriers, where interpreters attended and assisted parents with paperwork. An observation was made that some schools that had never had to deal with EAL children were increasingly finding themselves dealing with this group, yet lacked the necessary support systems to do so. In other areas, challenges might be posed by other groups (for example, literacy problems among white working-class groups), and in this particular authority, the role was undertaken by Education Welfare Officers. If parents had low expectations, particular efforts were made to raise the expectation of the child.

Arrangements for supporting children with SEN varied, but in general, the perception was that this group was well supported and were less likely to 'fall through the net' than other groups. In one area, work with SEN children around transition began in Year 5, and even earlier if the child had a statement. There may be greater flexibility regarding, for example, home-school distances if the child has a statement. These groups are more likely to receive additional help from the Choice Advisor. Support may also be offered for these groups at cluster level by SEN support workers. However, the level of uptake for support for children with SEN, along with that for other groups, was not monitored centrally and therefore local authorities were unable to assess this.

School preference, 'importing' and 'exporting'

Not all the local authority officials interviewed were able to say how many parents were given a place at their first choice school; however, half of those who had this information said that around 93 per cent were placed in their first choice school. In another area this figure was around 75 per cent. Similarly, limited data was provided on the number of appeals and the success of these, although one area noted that successful appeals were actually problematic for schools, as it left them oversubscribed. As a result, the appeals process in this area was a source of tension. In most areas, those who did not receive a place in their first choice school generally had a second or third place to go to. In one area, not accepting any school place led to an automatic referral to the Education Welfare Service and to the parents being offered places in schools with vacancies. If parents still refused to take up any place, parents were issued with a School Attendance Order.

While most parents were offered a school, in one local authority some families had not been allocated one. The local authority then followed up these cases and helped each family on an individual basis. Very few, it was felt, moved into private or home education.

Some local authorities commented that they tended to 'export' children (usually to grammar schools); others might import (provision for SEN was mentioned as a contributing factor in this). Although it is difficult to say what kinds of outcomes are currently monitored by schools, areas mentioned included attendance, attainment and behaviour. One area felt that it was currently an 'exporter' and would like to try to retain more young residents.

Successes of transition and issues for future development

Local authorities cited a number of features about the existing transition process that they felt worked, and were successful. These included: statutory dates and deadlines to help parents organise themselves; the admissions forums (which were more powerful than previous structures) and the move towards online applications. Other examples given were having a dedicated transition teacher in schools, as well as a parenting support officer providing generic advice and support for parents. Some areas also reported having strong partnerships between schools. Some areas cited for development and improvement included the National Pupil Database. Some expressed the general desire for schools to be of an 'equal' standard- current preference systems can lead to certain schools being 'favoured', and it was considered desirable to promote and value all schools for their merit in different areas. There was an acknowledgement that schools needed to work harder to engage families: engaged families are more involved in the children's education, which, in turn, leads to children receiving a higher standard of education. A comment made was that the reception intake was a good time to begin involving parents, as this is when they first become involved with the school system. Additionally, it was noted that the transition between pre-school and primary was also hard: some felt that this area deserved as much attention as transition at secondary level, particular with children coming from a huge range of nurseries at pre-school level.

With the advent of the 'Common Assessment Framework' across Social care, health and education, it was acknowledged that a more integrated and centralised multi-agency model was the future. However, it was mentioned that other than some limited DCSF materials, there is currently very little funding targeted specifically at transition.

It is clear that much of the work relating to transition is happening at the school level, and certain events and initiatives may occur independently of local authorities. However, it was also apparent that local authority staff who are responsible for school admissions are working extremely hard to support parents in the complex process of choosing a secondary school for their child. It is to the credit of local authorities that in the areas covered; relatively high numbers of parents were allocated places in their first choice school. The local authority officials interviewed showed an awareness of the challenges facing schools, and the need to work together with schools, parents and children to facilitate the transition process.

Chapter 4. Survey of children's and parents views on transition: exploring the parameters

4.1 Who participated in the survey? Sample characteristics

Questionnaires were given to 1190 children (see Appendix 4) and their parents (see Appendix 3). Forty six per cent of the children (N=550) and forty eight per cent of the parents (N=569) returned their questionnaires completed. Table 4.1 presents the demographic distribution of the complete EPPSE children sample, the EPPSE sample targeted for this survey, and the number of respondents to the EPPSE survey questionnaire.

The 1190 children who received the questionnaire were fairly reflective of the complete EPPSE sample (N = 3172) in terms of their socio-economic profile. However, the target sample (N=1190) contained a slightly higher proportion of children from medium SES, a slightly higher number of children from ethnic minorities and a slightly higher number of children whose families were of medium educational level.

Despite the demographic and socio-economic similarities between the whole EPPSE sample and the EPPSE survey sub-sample, the final achieved sample (N=550) was slightly different. More specifically, response rates were higher among girls, children from high SES and low SES, children from families with a medium or high educational level, children with English as first language, and children experiencing less multiple disadvantage. Response rates were also higher amongst white children, smaller families, families without SEN or not receiving FSM¹ and from homes with higher HLE¹. Therefore in the final achieved sample, the previous groups are rather over-represented compared with the target EPPSE sample.

1 The Home Learning Environment index used in the current analysis was collected in the parental interview at entry to the main EPPE 3-11 study. See Technical papers 8a, 8b and Sammons et al. 2007

Table 4.1: Characteristics of the complete EPPSE sample, the target EPPSE transitions sample and the achieved EPPSE transitions sample

	Whole EPPSE sample (N=3172)		Target EPPSE transitions sample (N=1190)		Achieved EPPSE transitions sample (N=550)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender of child						
Male	1636	52	601	50	251	46
Female	1536	48	589	50	299	54
Socio-economic status of family						
Low	573	18	198	17	102	19
Medium	1426	45	615	53	256	47
High	1057	33	343	30	186	34
Ethnicity						
White	2417	76	872	73	437	80
Non White	751	24	316	27	112	20
Highest educational qualification of family						
Low level (no or vocational qualification)	834	27	324	28	123	23
Medium level (Left education at 16 or 18)	1464	48	599	52	299	55
High level (Degree or higher)	751	25	229	20	123	23
Family Status						
Partnered parent	2293	75	856	74	414	76
Single parent	752	25	302	26	130	24
English as Additional Language						
English as first language	2815	89	1054	89	503	91
English as Additional Language	354	11	135	11	47	9
Family Size						
Only child	370	15	137	14	80	16
1-2 siblings	1746	72	710	72	369	74
3 or more siblings	312	13	139	14	49	10
Child recognised as SEN – Y5						
SEN	701	28	287	28	110	23
Not SEN	1814	72	743	72	377	77
Free school meals						
Child receives FSM – Y5	395	18	163	18	55	13
Child does not receive FSM – Y5	1791	82	738	82	374	87
Multiple Disadvantage Index						
No disadvantage	644	22	238	22	129	25
1	781	27	279	26	145	28
2	613	21	254	23	128	25
3	391	14	172	16	64	12
High disadvantage	470	16	150	14	56	11
Home Learning Environment Index						
0-13	308	10	117	10	51	10
14-19	665	22	249	22	111	21
20-24	727	24	284	25	116	22
25-32	960	32	365	32	185	35
33-45	346	12	121	11	70	13
Child has health problems						
No	2026	66	767	66	349	64
Yes	1041	34	394	34	196	36

4.2 The five aspects of a successful transition

Before investigating what hinders or facilitates a successful transition, it is important to define the concept of a successful transition. In other words, when we say that a child has experienced a successful transition, what do we mean? Instead of using a single definition of a successful transition, we treated it as a composite concept consisting of five underlying dimensions. These dimensions or aspects of a successful transition were found after performing a factor analysis on the responses of children and their parents on 18 survey items. Table A10.1 in Appendix 10, contains the survey items that made up each of the five factors, their factor loadings, internal scale reliabilities and other descriptives. A total score for each factor was computed by adding scores on all relevant items. Since children's scores tended to concentrate towards the higher end of the scale (not normally distributed), two groups were created for each factor using the median score (see Table A10.1 in Appendix 10 for median score of each scale and response scales for each group).

The definition of a successful transition for children is that they have:

- developed new friendships and improved their self esteem and confidence
- settled so well in school life that they caused no concerns to their parents
- shown an increasing interest in school and school work
- got used to their new routines and school organisation with great ease
- experienced curriculum continuity.

Overall, children in this study scored highly on all five aspects of a successful transition. Half of the children had developed new friendships and had boosted their self-esteem and confidence once at secondary school; and/or had settled so well in school life that they caused no concerns to their parents; and/or were showing more interest in school and work in comparison to primary school; and/or were finding it very easy getting used to new routines; and/or had experienced more curriculum continuity (i.e. they found work completed in Y6 to be very useful for the work they were doing in Y7)

All of these 5 aspects of a successful transition were positively and significantly correlated (see Table A10.2 in Appendix 10). For example; the more friendships, self-esteem and confidence children developed after transferring to secondary school; the more settled they were in their school life; the more interest they showed in school and work; the easier they found it getting used to new routines and the more curriculum continuity they experienced.

After having spent a term at their secondary school, seventy three per cent of the children said that they felt happy and a further sixteen per cent were excited. This further indicates that for the majority of children in the sample, the transition to secondary school was a successful one.

A more detailed investigation will explore the factors that hinder or stipulate that children will make a very successful transition noted via our five dimensions as opposed to the category of children that did not.

Firstly however, the children's and parents' experiences regarding the period before and after the transition will be presented.

4.3 Children's and parents' experiences regarding the period before and during the transition to secondary school

Many children (40%) answered that staying with friends and/or siblings was the first most important thing for them when they first started thinking about which secondary school they wanted to go to. Other popular responses included the school's distance from home, its facilities, provisions and curriculum, and the educational and career opportunities it offered (see Table 4.2). For children therefore, their secondary school was to act as a social institution where friendships were to be maintained and expanded; it was suggested to be a place away from home as much as an educational institution.

Table 4.2: Main categories for responses regarding 1st most important thing when thinking about secondary school (frequencies and percentages)

First most important thing when started thinking about secondary school: Main categories of responses* - Children	N	%
Staying with friends and/or siblings	185	40.2
Distance from home	71	15.4
School facilities/provisions/curriculum	53	11.5
Educational and career opportunities	43	9.3
School reputation and exam performance	26	5.7
School ethos atmosphere and culture	22	4.8
Teaching staff	21	4.6
Avoid being bullied	14	3.0
Making new friends	13	2.8
Own feelings, worries and impressions	12	2.6
Total	460	100.0

*only those with 10 or more responses

There were differences between parents and children regarding the period that they would start thinking seriously about a secondary school. In general, parents would start thinking seriously about it earlier than children. Seventy nine per cent of parents had started thinking about it before Year 6 whilst only twenty one per cent of children had started thinking about it during the same period. Forty five per cent of the children had started thinking about their secondary school only one year before going, (in Year 6), in comparison to twenty-one per cent of parents who had left it as late as that.

The vast majority of parents (85%) considered only state schools, two per cent only private schools and thirteen per cent would considered both state and private schools. There was some variation regarding the number of schools considered by parents: thirty seven per cent considered only one school; thirty six per cent considered two schools; twenty one per cent considered 3 schools and the remaining six per cent considered 4 or more schools.

As mentioned previously, for children, the most important thing when considering a secondary school was staying with their friends and siblings. However, only a very small minority of parents would take this factor into consideration when choosing a secondary school. More parents, on the other hand, would choose a secondary school based on its distance away from their home and its reputation for a high standard of teaching. Relying on their child's wishes was also one of the most important criteria for many parents (see Table 4.2). In regards to the final choice about which school to apply to, there was strong agreement between children and parents: seventy per cent of parents and sixty four per cent of children said they were in strong agreement with each other.

Table 4.3: Parents' responses regarding the first most important factor for choosing a secondary school

First most important factor for choosing a secondary school: Parents	N	%
Distance from home	66	14.1
Good reputation for a high standard of teaching	64	13.7
Child wanted to go there	59	12.6
School has a good reputation for behaviour and discipline	51	10.9
School has good exam results	43	9.2
School's atmosphere (ethos)	40	8.5
Brothers/sisters already at school	29	6.2
School is a church/faith school	17	3.6
School in partnership with child's primary school	16	3.4
School has good facilities	13	2.8
Child's friends go/going to school	10	2.1
Open day/visit to the school	7	1.5
School offers good pastoral care	7	1.5
6th form available	7	1.5
Specialist school (e.g. science, language)	6	1.3
Recommended by friends/relatives	6	1.3
Is a small school	6	1.3
Ofsted reports	5	1.1
Is a selective school	5	1.1
Recommended by child's primary school	3	0.6
Head teacher	3	0.6
Is a single sex school	2	0.4
School offers good vocational training opportunities	2	0.4
Parents' association available	1	0.2
Total	468	100

Applying to secondary schools

Half of the parents applied to only one state secondary school and thirty nine per cent applied to two or three state schools; only a minority (9%) applied to private schools. Twelve per cent of parents said that their children had to take an entrance examination and of those, twenty three per cent reported that their children had received out-of-school lessons to prepare for these exams. For eighty four per cent of children, there was no interview involved during the application process. The vast majority of parents found it easy or very easy to understand the school's admissions policy (94%), to get hold of this information (97%), and to fill in the application form(s) (98%).

Application process outcomes

Most parents (88%) admitted that the school attended by their child was actually their first choice. Of those who did not manage to secure their first choice of secondary school, thirty three per cent of the parents appealed and thirty one per cent were successful. The majority of the parents, who did not receive their first offer initially, did not appeal and the majority of those who had appealed did not manage to succeed.

School open days/evenings

Most children (82%) attended such events, which would often entail tours of the school, head teacher's talks, and meetings with other teachers and children (see Table 4.4). In addition, most parents (86%) went to open days/evenings, and almost all of them felt welcome in the school. Afterwards, seventy eight per cent discussed what they thought of the school visit with other parents and only six per cent of them found that such discussions did not help them in their final decision. For the majority of parents, these events offered them an opportunity to meet other teachers and pupils and to tour the school site (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.4: Activities during open day/evening – Children

Activities during open day/evening: Children	N	%
Had a tour	367	79
Listened to the Headteacher's talk	357	77
Met other teachers	343	74
Met other children	328	70
Had demonstration lessons	233	50
Was free to wander around	204	44
Met Headteacher	203	44
Saw classes working	177	38

Table 4.5: Activities during open day/evening – Parents

Activities during open day/evening: Parents	N	%
An opportunity to meet other teachers	457	91
Tour the buildings	446	88
An opportunity to meet pupils	376	76
Free to wander	287	57
Opportunity to have an individual discussion with the Headteacher	246	49
Watched a lesson	143	28

Most children (90%) also felt welcome on open days/evenings with the main reason being given as the friendliness of the staff and pupils (see Table 4.6). Comparatively, the minority (N= 42) of those who did not feel welcomed on that day suggest that a lack of information, communication and activities, and their own worries and personality characteristics prevented them from feeling more welcome. These children also mentioned how: other pupils making them feel uneasy, teachers being inattentive and unfriendly, and finding themselves in an unfamiliar setting and in a novel and strange situation, were also reasons to prevent them from feeling more welcome.

Table 4.6: Reasons for feeling welcome during open day/evening – Children's views

Reasons for feeling welcome during open day: Children	N	%
Everyone was nice, friendly and helpful	218	58.4
Welcoming and friendly teachers	59	15.8
Familiar faces	26	7.0
Helpful and friendly pupils	15	4.0
Offered a tour of school	12	3.2
Quickly made new friends	8	2.1
Provided information about school	8	2.1
Open to instigate and seek communication with pupil	8	2.1
Making an effort to persuade new pupils to join school	8	2.1
Being able to explore the school grounds	6	1.6
Activities offered	5	1.3
Total	373	100

The prospect of moving on to secondary school would make some children worry, for example about: leaving behind old friends and teachers; dealing with new people older and bigger than them; bullying; getting lost in a larger school, or having to cope with more homework (see Table 4.7; only categories with 10 or more responses are included).

Table 4.7: Reasons for worrying about secondary school – Children's views

Reasons for worrying about going to secondary school – Main categories*: Children	N	%
Leaving behind old friends and teachers	37	21.3
Bullying	34	19.5
Making new friends, having new teachers and dealing with too many new people	28	16.1
Getting lost	26	14.9
Amount of homework	20	11.5
Older and bigger children	17	9.8
Larger school	12	6.9
Total	174	100.0

*only those with 10 or more responses

Despite such worries, half of the children (54%) looked forward to the transition whilst at primary school. A further thirty one per cent had mixed feelings. Only thirteen per cent did not look forward to it. Making new friends and meeting new people was the most popular reason for looking forward to secondary school, followed by having more and interesting lessons, activities, clubs and facilities (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Reasons for looking forward to secondary school – Children's views

Reasons for looking forward to secondary school – Main categories*: Children	N	%
Making new friends and meeting new people	155	43.9
More and interesting lessons, activities clubs and facilities	63	17.8
Sport and PE	30	8.5
Many different classes and teachers	22	6.2
Growing up, new experience, and taking responsibility	16	4.5
Educational and career opportunities	16	4.5
Starting something new and challenging	13	3.7
Getting away from primary school and moving on	13	3.7
Being with friends and family	13	3.7
Becoming independent	12	3.4
Total	353	100.0

*only those with 10 or more responses

With regards to other transfer processes, the majority of children reported receiving relevant information to prepare them by teachers in both primary and secondary schools, meaning that they were not going unprepared to secondary school. The majority of children said that their primary school teacher had talked to them about having more than 1 teacher in Y7, behaviour and discipline, and changing classrooms between lessons. Half of the children had also been informed about having new subjects, and not being with the same pupils in all lessons. Only one in five children were told in advance about the lunch system in secondary school (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Issues Y6 teacher talked about to prepare children for Y7

Issues Y6 teacher talked about to prepare children for Y7: Children	N	%
Having more than 1 teachers in Y7	398	75
Behaviour and discipline	390	73
Changing classrooms between lessons	373	70
Having new subjects	304	57
Not being with same pupils in all lessons	288	54
Lunch system	123	23

In many cases (63%), a Y7 teacher would have also visited the primary school. During such visits, the Y7 teacher would talk to the class/small group (68%), watch the class working (18%), teach the class (17%), talk to individual pupils (13%) and/or talk to the assembly (12%).

Most children (81%) had also paid additional visits to their new secondary school (see Table 4.10 for activities). Fifty five per cent of the children had visited their new school more than twice. In addition, fifty two per cent of the children had said that they visited their new secondary school with their entire primary school class, and thirty three per cent were accompanied by their parents/carers. One in every four children reported feeling excited during these visits and more than half said they felt both excited and nervous. Few children felt nervous (16%).

Table 4.10: Activities during other visits to secondary schools

Activities during visits to secondary schools: Children	N	%
Met other teachers	434	81
Met other children	425	80
Had a tour	367	69
Had a lesson	354	66
Had lunch	335	63
Met the Headteacher	306	57
Saw a working class	182	34
Was free to wander around	162	30

The vast majority of parents (89%) were also satisfied with the way their child's primary school had prepared them for secondary school. Seventy one per cent of the parents were offered the opportunity to attend meetings at the primary school to find out more about their child's move to secondary school. Only 7 per cent of the parents who went to these meetings did not find them helpful.

In preparation for secondary school, some parents thought that their children needed help with talking about their feelings (45%); remembering books and equipment (43%); homework (41%); the journey to school (36%); and with making new friends (33%). Only one in ten parents believed that their child needed help with using the computer or the internet.

When parents were asked about their child's secondary school and how this, in turn, had prepared their children for moving on whilst they were in primary school, sixty nine per cent suggested that their child had visited the secondary school for special lessons, fifty two per cent mentioned evening meetings for parents and children and a further thirty four per cent reported joint events (i.e., sports, social). Only seventeen per cent of the parents mentioned that their child had been assigned a mentor and 4 per cent that their child was taking Saturday lessons. If a day time visit to the secondary school had been offered, eighty per cent of the parents believed that this visit included a tour of the school, seventy per cent of parents believed that their children had met their new form tutor, sixty six per cent that they had eaten lunch, and sixty three per cent thought that their child had joined in lessons.

In regard to the extent to which parents had an accurate picture of what was going on during these visits, it was found for example, that sixty six per cent of the children gave similar responses to those of their parents in terms of being offered a tour of the school.

In accordance with the finding that most children participated in the various transfer processes, the majority also felt prepared for moving on to secondary school (84%). According to children, the people who helped them most to prepare were their family alone (41%), followed by both their family and teachers (18%), and then their teachers alone (13%). Other sources of help included family and friends (8%), teachers, family and friends (6%), friends only (6%), others (5%), both their teachers and friends (3%) and a small minority said that it was only themselves that helped them prepare (2%). Children also responded that these sources had helped them by addressing their worries, reassuring and encouraging them (N=72), by explaining what to expect and how it all works (N=52), and by giving advice and tips on how to cope at their new school (N= 27). They also stated that these sources had helped them by sharing their own experiences with their child (N= 26), arranging visits at the new school, performing demonstrations and encounters with other pupils (N= 16), preparing the child for new educational demands (N= 14), and by talking with the child in general (N= 12). These forms of preparation were experienced by at least 10 or more children.

Sixty one per cent of the children said that their secondary school had given them a lot of help to settle in, compared to thirty six per cent who had said that it gave them a little help and 3 per cent that their secondary school did not help them at all. Responses for what enabled a child to settle in were grouped into broad categories. Categories with the most responses were: (1) being given help with getting to know your way around the school (N= 63), (2) relaxing rules and implementing procedures to help new pupils adapt (N= 37), (3) having friends at the school or

making new ones (N= 32), (4) visits to school, induction and taster days and booklets to prepare (N= 31), (5) nice, kind, friendly and patient teachers (N= 26), (6) other pupils and teachers initiating contact (N= 19), (7) other pupils helping, showing around and offering support (N= 19), (8) offering information and explanations on how things work (N= 19), (9) being given encouragement and support (N= 16), and (10) assistance with lessons and homework (N= 14).

Moving on to secondary school involved financial costs for the parents, which in many cases ranged between £100 and £200 (see Table 4.11). Although, forty eight per cent of parents did not find it difficult for their families to pay for these things, fifty two per cent of parents did.

Table 4.11: Parents' responses regarding the estimated cost of preparing their child for secondary school

	Less than £50	£51-£100	£101-£150	£151-£200	£201-£500	More than £500
Cost to buy all the things the child needed (including uniform) for secondary school	28 (5%)	110 (20%)	168 (30%)	169 (30%)	79 (14%)	3 (0.5%)

After the transition to secondary school, more than half of the children (61%) said that their secondary school had helped them to settle in a lot; only three per cent considered their secondary school to have offered them no help at all. According to children, their secondary school had helped them in various ways to settle in; for example by providing them with help in getting to know their way around school; by relaxing rules and by implementing procedures to help pupils adapt (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Various ways by which secondary school helped children to settle in – Children's views

How secondary school helped children to settle in – Main categories*: Children	N	%
Help with getting to know your way around the school	62	22.6
Relaxing rules and implementing procedures to help pupils adapt	34	12.4
Visits to school, induction and taster days, and booklets to prepare	31	11.3
Having friends at school or making new ones	29	10.6
Pupils and teachers initiating contact	25	9.1
Nice, kind, friendly and patient teachers	25	9.1
other pupils helped, showed around and offered support	19	6.9
Offered information and explanation on how things work	19	6.9
Given encouragement and reassurance	16	5.8
Assistance with lessons and homework	14	5.1
Total	274	100.0

*only those with 10 or more responses

As a result, the vast majority of children were well acquainted with the routines of the secondary school such as registration (95%), school wear (95%), PE kit (93%), lunches (92%), using school equipment (82%), and who to ask for advice (80%). However, there were fewer children who knew a lot about clubs and activities in their new school (59%). Thirty six per cent of the children had not joined or participated in clubs, activities or school teams.

Secondary schools had also taught most children how to use reference sources (90%), how to revise (87%), how to make notes (80%), and how to write an essay (77%). However, most secondary schools had not taught children how to use acronyms (71%). Also forty one per cent of children said that their schools had not taught them how to take notes when people speak.

Along the same lines, most of the children felt safe whilst at school (88%) and travelling between home and school (81%). A smaller but still large proportion of children (69%) felt safe in the playground.

However, worries about child safety were more prominent among parents, followed by worries regarding levels of homework and maintaining/making new friendships. Issues related to behaviour and disciplines were of concern only to a small minority of parents (see Table 4.13). Half of the parents were worried about their children being bullied at secondary school. Thirty percent of parents were also worried about their child's safety or about their child travelling to

school. Yet most parents (71%) felt that as far as they were aware their children had no problems with bullying at their new school. The vast majority of parents (84%) also reported that their child had never refused to go to his/her new school or tried to get out of going.

Table 4.13: Issues that worry parents in secondary school – Parents

Issues that cause worry among parents in secondary school: Parents	%
Bullying	53
Safety	30
Travel to school	30
Amount of homework	26
Making new friends	24
Level of work	23
Adjusting to having many teachers	21
Sustaining friends	16
Understanding school procedure	12
Amount of freedom	10
Understanding school rules	10

With regards to their involvement in their child's school, only fourteen per cent of the parents were not satisfied with the amount of contact with the school (i.e., telephone contact, newsletters, personalised letters sent home and parents evenings). As a result the vast majority of them (80%) argued that they had received enough feedback from the school about their child's progress and behaviour.

4.4 What hinders or ensures a successful transition?

Five models explaining each of the five aspects of a successful transition were produced after exploring many possible predictors including various demographic characteristics, children's and parents' views and experiences for the period before and during the transition as well as children's cognitive scores in Y5 and the effectiveness of their schools.

The sub-sections that follow aim to present these models in a narrative user-friendly way. The reader, who wishes to interrogate further the statistics behind figures 4.1 to 4.5 may consult tables A10.3 to A10.5 in Appendix 10.

4.4.1 Developing new friendships and boosting self-esteem and confidence

This aspect of a successful transition was based on how parents evaluated the number of friends a child has and the level of their self-esteem, confidence and motivation in Year 7 compared with Year 6 (see Table A10.1 in Appendix 10).

As shown in [Figure 4.1](#), the children who had expanded their friendships and boosted their confidence since moving on to secondary school, were those who had received enough help from their secondary school to believe that the school had helped them to settle in a lot.

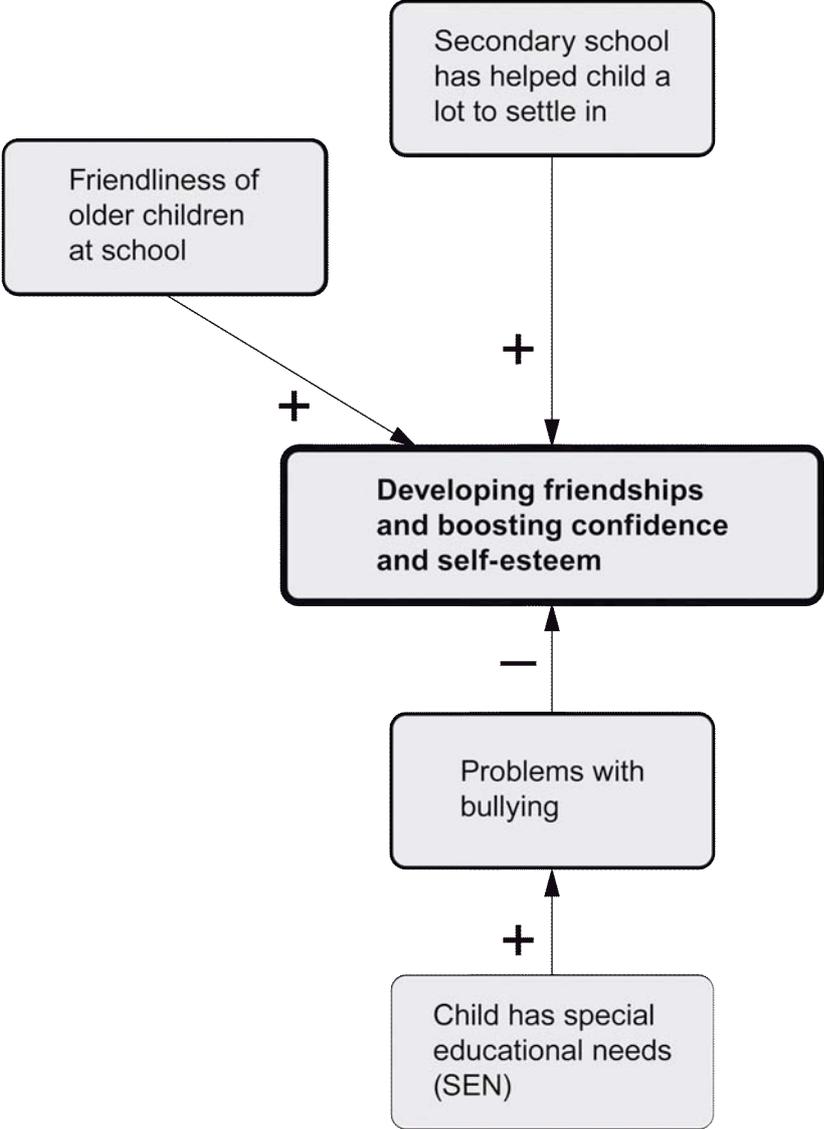
The friendliness of the older children at school was also very important. Children with more friends and confidence were in schools where older children were judged as friendlier to the child.

On the other hand, children were at risk of failing to develop friendships and confidence if they had not received a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in and/or were in schools where older children were less friendly to their younger counterparts.

There was also an important additional factor that could hinder this aspect of a successful transition. Children whose parents thought that they were having problems with bullying were less likely to expand their friendships and boost their confidence compared with children whose parents believed that they had no problems with bullying. Regarding bullying-related problems, the group of children who were more at risk, were those diagnosed with special educational needs (SEN).

These findings suggest that, in order to encourage children to expand their friendships and boost their confidence, self-esteem and motivation when moving to secondary school, secondary schools need to find innovative ways for helping children adapt. As seen in the previous section, some schools have already some practices in place to help children adapt (see Table 4.12).

Figure 4.1: Developing new friendships and boosting confidence and self-esteem - A model



4.4.2 Settling so well into school life that parents have no concerns

Settling very well into school life meant that children and their parents were both happy with the way the child had settled in, and that parents were very satisfied with the process of the transition and did not have any concerns during nor after the transfer (see Table A10.1 in Appendix 10).

As shown in [Figure 4.2](#), children who were very well settled in school life, had received a lot of help from secondary school.

Earlier we saw that forty per cent of the children believed that maintaining old friendships was the first most important thing when still at primary school and in considering their eminent transition to secondary school. Indeed, it was found that children who had moved on to secondary school along with most of their old primary school friends, tended to be among those that had settled in very well; more so than children who did not transfer with any of their old friends or moved with only a couple of them. These findings further confirm in statistical terms the importance of maintaining old friendships on how well children will settle in secondary school.

However, it appears that some children had better prospects for transferring along with most of their friends than others. White children were more likely to have most of their friends moving to the same school in comparison with non-white children.

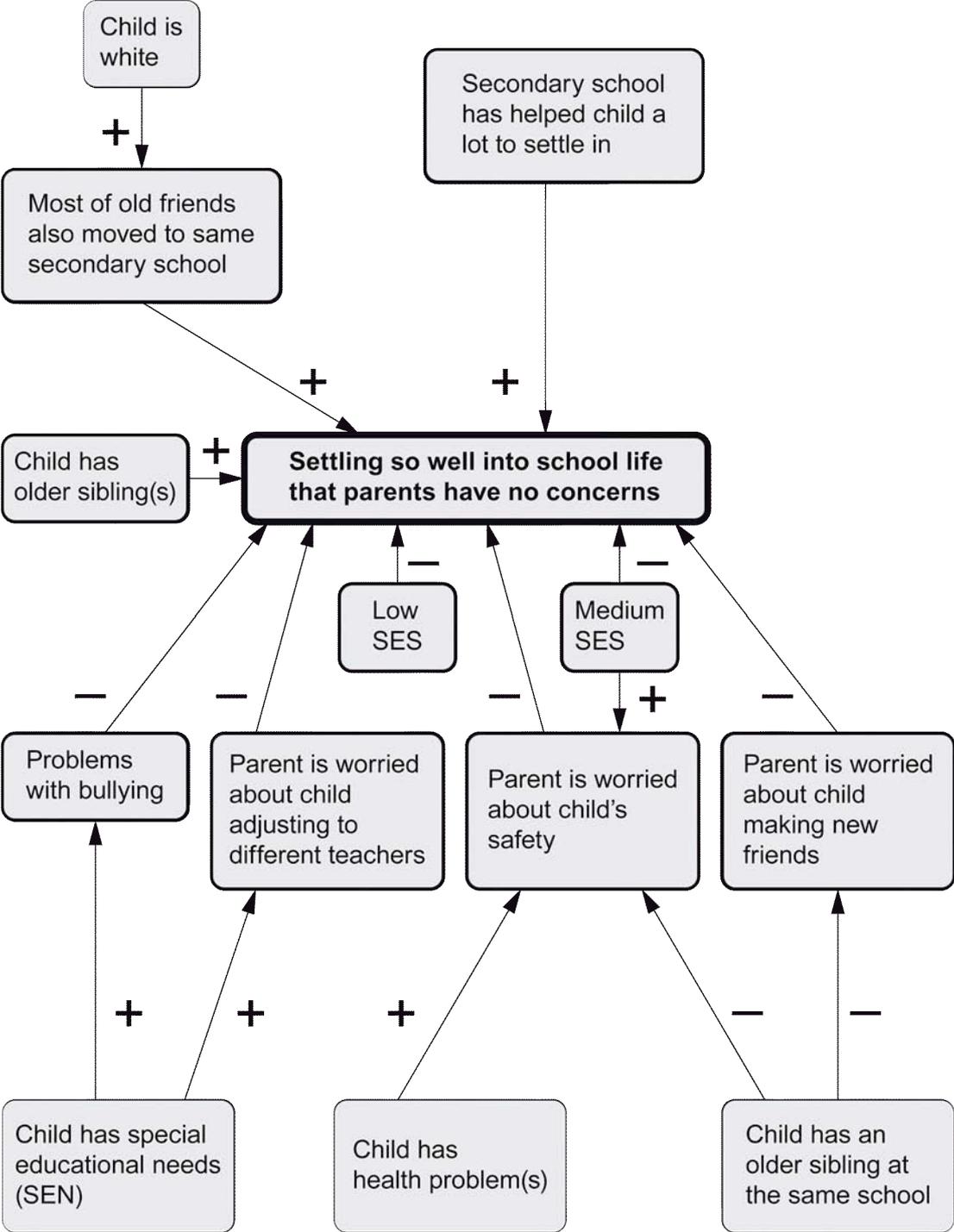
Children, who did not receive a lot of help from their secondary school and/or who did not move with most of their primary school friends, were not the only ones at risk of not settling in well. Children who sparked concerns about their ability to adjust to having different teachers, making new friends and staying safe were also at more risk of failing to settle in very well at secondary school. It is therefore important for parents and schools to address these issues and help children adjust to having different teachers, making new friends and staying safe whilst at school, in the playground or travelling between home and school. Safety, in particular, is very closely linked with the likelihood of a child having settled very well in school life. This is also indicated by the finding that children who had problems with bullying were at more risk of not having settled very well.

Two other groups, who were at risk of not settling in very well, were those of low and medium socio-economic status (SES). Their chances of adapting to life in the new school were worse compared with those of children of high SES. In addition, for children of medium SES there were more worries about their safety than for children of high SES.

Siblings have both direct and indirect effects on settling very well into school life. Having at least one older sibling significantly enhanced the chances for the child to become adapted at their secondary school. Also having at least one older sibling at the same secondary school would significantly ease their parents' worries about safety and making new friends, both factors directly related to a successful settlement.

Children with special educational needs or health problems were not at more risk of failing to settle in than those without such problems. However, health and developmental problems in children had significant indirect effects on their successful settlement into school life. More specifically, children with special educational needs were more likely to also have problems with bullying and there were more worries about them being able to adjust having different teachers; both factors significantly and directly linked with a successful transition. In addition, children with health problems had their parents worrying about their safety more so than children who had not such problems.

Figure 4.2: Settling so well into school life that parents have no concerns - A model



4.4.3 *Showing a growing interest in school and work*

A successful transition was also measured by comparing how parents' evaluations regarding how their children's interest in school and work had increased in comparison to the previous year at primary school (Table A10.1 in Appendix 10).

Figure 4.3 shows that children who showed the most growing interest in their school and their work at school, were those who had received a lot of help from their secondary school, who had looked forward to going to secondary school, and/or those who had at least one sibling at the same school.

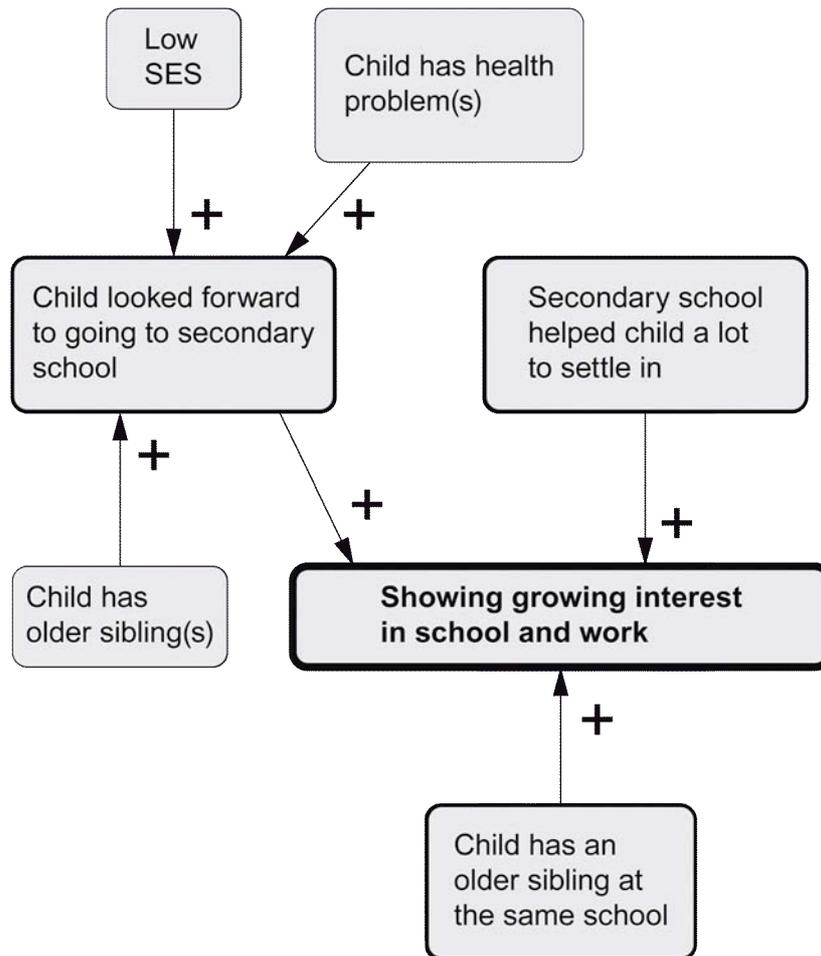
Siblings play an indirect role on this aspect of successful transitions. Having at least one older sibling significantly affects whether or not children will look forward to going to secondary school. Older siblings may offer enough information and guidance about life in a secondary school that may intrigue younger children to aspire to be part of that life. In addition, this type of information and experience may alleviate any fears or worries they might have prior to their transition.

The significant role of siblings continues well after children have moved to secondary school; this is shown as children with older siblings at the same school show a growing interest in school and work. It is very likely that, once at secondary school, older siblings may continue to offer support and help with home work as well as advice on how to deal everyday life incidents at school.

However, there were two surprising findings. Children of low SES and/or with health problems tended to look forward to going to secondary school more than children of high SES and/or without any health problems. The reasons that make these 'more vulnerable' children inclined to look forward to moving on from primary to secondary school are not straightforward.

Since this is a longitudinal dataset and there is information available about educational stages, we explored whether low SES children and children with health problems were any different from high SES and healthy children on four aspects of their educational lives in Year 5; this included enjoyment of school, anxiety and isolation, academic self-image, and behaviour self-image. There were no significant differences to suggest that these 'vulnerable' children had better or worse experiences from life at primary school.

Figure 4.3: Showing a growing interest in school and work - A model



4.4.4 Getting used to new routines and organisation of secondary school with great ease

The kind of routines that were considered for this sort of successful transition included: having many different teachers, changing classrooms between lessons, behaviour and discipline, and not being with the same pupils in all lessons (see Table A10.1 in Appendix 10).

As seen in [Figure 4.4](#), the children who found it very easy to get used to the routines of secondary school were those who found their work on six different subjects as more rather than less interesting, and those who believed that children in their class were more rather than less friendly. They were also those who had received a lot of help from secondary school.

Elsewhere, we found that white children may have better chances than non-white children to settle in well because of a tendency for them to move to secondary school along with most of their old friends, more so than non-white children. However, the relationship between ethnicity and successful transitions is different with regard to the child getting used to new routines. For this aspect of successful transitions, white children tend to find work less interesting than non-white children. Therefore, children from ethnic minorities do not necessarily experience less successful transitions and in some cases, due to their enthusiasm for work at secondary school, they may be in a more advantageous position than white children.

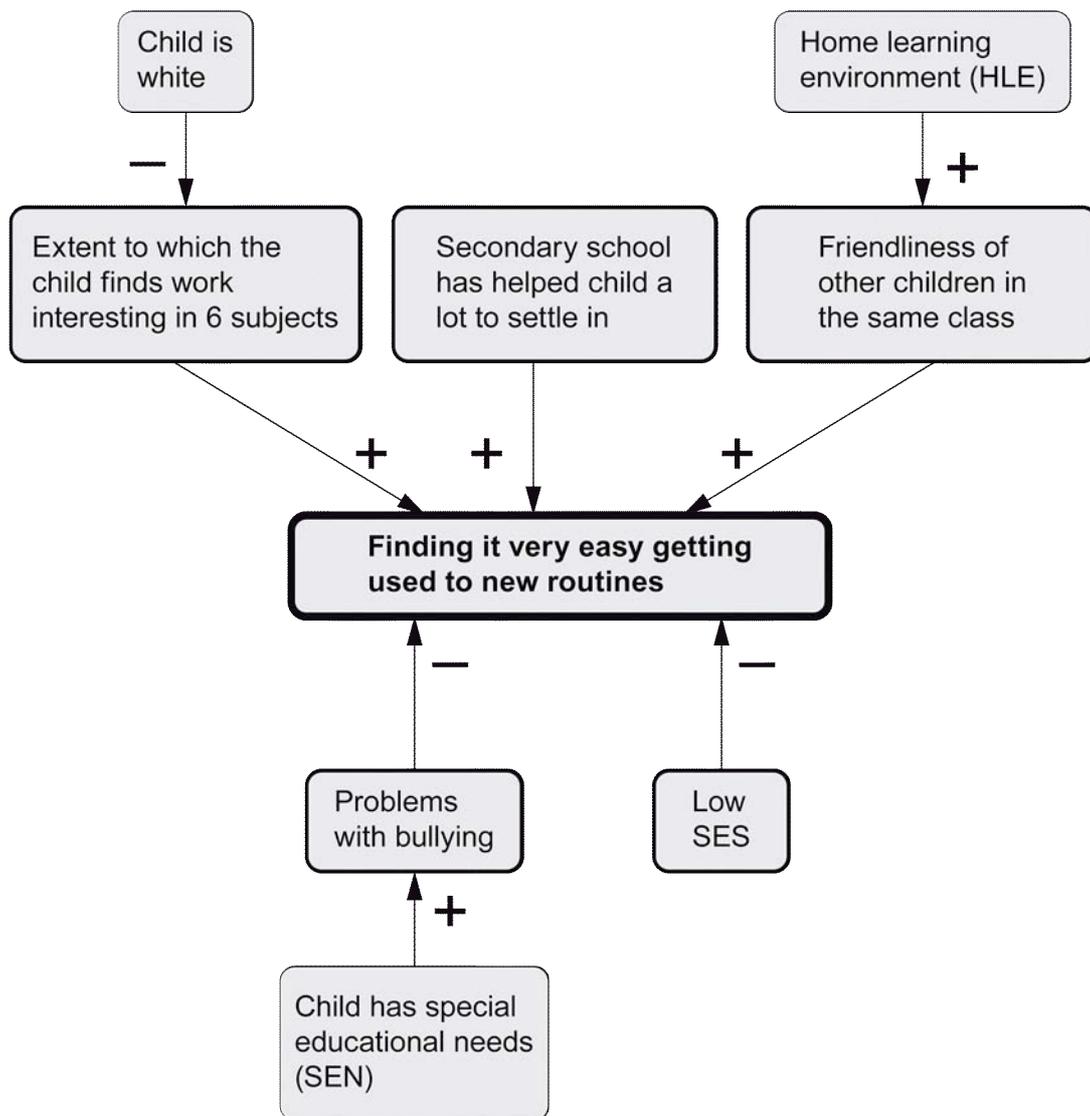
In three out of the five aspects of a successful transition, children who had problems with bullying were found to be at higher risk of not experiencing a successful transition compared with children without these problems. Bullying was the second most frequently cited worry by children when at primary school they were contemplating the prospect of moving on to secondary school.

In this case, children that had been victims of bullying were more likely to belong to the group of children who did not find it very easy to get used to the routines of their new school, compared with children that had no experience of bullying. Efforts to eradicate bullying at secondary schools should especially focus on children with SEN, who, as our findings suggest, are more likely victims than children without SEN.

Children from a lower Home Learning Environment (HLE) were also at risk of finding themselves in classrooms with less friendly children. As there were no other demographic and socio-economic characteristics that predicted this type of risk, it can be assumed that either lower HLE hindered children's popularity in the classroom by affecting, for example their educational performance and social skills, or it could have hindered their chances to be placed in friendlier classrooms at the first place.

Finally, when compared with children of high SES, those of low SES were less likely to find it very easy to get used to the new routines. Therefore, children of low SES will need more help than high SES children to prepare them for the organisation and expectations of secondary school.

Figure 4.4: Getting used to new routines and organisation with great ease - A model



4.4.5 Experiencing curriculum continuity

The fifth and final aspect of a successful transition involves how helpful children found their core work on English, Mathematics and Sciences in Y6 in order to cope with work on these three subjects in Y7 (see Table A10.1 in Appendix 10).

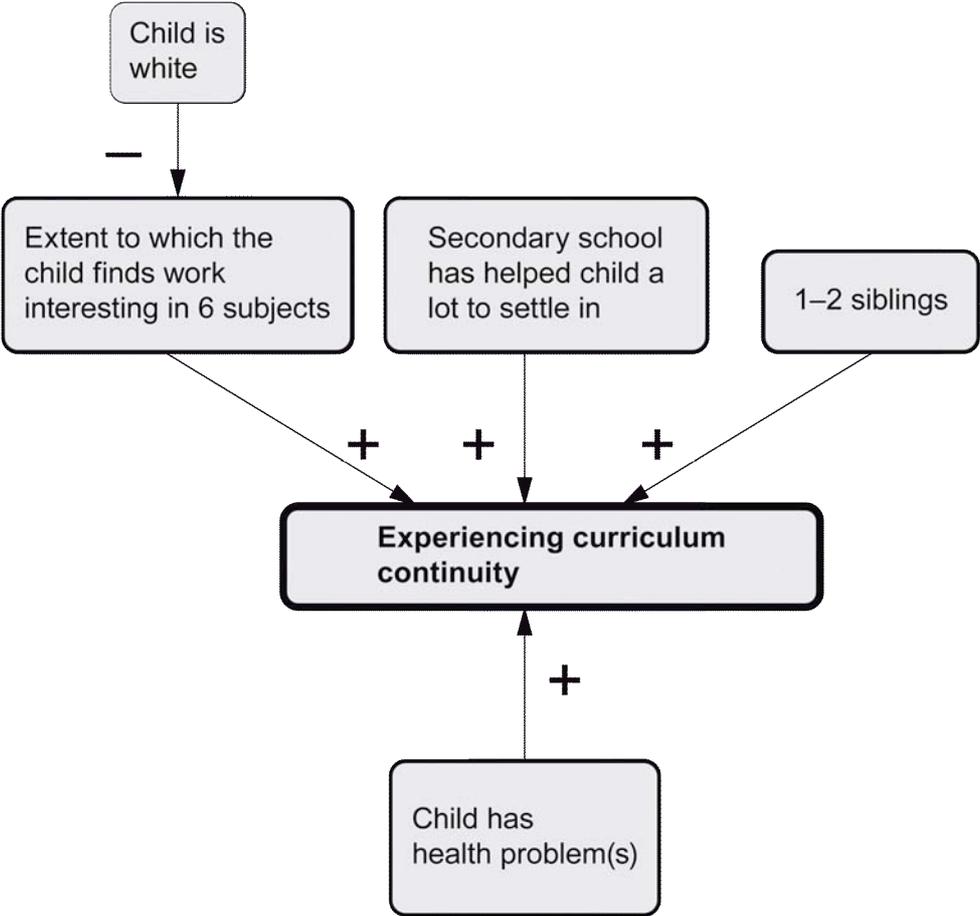
Figure 4.5 shows all significant relationships. As for all other four aspects of a successful transition, children who experienced great curriculum continuity were those whose secondary school had helped them to settle in a lot. According to children, secondary schools helped them settle in by helping them to get to know their way around the school, by relaxing rules and implementing procedures to help new pupils adapt, by allowing extra visits to school, induction and taster days, by preparing and distributing booklets, and through the kindness of teachers and other pupils. Secondary schools also helped children to settle in through being friendly, patient, initiating contact, and offering support, advice, explanations, and encouragement.

Finding the work in Y7 interesting was also linked with a successful transition in terms of curriculum continuity and again white children tended to find the work less interesting than non-white children.

Previously, the study found that children with health problems tended to look forward to going to secondary school more so than children without health problems. Looking forward to going to secondary school enhanced, in turn, children's chances to be one of those who showed a growing interest in school and work. On the other hand, children with health problems had parents who were more likely to worry about their safety than children without health problems. Worrying about safety, in turn, significantly hindered the chances that a child would be very well settled in his/her school life. Regarding curriculum continuity, children with health problems appear to doing better than those without, since they are more likely to perceive a greater curriculum continuity between Y6 and Y7 than children with no such problems. There are mixed findings, therefore, regarding whether health problems in a child hinders or ensures a better transition to secondary school.

On the other hand, the presence of siblings has consistently been shown to ensure a more successful transition. Children, who experienced high curriculum continuity, were those who had 1 to 2 siblings than those who were an only child.

Figure 4.5: Experiencing curriculum continuity - A model



4.5 Children's and parents' recommendations for a successful transition

Children were asked to write their own recommendations about the things that they thought they could facilitate transition to secondary school. One in every five children asked, believed that the future Y7 children could facilitate their own transition if they had the right attitude. For the majority, the 'right attitude' was not to be scared, worried or overly concerned but to enjoy the transition and have the confidence to believe in their ability to cope. An equal number of children, however, focused on the particular transfer procedures and how children could take advantage of these to get to know their secondary school and to prepare. Individual strategies to cope with routines and everyday school life were also cited by some and most of these strategies referred to children's organisational and communication skills. Table 4.14 shows the main categories of children's recommendations. Overall, however, these recommendations focused on what the individual child could do to improve his/her transition rather than on what schools could do for children.

Table 4.14: Children's recommendations that would make moving on to secondary school easier for other children

Type of recommendations that would make moving on to secondary school easier for other children: Children – Main categories*	N	%
On the right attitude to have (e.g., have confidence, do not worry/be scared)	74	21.6
On transfer processes (e.g., more visits to new school, go to induction/taster days)	73	21.3
On how to cope with routines and everyday school life (e.g., be prepared/organized, have right equipment)	67	19.6
On friendships (e.g., make new friend, stick with friends)	47	13.7
On how to deal with school work (e.g., be organized with homework, revise)	25	7.3
On how to avoid staying out of trouble (e.g., listen to teachers, do as told, stay away from nasty teachers/children)	20	5.8
On how to seek for advice and help (e.g., take advice from friends, teachers, ask for help, report bullying)	19	5.6
On how to behave towards others (e.g., be kind, nice, friendly, polite towards others)	17	5.0
Total	342	100

* only those with 10 or more responses

Unlike children, parents made recommendations that were focused on what primary and secondary schools could do to improve their children's transitions. In regards to recommendations for primary schools, one in three parents wanted to see primary schools preparing their children better for school work at Year 7 and increasing their homework. In addition, one in five wanted primary schools to arrange more induction days, taster days and other visits to secondary school. One in ten of the parents that made recommendations wanted primary schools to communicate more with their children and listen to what they had to say. A similar proportion wanted better communication between primary schools and parents (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15: Parents' recommendations on what primary school could have done better to help children move on to secondary school

Recommendations for primary schools to help children move on to secondary school: Parents – Main categories*	N	%
Prepare better for school work at Y7 and increase homework	70	34.5
Arrange more induction, taster days and other visits to secondary school	40	19.7
Communicate with children more and listen to what they have to say	28	13.8
Improve communication with parents about secondary schools	23	11.3
Prepare better for school life routines at secondary school	10	4.9
Better links between schools	8	3.9
Prepare children to be independent, confident and socially adept	6	3.0
Give more attention to children with SEN	6	3.0
Deal with bullying more effectively	6	3.0
Arrange more visits from secondary school staff and children	6	3.0
Total	203	100

* only categories with 5 or more responses

Increasing the number of visits prior to transfer was also seen as the responsibility of secondary schools (see Table 4.16). Other recommendations for secondary schools included increasing communication with parents, offering more explanations to children about their new routines and more help to cope with increased amounts of homework, showing more leniency and allowing more time for children to adapt, dealing better with children's individual needs and providing more help with the travel to school.

Table 4.16: Parents' recommendations on what secondary school could have done better to help children move on from primary school

Recommendations for secondary schools to help children move on from primary school: Parents – Main categories*	N	%
Arrange more induction, open, taster days and other visits	61	32.3
Increase communication with parent	16	8.5
Offer more explanation about school routines	15	7.9
Help them cope with more homework	15	7.9
Give more help and be more lenient during initial period	15	7.9
Deal better with children's individual needs	14	7.4
Provide more help with travel to school	11	5.8
Place children together with more of their primary school friends	8	4.2
Better links between primary and secondary school	8	4.2
Protect child more effectively from bullies	7	3.7
Give them a peer mentor	7	3.7
Help them with meeting other children and making new friends	6	3.2
Boost child's confidence and social skills to mix with others	6	3.2
Total	189	100

* only categories with 5 or more responses

Chapter 5: Case studies of “well-settled” children: enhancing the findings

5.1 Introduction

Following the analyses of the questionnaire data, the primary-secondary transition experiences of the twelve case study children were investigated in more depth through the means of face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Triangulation was sought by three interviews per case: the pupil, the primary school teacher in charge of transition and the secondary school teacher in charge of transition. As described above, the cases were selected by child, not school, following analyses of the children’s questionnaires.

The interview schedules reflected the aims and objectives of the project with the exception of issues of negative transitions, which were not part of the final research design. Analysis of the interview data revealed commonalities in children’s experiences and in school ethos, approach, organisation and activities. The interviews also uncovered slight differences between schools, which altogether presented a rich but not particularly varied picture of transition practices which supported a positive launch into secondary education.

The parameters set for the interview investigation were to seek positive experiences and to attempt to account for them within school structures that are in place for transition. The variable of the child’s personality and basic attitude toward life must play a role in their transition from primary to secondary, however, this was not part of the investigation although it emerges somewhat in the child’s responses. None of the case study children were on the special needs register or had been identified as vulnerable pre-transition. In the case study schools, such children experience a somewhat different, parallel programme for transition involving the primary and secondary school SENCO departments working together. This complementary path was not investigated, largely because it emerged in the course of the research and could not be described in any detail by the teachers in charge of transition who were interviewed. In other words, it was separate from the rest of the transition procedures.

A key finding is that no school in this study approached children or parents as members of any particular social, ethnic or economic grouping. Rather, children were dealt with as individuals and the pervading school ethos reported by the school teachers was one of support for the individual person.

Another key finding was the teachers’ reports of non-interaction with the Local Authority. The organisation of transition and the activities involved in it was reported by teachers as something which had evolved over years of school and teacher experience. The rather generic commonalities among the different schools’ transition practices indicate that they may well have been influenced by ideas and possibly initiatives stemming from government. However, no teacher reported being aware of such or of specifically being involved in government-based projects, initiatives, training or LA guidance for transition.

5.2 Describing the sample: the children

Twelve Year 7 pupils were selected in a stratified random draw from the sub-sample of pupils whose questionnaire results, corroborated by their parents’ questionnaire answers, showed that the child had had positive transition experiences during the transition from primary to secondary school. Three boys and nine girls were interviewed. They were born within eight months of each other, the average age being 11 years 9 _ months. There were eight white children – six girls and two boys - two Pakistani/Bangladeshi girls, one mixed Asian girl and one mixed Afro-Caribbean boy. They lived and went to school in five different geographical regions of England:

Table 5.1: Number of children per region

Region	Number of pupils
Shire	3
Inner London	4
East Anglia	2
North East	2
Midlands/ Metropolitan	1

Socio-economic status was spread evenly with four children each in high, medium and low categories.

The children's achievement scores for KS2 were not available. The spread of standardised reading and Mathematics scores when the children were in Year 5 was:

Table 5.2: Children's scores in reading and Mathematics in Y5

	Lowest score	Highest score	Missing
Reading	85	109	4
Mathematics	88	113	4

Altogether these pupils appear to represent broadly the EPPSE Cohort 3.

The primary schools

Primary schools ranged from very small rural schools with a total population of less than 100, to a large Inner London school with a Year 6 intake alone of 90 children. Most primaries had virtually no minority ethnic children. One primary had a very high percentage of such children and few white pupils.

The interview was usually with the, or one of the, Year 6 teachers, designated as the, or a, teacher in charge of transition. The teacher sometimes had another post such as Deputy Head, or Learning Coordinator for Years 5 and 6. In one instance the Head teacher herself gave the interview. In one case, the pupil had moved house between schools so his primary school was not a feeder school for his secondary school. All other primary schools were one of several feeder schools of the respective case study secondary school. Most of the primary schools were part of at least one network or consortium.

The secondary schools

An overview of the case-study secondary schools is given in the table below. This data comes from teacher interviews, school and LA documentation and the most recent Ofsted inspection report for each school. In the latter, all schools were always noted as 'improving' in academic achievement since the previous inspection, even where achievement was still below average. There were positive comments in the reports for all schools on the 'Personal Development and Well-being' of their pupils. Parents were reported as 'pleased' with their child's respective school and four schools were over-subscribed at the time of the inspection.

Table 5.3: Secondary schools' characteristics

Secondary school type or status (age range)	Location	Number of main primary feeder schools	Numbers on role 2006-07	Year 7 intake 2006-07	% Free School Meals	KS4 Achievement	Ethnicity	SEN
1. Visual and Performing Arts (11-18)	Town, Shire	8	1173	178	Below average	Above average	White British	Average
2. Business and Enterprise (11-18)	Suburban, North East	6	1466	202	Average	Above average	96% white British	Below average
3. Comprehensive (11-16)	Rural, East Anglia	3	560	131	Below average	Above average	Mainly white British	Average
4. Sports, Extended (11-18+)	Suburban, North East	4	1081	157	Average	Average	Mainly white British	Above average
5. Media Arts & Technology (11-18)	Urban, Inner London	6	1220	187	Average	Above average	60% minority ethnicity	Below average
6. Visual Arts & Music	Town, Shire	5	1005	182	Below average	Average	Mainly white British	Below average
7. Vol. Aided Roman Catholic Language College (11-18)	Urban, Midlands/Metropolitan	7	982	181	24% higher than average	Average	20% mixed minority ethnicity	Higher than average
8. Performing Arts (11-18)	Rural, East Anglia	3	813	134	Below average	Average	Mainly white British	Below average
9. Sports (11-16)	Town, Shire	3	936	183	Slightly above average	Below average	Higher than average minority ethnicity	Below average
10. Mathematics & Computing, Technology, Music (11-18)	Urban, Inner London	3	1612	255	Below average	Above average	Above average	Above average
11. Sports, Extended (11-16)	Urban, Inner London	8	869	180	Above average	Below average	67% mixed ethnicity	Above average
12. Girls' Language College (11-18)	Town, Shire	6	1406	240	Lower than average	Above average	Mainly white British	Lower than average

5.3 First layer of findings: commonalities

5.3.1 Commonalities among the pupils

The pupils all reported that they were happy at this point in time: at the end of their first year of secondary education they felt they were getting along fine at the school and with their work, regardless of subject, set or level. They all knew precisely who they could go to if they did have a worry.

They had expected the school to be much bigger than the primary with a lot more people in it and this was of course true. Initially, all pupils had worries about finding their way around, but every school had mechanisms for helping with this and the pupils soon had no problems.

Another common worry among pupils was making new friends. Every child had made new friends, apparently without any difficulty or hindrance. Children described strategies that were in place for making new friends, for example sitting arrangements in lessons. As one girl reported, *'It's common sense that when you have to do group work and pair work you have to get along with other people and you can make new friends that way.'* Indirectly, teachers were therefore facilitators for making new friends.

Pupils did not have many views about the institutions' roles in facilitating transition. When questioned specifically about it, they remembered open evenings and other visits to the school, which they believed were 'helpful'.

Pupils found the work *'a bit harder'* than in primary and sometimes *'different'*, but not problematic. Every pupil mentioned repeating work that they had done in primary school, but none criticised that occurrence. They all felt challenged enough by the work. All children viewed the secondary teachers as helpful and encouraging and none had difficulties getting along with their teachers. They all felt that they had made progress in all their subjects since starting at the school. The pupils were aware of setting and what it meant and felt comfortable with that.

These pupils all appeared to have positive support from their parents and to have generally positive attitudes towards learning and school. They were in no perceivable way maladjusted or disengaged. They appreciated their teachers and apparently the school as well.

5.3.2 Commonalities among the primary schools

All primary schools reported that the secondary schools initiated the vast majority if not all of the transition documentation and activities. Documentation included the data that were sent or given to the secondary schools about individual pupils. Activities always included at least one visit to the secondary while the child was in Year 6. All primary schools helped facilitate the visits and any other interaction with the secondary school, despite their own full programme of end-of-year events and activities – sports day, school fête, leavers celebration, etc.

All Year 6 teachers used the school's PSHE curriculum to prepare children for transition by talking about changes and development. They fielded questions from the pupils to the best of their ability about the secondary school, about relationships, expected behaviour, work and homework. A key feature for a positive transition as viewed from the primary schools was that the individual child became to some extent *familiar* with where he/she was going next – the place, at least some of the people, the work to some extent and behaviour expectations. There was a range of opportunities for the familiarisation to take place, mostly depending on the secondary school which conducted projects and events so that the primary children could get to know the secondary. The aim of transition activities was to enable children to settle in easily and smoothly at the secondary school, because then as one teacher commented *'the academic is going to fall in to place'*. "Circle time" was usually mentioned as a point where worries and questions about moving to secondary school could be discussed.

All teachers spoke of the period consisting of about 6 weeks which followed the Key Stage 2 national assessments and was prior to the summer holidays when the curriculum needed to be adapted to suit the changing attitudes of the Year 6 pupils. Often linked to the Open Day or Transition visit to the secondary school, was a developing feeling among the pupils of being *'too big for the primary'*. The curriculum in the primary schools was then adapted and children were expected to work more independently, as a different teaching and learning style came in, one that would prepare them for secondary school life, give them *'a taste of secondary procedures'*, reported one teacher. Another teacher described it as, *'The children are shifting and the teaching shifts with them'*.

All of the primary schools had tried curriculum continuity projects but only one felt that there was actually any real curriculum continuity which had stemmed from the projects. This was where a number of rural primary schools fed to just one secondary school and the cluster partnership between them all worked fairly well.

In all cases the primary SENCO worked with the secondary school SENCO to exchange information about individual pupils and to arrange extra visits to the secondary for children identified as 'vulnerable' with regard to transition. The primary teachers identified these pupils who were not necessarily statemented, but who had a problem with shyness or behaviour difficulties and would possibly have a difficult time during the transition and settling in at the secondary school.

Parents were kept informed about transition through at least one parents evening at the school. This might take place at any time during the Year 6. In addition, all schools operated an open door policy where parents could come in at any time if they were worried.

All teachers felt the full support of senior staff, or were themselves senior staff, who felt that transition was an integral element of Year 6, not an 'add on'. This involved resources being available to support the transition activities and duties, such as data entry.

Key Features

Key features of a smooth transition involve making sure that the child feels comfortable about the move, has had some experience in and with the secondary school and teachers there. At the schools level, a clear and complete transfer of information in both directions about transition and about individual children was found to have taken place with face-to-face information exchange about children *'because there is always information which is best not written down'*. Communication appears to be vital. A child's good experience with secondary school contacts was also important. All primaries reported that their pupils' visit/s to the case study secondary school were positive.

Possible obstacles

The most common possible obstacle is for the secondary school not to have enough information about a child. This can happen when the parents have not filled in the choice form correctly or at all and the child appears at the secondary school without any prior notice. Apart from the small number of parents who did not handle the school choice form correctly, parents were thought to cause few problems. A very few parents might exert pressure about which tutor group or school 'house' their child went into but this was usually handled without difficulty by the secondary school. Another possible drawback for a smooth transition is when it is the first child in the family to enter secondary schools. In these cases, teachers reported, the parents are usually more worried (if at all) than the child is. Such worries are alleviated by both the primary and the secondary schools through visits, interviews, phone calls, etc.

Wishes

Even more contact at all levels between the secondary and the primary schools was a unanimous wish of primary school teachers. Each secondary should have as much contact with the primary schools as the case study secondary schools had in order to find out about individual pupils. This additional contact included, for the majority of the primary teachers, the opportunity for primary teachers to visit and spend time at the secondary school as well as for more secondary teachers to come in to the primary. This would increase understanding between the two levels and approaches to teaching: each side should know the other better. There was an almost unanimous wish for more coordination between local secondary schools, especially to have their end-of-Year 6 open/transition days on the same calendar day. Then the odd child or two, who were not bound for a particular secondary but for some other school/s, would not be left behind at the primary school when that secondary had its open day.

Commonalities among the secondary schools

All secondary schools took the lead in transition once they had the list from the LA of their prospective pupils. All teachers in charge of transition visited the main feeder primary schools in person, talked with the pupils who would be joining the secondary school and collected information from the primary teacher/s about individual pupils. A key element to a good transition was the importance given to the completeness of the information collected about each child. The secondary teachers then used the information they had collected from a number of sources to form the Year 7 tutor groups. The make-up of these groups was viewed as essential to a child's transition experience. It was important that the child would be comfortable in the future tutor group and that the groups were balanced in terms of their membership.

The approach taken to transition was consistently at the level of the individual, not the primary school group, or any other grouping such as ethnicity or EAL. All secondary transition teachers were dedicated to distinguishing the child from any group. The exceptions to this were the SEN children who were taken through transition by the secondary school SENCO's and their support staff. Children who were identified for whatever reason as 'vulnerable' and might experience a difficult transition were handled separately from the typical child coming from Year 6 to Year 7. Again the focus was on the individual and his or her situation and experiences.

In all secondary schools, transition was given a high priority by senior management. This was evidenced by the amount of staff time allocated or allowed for transition organisation and activities and the number of mechanisms for ensuring that a child settled in. Each secondary school arranged for at least one visit by the Year 6 pupils to the school to become familiarised with the setting, the buildings, the procedures, key staff, and other details.

Clearly for these schools, transition was a question which fell primarily under the umbrella of pastoral care, but this was to create secure and settled individual children who would then be able to engage in academic work to the fullest extent possible. The ultimate goal was then academic achievement through a comfortable environment. Transition was viewed as a point in time when a person's whole future could be decided. As one teacher stated, "*...if a child is not happy, s/he will not be able to settle, to concentrate, to absorb, to learn*". An unhappy child may become disengaged or disruptive, may lose motivation to learn and spiral downwards. The view taken by the secondary school was that the facility with which a child can settle in to secondary education depends on the preparation for it. All secondary teachers were intent on that preparation being as complete as possible, which meant as much pupil contact with the secondary school beforehand as possible and as much knowledge about the pupil beforehand as possible. Common wishes by secondary teachers were for even more time, more resources, more contact and more information exchange between schools.

Below is a list of generic events which secondary schools described as part of their induction procedures. All schools engaged in these activities.

1. Secondary school has one or more prospective parents' evening (possibly several open days) in early autumn with displays of pupils' work, possibly sample lessons for prospective parents prior to their making their school choice. The purpose is intake recruitment but transition is also a topic. Information packs may be given or sent out via the primary schools. Secondary teachers may go into the primary schools to talk about their school to parents, possibly also children.
2. Mid-late autumn parents fill in LA school choice form. Primary schools may help with this.
3. Before Easter a list comes to the secondary school from the LA of the pupils who have been allocated to the school.
4. The LA or the secondary school sends a form to the primary school for the teacher/s to fill in about each individual pupil, including special issues that may have arisen during the child's time in primary, National Curriculum predicted levels in Mathematics, English and Science, possibly also information about which friends they want to be with (or not) in secondary school and extra-curricular activities and special achievements of the child.

Children may also fill in a form or write about themselves. Written information may be requested from the parent about their child. An information pack or a letter goes out to parents welcoming them and introducing the school, giving dates for transition activities and perhaps other relevant information.

5. An information pack or a letter goes out to parents welcoming them and introducing the school, giving dates for transition activities and perhaps other information. They are encouraged to ring the secondary school if they have any queries or worries. The primary school runs an open-door policy for parents to ask questions about transition or to discuss their worries about it. The secondary school is informed about any child or parental worries prior to transition.
6. After the KS2 national assessments in May the secondary teacher/s in charge of transition ring the primary schools of the children on the list and arrange to go in to talk to the children who are going to that secondary and to talk with the primary teachers about each individual pupil. Primary teachers are primed to encourage pupils to have questions ready which they can ask about the secondary school and transition when the teachers come in to see the pupils.
7. The teacher/s in charge of transition and possibly also a secondary subject teacher go to each main feeder primary school (and all other feeder schools, if possible) in June/July to meet the prospective pupils as a group and possibly individually. Previous pupils from the school who are now Year 7's may go in with the secondary teacher/s to talk about their secondary experiences and settling in. The secondary teacher/s talk about what's different at secondary and what is available there. Pupils ask questions and may be asked to write about themselves and their friends. The secondary teacher may take an introduction pack for each child to take home to parents. Otherwise parents are sent the introduction pack directly from the secondary school.
8. Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school at least once for an open or transition day where they tour the school, may meet their new form group, experience ice-breaker activities to get to know other prospective Year 7's, may have taster lessons. There may be further link lessons with small groups from primary schools. Secondary school subject teachers may go in to primary schools to teach lessons or carry out projects.
9. Parents' evening at the secondary school in June/July welcomes parents and children. A great deal of information is made available through brochures, information sheets, school packs, stalls and stands by groups such as the parents association, school uniform and equipment providers. Parent-school links are supported with telephone numbers/email addresses of key secondary staff, parents can call in case of questions or concerns. Parents may be asked for information about their child.
10. All the data collected by post, visits, and phone or in person about each individual child is used by the teacher in charge of transition to create balanced tutor or form groups. One school had to take a family's generation-to-generation tradition of being in a specific House into consideration. The harmony within a tutor group and the balance between tutor groups was felt to be essential tasks, with much of what was in place for transition feeding into it.
11. The first half day, at least, of Year 7 was specially constructed for the new pupils to be (virtually) alone in the secondary school so that they could experience the space without many other pupils crowding halls, the canteen, etc. This easing in might extend for several weeks with a different timetable from the rest of the school. The Year 7 might be taken outside school for team-building activities for a day or a weekend. The first PSHE module is about transition.
12. Pupils' settling in is tracked through information from form tutors to the head of year, house, transition; some schools have special mentoring meeting times for pupils and form tutors.
13. An autumn parents evening is held to inform parents of their child's settling in.

During the above transition events and sometimes beginning even earlier there was put in place in each school a co-occurring programme of contact, documentation and time input carried out by the SENCO's of both secondary and primary schools. This parallel transition path was created

for primary pupils who had special needs or were otherwise identified by the primary school as vulnerable and unlikely to have a smooth transition. These children had separate and more frequent visits to the secondary school in order to become thoroughly familiar with the school, the teachers for Year 7 and other staff with whom they would be involved as a Year 7 student. The secondary teachers who were interviewed for this project were concerned with mainstream transition and had no details about the parallel activities for vulnerable pupils. Some specific arrangements did emerge from several primary teacher interviews.

Contact and involvement of people, agencies or organisations outside the schools and families concerned was largely negligible from the position of the teachers in charge of transition. Some outside agencies were involved in special needs case meetings for which the SENCO was responsible and so the interviewee had little or no experience with them. There was no direct LA involvement and in most cases no interviewee knowledge of Transition Information Services or sessions, choice advisors, home/school liaison officers. No interviewees had had training or specific guidance from the LA about transition. Transition procedures were not monitored by the LA.

The evaluation of transition was largely informal in all schools and was done through anecdotal evidence from all sources: parents, teachers, pupils. Several schools had the formal mechanism of sending a questionnaire to parents about the success of transition for their child.

Common successes perceived by the teachers in charge of transition were:

- The exchange of information between all parties, including at different levels and at different times,
- The amount of time and school support given to transition,
- The contact time between players: schools, parents, children.

Common wishes for transition improvement were:

- More time for transition actions and activities at all levels,
- Greater quantities and more efficient information transfer between all,
- Better curriculum continuity between primary and secondary.

The major obstacle across all schools was:

- The lack of information about a child.

This took place particularly when a child arrived in Year 7 about whom nothing was known.

All schools reported that the purpose behind transition procedures and events and the key to a smooth transition was to effect complete transfer of information:

- Children and parents learning as much as possible about the secondary experience prior to transition and post-transition,
- The secondary school learning as much as possible about the child from the parents, the child and the primary teachers,
- The secondary school tracking the settling in of the child until complete and happy integration into the school was assured.

The ultimate aim of transition procedures and events was for a child to arrive at secondary school as a Year 7 already familiar to the greatest extent possible with what lay ahead.

5.4 Second layer of findings: variations and exceptions.

5.4.1 Variations among the pupils

None of the pupils were aware of parental worries, if there were any, about transition, even in the case where the primary teacher mentioned the mother's concerns. Five pupils had discussed transition with their parent/s but most had not. Several pupils had older siblings in the school and had had some information from them about the school, mostly reassuring, sometimes in the form of a mild warning about homework or behaviour all of which the pupils viewed as generally helpful. One girl said that warnings from her sister about homework had not had any substance in the end; there was not that much homework. Two pupils had mothers who had been at the school and who were '*a bit helpful*' in informing them about what lay ahead and in giving reassurances. Although having an older sibling in the secondary school helped to ease a child in to it, or having a mother who had been at the school, these were not viewed by the child as key to his or her smooth transition.

A few pupils recalled their primary teachers saying they should try to make new friends in secondary school. Some pupils spoke at length about making friends, which they were all able to do. Over the course of the interviews the pupils described several things that happened that helped them to make friends. The essence they felt was to talk with someone new. This could happen in the form group because it met every day and some pupils had all or most of their lessons with that group. It could also happen when teachers moved pupils around to different seats, when there was group or pair work during the lesson, when form groups were mixed up for instance for Design and Technology, when there were outings or other special activities. One form tutor asked a student to look after a girl who had come to the school knowing no one and the two girls became best friends. One boy talked to a boy standing near him during the open day and so had a friend already, he said, when he came up the first day of Year 7. One girl said that when her old friends made new friends they became her friends too.

The various mechanisms that were helpful for overcoming their worries about and difficulties in getting around the new secondary school when they first arrived included the following points: going to all lessons together in their tutor group; being explained in detail how the blocks, floors and rooms were labelled; having a teaching assistant or peer mentor (Year 10 or 11) accompany them from lesson to lesson during the first weeks of Year 7; asking teachers the way; having a map. Only one of the pupils who had received a map of the school said that he could read it while the others could not. As one boy said, '*blocks of buildings on a map do not look like they do when you are standing among them*'.

Most pupils recalled visiting the secondary school but aside from the help it gave in terms of getting to know the school layout somewhat and possibly meeting their new tutor group, they did not remember details of the visits. One boy said it was good to be able to ask questions at the open day and added that one such day was enough, in his opinion.

A few pupils remembered their primary school giving them some practice for secondary, for instance having to bring in their own equipment and look after it, moving to other classrooms for different lessons. They also got more homework and some had to come to terms with a homework diary or planner. They felt that these changes at the end of Year 6 were helpful for them to begin to understand secondary school.

Most pupils did not remember their primary school teachers telling them about work at secondary school. In one girl's opinion the primary school teacher did in fact not know what kind and how much work there was at secondary school. The primary school teacher herself said the same during her interview. Some pupils remembered being warned by their primary teacher about handing in homework on time and behaving more '*maturely*'.

A different teacher for each subject in secondary school was viewed positively by the pupils. One boy liked it because the teachers were specialists in their subject. All but two pupils raised

their hands and participated more in secondary school than they had done in primary school because the teachers encouraged them to do so. They felt that for a number of reasons: it did not matter if they got an answer wrong, as they would learn from that; they felt they could express themselves in an accepting atmosphere and on the whole they felt more confident than they had done in the primary school.

Pupils had different favourite subjects and some found a particular subject more difficult than others. Several said that they had quite a bit of homework at the beginning of Year 7 but not much any more. Most pupils felt that some work at secondary, particularly in Mathematics was a repetition of what they had done in primary, but they felt this was good, as revision, and secondary lessons extended and deepened what they already knew. Some felt that lesson format was similar to primary, but thought that that was probably to ease them into secondary. In general, lessons were seen as different in secondary and by most pupils as somewhat harder. Several pupils mentioned that teachers helped them until they '*got it*'. Some pupils thought there was a bit more work in secondary, primarily due to an entire lesson being given over to just one subject. Some pupils greatly appreciated the different type of work, not '*just worksheets*' as he – and several others - remembered from primary school.

If pupils needed help they were aware of the people they could go to for it. They mentioned their form tutor or teacher, their friends, teachers in general, the teacher in charge of the year or the house or the learning coordinator. A few mentioned that prefects or peer mentors were available but this was not universal. Some had prefects help in the tutor group the first few weeks of Year 7 and then not any more after that. The pupils had not, on the whole, consulted any older pupils for help or advice, but most felt that they could if they wanted to do so.

The pupils had similar advice for Year 6 pupils, primarily not to be worried or scared. There was plenty of help and support; teachers were friendly and encouraging; it was easy to get used to finding your way around and settling in to the secondary way of doing things; bullying was not a problem but if it was there were a lot of people to help you feel safe; do your homework at a planned time on the weekend; make friends because you'll need them; don't worry, '*there is always somebody who is there to help that you can go to*'.

5.4.2 Variations among the primary schools

Primary schools had varying contact with secondary schools throughout the school year. Some had frequent visits from secondary school staff or Year 10 or 11 pupils, for instance, the local Sports College provided regular sports lessons for one primary. The case secondary school usually had strong and frequent interaction with them at least by the end of the Year 6 summer term after the KS2 national assessments were finished, if not before that. Year 3, 4, and 5 pupils in one primary school had opportunities provided by the secondary school to visit and engage in sports, music and drama activities there.

The primary school was usually a main feeder school to the secondary school. In one instance, the child moved to a different town so the transition he experienced was not quite the same as the other case children. Nevertheless because the schools at both ends had excellent 'information transfer' procedures in place and because both schools were personally concerned to effect a smooth transition, the transition worked well for him (one of the two selected case studies below).

Primary schools had differing ways of preparing the pupils for 'secondary ways', but they all did at least several things. There were various ways of adapting the primary curriculum to a more secondary approach. Several larger primary schools had 'pretend' secondary school days where the pupils moved around the school to other classrooms. Several rural primaries joined together with other primary schools for transition events so that pupils would get to know each other, for instance, a barbecue or outing. Handling the visits to and from the prospective secondary school was generally left to the secondary school, including transport issues.

5.4.3 Variation among the secondary schools

Schools, which had more funding, organised more transition events. Primary and secondary school links and interactions were more or less strong depending on funding, circumstances, staffing, allocated time, number of joint meetings, commitment. School packs of information and forms were sent by secondary school to parents directly or via the primary school at sometimes slightly different times of the year. Schools varied in their involvement with parents during the school choice procedures in the autumn of a child's Year 6 from engaged to no involvement at all. The number of times a prospective student had had contact with the secondary school ranged from between once to numerous, depending on the amount the secondary could spend on outreach. Funding as a Sports College allowed several to send sports teachers regularly into primary schools to teach lessons with groups as young as Year 3. Two schools had Year 7 pupils make brochures and DVD's for prospective pupils in Year 6 to tell them about the secondary school experience. Some schools were able to offer summer schools to children between Year 6 and Year 7 for literacy and/or numeracy. Some schools had funding to take Year 6 or Year 7 pupils to outdoor centres for team-building activities. Somewhat different organisational structures in schools had some impact on precisely how prospective and new pupils were supported, particularly when they were in Year 7, for instance, extended tutor group times, House systems, prefects, peer mentors, nurture groups, alternative curriculum arrangements.

The beginning of the transition period differed in the minds of the various secondary school teachers. Some felt it was as early as Year 5 or earlier, some considered it when the preliminary contacts were made with parents before they made their school choice and some thinking it began when the LA sent them the list of prospective pupils for Year 5 around Easter time. This was the beginning of the intense data collecting about individual pupils which would inform the creation of the Year 7 tutor groups.

The end of the transition period was viewed as the time when a student had settled in, become a working member of the school, had been schooled to the ways of the secondary school. This was variably the end of September, the first Year 7 parents' evening in the autumn when form tutors reported how the settling in was going; October half-term after the first set of academic tests which measured academic settling in; in the autumn or after Christmas when the schools had the first meeting to discuss the next year's transition procedures; at the end of Year 7 when the child was moving up to Year 8; or when the student left secondary schooling altogether. The key word was '*settled in*'.

5.5 Case study profiles

Tables 5.4 – 5.6 present the demographic information of the 12 case study children. It is worth noting that children were chosen by using a stratified sampling procedure.

Table 5.4: Distribution of case study children by gender and SES

	High	Medium	Low
Male	1	1	1
Female	3	3	3

Table 5.5: Distribution of case study children by area and SES

	High	Medium	Low
East Anglia	1		1
Shire	1		2
Inner London	2	1	1
North East		2	
Midlands/Metropolitan		1	

Table 5.6: Distribution of case study children by ethnicity and SES

	High	Medium	Low
White	3	2	3
Bangladeshi	1		1
Mixed race		2	

Pupils - commonalities and differences

While each child had his or her story to tell, the stories were very similar and all presented a picture of a student who had settled well at secondary school, had made new friends whether they came up from primary with friends or not, liked secondary school work and having different teachers and knew who they could go to in order to talk about any worries they might have. In fact none had talked with peer mentors, prefects, or senior staff; they all talked with friends or a teacher, or their form tutor if any sort of problem arose. They may have had worries before or at the beginning of Year 7 but they soon found that they no longer had those worries or did not need to have had them in the first place. The worries were about getting lost or finding their way around the school and two had some worries about making friends which they subsequently had no problem in doing. Few thought their parents had any worries, those were only about finding their way around, and one set of parents had some concerns about her going up to secondary with no friends from her primary school with her. She had rapidly made new friends in Year 7 and the only current worry expressed by any of the pupils was her worry about which sets she would be in for Year 8. All pupils otherwise expressed satisfaction and in some cases enthusiasm about being in secondary school.

School choice

Pupils were in their first choice school with the exception of two. One girl had tried but failed to pass the eleven-plus test; one boy had thought he might go to the nearest school to where he lived, but then later found out that it was a boarding school which made it out of the question.

Remembering primary school

With some prompting, pupils remembered their primary school teachers, talking about what secondary school would be like: there would be more homework and it must be handed in on time; they would have different teachers for different subjects; they must behave well and they would make new friends. One student said that her primary school teacher did not know much about secondary school and so could not say much about it. Her teacher said the same during the interview at the primary school.

There were few pieces of advice from primary teachers except the warnings about homework and behaviour. Two girls said their primary teachers had reassured them they did not need to worry because they already always handed in their (primary school) homework on time. One girl said that her primary teacher had warned her that she might get into trouble for being chatty at secondary school and '*it is true*' she said. One student said that the Year 6 pupils were given playground duty so they had some experience in being more responsible. One student said her primary teacher had said that in secondary school they would have to behave more '*mature*'. She was not completely sure what that meant but she '*got the idea*', she said.

Several pupils remembered some changes in their schooling at the end of primary school. Three described having different teachers for a subject (two Mathematics, one English) and two remembered changing classrooms for that subject. One student spoke of having more homework at the end of Year 6. Three remembered having to look after and account for their equipment by the end of the year. One of these, a boy, remembered the special transition day at school where he had received a bag with equipment and had had to change rooms for every lesson (see primary school accounts). One student said they had had a transition booklet to fill in but that it had not been followed up in Year 7. Another remembered vaguely an English project, which carried over from Year 6 to Year 7, but he could not remember about what it had entailed precisely.

All pupils knew that they would need to make new friends in secondary school and apparently were ready to do so by the time they left primary school. They received no specific advice from their primary teachers about making friends except for one girl who said her primary teacher had pointed out that a new Year 7 had to take into consideration the possibility that old Year 6 friends might make new friends at secondary school, so *'you should make new friends, too'* which she had done.

Learning about aspects of growing up and going through the changes of adolescence were not specific memories for these pupils, which supports the primary schools' approaches to transition as being mostly embedded in the curriculum throughout Year 6 except for a few specific talks by teachers about what to expect in Year 7. No student felt in any way short-changed or misled by the primary school teacher/s. There was a sense, in the interviews, of pupils remembering primary school with satisfaction but no longing whatsoever to return there.

Easing into secondary

Two pupils had mothers who had gone to the same school and could tell them a little about the school. Three pupils had older siblings in the school who had explained a little about the school. Only one mentioned having any interaction with his older sister when actually at the secondary school and that was at the very beginning of Year 7 when he was unsure about finding his way around. Three pupils said that they had received maps of the school but had found them hard to read and unhelpful. In any case if they were lost they only needed to ask someone. Everyone at secondary was helpful both before they came up to the school and once they were in the secondary school.

Unless specifically prompted about secondary induction days or open days, the pupils did not mention them. Nevertheless the majority of pupils remembered secondary school staff coming into their primary school and telling them about secondary school. One girl said she knew that the teachers exchanged information about the Year 6 pupils. After prompting, all pupils remembered visiting the secondary school and some spoke of the lesson/s or activities they had had on the day. Those who had met their new form had been pleased to do so and several mentioned that it was good to meet new people, thus have a chance to make new friends. The boy who started in a secondary far from his primary and therefore had no friends at all in the new school told of standing next to a boy during the Open Day and of starting up a conversation with him so he had a friend already on the first day in September; they are still best friends now.

Pupils said that they soon found their way around the school and if they had a problem they could and did ask. There was a strong feeling of trust in teachers and other pupils. Teachers were viewed as helpful and kind.

Subject areas and learning

Pupils had different favourite subjects but all pupils felt that they had made progress in Year 7 in all their subject areas.

All pupils except one contributed more in secondary school because:

- The teacher called on them,
- Teachers encouraged them to contribute,
- If they got an answer wrong, it didn't matter; the teacher helped,
- They could say what they wished to express.

The one exception to this rule was a girl who said she stopped raising her hand because the teachers never called on her.

All pupils found secondary work:

- Challenging enough without being too hard,

- More interesting and varied than in primary, doing different things than they had done in primary - being in the Science lab was a common example, as was not doing as many worksheets as they had done in primary.
- More fun and, as one boy said: '*You get more done in lessons*'.

With one exception, no student needed any help with organising their work. The one student was a boy who said that his secondary school teachers had helped him get organised, which he felt he was now. Several girls said that revising for Year 6 KS2 national assessments had helped them learn to organise their work.

Several found that there was more homework at the beginning of Year 7 than there was at the end of the year. One complained about the amount of homework but none of the others did.

All pupils found that secondary work was '*a bit harder*' than in primary; one girl said that lesson structures were similar while some pupils thought lessons were different. All pupils expressed the following comments:

- There was '*a bit*' more work than there had been in primary mostly because they had a whole lesson of one subject;
- Some of Mathematics was repeated but their knowledge was also extended in Mathematics;
- Setting pupils was the right thing to do: '*Some people are good at and some people are good at other things*' said one girl.

Two pupils were in bottom or low set for Mathematics, found the work at the right level of challenging and the teachers helpful. Seven of the twelve pupils reported being in top sets, band or next to top or fast track. Three were in middle sets for Mathematics. All felt that they were correctly put in the right set and two felt they may move up. Two thought that pupils in bottom sets might think '*they could work harder*' but several thought that pupils were probably '*all right*' about where they were set because the work was then just challenging enough.

Teachers

With the exception of one student's complaint about a History teacher who could not control the class, all pupils had positive comments to make about teachers, principally that they were helpful and in some children's perceptions '*kind*'. They all felt they could approach any teacher with a problem, a worry or a question. All pupils found that having different teachers was good for a number of reasons: secondary teachers were specialists so education was better and they learned more details; having different teachers was more interesting and resulted in different types of work and experiencing different ways of teaching; '*if you cannot understand one teacher you can understand other ones*'; teachers help until you understand. Only two pupils complained about the behaviour of other pupils in particular lessons which they viewed as being the teachers' fault for not controlling student behaviour.

Making new friends

All pupils said that they had soon made new friends at secondary school whether or not they had come to the school with any friends or had primary friends in the same tutor group. What helped make new friends, in their opinion was:

- Sitting next to people they did not know,
- Getting to know members of the form group through different activities,
- Group and pair work during lessons,
- Being in mixed tutor forms for some lessons like art and Design Technology.

In summary, these twelve pupils liked secondary school, had had no intense worries about leaving primary for secondary school, felt that they were welcomed and cared for at secondary and were treated fairly in all aspects. They had quickly settled in and lost any initial worries about finding their way around or making friends. They appreciated the helpfulness of all the

people they had met. They all liked the increased opportunities and facilities that secondary school offered including having different teachers for different subjects.

5.6 Concluding remarks concerning the case studies

Successful transitions are based on schools looking after pupils as individuals. A great deal of information is exchanged about the incoming Year 6-to-Year 7 student. All possible sources of this information - primary school, parents, child - are made use of by the secondary school at several times throughout the transition process, not just once or twice. Prior to transition there are several set occasions when information is collected, for instance school visits (secondary teacher/s to primary school, primary children to secondary school), face-to-face interviews between teachers, and between teacher, parents and child. The overriding purpose of the collection of information about the child by the secondary school teacher is to enable the creation of balanced, happy, interactive and cohesive form tutor groups in Year 7. It is planned so that the pupils may have an old friend from primary but can also make new friends and receive support from numerous sources, principally teachers and peer mentors. The more that is known about each child, the better the secondary school can accommodate procedures and settings to the child. This is seen as essential to enabling all new pupils to settle in without difficulties and to engage well in academic learning at secondary school.

Conversely, a successful transition involves informing the child, in the first instance, and the parent/s, as completely as possible about transition, secondary schooling and the specific secondary school prior to transition. Both primary and secondary schools engage in special attention toward facilitating this. Primary teachers talk about changes in general and the move to secondary schooling in particular throughout Year 6, particularly after the KS2 national assessments are over in May/June and introduce more secondary school-like procedures and teaching approaches. Secondary schools establish secure links with the primary school through visits in both directions and the above-described exchange of information. The purpose is to familiarise the incoming student as fully as possible with the secondary school experience before the student arrives in Year 7. In addition, both secondary and primary schools offer unrestricted opportunities for parents to obtain information, answers to queries and the resolution of any worries surrounding transition. From both primary and secondary schools' perspectives, transition is viewed as integrated into the curriculum and the school year. It is in no way an 'add-on'. A great deal of time and effort is devoted to transition thus enabling a smooth settling-in to secondary schooling.

The attention given to pupils, at the individual level, means that schools with successful transition procedures do not view or treat children or their families as members of particular groups. Case study children with minority ethnic backgrounds or at lower SES levels did not report any different or more difficult transition experiences. While separate events take place for children designated with special needs or as vulnerable at the time of transition, the purposes for those events are the same as for all pupils: to gather information about the pupils and to give information to the pupils and parents about transition and the secondary school experience. They, no less than any other student, are tracked carefully until they have successfully settled in.

The Local Authority had very little direct involvement in the transition procedures of the case study schools. Activity was restricted to the school choice forms and the list of prospective pupils. Additionally, teachers unanimously reported that their transition programmes were the result of years of experience and in-school or between-school development at the teacher level. Transition was largely reviewed informally and always had as a focus how successful the various mechanisms had functioned for information exchange, diminishing stress in children and parents and increasing ease of settling in.

Although minor worries at the beginning of Year 7 about finding their way around the secondary school and making new friends were expressed by the case study pupils, these were temporary, as has been found in the literature on transition. Transition was slightly eased by moving with friends but there were structures and activities in place to make new friends which all had done.

These pupils did not experience any particular stress during transition and viewed it generally as a positive experience regardless of their gender, SES status or ethnic background.

Subject teaching and learning were viewed positively through the eyes of the pupils. What they experienced in secondary school were very helpful teachers who worked hard to ensure that they understood and learned the subject matter. The pupils appreciated the expertise of the teachers and the deepening of their own subject knowledge at secondary level. They liked hands-on aspects in lessons like History and the feeling that they were encouraged to express themselves orally and in what they produced in various subject areas. They accepted repeating lesson content in some subjects that they had done in primary school because they thought revision helped their learning and enough new material was presented to extend and deepen their knowledge. Altogether these pupils liked secondary school, secondary work and were happy with their friendships in secondary school. They appeared well-adjusted socially and academically even when they were not in top-set groups.

The only weakness observed in the study was that of continuity in teaching and curriculum between primary and secondary. This was due, in the teachers' views, to inadequate opportunities to see and experience the teaching and learning in each other's school. Resources and time were needed to develop interaction between the two sectors so that they could become more familiar with what and how each other worked.

To conclude, transition is successful when it is integrated fully into the primary and secondary school programmes. It is also successful when it revolves around strong communication links between the schools in all aspects of administration and curriculum. Finally, it is successful when complete information exchange mechanisms are established so that the secondary school can create a situation which is fully conducive to the individual child settling in to secondary school life and work.

Chapter 6. Summary and conclusions

This study is part of a major longitudinal study investigating the influence of pre-school, primary and secondary education on children's cognitive and social/behavioural development (EPPSE) in England. It set out to explore the transition experiences between primary and secondary school for 550 children and their families in England. The study adopted a mixed methods approach in order to investigate child, home, school and LA factors concerning transitions.

During their first term at secondary school, children were asked to complete a postal questionnaire exploring their experiences of transition. Similar questionnaires were posted to their parents which sought their opinions and views concerning transition. In addition, twelve selected case studies of children who reported positive experiences during transition were carried out. The views of parents and children were complemented by the views of both their primary and secondary teachers obtained through interviews.

The aims of the analyses were:

- To explore transition practices and specific successes and challenges in the six LAs.
- To explore the processes that support pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools and to identify any hindrances that affect this process.
- To explore the experiences and perceptions of both pupils and their parents of the transition process.
- To identify any associations between the background characteristics of pupils and families that may lead to more positive transitions.
- To describe the specific practices which lead to positive and negative transitions (as reported by pupils and parents).

Current transition practices

The Local Authorities were responsible for the secondary admissions procedure, and issued information on this to schools and parents. The primary schools shared information on Key Stage 2 results, attendance and special educational needs of individual pupils with the secondary schools. The interviews with the six LA officials revealed that secondary schools do not appear to 'trust' the data on children provided by primary schools at Year 6 level, and this leads to a system of baseline re-testing of all children at Year 7. Guidelines on good practice, opportunities for training and formal systems to evaluate training and practice differed enormously between the six Local Authority areas. Choice Advisors, a new Government initiative being delivered in some areas, provide impartial advice and support to parents.

There were some interesting initiatives to ensure that children and their parents knew about secondary schools and felt comfortable with the process of transfer. These included information booklets about the secondary schools, open days, talks by the secondary teachers, and meetings with other children and staff. Visits to secondary schools were for whole classes at primary school or for families, where they could see examples of work, and sample lessons. There were also visits by secondary Year 7 teachers to feeder primary schools to help familiarise children with the teachers they would meet. Some schools structured the first day of Year 7 so that the children were the only pupils at the school and could experience the space and facilities without other pupils around.

To help curriculum continuity, some schools used 'bridging materials' where the same work books were used in both Years 6 and 7. There was some sharing of information on the skills and understanding pupils had achieved and on the style of lessons, for example, through the visit of Year 7 teachers to Year 6 classrooms to watch the class work and talk to individual pupils. Secondary school teachers initiated most of the contact.

In the schools attended by children in the study, there were various strategies used to support children in their transition to secondary school. Most children (82%) attended open days. These included tours of the school, head teacher talks, and meetings with other teachers and children. The majority of children said that their primary school teacher had talked to them about having

more than one teacher in Year 7, behaviour and discipline, and changing classrooms between lessons. Half of the children had also been informed about having new subjects, and not being with the same pupils in all lessons. In many cases (63%), a Year 7 teacher would have also visited the primary school during which they would have talked to the class/small group (68%), watch the class working (18%), taught the class (17%), talked to individual pupils (13%) and/or talked during assembly (12%). Most children (81%) had also paid additional visits to their new secondary school. Many children had also visited their new secondary school for special lessons, evening meetings for parents and children and attended joint events. Only seventeen per cent of the parents mentioned that their child had been assigned an older pupil as a mentor in secondary school.

Key Features of a Successful Transition

According to LA officers, a successful transition was one where the process was managed smoothly – with parental choices received on time, most parents getting their first choice of school and few appeals.

The analysis of the survey responses of children and their parents was used to identify children who had experienced a successful transition, in terms of the following five factors: children had greatly expanded their friendships and boosted their self-esteem and confidence once at secondary school; they had settled so well in school life that they caused no concerns to their parents; they were showing more interest in school and work in comparison to primary school; they were finding it very easy getting used to new routines; and/or they were finding work completed in Year 6 to be very useful for the work they were doing in Year 7.

Developing new friendships and improving self-esteem and confidence

Children who had developed their friendships and boosted their self-esteem and confidence after moving to secondary school were those who: had received a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in and found that older children at their school were friendly. On the other hand, children were at risk of not expanding their friendships and boosting their self-esteem and confidence if they experienced bullying whilst at secondary school. In addition problems with bullying were more acute among children with SEN.

Settling so well in school life that parents have no concerns

Children who settled very well in school life were those who had received a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in; had most of their primary school friends move on with them to the same school; and had older sibling(s). However, children were at risk of not settling very well into school life if they experienced bullying whilst at secondary school; there were worries about their ability to adjust to having different teachers, their safety and their ability to make new friends; and if they were of low or medium socio-economic status (SES) rather than of high SES.

In addition, children of a white origin were more likely than others to move to secondary school with most of their friends. Having at least one older sibling at the same secondary school would significantly ease parents' worries about their children's safety and their ability to make new friends. Additionally, parents of children with health problems worried more about their safety than parents of children who had no such problems.

Showing an increasing interest in school and school work

Children showed a growing interest in school and school work if they: had received a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in; looked forward to going to secondary school; and had other sibling(s) at the same school. In addition, the presence of older sibling(s) encouraged children to look forward to going to secondary school, whilst those from low SES families or those with health problems were also found to look forward to going to secondary school more than children from high SES families or those without health problems.

Getting used to their new routines and school organisation with great ease

Children found getting used to new routines very easy if: they had received a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in; other children in their class were friendly; and they found the secondary school work interesting. However, children were at risk of not getting used to new routines very easily if they experienced bullying whilst at secondary school, and if they were of low socio-economic status (SES) rather than of high SES. In addition, children of a white origin did not find the work at secondary school as interesting as children from ethnic minorities. Furthermore, children who experienced a higher quality Home Learning Environment (HLE) would also find themselves in friendlier classrooms.

Experiencing curriculum continuity

Children reported experiencing high curriculum continuity if they: had received a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in; found the secondary school work interesting; had one or two siblings in comparison to those who were only children; and had health problems compared to those with none.

One of the main features affecting a successful transition included whether or not children had received a lot of help from their secondary school. The sort of help that secondary schools could provide to their new pupils included help with getting to know their way around the school, relaxing rules, procedures to help pupils adapt, visits to schools, induction and taster days, and booklets, offering adequate information, encouragement, support and assistance with lessons and homework. The vast majority of children had been taught by their secondary schools how to use reference sources (90%), how to revise (87%), how to make notes (80%), and how to write an essay (77%). The majority of parents (80%) reported they had received enough feedback from the school about their child's progress and behaviour.

Other things that promoted a positive transition among children included: looking forward to going to secondary school; the friendliness of the older children at secondary school and those in their class; having moved to the same secondary school with most of their primary school friends; having older siblings who could offer them advice and support; and finding their new school work interesting.

Eighty four per cent of children had felt prepared for moving to secondary school, and after spending a term at their new school nearly three quarters of the children said they felt happy. However, there were children – albeit a minority – who did not feel prepared.

What hinders a successful transition?

Local Authority officers felt that parents not understanding the admissions process, or trying to 'subvert' the system (e.g. pretending to live in an area to get a better chance of a school place) caused problems. In urban areas problems may also have arisen where neighbouring authorities had different procedures – which often caused confusion among parents. There was also some concern about the National Pupil Database, which some LA officers reported as not being sufficiently up-to-date and occasionally holding duplicate records.

For children, analysis of the survey showed that experiences of bullying, worrying about their ability to do the work or about having new and different teachers for subjects, or worrying about whether they can make friends, were all associated with a poor experience of transition. It is worth mentioning, that approximately 3 in every 10 children had some or many experiences of bullying according to their parents. Of the 165 parents who reported their children to experience some or a lot of problems with bullying 63 per cent of these children did not expand their friendships and did not boost their self-esteem and confidence; 72 per cent of these children did not settle well and were of particular concern to their parents; and 66 per cent of children did not get used to the new routines with great ease.

Transitions for vulnerable children

Overall, children with special educational needs (SEN) or those from other vulnerable groups did not experience a less successful transition than other children. However, the survey data did highlight some interesting findings. Children with SEN, (approximately 20% of children in the sample), were more likely to be bullied – which is a key inhibitor of a successful transition. Out of the 110 children with SEN in the sample 37 per cent had problems with bullying compared with 25 per cent of children without SEN who had problems with bullying. On the positive side, children with SEN and other health problems were experiencing greater curriculum continuity between Years 6 and 7. It may be that the earlier and more individual transfer process that these children experience has prepared them better for the move and the work they will do in Year 7.

Of the 102 children living in low SES households 72 per cent did not get used to the new routines with great ease and 58 per cent did not settle in very well. In comparison, of the 186 high SES children, 50 per cent did not get used to the new routines with great ease and 39 per cent did not settle in so well that they would cause no concern to their parents. However, children of low SES did look forward to secondary school, which had a positive effect on them developing an interest in school and school work.

Conclusions and Implications

This study was commissioned in light of concern about the transition experiences of children moving from primary to secondary school. Most of the children in the study had a positive transition experience, but a noticeable minority did not.

For children, parents and schools the factors that identify a successful transition can be summarised as social adjustment, institutional adjustment and curriculum interest and continuity. This report highlights a number of influences that shape children's transfer experiences and the likelihood of a successful transfer.

Social adjustment

The research identified that one important indicator of a successful transition was the extent that children have more and new friendships and higher self-esteem and report greater confidence after their transition to secondary school. The research suggests there is a need to help children develop their social and personal skills (friendships, self-esteem and confidence). Secondary schools could involve older children to help Year 7 children settle and this strategy may alleviate children's and parents' worries as well as reduce incidents of bullying. It is appropriate to develop clear systems to identify bullying and offer guidelines for Year 7 tutors, in order to refer those who appear to have problems after transfer to a support system or a scheme of "buddies". Older children in the school could assume the role of "an older sister/brother" since children with older siblings adjusted better in this regard. Using the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum to develop these skills, as well as using the period after the KS2 national assessments as a key period to help prepare children could help both in the transition process as well as the PHSE skills of older pupils.

Institutional adjustment

The survey showed that settling well into school life and getting used to new routines were two important elements of a successful transition. These aspects can be improved by encouraging children in the same class to work collaboratively and help each other even if they are not always together in the same lessons. Most secondary schools are structured around a "form" system. Whilst this is usually used as a "registration" group and as a PSHE group, heads of Year could use this time more constructively to enhance children's social skills and self-esteem. A possible way forward may be to establish smaller "tutor/focus" groups with the "form".

The most successful schools, as identified from the case studies, were those with very close links and co-ordination between primary and secondary schools. A variety of opportunities for induction, taster days and visits between schools appear to improve the transition experience for

children. Choice Advisors targeting families that may need additional help seems to be helpful in the areas where they have been used, but the initiative was not yet widespread.

Curriculum interest and continuity

A child's curriculum interest and continuity were two further indicators of a successful transition. Children need to understand what is expected of them in secondary school, be prepared for the level and style of work, and be challenged to build on progress at primary school. This helps to ensure a growing interest in school and work. Teachers reported wanting more information and a better understanding of the different approaches to teaching between primary and secondary schools. Parents also want to see schools better preparing their children for the work expected of them in secondary school. Interestingly, the study found that children with health problems actually reported higher curriculum interest and continuity which may be related to focused support for these children at the point of transfer.

The main responsibility of the Local Authorities was the administrative process of admissions. Their major concern was to provide good clear information to parents at an early stage, have statutory deadlines for the process met and have as few appeals as possible. However, where the Inspectorate/Advisory team had a stronger role/interest in the process, there was a higher likelihood of innovative curriculum practices and continuity (such as working on the same texts in Year 6 and Year 7). The Inspectorate/Advisory service had a key role in promoting good communication and sharing good practice between clusters/pyramids of schools. The Inspectorate/Advisory service might be encouraged further in such practices and in taking a more active interest in the pupil's experience of transition. Creating strategies and ideas for the Inspectorate/Advisory service to help promote curriculum continuity could be beneficial for ensuring pupil's interest and avoiding the learning 'dip' associated with Year 7.

To ensure that children's transitions are successful (and improved where needed), all three areas (social adjustment, institutional adjustment and curriculum interest and continuity) need to be taken into account when planning transition strategies at Local Authority and school levels.

Links with EPPSE Research

This research brief is based on a report which concentrates on the transition experiences of children who are taking part in the longitudinal EPPSE project. There will be opportunities in the future to follow their progress over the next few years, and relate this to their early years. As the EPPSE project will continue to track children's development into KS3, the findings from the Transition project will complement the model of analyses for children's developmental progress at age 14 (Year 9). This will be achieved by using the current findings on a sub-sample as potential predictors to explore cognitive and socio/behavioural development in Year 9.

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Appendix 1: The Effective Provision of Pre-School (EPPE) Project Technical Papers

Technical Paper 1 - An Introduction to the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project

ISBN: 085473 591 7

Published: Autumn 1999

Price £8.50

Technical Paper 2 - Characteristics of the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project sample at entry to the study

ISBN: 085473 592 5

Published: Autumn 1999

Price £4.00

Technical Paper 3 - Contextualising EPPE: Interviews with Local Authority co-ordinators and centre managers

ISBN: 085473 593 3

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ISBN: 085473 594 1

Published: Autumn 1999

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Technical Paper 5 – Characteristics of the Centre in the EPPE Study: (Interviews)

ISBN: 085473 595 X

Published: Autumn 2000

Price £5.00

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ISBN: 085473 598 4

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ISBN: 085473 599 2

Published: Autumn 2002

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Technical Paper 8b – Measuring the Impact of Pre-School on Children’s Social/behavioural Development over the Pre-School Period.

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Technical Paper 12 - The final report

ISBN: 085473 603 4

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Related Publications

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale: Revised Edition (1998). Harms, Clifford and Cryer

ISBN: 08077 3751 8

Assessing Quality in the Early Years, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Extension (ECERS-E):

Four Curricular Subscales (2003) Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart (2003) Trentham Books
ISBN Number: 1 85856 315 1 **Price £8.99**

Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years 2002 (REPEY): DfES Research Report 356.
Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Muttock, S., Gilden, R. and Bell, D. London: DfES, HMSO
Early Years Transition and Special Educational Needs (EYTSEN) Technical Paper 1: Special
Educational Needs across the Pre-school Period.
ISBN: 085473 680 8 **Published: Autumn 2002** **Price £8.00**

EYTSEN Technical Paper 2: Special Educational Needs in the Early Primary Years: Primary
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ISBN: 085473 681 6 **Published: Summer 2004** **Price £8.00**

EYTSEN Technical Paper 3: Special Educational Needs: The Parents' Perspective
ISBN: 085473 682 4 **Published: Summer 2004** **Price £8.00**

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Appendix 2: Interview schedule for Local Authority Officials

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICIALS

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today. As I said in my original letter, children in your area are participating in the EPPE (Effective Provision of Pre-school Education) study, run by the Institute of Education (IoE). The EPPE project is a longitudinal study which follows 3000 children all over the country to identify those factors that have a positive impact on children's progress, and to provide guidance on good practice. The study has influenced Government policy and now has additional funding to investigate the transition between primary and secondary school.

A. Interviewee role and structures to support the transition process

1. Could you describe your role with regards to transition?
*(Prompt: Is it your main responsibility or is it part of a portfolio of duties? If it is your main role, how many primary/secondary schools do you cover?
How is the work shared in your department? If it is a shared responsibility, how is this operationalised and how many schools do you cover?)*
2. Can you tell me about any positive experiences of transition you have had while working in this LA? What would you say are the main obstacles and barriers encountered in ensuring a smooth transition in your area?
3. Are there any recent changes, both at local and national level, which affect your work on transition?
4. What are the key features of a successful transition?
5. Does your LA provide guidelines on good transition practice for primary and/ or secondary schools? (Ask for copies prior to the interview)
6. What training, if any, is available for those responsible for transition within schools? 7. Do you have a system in place for evaluating this training?

B. Models of transition within schools

(Assuming that all schools have information sessions for parents and children)

1. What is the LA's role in these sessions?
2. What % of your secondary schools hold something other than:
 - a) Taster days?
 - b) Demo lessons?
 - c) Any other innovative transitional practices?
3. What is the LA's role in these sessions and encouraging other school to expand their transition practices?
4. What % of primary/secondary schools use 'transition' events to offer 'other' support to families?
(For example, the National Family Parenting Institute supported the Parents Information Point at schools during open sessions, with a view to offer supplementary information to families of 11 years olds (Y7) about bullying, puberty, divorce and separation, children's fears and personal safety).
4. If yes, are some seen to be more successful than others?
5. Do you have networks/transition partnerships established between primary and secondary schools?

6. If so, what is their purpose?
7. How do you ensure effective linkage between feeder primary schools and secondary schools?
8. If no partnerships available: Do you take any action in order to encourage effective linkage between non-feeder/partner primary schools and secondary schools?
9. How do you ensure continuity of the curriculum between primary and secondary schools?
10. What level of information regarding an individual child, is passed between the primary and secondary school?
11. How do other services (e.g. social/health services) contribute to transition?

C. Information given to parents and children about transition

Information for both parents and children is important to ensure a smooth transition.

1. What information is given to parents and children from your LA about transition? (Ask for copies prior to the interview)
2. How do you get feedback on this information?
3. What do primary and secondary schools send out separate information directly to parents?

D. Support

It has been shown that children with support networks at home and at school find the transition process easier.

1. Do you have support teams in primary and secondary schools in your area and if so, how do they operate?

Children who come from a disadvantaged background and children from ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable to falling behind academically and socially after transition.

2. What support, if any, is in place for those children of disadvantaged and children of ethnic minorities in both primary and secondary schools?
3. What support, if any, is in place for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)?
4. What is the level of uptake for this support in these groups?

E. Unsuccessful applicants

1. What % of parents do not get a place for their child at their first choice of secondary school?
2. How many go to appeal?
3. How many appeals are successful?
4. Could you tell me what happens to these remaining families? (*Do many go to independent / home education?*)
5. Are you satisfied with the appeal arrangements?
6. Do you have a system in place for evaluating the system?
7. Based on the recent article in the TES (23rd Feb 07) is your LA an importer of children at Yr7? Why do think this is the case?

F. Evaluation

1. Do you have a system that evaluates transition in your area and if so, what is it?
2. Do schools evaluate transition internally?
3. Is this monitored by the LA, and if so how?
4. What sort of outcomes do you think are important to monitor?

5. Do you ask for feedback from all parties involved (parents, children, school teachers)?
6. What action is taken on the basis of this feedback?

And finally...

1. From what you've seen of transition in your area, could you tell me three things that are successful about the system and three things that if you had a magic wand you could change?
2. How do you think your role is set to change in the future? Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time; it is greatly appreciated!

Appendix 3: Survey data: Parents' questionnaire

A. CHOOSING A SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR YOUR EPPE CHILD

1 When did you start thinking seriously about which secondary school your child would go to?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Before Y3	<input type="checkbox"/> Y3	<input type="checkbox"/> Y4	<input type="checkbox"/> Y5	<input type="checkbox"/> Y6	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

2 What type of school(s) did you consider?		
<input type="checkbox"/> State schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Private schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Both state and private schools

3 How many schools did you consider as serious possibilities for your child? (Please write here)
--

4 How many schools did you apply to? (Please write the number here)	
State school(s) =	Private school(s) =

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS APPLY ONLY TO THE SCHOOL THAT YOUR EPPE CHILD IS CURRENTLY AT

5 Did you go to the open day/evening before you made up your mind?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> No open day/evening

6 If so, was your child invited to go with you?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

7 Did the open day/evening include any of the following?		
<input type="checkbox"/> An opportunity to have an individual discussion with the Head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> An opportunity to meet other teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> An opportunity to meet pupils

8 Did the visit include any of the following?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Watched a lesson	<input type="checkbox"/> Tour the buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Free to wander
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)		

9 Did you feel welcome in the school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
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10 If you did not feel welcome, why was this? (Please write here)



11 From the open day visit, what was your impression of the school's...					
	Very good	Good	Average	Weak	Very weak
Emphasis on academic results	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Emphasis on working with parents	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Emphasis on school's pleasant atmosphere (ethos)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Emphasis on discipline and behaviour in school	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Emphasis on non-academic activities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Quality of the buildings and facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Emphasis on the child as an individual	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Quality of teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Friendliness of teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Safety within the school	<input type="checkbox"/>				

12 Did you discuss what you thought of the school visit with other parents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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13 If yes, how helpful was this discussion in your decision?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Very helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Quite helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Not helpful at all

14 How important were the following school characteristics in your decision to send your child to this school?				
	Very important	Important	Not important at all	Not applicable
a. Distance from home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. School in partnership with child's primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Parents' association available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. School's atmosphere (ethos)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Good pastoral care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is a church/faith school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Is a mixed school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is a single sex school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Is a small school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Is a large school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is a selective school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Is a private school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Specialist school (e.g. Science, Language)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. 6 th Form available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Good vocational training opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Very important	Important	Not important at all	Not applicable
p. Buildings in good order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Good facilities (e.g. art, music, IT, sports)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Availability of After School Clubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15 How important were the following in your decision to send your child to this school?

	Very important	Important	Not important at all	Not applicable
a. Has a good reputation for behaviour and discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Good exam results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has a reputation for a high standard of teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Ofsted reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16 How important were the following pieces of information in your decision to send your child to this school?

	Very important	Important	Not important at all	Not applicable
a. Recommended by friends/relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Recommended by child's primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Brothers/sisters already at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Child's friends go/going to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Child wanted to go there	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. School's brochure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. School's website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Open day/visit to the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17 Please write your 3 most important reasons from the 3 QUESTIONS above (14, 15 and 16): for example 14b 15a and 16c.

1 st most important:	2 nd most important:	3 rd most important:
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18 How much did you and your child agree about the final choice of your child's secondary school? (Please tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Strong agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> Some agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> No agreement
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B. APPLYING TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR YOUR EPPE CHILD

1 How easy was it to understand the admissions policy for the school that your child is attending?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Not easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Not easy at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

2 Getting hold of this information about the school was?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Not easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Not easy at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS APPLY ONLY TO THE SCHOOL THAT YOUR CHILD IS CURRENTLY AT

3 How easy were the forms to fill in?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Not easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Not easy at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

4 Did your child have to take an entrance examination?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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5 If yes, did your child have any out-of-school lessons to prepare for the exams?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------

6 Did you or your child attend an interview during the application process?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer only	<input type="checkbox"/> Child only	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer and child	<input type="checkbox"/> No interview

C. YOUR EPPE CHILD'S SECONDARY SCHOOL: OFFERS AND APPEALS

1 Think of the school your child goes to now. Which choice was this? (Please tick one)			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 st choice of school	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd choice of school	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd plus	<input type="checkbox"/> Not my/our choice at all, just allocated.

2 If you did not receive an offer for your first choice, did you appeal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------

3 If yes, was the appeal successful?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
--------------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------

4 If no, what reasons were you given for this? (Please tick all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Distance from home	<input type="checkbox"/> School oversubscribed	<input type="checkbox"/> Faith	<input type="checkbox"/> No reasons were given
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)			
.....			

5 If your appeal was unsuccessful, what did you do? (Please tick)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Go to a different state school	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to a private school	<input type="checkbox"/> Move catchment area	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep him/her at home
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)			
.....			

D. PREPARING YOUR EPPE CHILD FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

1 How satisfied were you with the way your child's primary school prepared them for secondary school?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied at all

2 Did you go to any meetings at primary school to find out more about your child's move to secondary school?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not offered

3 If yes, how helpful did you find these meetings?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Very helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Not very helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Not helpful at all

4 Do you think your child needed help with any of the following in the last term of primary school and/or during the summer, in preparation for secondary school? (Please tick all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/> The journey to school	<input type="checkbox"/> Talking about their feelings	<input type="checkbox"/> Remembering books and equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> Making new friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Using the computer or the internet
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)		



5 Did your child's secondary school do any of the following things to prepare your child for moving on whilst they were in primary school? (Please tick all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint events (i.e. sports, social)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentors assigned
<input type="checkbox"/> Visit the secondary school for special lessons	<input type="checkbox"/> Evening meetings (for parents and children)
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday lessons	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please write here)	

6 If a day time visit to the secondary school was offered, do you know if any of the activities listed below took place?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the new form tutor	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Tour of the school
<input type="checkbox"/> Joining in lessons	<input type="checkbox"/> Not offered	

7 How much did it cost to buy all the things your child needed (including school uniform) for secondary school?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than £50	<input type="checkbox"/> £51-£100	<input type="checkbox"/> £101-£150	<input type="checkbox"/> £151-£200	<input type="checkbox"/> £201-£500	<input type="checkbox"/> More than £500

8 How difficult do you feel it was for a family such as yours to pay for these things?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Very difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> Not difficult

E. NOW THAT YOUR EPPE CHILD IS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

1 How did you feel when your child <u>first moved</u> on to secondary school?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> A bit concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> Concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> Very concerned

2 How do you feel now?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> A bit concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> Concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> Very concerned

3 Which, if any, of the following things do you worry about?

<input type="checkbox"/> Amount of freedom	<input type="checkbox"/> Amount of homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Level of work	<input type="checkbox"/> Adjusting to having many teachers
<input type="checkbox"/> Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel to school	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustained friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Making new friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding school procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding school rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

(Please write here)

.....

4 How do you think your child has settled in?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very well	<input type="checkbox"/> Quite well	<input type="checkbox"/> Not very well	<input type="checkbox"/> Not well at all
------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--	--

5 Compared with the last year at primary school would you say your child now shows or has: (Please tick)

	More	The same	Less
Interest in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interest in schoolwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interest in out of school activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-esteem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 Has your child ever refused to go to his/her new school or tried to get out of going?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

7 If yes, please write here why you think they did not want to go.

.....

8 As far as you are aware, has your child had any problems with bullying at his/her new school?

<input type="checkbox"/> No problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Some problems	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot of problems	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
--------------------------------------	--	--	---------------------------------------

9 Do you think your child has had any problems with racism at his/her new school?

<input type="checkbox"/> No problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Some problems	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot of problems	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
--------------------------------------	--	--	---------------------------------------

If they are not already receiving it, do you think your child needs extra help with his/her reading or maths?

	Yes	No
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11 On a normal school evening, how long do you spend helping your child with their homework?

<input type="checkbox"/> My child does not want help	<input type="checkbox"/> My child does not need help	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 30 min
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 min	<input type="checkbox"/> 45 min	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 or more hours



12 Compared with the last year at primary school, would you say your child now has on average: (Please tick)				
	Much more	More	The same	Less
Amount of homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interest in homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Challenged by homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Different types of homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Different patterns of homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13 How satisfied are you with the amount of contact with the school? (Please tick)				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Not at all satisfied
Telephone contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personalised letters sent home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents evenings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14 Do you receive enough feedback from the school about your child's progress and behaviour?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------

15 How satisfied are you with the whole process of your child's moving on to secondary school?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all satisfied

16 Could you tell us one thing that your child's primary school could have done better to help children moving on to secondary school? (Please write here)

.....

17 Could you tell us one thing that your child's secondary school could have done better to help children moving on from primary school? (Please write here)

.....

18 Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your child's move to secondary school?

.....

*THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!
ALL INFORMATION IS KEPT IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND USED ONLY FOR OUR RESEARCH.*

WE DO NOT GIVE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU, YOUR CHILD OR YOUR FAMILY TO ANYONE.

Please post your completed questionnaire using the pre-paid envelope provided as soon as possible.

Appendix 4: Survey data: Children's questionnaire

A. CHOOSING A SECONDARY SCHOOL



1 When did you start thinking seriously about which secondary school you would like to go to?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Before Yr 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

2 Can you write 3 things that were important to you when thinking about which secondary school you would like to go to?
1.....
2.....
3.....

3 Did you go to your new school's open day/evening before making up your mind?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> No open day/evening
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

4 If you went to your new school's open day/evening, what did you do there? (You can tick more than one)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Listened to the Headteacher's talk	<input type="checkbox"/> Met Headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Met other teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Met other children
<input type="checkbox"/> Saw classes working	<input type="checkbox"/> Had demonstration lesson(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Had a tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Was free to wander around
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)			
.....			

5 Did you feel welcome in the school on the open day?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

6 If you did feel welcome, why do you think this was? (Please write here)
.....

7 If you did not feel welcome or you are not sure, why do you think this was? (Please write here)
.....

8 How much did you and your parent(s)/carer(s) agree about which school to apply to? (Please tick one)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Totally agreed	<input type="checkbox"/> Agreed a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> Agreed a little	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagreed

B. BEING PREPARED FOR YOUR SECONDARY SCHOOL



1 When you were still at primary school, did you look forward to going to secondary school?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> I can't remember

2 If yes, was there anything in particular you were looking forward to about going to secondary school? (Please write here)
.....

3 If not, was there anything in particular you were worried about? (Please write here)
.....

4 Did your Y6 teacher talk to you about any of the following things before you went to secondary school?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Having more than 1 teacher in Y7	<input type="checkbox"/> Changing classrooms between lessons	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch system
<input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour & discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Having new subjects	<input type="checkbox"/> Not being with same pupils in all lessons
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)		
.....		

PLEASE REMEMBER TO THINK ABOUT YOUR CURRENT SECONDARY SCHOOL WHEN ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

5 Did teachers from your current school ever visit your primary school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------

6 If yes, what did they do?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Talk to assembly	<input type="checkbox"/> Talk to you on your own	<input type="checkbox"/> Talk to the class/small group	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch your class working	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach your class
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)				
.....				

7 Did you visit your new secondary school before you started, apart from going to an open day/evening?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

8 If yes, who did you visit with?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents/carers	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school class	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Family e.g. older sibling
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)			

9 Overall, how many times have you been to visit your secondary school? Please write the number of times you have visited in the space below.
I visitedtimes.

10 During the visit(s), who did you meet and what did you do? (You can tick more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Met the Headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Met other teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Met other children	<input type="checkbox"/> Had a tour
<input type="checkbox"/> Saw a working class	<input type="checkbox"/> Had a lesson	<input type="checkbox"/> Was free to wander around	<input type="checkbox"/> Had lunch
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

(Please write here)

.....

.....

11 Overall, how did you feel when you visited the school?

<input type="checkbox"/> Excited	<input type="checkbox"/> Nervous	<input type="checkbox"/> Both excited and nervous
<input type="checkbox"/> Not bothered	<input type="checkbox"/> I can't remember	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not visit
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please write here)		

.....

.....



C. NOW THAT YOU ARE AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

C.i Settling in to your new school

1 Did you feel prepared for moving on to secondary school?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

2 If yes, who helped you and how? (Please write here)

.....

.....

.....

.....

3 Did your secondary school give you enough help to settle in?

<input type="checkbox"/> It helped me a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> It helped me a little	<input type="checkbox"/> It did not help at all
---	--	---

4 If you did have enough help, what things helped you? (Please write here)

.....

5 If you feel that you did not have enough help, what or who could have helped you more? (Please write here)

.....

6 How do you feel now that you have spent a term at your secondary school?

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excited | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous | <input type="checkbox"/> Both excited and nervous | <input type="checkbox"/> Worried |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|

Other (please write here)

.....

7 How are you settling in?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Quite well | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all well |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|

8 Do you feel safe when...?

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travelling between home and school | <input type="checkbox"/> In school | <input type="checkbox"/> In the playground |
|---|------------------------------------|--|

9 Now that you've been at your school for a term, please tick the routines below that you know really well.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration | <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs and activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Lunches | <input type="checkbox"/> Using school equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PE Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> School wear | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting to lessons on time | <input type="checkbox"/> Who to ask for advice |

10 How easy/difficult was it to get used to the routines and organisation of your new school?

	Very easy	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult
Having many different teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changing classrooms between lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lunch system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behaviour & discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not being with same pupils in all lessons (this may not be the case in your school)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11 Have you joined any dinner-time clubs/activities or any after school clubs or school teams (for example choir, orchestra, drama, football, netball etc)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

12 If yes, which ones? (Please write here)

.....

13 Is there anything that you particularly like about your new school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------

14 If yes, what is it? (Please write here)

.....

.....

15 Is there anything about your new school that you particularly don't like?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------

16 If yes, what is it? (Please write here)

.....



C.ii Comparisons with your primary school

1 How much do you think the work you did in the following subjects in Y6 helped you to cope with the work you are doing in Y7?

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not helpful	Not helpful at all	Did not do it in Y6
English	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>				
History	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Design & Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>				
ICT	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Art & Design	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>				
PE	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religious Education/ PSHE	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Languages (this may have not been the case in your primary school)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

2 Compared to the work you did in Year 6, how easy/difficult do you think work is in Year 7?

	A lot easier	Easier	More difficult	A lot more difficult	Did not do in Y6
English	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>				
History	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Design & Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>				
ICT	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Art & Design	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>				
PE	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religious Education/ PHSE	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Languages	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3 Compared with primary school, in secondary school do you think you now have:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More school friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer school friends | <input type="checkbox"/> A similar number of school friends |
|--|---|---|

4 Compared with your primary school, do you think the teachers at your secondary school overall are?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More strict | <input type="checkbox"/> Less strict | <input type="checkbox"/> About the same |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|



C iii Your secondary school

1 Which is your favourite subject at this school? (Please write here)

.....

2 How interesting do you find the work in Year 7?

	Very interesting	Interesting	Not interesting
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Languages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Does your secondary school teach you any of the following study skills? Please say how helpful you find them.

	I have not done this	Helpful	Quite helpful	Not helpful at all
How to take notes when people speak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How to make notes (e.g. from textbooks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to use acronyms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to write an essay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to revise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to use reference sources (e.g. dictionaries, atlases, internet)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: (Please write here what it is <u>and tick</u> how helpful it is)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 On a normal school day, how long do you spend doing your homework?

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 30 mins	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 mins to 1 hour	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 2 hours
--	--	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

5 Are you getting any extra help with your reading or maths during school time?

	I don't need any help	Yes	No
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 If yes, who is helping you?

Language support assistant | Learning support assistant | Mentor

Other (please write here)
.....

7 Do you have an older brother/sister at this school?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

8 How many of your friends from your primary school also moved to your secondary school?

<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Only a couple	<input type="checkbox"/> Most of them
-------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

9 Think of the person you feel most friendly with in your form class. Does your teacher deliberately put you... (please tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> With your closest friend	<input type="checkbox"/> Away from your closest friend	<input type="checkbox"/> Lets you make your own decision
---	--	--

10 Overall, do you think the children in your class are?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Not friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
--	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

11 Overall, do you think the older children at this school are?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Not friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
--	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

12 Overall, do you think the teachers at this school are?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Not friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
--	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

13 What advice would you give to primary school children who will join your school next year? (Please write here)

.....

14 Could you suggest anything that would make moving on to secondary school easier for other children? (Please write here)

.....

Thank you so much for helping us with our work!

Please post your completed questionnaire using the pre-paid envelope provided as soon as possible.



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Appendix 5: Interview schedule for Case studies: Children

Interview schedule for children's case studies

The RO who carried out the interviews was familiar with the unique responses of each individual child before hand. This allowed her to build a rapport quickly with the child and gave her a base for the discussion to follow.

Themes to talk about would include:

A) Warm up questions

- How are you getting along in Y7 now that you have been here for almost a year?
- You've told us in the questionnaire you filled in for us, that moving on from primary to secondary was a nice experience for you.

Thinking back to Yr 6:

- What did you expect secondary school to be like?
- What were you looking forward to about moving on to Y7?
- Did you have any worries about coming here?
- If yes, do you still have any of those worries?
- If you have worries – who can you talk to about these?

B) Being prepared for the secondary school

Now, I would like you to think back in time when you were still in Y6.

- What do you think helped you most when transferring from Y6 to Y7?
- How do you think your primary school helped you with(for sec school):
 - a) coping with the work in secondary school
 - b) homework
 - c) expected behaviour at your new school
 - d) making friends and being with a new group of children (e.g. bullying)
 - e) working with a range of teachers
 - f) the size of buildings and how to find your way around(Prompt for the response 'can't remember' is to probe further what they did at primary school and what they did differently in secondary school).
- Did your family have any worries about your move from primary to secondary school? If they did, did they ever talk to you about it?
(Prompt: anxiety over choice, finances regarding uniform, worries about journey etc.)

C) Settling into your secondary school

- Was this school your first choice? If not, how do you feel about it now?

Focus on academic work

- Did you need help when you started in Y7 with organising and getting your work done in lessons? If so, which subjects did or do you still need help with and who helped / helps you?

Focus on pastoral care

- Have you stayed with the friendship group who moved with you from primary school?
- Or have you made new friends?
- What helped you make new friends?
- Did anything make it hard for you to make new friends?
- How was it for you when you moved from being in the oldest year group at your primary school to being in the youngest one here?
- What was the easiest thing to learn how to do in Y7?

- What was the hardest thing to learn how to do in Y7?

D) Your current experiences of your secondary school

- What do you think about secondary school now?
- Is there anything really great about being in Y7 compared to being in Y6?
- Do you miss anything about primary school? If so, what?
- When you first started here was the work generally:

More than primary	Less than primary	The same
Easier than primary	Harder than primary	The same
- Are some lessons or subjects (for example Maths, English, Geography etc) easier or harder than the others? Do you get more work in some subjects than you get in others? How do you feel about this?
- Is the type of work you do in lessons here the same as in primary? In all subjects? If not in all, in which ones? How is it different?
- Do you think you were repeating any work you had already done in primary? In all subjects or in just a few of them? Which ones?
- How do you feel about having different teachers for different subjects? Does this make a difference to how you learn? And does it make a difference to how you get along with your teachers?
- Do you think you have made good progress in your subjects this year? If so, in which ones? If not, in which ones and why do you think that is?
- Do you think you contribute to class as much as you did in your primary school? If not, why do you think that is?
- Are you in a mixed form group or a 'set' form group (getting here at ability groupings)? [*The RO will know in advance which sets the child is in and therefore will adjust questions about sets accordingly*]
- How do you feel about this? (Prompt: Is the work challenging enough, do you feel like you are in the correct set, are you separated from your friends?) How do you think other children feel in higher/lower sets?
- If you had to give some advice to a next years Yr 6 about secondary transfer what advice would you give them?
- Is there anything else you want to tell us about moving on to secondary school?

Thank you very much for your time; it's been great talking to you!

Appendix 6: Interview schedule for Case studies: Primary school teachers

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today. As I said in my original letter, children in your school are participating in the EPPE (Effective Provision of Pre-school Education) study, run by the Institute of Education (IoE). The children that left your school last academic year and participate in our study reported that your school greatly helped them with the transition. The EPPE project is a longitudinal study which studies 3000 children all over the country to identify those factors that have a positive impact on children's progress, and to provide guidance on good practice. The study has influenced government policy and now has additional funding to investigate the transition between primary and secondary school.

A. Interviewee role and structures to support the transition process

1. How is transition from primary to secondary organised in your school? (Prompt: When do you start planning for transfer – is it something that is an all year round consideration, or do you have a specific start and end date; describe contact if any with secondary school(s) including visits; how much and what type of pupil data is shared between your school and the secondary schools?)
2. Could you tell me about your role within your school regarding transition?
3. What are the key features that lead to a positive experience of secondary transfer?
4. What are the main obstacles and barriers to a smooth transition?
5. Are there any recent changes, locally / nationally, that have affected transition?
6. Does your LA provide you with guidelines on good transition practices?
7. Has your school been allocated a choice advisor or a Home/School Liaison Officer. Do you have access to a Transition Information Service? What are your views on the services you've experienced?
- 8a. Does your LA provide training, for you for transition?
- 8b. What was provided and what did you think of it?
9. What support does your school provide to you in your work with transition? (Prompt: Head teacher's / senior management's attitudes)
10. Do you ever feel pressure from parents to deal with transition in a different way?

B. Information and support

(Assuming that all schools have information sessions for parents and children)

1. What do you do to inform parents and pupils about transition?
2. What information is given to parents and children from your school about transition?
3. How do you get feedback on this information?
4. What do you do to support parents and pupils about transition?

5. What sort of events do you offer to parents and children?
6. Do you have / know of / or would like to put in place other transitional practices?
(For example, the National Family Parenting Institute supported the Parents Information Point at schools during open sessions, with a view to offer supplementary information to families of 11 years olds (Y7) about bullying, puberty, divorce and separation, children's fears and personal safety).
7. Do you have network/transition partnerships with local secondary schools?
8. How do you ensure continuity between your school and the secondary school(s) for?
 - curriculum
 - expectations of behaviour
 - homework
 - information exchange regarding individual children
9. How do other services (e.g. social/health services) contribute to transition?

C. Concerns

1. Is there a period of time during Y6 when you 'sense' anxiety among the children regarding their transition? How does this manifest itself and what do you do about it?
2. Do any particular groups appear more anxious than others (for example low SES, children in care, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, SEN, EAL)? Do you have targeted provision for each group?
3. Are there particular groups of parents that are more troubled by secondary transfer?

D. Evaluation

1. Does your school evaluate transition internally? If so, how do you evaluate this process?
(Prompt: Do you collect information only on which pupil goes where or do you link up with the secondary schools in any particular ways? For instance, do you get any feedback on the progress children make at secondary school?)
2. Is this monitored by the LA, and if so how?
3. What sort of outcomes do you think are important to monitor?
4. Do you ask for feedback from all involved (e.g. parents, children and secondary school teachers)?
5. What action is taken on the basis of this feedback?

And finally...

1. From what you've seen of transition in your school, could you tell me three things that are successful about the system and three things that if you had a magic wand you would change?

Thank you very much for your time; it is greatly appreciated!

Appendix 7: Interview schedule for Case studies: Secondary school teachers

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today. As I said in my original letter, children in your school are participating in the EPPE (Effective Provision of Pre-school Education) study, run by the Institute of Education (IoE). The children that joined your school this academic year and participate in our study reported that your school greatly helped them with the transition. The EPPE project is a longitudinal study which studies 3000 children all over the country to identify those factors that have a positive impact on children's progress, and to provide guidance on good practice. The study has influenced government policy and now has additional funding to investigate the transition between primary and secondary school.

A. Interviewee role and structures to support the transition process

1. How is transition organised in your school? (Prompt: When do you start planning for transfer – is it something that is an all year round consideration, or do you have a specific start and end date; describe contact, if any, with primary school(s) including visits; how much and what type of pupil data is shared between your school and the primary schools?)
2. Could you tell me about your role within your school regarding transition?
3. What are the key features that lead to a positive experience of secondary transfer?
4. What are the main obstacles and barriers to a smooth transition?
5. Are there any recent changes, locally /nationally, that have affected transition?
6. Does your school and LA provide you with guidelines on good transition practices?
7. Has your school been allocated a choice advisor or a Home/School Liaison Officer? Do you have access to a Transition Information Service? What are your views on the services you've experienced?
- 8a. Does your LA provide training, for you for transition? If so, have you attended any?
- 8b. What was provided and what did you think of it?
9. What support does your school provide to you in your work with transition? (Prompt: Head teacher's / senior management's attitudes)

B. Information and support

(Assuming that all schools have information sessions for parents and children)

1. What do you do to inform parents and pupils about transition (before children transfer)?
2. What information is given to parents and children from your school about transition (before children transfer)?
3. How do you get feedback on this information (before children transfer)?
4. What do you do to support parents and pupils about transition (before children transfer)?
5. What sort of events do you offer to parents and children (before children transfer)?
6. Do you have / know /or would like to put in place other transitional practices (before children transfer)?

(For example, the National Family Parenting Institute supported the Parents Information Point at schools during open sessions, with a view to offer supplementary information to families of 11 years olds (Y7) about bullying, puberty, divorce and separation, children's fears and personal safety).

7. Do you have network/transition partnerships with local primary school(s before children transfer)?

8. How do you ensure continuity with your feeder primaries for:

- curriculum
- expectation of behaviour
- homework
- information exchange regarding individual children

9. What information is given to parents and children from your school once children are transferred to you?

10. What sort of mechanisms do you have in place as a school to help Y7 children to settle in more easily?

11. How do other services (e.g. social/health services) contribute to transition?

C. Concerns

1. Is there a period of time during the first term when you assess how children have 'settled' and identify those who are showing anxiety? Once you have identified those showing anxiety what would you do?

2. Do any particular groups appear more anxious than others (for example low SES, children in care, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, SEN, EAL)? Do you have targeted provision for each group?

3. Are there particular groups of parents that are more troubled by secondary transfer?

D. Evaluation

1. Does your school evaluate transition internally? If so, how do you evaluate this process? (Prompt: Do you collect information only on which school every pupil comes from or do you link up with the primary schools in any particular ways? For instance, do you get any feedback on the progress children make at primary school or their KS2 national assessment results and school reports? In addition, do you give any feedback on the progress children make at secondary school to their primary schools?)

2. Is this monitored by the LA, and if so how?

3. What sort of outcomes do you think are important to monitor?

4. Do you ask for feedback from all parties involved (parents, children, and primary school teachers)?

5. What action is taken on the basis of this feedback?

And finally...

1. From what you've seen of transition in your school, could you tell me three things that are successful about the system and three things that if you had a magic wand you would change?

Thank you very much for your time; it is greatly appreciated!

Appendix 8: Two case study pupils - Sylvia and Adam

The two case study pupils presented below were chosen because their situations reflected clearly what their respective two schools had put into place for a smooth and happy transition. Both pupils arrived at secondary school without any primary school friends and needed to settle into the new environment on their own in that respect. In the one case the primary and secondary schools are involved in a closely run local network of schools in a medium-sized country market town, exemplifying an inter-school communication system which puts transition at the level of local school impetus. In the other case the primary and secondary schools are located far from each other in different towns and Local Authorities, so these schools have no established inter-school communication links at all. The one secondary school is virtually all-white with few minority ethnic or EAL pupils. The other school has a wide mix of ethnicities among its pupils. All four schools have in place a range of events and teaching experiences to ensure a good transition experience for the pupils.

Sylvia

Sylvia comes from a white, professional, non-manual higher (but not highest) socio-economic status home where both her parents are professional, non-manual employees and have an au-pair looking after Sylvia and her younger sister who was still in primary school. Sylvia has higher than average cognitive ability and is keen on good achievement in school. In the market town where they live, the two secondary schools and fourteen primary schools have formed a partnership that involves regular meetings between the head teachers of all sixteen schools and they also have subject teacher meetings. The teacher in charge of transition at Sylvia's primary schools was, at the time of the interview with her, in charge of the task of co-ordinating assessment across the consortium which meant a great of liaising with and between schools. The two secondary schools in the town have different specialisms and according to the experience of the primary teacher, although they are in some competition with each other for student intake, the competition does not hamper communication between the two schools. For instance they coordinated Open Days to coincide with each other which was a great help for the primary schools.

The secondary school was Sylvia's first choice school in a small town where there are two successful secondary schools that are less than two miles apart. All of her friends went to the other secondary which is closer to her primary school. Her secondary school is closer to where she lives, however, being just down the same road. She expected that she would be very small where everyone else would be really big and wondered about making new friends. The majority of her primary class were going to the other local secondary school but she did not mind much. She explained that by saying that she was interested in a new experience and that if she was *'friends with them in Year 6 but didn't really talk to them in Year 7'* then she would know they were not really such a friend because they have not stayed in touch. She has stayed in touch with really good friends who are at the other school and has made new friends. If she has problems she can talk to the Head of Year (Learning Community) or her form tutor who has solved a minor problem she had with a student who would not cooperate during pair work. She was worried about getting lost in the new school but a teaching assistant accompanied the form group around to lessons the first weeks and they soon found their way around the school.

In primary school Sylvia remembers her teacher warning them about the consequences of poor behaviour in secondary school, about remembering to do homework on time and about working hard in Year 7 so they would be in good groups in Year 8. The teacher talked about the kind of class work they would be doing in secondary school and about having different teachers and that some teachers would enforce seating plans. She could not remember what might have been said about making new friends.

Sylvia remembers two visits to the secondary school. These were useful because she arrived at the secondary school knowing what the school looked like and who was in her form. Her form tutor asked her when she was new to look after a girl who had moved from London and knew no

one. They are now best friends. She made other friends with people in her tutor group. She thinks that teachers purposefully seat people next to each other so they can get to know each other. Teachers also move people around in lessons so it is possible to get to know other people. Staying together as a tutor group at the beginning of year 7 helps with settling in by giving the pupils the feeling that they know at least someone. School outings and her music activities give Sylvia opportunities to make friends in other year groups and other tutor groups.

Mathematics has been the hardest for her to get used to but she has friends she can ask, or her teacher or her father. Drama was the easiest because they started new, having never done it in primary school. History was also easiest because it did not really matter if you did not know something because the teacher went over things. At the beginning of Year 7 there was a lot more work but now toward the end of the year there was not so much, she thinks. Some subjects are harder than others, for instance the new vocabulary in Geography. The teacher helps by writing the words on the board. She does not feel like she is repeating work although they sometimes go over things in lessons. She feels that many lessons in secondary have the same sort of lesson structure as in primary. She is comfortable with having different teachers. She has made best progress in English and Art. However, she no longer puts her hand up because she rarely gets called on so she volunteers less than she did in primary school. Primary school work was easier but she likes secondary work nevertheless and her only worry is about which sets she will be in in Year 8.

Sylvia recognises that setting is complex because *'sometimes you know some of it like in Mathematics but have trouble understanding other things'*. She is on her own in Technology lessons and likes them the least because pupils are put into partners and she does not have any friends there so she is never working with a friend. Her advice to pupils coming up from her old primary school is that they should not be worried: *'you will get help and get used to secondary'*. They should not worry about making new friends because *'everyone is really friendly'*. Looking at her questionnaire and interview responses, Sylvia's most important issue with regard to transition was making new friends; however, she feels she has done this quite successfully. She is happy where she is.

Transition at Sylvia's primary school

Sylvia's primary school is a small single-story red brick school with a long history. There are about 100 pupils in the school with one Year 6 group taught by the teacher in charge of transition. There is no particular start date for transition, in her thinking. It may extend as far down the school as Year 5 when some pupils have the chance to visit the secondary school for performances or concerts. Shortly after Christmas of each school year the consortium head teachers meet to discuss how transition is going to proceed that year. They share informal feedback from the previous year's transition and discuss what they plan for the current year. This ensures that across the consortium everyone knows what children will be experiencing in terms of transition events and can comment or propose changes that might be useful. Transition practices are not rigidly set and are open for informal evaluation.

In Sylvia's case, throughout her Year 6 there was contact with the secondary school, for instance a concert was given at the secondary school expressly for Year 6 pupils. Also, a secondary drama production each year included primary school pupils, so many pupils had been to the secondary school before Year 6. Sylvia had been to two concerts in addition to the open days in September and after Easter.

Exchanges of information

The Local Authority provides a student information document which the primary school fills in about each child that is leaving Year 6. This document goes to the secondary school and is followed by a visit from the Head of Year 7 who comes into the primary to talk to the group of pupils who have chosen that secondary school about the school and gives each pupil a transition pack. In it are sheets of information about the school, the school day, uniform, homework, subject-specific equipment, behaviour expectations, etc. At the time of this visit to the primary

school the secondary teacher also talks to the primary teacher privately about each individual student. This visit and sharing of information are the most important aspects of transition, said Sylvia's primary teacher. The secondary school sends quite a lot of information about being in secondary school to the primary teacher for her to present and discuss with the Year 6 pupils. Every transition needed to be a positive experience and any problems needed to be recognised immediately and handled instantly, whether they were simple queries from parents or children or serious worries, said the primary teacher. The primary school has an open door policy so parents are free to come in or to phone at any time if they have concerns or questions. However, the principal source of information for parents about transition comes from the secondary school.

Primary school views and contributions

Transition is seen by Sylvia's primary school as a fluid, on-going process for the children. It continues throughout Year 6 and is aimed at creating a sense of security about moving to secondary school. Particularly around the time of the visit from the Head of Year 7 the primary teacher talks to the children in general about growing up and about changes. The school nurse talks to the Year 6 about adolescence, relationships and *'a lot that links in to the transition without directly being a part of the process'*.

A positive transition is seen to be linked principally with the primary school and the child's contact with the Year 7 teacher and associated exchanges of information as well as with experiences that the child has had with the secondary school prior to transition there. After the KS2 national assessments are finished in May, a great deal takes place to familiarise the children with the secondary school experience in general and specifically at the school they are going to, e.g. the secondary school open day. Senior support is excellent and child-centred in the primary school so that there is no problem with getting supply if the teacher needs to spend time out of the classroom with a child or with parents to deal with any transition issue. The head teacher is always ready to take a lesson if need be.

The primary school alerts the secondary school to children viewed as vulnerable at transition and arranges for extra visits to the secondary school for those children. The primary arranges for the child to meet the head teacher and other teachers he or she will be in frequent contact with at secondary school. The secondary school is invited to send a teacher to case conferences at the end of Year 6. This is the only point where Social Services are involved with transition.

To support continuity across primary-secondary school curricula, the primary school arranges for Year 6 children to do some project work which feeds into Year 7 work, particularly in Science and ICT. A pack for transition work was produced by a team of consortium primary and secondary teachers. For Science the Year 6 child produces a poster of what she has learned in primary school and that goes up on display in the secondary school where the child sees it when she arrives on the first day of Year 7. The Local Authority has produced a transfer project that goes up on the child's digital brain space and which she can access when she is in secondary school.

What need to be monitored during transition are the child's happiness and the assurance that she feels comfortable and confident to go on to secondary school. During the first term of Year 7 there is a phone conference between the secondary school and the primary teacher about how the child has settled in. The primary teacher might call the secondary Head of Year 7 if a child has come back to the primary and reported negative experiences. Children often come back to the primary in the term before Christmas to talk to their old primary school teacher.

The primary teacher feels that the successes they have had with transition revolve around the mechanisms for exchanging information, particularly the face-to-face with the secondary teacher about the individual children. In terms of wishes for change, she would like to have more time to spend with each child individually to talk to them about their worries and concerns. In addition, she feels it would be a good idea for the secondary school to send down the provisional tutor group list which the primary could then comment on - sometimes the primary school knows information about a child's past unhappy experiences with children from other primary schools

which does not easily get transmitted to the secondary school. There should also be more opportunities for children's and especially primary teachers' visits to the secondary school to experience it. More links should be created between children from the different primary schools who will then be together in the secondary school. (These practices were successfully in place for some of the primary and secondary schools in this sample). She also felt it would be useful for secondary teachers of subjects which the children did not get in primary school to come into primary to introduce their subjects. (This also takes place in some of the schools).

The primary teacher has some doubts about the discrepancies that arise between the push in primary schools to get children to levels of achievement that then appear to be superior to what the children are asked to do in secondary and feels that this is a point for sharing and discussion within the consortium.

Secondary school views and contributions

The interview with the Head of Year 7 brought out the activities that Sylvia's secondary school has in place for transition and the rationale and beliefs behind those events. Transition begins first with the schools meeting after Christmas where the year's transition is discussed. Actually before that there are several opportunities for prospective parents to come in to get to know the school. An open evening in September includes displays and sample lessons for parents and children to see. There are several open days which take place in the early autumn prior to parents having to make their school choice. These events are public relations activities but they also support the information transfer which is the key to a successful transition. He views the end of transition for a pupil to be when that pupil moves up to Year 8, having settled in to the secondary school ethos and having become a *bona fide* member of the school.

The first administrative step toward a child's transition for the secondary school's involvement in transition is when the school receives the list of names of the pupils who will start at the school in September. At the same time the Local Authority sends a form to the primary school requiring information about individual pupils including any special issues that may have arisen during the child's time in primary school and National Curriculum levels in Mathematics, English and Science. In addition, information which both the primary teachers and the child fills in about which friends they want to be with (or not) in secondary school is requested. Another important piece of information for the secondary school is about the child's extracurricular activities. The secondary school seeks to gain a comprehensive picture of the child from the primary school and from the child.

At Sylvia's secondary school there are two secondary teachers in charge of transition representing the two vertical Houses into which pupils are organised in the school. These teachers share the transition tasks, the first being to ring personally the primary schools of the children destined to arrive as Year 7's and to arrange to go in to talk with the primary teacher about the prospective pupils individually and to meet and talk those pupils as a group. The primary school teachers are primed to encourage the pupils to have questions ready which they can ask about the secondary school and about transition when the teacher comes in to see the pupils. The secondary teachers talk about what is different at secondary and what is available. They take an introduction pack for each child to the primary school for the child to take home to read and discuss with parents. At this meeting the pupils are encouraged to ask any questions they have about transition and secondary school. They are also invited to write a letter to the secondary school teacher introducing themselves. This is presented not as a requirement, but an opportunity to tell the secondary school about who they are, what they like doing, and so forth. A secondary school teacher then picks up the letters some days later from the primary school. The letters are viewed as an additional source of information about the pupil.

The formation of the Year 7 tutor groups is considered extremely important and in the first instance relies heavily on information passed on by the primary school teachers on the forms and then augmented during the face-to-face meetings between primary and secondary teachers. Entire primary classes will come up to this secondary school so it is important to understand the

relationships between children. Information is gathered from the primary teachers, the children and then the parents also have a say. The procedure for this is through an information sheet sent home to the parents. This sheet is in the pack which the child takes home. The parent is asked to write down anything they feel is important for the secondary school to know about their child and their expectations for their child in the secondary school. This information sheet is provided by the LA Education Service. Parents also have a chance to influence the formation of tutor groups at prospective parents' evening in July. Parents are always invited to ring the secondary school teachers in charge of transition at any time they feel the need.

Beside careful consideration of pupils' past personal relationships with each other, individual pupil academic achievement, the personal interests of each child and his/her outside-school activities are taken into account in an effort to create balanced tutor groups. For instance, there is an effort made to avoid any one tutor group having most of the best sports people or musicians. This is to ensure that no one group necessarily excels in any inter-house competition.

An obstacle to a happy transition can be when a child arrives 'alone' at the school with no one else from his or her primary school. The secondary teacher ensures that equivalent amounts of information are gathered about the child but it is thought an obstacle when the child arrives without knowing anyone. The challenge is to ensure as happy a transition as a child who has arrived with 8 or 9 friends. This challenge seems to have been met in the case of Sylvia.

Another obstacle that can cause the child to be unhappy or distressed about transition is when the child has special needs or has been identified by the primary school as vulnerable. These children are facing a move from a small, intimate, protected environment in the primary school where he or she has been looked after for six years to a very large secondary community with a great number of people who don't know him or her. There are several mechanisms for dealing with this. One is that the SENCO at the secondary school visits the primary schools in a parallel set of transition procedures to what the teachers in charge of transition are doing. The SENCO collects information about the child/children and gets to know them personally. These children then have several visits to the secondary school on their own or as special groups to familiarise them with the school and the teachers. A second mechanism is a 'nurturing' group at the secondary school where all vulnerable children are placed when they arrive, whether they are statemented or otherwise have no academic problems. In addition to SENCO help, there is a woman specially involved in helping children with behavioural problems get used to secondary school. Nurturing group children have 'time out' as and when in what is called the 'space to learn'. Teachers work with the child until he or she declares themselves to be ready to follow a normal curriculum. There is no time restriction on how long a student continues to have access to this mechanism.

Key features of a positive transition revolve around getting all the information possible about a child before he or she enters secondary school. This information arrives from three strands: child, parent, primary school (and later, KS2 national assessment results). Another is familiarising the prospective student with the school: their tutor group, layout of the school, changing classes, types of lessons, breaks, lunch procedures. The prospective pupils visit the school twice, one is a practice day at school which takes place in July, the other is at parents' evening the same week in July where the parents also meet the tutor group, see sample classes, get information from the Head teacher, ask questions in an open forum or in private discussions with teachers.

Feedback on transition is informal. It comes at the January meeting between schools. It also comes from pupils during their Year 6 visits to the school: their 'practice' open day in school and it comes from parents at the parents' evening. Tutors are frequently consulted about how a child is settling in. Parents are encouraged by the school from first contact to let the school know of any difficulties that the child might have or be having. Parents who have anxieties are either parents of SEN children or of gifted and talented children. These are parents who are

particularly concerned to know what is in place at the secondary school for their child's particular needs.

Transition procedures are not monitored by the Local Authority to his knowledge. The only input from the Local Authority is the provision of some of the documentation for transition. There is no home-school liaison officer to the interviewee's knowledge, certainly not involved in transition. There is a family support network that is town-based and the school has access to that and 'buys' into it. The school might refer the parent of a child who is having particular problems to that group. There is another such support group for SEN children. The few EAL children are similarly tracked with the help of the Local Authority language support team. These children generally get one-to-one help and are not normally placed in the nurture group unless there are additional problems.

Curriculum continuity from primary to secondary schools is slight. The primary school does introduce the home-school link through the introduction of diaries which then continue to be used in the secondary school. The secondary school has recently passed information down to primary heads (at their request) about assessment procedures at secondary level (possibly part of the primary school teacher's remit to coordinate assessment across the school consortium). There are also the Science posters which the Year 6 pupils produce. As a performing arts college the secondary invites primary children up to see performances, to participate in performances and also for special sports activities. Children from the primaries, for instance, come up to perform with the music department and pupils in the secondary. In these ways the child gains an understanding that the secondary is part of her life before she arrives there as a Year 7.

At the beginning of Year 7 the House system for lower school (Years 7 and 8) is vertical so that Year 8's interact with Year 7's helping them to arrive and settle in the school. The teaching assistant force is focussed on the first weeks of Year 7. Phone and personal contact with parents is encouraged and intense the first weeks of Year 7. The group tutors, support staff and nurturing group staff supply a lot of feedback about how each child is settling in. The nurture group serves at this point to absorb children who are having problems. A child goes into the nurture group only after contacting the parent and with the parent's support.

The first few weeks of Year 7 the tutor times are longer for the new Year 7's to enable the groups to get to know each other and the tutor and for team building. After the first three weeks tutor time becomes academic mentoring which takes place between tutor and individual or small groups of pupils. The student's situation is reviewed and discussed and goals are set. This process also feeds into the transition feedback process. If there are issues that need the Head of Year 7's input, that goes from the tutor to that Head. Any problems with transition can come through at this point. Monitoring is done through the dedicated tutor-pupil interview time, information about the child's settling in including the child's academic progress, homework and development of independent study, the child's extra-curricular activities and the home-school link; what parents might say. There is also the feedback to the primary school about the child.

Transition practices have been built up in the secondary school over the years. The teachers in charge of transition had not been on any courses, had any training, or were aware of any local or national changes that had impacted on the school's approach to transition. However, the interviewed teacher was about to go on a course in Nottingham about how a good school does transition the week following the interview. Senior staff is very supportive in providing time for transition practices. For instance the teachers have the time to visit up to 17 local primary schools two or three times if need be, prior to transition. In the future they are looking at having Year 7's buddy-up with Year 6 children in the primary schools for email exchanges about the school over the summer before Year 7. In addition they have tried out and will continue to take a Year 7 back to their old primary school when they visit the school after the KS2 national assessments.

Three particularly successful aspects of transition for this school, which certainly contributed to Sylvia's happy transition, were:

- The excellent links and information exchanges between the secondary and primary teachers,
- The smooth success of the transition mechanisms,
- The amount of time given over to transition by the secondary school.

In addition, what is good is the chance for teachers to go into primary schools and to see the children at work there. There should be more cross-visits between primary and secondary school teachers.

This teacher's wish for an improved transition is an administrative one. That would be to merge in some way all the paperwork that is duplicated, perhaps with the use of one form that could be used by all concerned: parents, school, secondary school, county, so that, for instance rather than collecting names and addresses four times, it would be done once. In addition, it would be interesting and could be useful to see what is going on in other primary-secondary transitions, i.e. professional exchanges between school groupings about transition.

Conclusion

Sylvia's secondary school is a Performing Arts College which has developed links with other schools and the community through its status. These contacts, which include involving primary school children in events at the secondary school, are additional ways in which the secondary school becomes familiar to children before they reach the stage of entering it. That the secondary world is accepted as a normal part of life, as a place which is not threatening or daunting but rather offers opportunities and is a world which the child feels equipped to master is the underlying ethos of Sylvia's two schools' transition programmes. Clearly the secondary school provides the resources to enable a great deal of teacher time to be spent on transition. In addition, the contact between schools at the consortium level facilitates a coherent transition between schools for a child. In this study not all consortia operated smoothly or to the interviewee's satisfaction, largely due to lack of time or willingness on the part of other members. The comprehensive exchanges of information, viewed as the key mechanism in a smooth transition were always facilitated by other inter-school structures which were in place.

Adam

Adam is a mixed-race Afro-Caribbean boy who reported that he had looked forward to a new school. He had moved house with his family after leaving Year 6. Both parents are skilled manual workers in a lower socio-economic grouping than Sylvia. He said that he may have had some worries about transition but he could not really remember what they were - *'maybe a bit about the work, that it might be a bit hard'*. He talks to his father about his worries or to his friends. He remembers the peer mentors at the beginning of Year 7 to whom he could have talked (but did not) but they are not around any more, he said. He is aware that he can talk to his teacher about his worries but he does not do so. In fact he does not have worries now. His family did not have and had not had any worries about his transition as far as he knew. In terms of school choice they had chosen the closest school to their new home.

He remembers the transition day at primary school when the teachers gave all the Year 6 pupils their own bag with *'lots of stuff in it'*. They had to move around the school as if they were going to secondary school. It was *'a kind of practice'* and they had different teachers for different lessons. He thought it was all helpful. He did not remember his primary teacher telling him about the work or homework at secondary school or about making friends. They did tell the pupils that they would have to behave *'well'* in Year 7.

Before he left his primary school he took friends' phone numbers to keep in touch with them, which he still does. He did not know anyone in the new school. No one else from his primary school came up with him but he thinks that was *'fine'*, accepting the circumstances. He came to

the Induction Day as a Year 6 so clearly his parents had been in touch with the new Local Authority and school and had received information from them. On that Induction Day he made a new friend by talking to the boy who was at one point standing next to him. Then on the first day of Year 7 in September he had already made a friend and they are still best friends. He thought that the Induction Day was helpful for getting to know the school, the buildings, his tutor group and where subject areas were in the school. At Induction Day the prefects helped them with finding their way around and he remembered doing PE and art on the Induction Day.

He could not remember if his parents came to the parents evening. They did get some information about the school - the introduction pack - before he started at the school and he remembers the sheet with photos of his form tutor and teachers on it. He found that helpful when he got to the school and recognised the teachers. He remembered that there was a school newsletter in the introduction pack; he may have gone through it, he said.

When he started in Year 7 he realised that there is more work in secondary school due to there being different lessons. *'The work is a bit harder than in primary school'*, he said. It was better staying in one class, he thought; that is the only thing better about Year 6 although he misses his friends from primary school.

His best subjects are Science, Drama and PE. He finds English and Mathematics harder than other lessons. He gets more work done in Drama, Art and Science and PE. He feels 'OK' about those subjects but he thinks he could do better in the harder lessons. He does not have an opinion about who is responsible for these discrepancies. Art and Mathematics are sometimes the same as in primary which he does not mind repeating. Music, Science and English are different from primary. He does not really think that he has a different way of learning since he came to secondary school.

According to Adam, it is better to have different teachers rather than just one all the time. It makes a difference in how he learns because different teachers ask for different types of work. He believes that he gets along with all his teachers and he has made good progress this year especially in Art, Science and Mathematics. He feels that he participates more in lessons than he did in primary school. He explained that this is the case because the teacher asks them *'more stuff'* and not because he was shy in primary school. *'It is just that in secondary you don't just copy from a book all the time'* and when he gets stuck he does not hesitate to put his hand up because the teachers help.

He is in a middle set for Mathematics and he is happy enough about this as it is challenging enough: *'not too hard, not too easy'*. He commented that other children probably feel fine about their set but the ones in lower sets may feel they should do better. He thought that French and finding your way around when you first come to the secondary school was hard. In addition, he thought that working with different teachers can be hard at the beginning because *'you don't know them and when you don't like the teacher'*. On the other hand, he cited a litany of things which were not hard about secondary school:

- Homework,
- Getting organised with work,
- Getting along with older pupils,
- Behaving properly because *'you get a warning'*,
- Making new friends.

Adam would offer the following advice to prospective pupils: *'don't be shy and make as much of secondary school as you can'*.

Transition at Adam's primary school

In contrast to Sylvia's small primary school with its largely white intake, Adam's is very large multi-ethnic, multi-cultural junior school located in a large city. The buildings are a Victorian brick complex of large two- and three-story structures with several spacious courtyards. The Year 6 alone has over 90 pupils and is a feeder school to twelve local secondary schools. The teacher in charge of transition teaches Year 6 and is the Key Stage 2 coordinator in charge of Years 5 and 6. The school was in special measures several years ago but is doing well now. The school is part of a Local Authority cross-phase project for Years 5 to 8 looking at the teaching and learning strategies and skills in the two Key Stages and considering how to bridge the gap between them.

Exchanges of information

Most of the actual transition procedures for pupils depend on the various secondary schools' transition practices and every school is different with regard to induction days, parents' evenings and any associated activities. For the primary school transition starts at the beginning of Year 6 when the school receives the forms from the Local Authority for parents to indicate their school choices. Around this time some secondary schools have parents evening at their schools to present their school to prospective pupils and parents. Some secondary head teachers ring up the primary school to arrange a dedicated time when they can come in and talk about transition and their school. Completed school choice forms must go back to the Local Authority in October. To help avoid incomplete or incorrectly filled-in forms, the Year 6 teachers have decided to help with them: parents are invited to contact the school if they have queries or to come in for help with the form. The teachers then collect in all the forms so that it is the school and not the parents that send them to the Local Authority. This puts in place a control mechanism to make sure that all forms have been filled in properly and get sent to the Authority. This is extremely important because an incomplete or incorrect form can mean that the child goes missing in the system. The child then arrives for the first day of Year 7 and no information has been exchanged about him or her between primary and secondary. This is seen by this primary teacher, as by all the teachers in the project as the major obstacle to a successful transition for a child.

In early October the primary school has a 'Meet the Year 6 Teacher' evening for families and transition is brought up in conjunction with descriptions about what will go on during the year. There is a more conventional parents evening near Christmas when the teachers can follow up on school choice forms that they have not seen. There is a parent questionnaire given out at each termly parents evening which has one or more items about the transition, tracking that the parents have done what they need to have done, e.g. forms or evenings at the secondary school. The parents fill out the questionnaire at the meeting and it is kept by the Year 6 teacher as a reference. It was at such a parents evening that the primary became aware of Adam's family moving house and of the secondary school he would be going to. The secondary school contacted the primary school for information about Adam.

The data that are requested from the various secondary schools are usually sent to them using a form. Some schools want to know the list of gifted and talented children; some (but not all) might ask about friends and about special contributions which the child has made to the primary and which the primary teacher considers important. The primary teacher often writes at the bottom of the form: '*Please phone me*' because there is always information which is best not written down but which the teacher feels the secondary school should know about.

The termly meetings with the parents keep them informed about transition. In addition, there is a KS2 national assessment meeting in March-April where they also talked a bit about transition. There are letters home and the school newsletters that also keep parents informed.

The major obstacle for this school in terms of assuring that all their pupils enjoy a happy transition resides in communication problems which can exist between schools. Different secondary schools do different things for transition and they do not hear from all schools. The secondary schools have an impact on what the primary school does or can do for a child's transition. For instance, not all children get a visit from their future schools and those can be the

more vulnerable children. She feels that a better coordination from the Local Authority would help avoid inconsistencies when dealing with the secondary schools and the way the secondary schools approach transition.

Primary school views and contributions

To help facilitate children's transition to secondary-type school work the school elects to follow the transition units for literacy and numeracy which the UK government produced several years ago. After the KS2 national assessments are over, the pupils do several weeks of work from the English and Mathematics units. She does not know whether the secondary schools follow this work up and *'would love'* to see what the secondary schools do. Her assessment of the units is that they get the pupils thinking in a different, more grown-up and independent way. The pupils love doing them and that the idea that their work might be sent to the secondary school. She feels that the work could show what a child is capable of doing. In addition, with the child's units in her hand, the secondary school teacher can say, *'I know you know this'*. She does not know whether this takes place.

The funding has run out from the government for those units but the school has in mind to continue with them, using the teaching and learning ideas from them, adapting them as part of the post-KS2 national assessment curriculum for the Year 6 pupils. They are going to do the literacy units even though they cannot guarantee direct continuity with the secondary schools. The cross-phase project may support this kind of curricular continuity which the teachers in the primary sector cannot control.

In Year 6 the pupils are eased toward secondary school type work and experience by being given homework and they discuss that in secondary school different teachers will give different types of homework and may not coordinate with each other the amount and the due-in date. They talk to the pupils about handling equipment and how to organise themselves and their work. The PSHE curriculum for the summer term at the primary school is about growing up, changes, behaviour, friends, safety outside the home for instance to and from school, and so forth. Parents might be worried about gangs but these issues are usually taken up by the secondary schools. They do talk with the children about these things, like what will they do when someone on the street says something derogatory or mocking to them.

They follow the Local Authority-supported/led junior citizen programme using materials which include *'becoming an adult'*. The school has a variety of specialists come in, e.g. a drugs expert, to tell them information which is not covered by the normal curriculum. The Year 6 children go to a safety awareness event where they have police-directed activities and role-plays and how to call 999. This has been going on for two years but she is not sure where the funding for that comes from, probably the Local Authority. Outside services also support vulnerable Year 6 children with transition in mind, particularly children who might start truanting in secondary school. There is a 'targeted pupil initiative' where 6 children are supported to improve their self-esteem and to overcome being dominated by other pupils. The six TPI children are identified by the primary school teachers. The school gets money to decide how to support these children, as well as a number of other variously targeted pupils, like a Mathematics group. Therefore, such groups are viewed as 'normal' by the children as a whole.

The Learning Support teacher does special transition workshops with the more vulnerable Year 6 children. They take these children up separately to the secondary to meet the secondary support teachers. These could be children with problems at home or children who might get lost, as judged by primary teachers' experience of them.

Last year, when Adam was in Year 6, the school organised a *'big Transition Day'* which they could carry out with the help of over £3,000 of funding from the London Challenge that they don't have this year. The children were all given a black bag with school items in it - a compass, dictionary, pens and pencils. To experience what secondary school is like they had a timetable and different lessons to go to where they were taught subjects which they did not normally have

by different teachers, some of whom they had not really met before. The pupils had to find their way around the entire school complex, go to registration, fill in a diary, etc. The children loved it, said the transition teacher, and that is why they applied for funding again this year. They have succeeded although it is not as much money as last year, and they will again have the Transition Day. In the mind of the primary teacher, the Transition Day is for the children to have a positive memory of the new procedures and to increase their sense of being capable of a successful transition to secondary.

During the Transition Day teachers noted issues that arose with different children. They then went through their notes from the day, evaluating all the aspects of it. In addition, the children had feedback forms to fill in, which were also reviewed.

The school conducts a leavers' assembly with a talk about a new start in Year 7 and they organise a leavers' barbecue. The primary school teacher explained that transition does not end until the child is firmly secure in secondary school. The primary school gets some feedback on this through the children who come back to visit them the first few weeks as a Year 7. Some come back at the end of Year 7 to talk to their teachers about their experiences during the year. From these conversations with past pupils the primary school can probe the success of the transition.

The teacher did not notice any particular time of year when the children are more anxious as she thinks that they are '*quite laid back*'. Nor she thought that there is a particular separate group of parents which is worried about transition. If any, SEN children and parents might be more nervous than others. Brand new EAL pupils are sometimes nervous about yet another change. The Learning mentor looks after these children, all identified by the child's primary teacher. In the past Irish traveller families were more protective of their children and more concerned about transition and the increased independence expected in secondary school. The school does get support from the Local Authority when they have more traveller families than they do at present.

The school has a semi-formal evaluation of their own transition practices at the beginning of the school year for Year 6 in preparation for the next transition group and activities. They collect feedback from parents throughout the year, get some informal feedback about how successful the transition has been through the children themselves and have contact with some secondary teachers in charge of transition (but not all). The teacher was involved in the Local Authority-organised group for transition which evaluated transition practices and tried to make links across schools. This transition group was a network - one secondary with several primary schools but has since been disbanded.

The school and this teacher view the key features of a good transition as making the children understand that it is not scary; it is a normal process. The key feature to monitor is how the individual child is feeling. They talk a lot about the children's future without scaring them. She is a senior member of staff who supports and leads all activities around transition. The school has no pressure from parents to handle transition differently.

Evaluation is informal, collated by her and discussed each year with her staff with the view to improve it each year. She has had some guidelines from the Local Authority in the past about good transition practice through the Education Action Zone; however, the Local Authority does not monitor the school's procedures. The school does not have a choice advisor and although they do have a home-school liaison officer, this person is not appointed specifically to work on transition.

When asked about any particular successes in her school's transition practices she reported the following:

- The Transition day when pupils behaved like secondary pupils while still in the comfortable primary setting, yet having the freedom of the school,

- Giving the children more and more autonomy throughout Year 6 and more responsibility around the school while behaving maturely; she sees this as a bridge from the restrictive, controlled primary context to less such in secondary,
- The visit to the secondary school (if one is arranged by the secondary).

Finally, she suggested the following issues for improving transition:

- Building better links between all secondary schools and the primary school,
- All secondary schools should visit the primary school to find out more about the school, the work and the pupils,
- Ensuring an on-going link throughout the year between the primary and secondary schools, including knowing the person to contact at the secondary school and receiving more information from the secondary schools,
- Securing money for sustaining the projects the school already has in place - most money goes to secondary and not primary schools.

The above points summarise the main communication and funding issues: however, according to the teacher, the issue which remains most pressing in transition, is communication.

Secondary school views and contributions

This large multi-ethnic, multi-racial school on the edge of a large metropolitan city has three main feeder schools plus children from a number of other primary schools. Adam did not come from any of these schools. The sole teacher in charge of transition is a deputy head with the titles of Coordinator for Key Stage 3 and Head of Learning for KS3. He coordinates the whole transition process which starts about Christmas time for the Year 6. A secondary school Transition Mentor visits all the feeder schools and she finds out about any child who is going to find the transition difficult. She then works with them, by going in to the primary school one day a week and mentoring them there. She will not know for certain who is coming to their school but she will have an idea about who may be joining and their needs. The input by the Transition Mentor increases once the secondary school has the names of the prospective pupils from the Local Authority. This includes bringing these more vulnerable children into the secondary school for a number of visits.

The secondary school instigates a transition project for physical education immediately after the KS2 national assessments have finished. Prior to these national assessments *'the Year 6 are untouchable'*. For the PE project Year 6 pupils come into the school for activities, team building tasks and challenges. They talk to the children about developing *'the secondary approach'* and about skills, health and fitness. It is a head start on secondary PSHE using their Sports College status. The children get to know the school; prefects are assigned to groups and the children get to meet some of the teachers.

During this period of time after the KS2 national assessments, the deputy head for transition goes into primary schools and talks to teachers about the individual pupils. He also observes lessons to get an idea about the pupils, their work and their relationships. He obtains a great deal of information from the teachers and the teaching assistants in the primary schools about the pupils. He also talks to the Year 6 pupils about the secondary school, expectations of behaviour and homework. These points, which may be a bit scary, are reiterated during the visits to secondary school as he feels that *'it is important to make it all clear'*. Year 7 pupils who were previously at the primary school go with him to talk to the Year 6 pupils about their secondary school experiences and to answer questions. From the primary teachers he receives estimated levels for English, Mathematics and Science, special needs information, statements, other personal, social and academic information about individual pupils, friendship groups, who to separate, in short, as much as the primary can offer him.

Outside agencies might be involved in a child's transition. If they are, he will also ask for additional information from them. The Transition Mentor provides him with a great deal of

information from her contacts and interaction with the primary schools. He uses all the information he has available to create balanced tutor groups which are largely in place by the Transition Evening for parents and children in July.

Parents receive the school choice forms and information from the Local Authority. Around Easter the secondary school has the list of prospective pupils. Then the school sends the parents a booklet with important dates, for example the Transition Evening. This is an open evening for parents and children which takes place at the end of Year 6 where the head teacher and deputy head (the interviewee) talk to the parents about the school and everything related to it, such as uniforms, behavioural expectations, etc. Year 7 pupils help with Transition Evening and Year 10 prefects also assist during the event. The parents get a tour of the school and meet their child's form tutor and the other children in the tutor group whilst they are having the opportunity to raise any questions. They also receive the school's welcome booklet which has '*everything they need to know*'. Over the summer the parents are '*bombarded*' with information from the school, including a sheet with a photo of their child's form tutor and other key teachers, and information about upcoming transition events. This sheet is personalised for special needs children. The purpose is always to increase familiarisation with the school and to ensure complete information is shared. Over the summer uniforms are sold at a shop in the school.

A week after the parents' Transition Evening the whole prospective Year 7 cohort comes in for a Transition Day. The purpose of this is to offer some taster lessons thus giving them an experience of the new routines, the routes between lessons and expected behaviour at secondary school. The school sends a bus to the further-away primary schools to collect the children and have booked taxis for some children to ensure their safe arrival on the day. For a second visit the children are brought to the secondary school to use the ICT facilities. This provides another opportunity to discuss and experience how the secondary school operates.

The school is involved in Web Quest which provides an ICT/English transition project that is started in primary and finished in secondary. Through this there is some continuity (for most children) in English and ICT with a few other elements that can be organised within other subject areas.

On the first day of Year 7 in September, this cohort arrives earlier than the rest of the school and spends most of the morning alone. They tour around the school again in their tutor groups, are shown where their classes are, go over fire drill so that they become even more familiarised with their new school. They receive a school map and they are taught how to use it during the tour. During the first week Year 7 goes into lunch early to get them used to canteen procedures and the card system. The purpose is to give the prospective and new pupils time and opportunities to become familiar with the secondary school and its practices so that they can feel comfortable and settle easier.

During the first few weeks of Year 7 the pupils have a drop-in room where they can talk to people about any worries, concerns or questions. In addition, there are two prefects per tutor group who serve as peer mentors to help out during sessions with the tutors. There is also a 'circle of friends' where pupils who seem to be having difficulty making friends are invited to come and meet others. The Transition Mentor helps here and she spends the Autumn Term visiting lessons and tutor groups to assist with the settling of pupils. She reports back to the deputy head.

The school has an 'access group' where slow learners can go for support. Pupils go in and out of this group as needed; they have more literacy and numeracy in their curriculum so they can catch up. The pupils in this group are reviewed on a half-termly basis and they are amalgamated into the other tutor groups by Easter. The access group is for pupils who are struggling academically. Behavioural problems are addressed through different mechanisms. No specific groups of pupils appear to be more anxious or needy during transition. The school's approach is always at the individual level. Pupils are not grouped, but rather tracked individually

as they settle in. No specific group of parents is identifiable as being particularly worried about transition. Parents, too, are approached individually and are free to ring the deputy head at any time.

The Transition period ends with the Year 7 parents evening in October called 'Achievers' evening' where parents meet with the child's tutor and discuss among other things how and if a child has settled in. Feedback about transition processes, success or difficulties are discussed and adjustments are made immediately, if needed.

The school considers the key features for a good transition to be the provision of and collection of as much as information as possible about:

- The pupil and his/her needs,
- SEN provision and anticipated future needs,
- Teaching approaches in the primary schools and the work done there so that it can be bridged into secondary,
- Continuing any support a child has had at primary level,
- Familiarising the children and their parents with the school and the way secondary works;
- Getting rid of any negative preconceptions that children might have.

The greatest obstacle facing the school in their attempt to ensure a happy transition is not knowing about a student who, for example arrives without being on the Local Authority list. This can occur for a number of reasons: Parents who do not fill in a choice form because they have other child/ren at the school and assume that they would be offered a place automatically; or parents who are new in the area and do not know about or have not followed the necessary processes.

Transition is evaluated through feedback from a parents questionnaire that is filled in at October tutor-parent evening. Parents are asked their opinions about the transition process. The deputy head collates the feedback and notes parents who may need to be contacted. Other members of staff are involved in the evaluation of transition during meetings where feedback about procedures and activities is given and ideas about possible improvements are discussed. Feedback about what is different in secondary school and whether pupils are settling in is also sought during PSHE lessons early in Year 7. The deputy head reported that children '*have it sussed pretty much straight away*'.

Academic as well as pastoral (settling in, behaviour) monitoring is on-going. The school tracks levels of achievement and the Year 7 '*dip*' is noticed. A discrepancy between what levels children have, their predicted levels and his interpretation of levels has been noted. The deputy head was not able to provide an explanation behind the identified discrepancy; as he wondered about '*what feeds into going 'backwards' or whether the students really are going backwards, or standing still*'.

Transition is not monitored by the Local Authority. The deputy head is responsible for monitoring it and he then reports to the school's leadership team. The school fully supports the time he and other staff members need for transition.

A particular success of the school's transition process is the PE project for the Year 6 pupils and the other outreach events and programmes which they carry out as a Sports College. For example, Year 10 and Year 11 pupils go into primary schools to teach PE, usually as a one-off experience. The school is keen to continue the project with Year 6 and would like to extend it to lower grades. Staff input into transition is also a strong point for the school. The work of the Transition Mentor and her staff who have very good links with primary staff ensure the consistent sharing of information about pupils in spite of changes of head teachers and other disruptions in schools they are involved with.

There are also other links between schools, for example primary school teachers come in to hear outside speakers, or advanced skills teachers go into the primary schools. Primary staff discuss with the deputy head and Year 7 tutors their work at primary school. Curriculum continuity is still on the agenda when teachers between phases meet up. In addition, the school puts forward courses, many of which are provided by outside organisations where teachers from both primary and secondary schools may meet up.

Home-school liaison and choice advisors are not involved in transition and transition procedures are separate from and not involved in any parenting guidance activities which might take place in the school.

The deputy head commented that for him the first and foremost important change with regards to transition would be the availability of more time for transition to occur. As most of transition is squeezed into the period following the KS2 national assessments he has to *'move fast'* thus putting tremendous pressure on the collection of information. In addition, there is limited time available to ensure children's contact with the secondary school and to achieve complete communication between all the schools involved. The weeks after the KS2 national assessments constitute a *'small window of time to contact everyone, visit all the schools, gather all the information necessary'*. In fact, he and most other teachers interviewed for this study, voiced their opinion that the KS2 national assessments *'are inhibiting of the whole process'*.

He would also like to invite primary teachers to a meeting with past pupils so they can obtain first-hand knowledge about whether and how pupils settle in. Another hope would be to have the ability to offer a residential trip in the first few weeks of Year 7 to build relationships within the tutor groups and across the Year. He was aware of one school that was able to do this by using Education Action Zone funds. Such a trip would extend transition where it cannot be extended in the weeks following KS2 national assessments.

Conclusion

Adam's secondary school was similar to several others in this study in that, as a specialist college it reaches out to primary schools and thus younger pupils could, to some extent, become familiar with the secondary world before they enter it. In addition, its specialist status appeared to facilitate its secondary school pupil's work with primary schools children. Furthermore, there were inter-school liaisons at other levels, if not an actual consortium to enable interaction between Key Stages.

Transition itself is a time-consuming and intense event for secondary schools because of its dual thrust. They must get to know the pupils well before they come to secondary school (information gathering at many levels and involving many people); and they must enable pupils to get to know the school all within a short period due to time restrictions imposed by the KS2 national assessment timetable. All schools in the project support the input and resources needed to achieve those two thrusts and would welcome an increased facilitation for this.

All teachers in the study at some point reported their wish for more cross-school teacher visits to enable them to get to know each other's school Key stage phases better. Clearly, this would have time and resource implications.

From the secondary school's perspective, a happy and smooth transition for a pupil into secondary school involves communication at two levels: gathering information about the pupils and offering information to the pupils.

Appendix 9: Overview of the data collection procedures

Piloting of survey questionnaires

The postal questionnaires and the interview schedules for the case studies were drawn up by the EPPE Research Team, reviewed, and agreed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Both the questionnaires for children and parents/guardians were piloted before the initial postage to the families. A total of 15 families were targeted and 11 sets of questionnaires were returned. Issues of clarity, timing, layout were addressed based on the responses.

The LA interviews

All six interviews with the local authority officials were carried out during March and April 2007. All participants gave their time generously. An informed consent was obtained and a transcript of the interview was shared and agreed as a true record with all involved.

The case studies

The interview schedules for the case studies were piloted with one child, one primary teacher and one ex-secondary teacher. A brief report of the child interview was made with the comment that two questions were difficult for the child to answer because he did not understand them. From the piloting the researcher in charge of the interviews developed sub-questions which were to be used as prompts, and in the case of the child interview, sought to clarify the problematic questions.

Once a child's name was drawn to participate in the study a set of procedures was followed in order to conduct the interviews. The child and parent were contacted to get their agreement to be involved and to be interviewed. The child and parent chose the site for the interview, either at home or in school. Letters to both child and parent followed which confirmed the arrangements. The primary and secondary schools were then contacted to find out who was in charge of transition and to arrange an interview time with that person. Letters were sent to the teachers involved confirming the arrangements and to the secondary school Head teacher. All teacher interviews took place in school as organised by the teacher except for two primary teacher interviews that were conducted over the phone, at their request. All interviews were carried out by the same researcher who has enhanced police clearance to work in schools. The interviews were audio-recorded, including the phone interviews, with the permission of each interviewee and signed consent forms were collected from the children.

Data collecting - Timetable

A total of 34 interviews were carried out between 25 May and 7 July 2007. Twelve pupils, 10 primary and 12 secondary teachers were interviewed.

Due to unavoidable delays in the implementation of the data collecting process the timing for the interviews was somewhat inopportune for the schools. From January primary schools were involved in pre-KS2 and KS2 national assessments followed by the Whitsun half-term holiday which meant that schools were not approachable until late May or June. Nearly all transition activities occur in the window of time following the Year 6 national assessments and before the begin of the summer holidays so Year 6 teachers and secondary teachers in charge of transition are extremely busy during this period. The two missing primary schools could not manage to arrange an interview time, in one school due to teacher illness. This missing information was not deemed detrimental to a comprehensive understanding of the transition processes of the two case children or of an understanding of what leads to a positive transition based on the project data.

Locations of interviews

Nine of the student interviews took place at their respective secondary school with the child's agreement. The interview time and place was arranged by the teacher in charge of transition.

The location was usually a conference room. Three student interviews were carried out in the student's home with the parent's permission.

All secondary and eight of the primary school teacher interviews took place at the respective school, either in a conference room, the staff room or the teacher's office. Two of the primary interviews were by telephone, one where the teacher was still in school and one where the teacher was at home during the Whitsun half-term holidays, as arranged by the teacher herself.

Duration and conduct of interviews

Interviews with the pupils lasted between 20 and 25 minutes. At the beginning of the interview the researcher explained the purpose and probable duration of the interview and asked the student to read and fill out the consent form and sign it. Two children sent in their consent form by post at a later date.

Teacher interviews lasted between 25 and 45 minutes with the average interview being 30 minutes long. The length depended very much on the teacher, how much he or she had to say and the length of the time slot available to them. School transition documents were supplied by the secondary school teachers. Primary schools generally had no transition documents, data either being handled electronically or documents being supplied by and returned to the secondary school. On the whole interviews were continuous and uninterrupted although some teacher interviews were briefly interrupted by the telephone, other teachers or pupils with queries.

Data handling and analysis procedures

The audio cassettes of the interviews were listened to and notes were taken amounting to 80 pages of approximately 40,000 words. The case studies were initially separated into their three constituent parts and details were collated according to student, primary school and secondary school. Coding was done according to the interview questions. Brief field notes, the websites of the schools and the school documentation where available provided additional sources of data. The commonalities of transition practice and experience were drawn out in order to bring the data together.

Appendix 10: More Technical Information About the Survey Findings

Table A10.1: Underlying dimensions of a successful transition using factor analysis (N=550 children)

Underlying dimensions of a successful transition	
	Loadings
Developing friendships and confidence (1=less, 2=same, 3=more)	
1. Compared with Y6, child's school friends (source: parents)	0.403
2. Compared with Y6, child's self-esteem (source: parents)	0.868
3. Compared with Y6, child's confidence (source: parents)	0.881
4. Compared with Y6, child's motivation (source: parents)	0.564
<i>Cronbach's alpha= 0.839; Median= 2.5, SD= 0.52, N= 506</i> <i>1-2.5 = "0" (n = 266) versus 2.75-3 = "1" (n = 240)</i>	
Settling in school life (1=not at all to 4= very well/much)	
1. Child settling in (source: parents)	0.643
2. Satisfaction with the process of transition (source: parents)	0.475
3. Not having felt concerned about child when first moved on (source: parents)	0.471
4. Not feeling concerned about child now (source: parents)	0.774
5. Child settling in (source: children)	0.365
<i>Cronbach's alpha= 0.747; Median= 3.6, SD= 0.49, N= 485</i> <i>1.2-3.4 = "0" (n= 239) versus 3.6-4 = "1" (n = 246)</i>	
Showing a growing interest in school and work (1=less, 2=same, 3=more)	
1. Compared with Y6, child's interest in school (source: parents)	0.797
2. Compared with Y6, child's interest in school work (source: parents)	0.772
<i>Cronbach's alpha= 0.824; Median= 2.5, SD=0.56, N= 504</i> <i>1-2.5 = "0" (n = 295) versus 3 = "1" (n = 209)</i>	
Getting used to new routines (1=very difficult to 4= very easy)	
1. Having many different teachers (source: children)	0.740
2. Changing classrooms between lessons (source: children)	0.665
3. Behaviour and discipline (source: children)	0.472
4. Not being with same pupils in all lessons (source: children)	0.507
<i>Cronbach's alpha= 0.700; Median= 3.00, SD= 0.54, N= 490</i> <i>1-3="0" (n = 271) versus 3.25-4 = "1" (n = 219)</i>	
Experiencing curriculum continuity (1=not at all to 4 = very)	
1. English in Y6 helped cope with Y7 work (source: children)	0.762
2. Maths in Y6 helped cope with Y7 work (source: children)	0.580
3. Sciences in Y6 helped cope with Y7 work (source: children)	0.663
<i>Cronbach's alpha= 0.702; Median= 3.00, SD= 0.59, N=516</i> <i>1-3="0" (n = 276) versus 3.3-4 = "1" (n= 240)</i>	

Table A10.2: Correlations between dimensions of a successful transition

		Developing friendships and confidence	Settling in school life	Showing a growing interest in school and work	Getting used to new routines	Experiencing curriculum continuity
Developing friendships and confidence	Pearson r	1	0.519***	0.553***	0.232**	0.149**
	N	506	482	500	456	479
Settling in school life	Pearson r		1	0.388***	0.306**	0.246**
	N		485	479	438	462
Showing a growing interest in school and work	Pearson r			1	0.219**	0.110*
	N			504	454	478
Getting used to new routines	Pearson r				1	0.182**
	N				490	468
Experiencing curriculum continuity	Pearson r					1
	N					516

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table A10.3: Models for the 5 aspects of a successful transition – Logistic regressions

Predictors	FIVE ASPECTS OF A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION									
	Developing new friendships and boosting self-esteem & confidence		Settling in school life so well that parents have no concerns		Showing growing interest in school and work		Finding very easy getting used to new routines		Experiencing curriculum continuity	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Socio-economic status of family ('High' as reference category)										
Low			-0.73	0.48*			-0.98	0.38**		
Medium			-0.57	0.56*			-0.17	0.85		
Presence of older sibling (s)										
Yes			0.77	2.16***						
Having an older sibling at same school										
Yes					0.42	1.52*				
Number of siblings ('Only child' as reference group)										
1-2 siblings									0.72	2.04**
3 siblings or more									0.68	1.97
Child health status ('No health problems' as reference category)										
Child has at least one health problem									0.53	1.69**
Child looked forward to going to secondary school										
Yes					0.41	1.50*				
Secondary school gave a lot of help for child to settle in										
Yes	0.49	1.63**	0.84	2.32***	0.47	1.60**	0.6	1.81**	0.58	1.78**
Extent to which child finds work on six subjects interesting										
Yes							0.66	1.93**	1.06	2.88***
Friends from primary school who also moved to same secondary school ('none or only a couple' as reference category)										
Most of them			0.84	2.32***						
Friendliness of children in child's class										
Yes							0.37	1.44*		
Friendliness of older children at child's school										
Yes	0.36	1.43*								
Parent is worrying about child adjusting to having new teachers										
Yes			-0.71	0.49**						
Parent is worrying about child's safety										
Yes			-1.23	0.29***						
Parent is worrying about child making new friends										
Yes			-1.2	0.30***						
Problems with bullying ('no' as reference category)										
Yes	-0.62	0.54**	-1.41	0.24***			-0.55	0.58*		
Constant	-0.8	0.45**	0.19	1.21	-0.99	0.37***	-2.31	0.10***	-3.41	0.03***
N of observations	475		434		485		417		448	
-2 Log likelihood	632.8		457.63		643.19		531.29		574.64	
Chi square of model	24.93***		143.69***		16.24***		43.85***		45.53***	
Nagelkerle R Square	0.07		0.38		0.04		0.13		0.13	

* significant at level $p \leq 0.05$ **significant at level $p \leq 0.01$ ***significant at level $p \leq 0.001$

Table A10.4: Models for significant correlates to successful transitions – Logistic regressions

Predictors	Significant Correlates to Successful Transitions											
	Child looked forward to going to secondary school		Most of friends moved on to the same school		Parent is worrying about child adjusting to different teachers		Parent is worrying about child's safety		Parent is worrying about child making new friends		Problems with bullying	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Socio-economic status of family ('High' as reference category)												
Low	0.61	1.84*					0.49	1.63				
Medium	0.26	1.3					0.62	1.85**				
Presence of older sibling (s)												
Yes	0.54	1.72**										
Sibling(s) at same school ('No' as reference category)												
Child has sibling(s) at same school							-0.97	0.38***	-0.62	0.54**		
Ethnicity ('Non white' as reference category)												
White			1.64	5.18***								
SEN status ('No' as reference category)												
Child has Special Educational Needs					0.56	1.74*					0.55	1.74*
Child health status ('No health problems' as reference category)												
Child has at least one health problem	0.41	1.51*					0.54	1.71**				
Constant	-0.51	0.60**	-0.89	0.41***	-1.42	0.24***	-1.18	0.31***	-0.91	0.40***	-1.07	0.34***
N of observations	541		538		439		478		482		436	
-2 Log likelihood	725.87		669.31		456.67		548.69		536.18		512.01	
Chi square of model	21.24***		54.69***		4.48*		32.90***		7.01**		4.89*	
Nagelkerle R Square	0.05		0.13		0.02		0.1		0.02		0.02	
* significant at level $p \leq 0.05$ **significant at level $p \leq 0.01$ ***significant at level $p \leq 0.001$												

Table A10.5: Models for significant correlates to successful transitions – Linear regressions

Predictors	Extent to which child finds work on six subjects interesting		Friendliness of children in child's class	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Ethnicity				
White	-0.17*	-0.15***		
Home Learning Environment (HLE) Index				
Constant			0.09***	0.15
	2.17***		1.92***	
	$F(1,523) = 12.06$ ***		$F(1,531) = 12.29$ ***	
R	0.15		0.15	
Adjusted R Square	0.02		0.02	

Glossary of terms

Child background factors Child background characteristics such as age, gender, or ethnicity.

Compositional effects The impact of peer group measures on a child's individual outcomes. For example, when the characteristics of children in a centre (measured as a centre level aggregated variable) show a significant relationship with outcomes at the individual child level, after controlling for the same variable at the individual level. For further details see Harker (2001).

Confidence intervals at the 95% level A range of values which can be expected to include the 'true' value in 95 out of 100 samples (i.e. if the calculation was repeated using 100 random samples).

Controlling for Several variables may influence an outcome and these variables may themselves be associated. Multilevel statistical analyses can calculate the influence of one variable upon an outcome having allowed for the effects of other variables. When this is done the net effect of a variable upon an outcome controlling for other variables can be established.

Correlation A correlation is a measure of statistical association that ranges from +1 to -1.

Family factors Examples of family factors are mother's qualifications, father's employment and family SES.

Factor scores Factor scores for each child were calculated by averaging the ratings given by the teacher / pre-school centre worker for the questions that form each factor.

Hierarchical nature of the data Data that clusters into pre-defined sub-groups or levels within a system (e.g. young children, pre-school centres, LEAs).

Home learning environment factors Measures derived from reports from parents (at interview) about what children do at home, for example, playing with numbers and letters, singing songs and nursery rhymes.

Multiple Disadvantage Based on three child variables, six parent variables, and one related to the home learning environment, which were considered 'risk' indicators when looked at in isolation. A child's 'multiple disadvantage' was calculated by summing the number of indicators the child was 'at risk' on.

Multiple regression A method of predicting outcome scores on the basis of the statistical relationship between observed outcome scores and one or more predictor variables.

Sampling profile / procedures The EPPE sample was constructed by:

- Five regions (six LEAs) randomly selected around the country, but being representative of urban, rural, inner city areas.
- Pre-schools from each of the 6 types of target provision (nursery classes, nursery schools, local authority day nurseries, private day nurseries, playgroups and integrated centres) randomly selected across the region.

Significance level Criteria for judging whether differences in scores between groups of children or centres might have arisen by chance. The most common criteria is the 95% level ($p < 0.05$) which can be expected to include the 'true' value in 95 out of 100 samples (i.e. the probability being one in twenty that a difference might have arisen by chance).

Social/behavioural development A child's ability to 'socialise' with other adults and children and their general behaviour to others.

Socio Economic Status (SES) Occupational information was collected by means of a parental interview when children were recruited to the study. The Office of Population Census and Surveys OPCS (1995) Classification of Occupations was used to classify mothers and fathers current employment into one of 8 groups: professional non-manual, intermediate non-manual, skilled non-manual, skilled manual, semi-skilled manual, unskilled manual, never worked and no response. Family SES was obtained by assigning the SES classification based on the parent with the highest occupational status.

Standard deviation (sd) A measure of the spread around the mean in a distribution of numerical scores. In a normal distribution, 68 percent of cases fall within one standard deviation of the mean and 95 percent of cases fall within two standard deviations.

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