



Strengthening transfers and transitions

Sustaining improvement, building capacity

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Acknowledgements

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Extract from Transforming Transfer. For children moving from primary to secondary school. © 2004 Education Leeds. Used with kind permission.

The National Strategies would like to thank the following local authorities (LAs) and schools whose action research underpins this report.

Suffolk LA

Bacton Community Middle School

Bacton Community Primary School

Beccles Middle School

Crawfords CEVCP School

Crowfoot Community Primary School

Mendlesham Primary School

Old Newton CEVCP School

Sir John Leman High School

The Albert Pye Primary School

The Freeman Primary School

Hampshire LA

Costello Technology College

Fairfields Primary School

Great Binfields Primary School

Rucstall Primary School

St Mary's C of E Junior School

Swindon LA

Churchfields School

Drove Primary School

Lainesmead Primary School

Lawn Primary School

Mountford Manor Primary School

Oaktree Nursery and Primary School

Leeds LA

Intake High School Arts College

Raynville Primary School

Whitecote Primary School

Wortley High School

Coventry LA

Whitley Abbey Community School

Howes Community Primary School

Manor Park Primary School

Gateshead LA

Heworth Grange Comprehensive School

Bill Quay Primary School

Brandling Primary School

Colegate Community Primary School

Lingey House Primary School

Roman Road Primary School

The Drive Community Primary School

Wardley Primary School

White Mere Community Primary School

Salford LA

Harrop Fold School

Bridgewater Primary School

Dukesgate Primary School

Hilton Lane Primary School

North Walkden Primary School

Peel Hall Primary School

St Andrew's Methodist Primary School

St Paul's (Heathside) C of E Primary School

St Paul's Peel C of E Primary School

Wharton Primary School

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Introduction

Maintaining rates of learning during transfers and transitions remains a challenge for many pupils. Galton et al. (1999) found that transfer to secondary school can result in a dip in motivation and achievement with up to 40 per cent of pupils failing to make expected progress during the year immediately following a change of school. In a subsequent review of evidence (2003) it was found that approximately 30 per cent of pupils made no progress in mathematics between Year 6 and Year 7 with the figure reaching approximately 50 per cent in English and science. Some children find transfer particularly challenging.

'Lack of connection and continuity between one phase of education and the next remains a major handicap to the progress of pupils from deprived backgrounds'

Social Class and Achievement: White British pupils from low-income backgrounds, Part 1: data and research, 2007¹

The *Strengthening transfers and transitions: partnerships for progress* document published in June 2008² is based on the work of seven LAs and 47 schools with a broad range of contexts. Their work demonstrated that where families of schools worked in partnership with a common vision and sense of shared responsibility, progress can be maintained and often accelerated following transfer. Their action research identified seven key messages.

1. Transfers and transitions are key drivers to raising standards.
2. Assessment for Learning (AfL) principles underpin progress across transfers and transitions.
3. Pupils need the confidence, understanding and skills to advance their own progress across transfer or transition.
4. Partnership working is essential for effective transfers and transitions for progress.
5. Effective partnerships are built on a common vision, shared responsibility and trust.
6. Partnership working requires mutual understanding through shared experiences and a common language.
7. Sustained collaboration requires structures and systems that support formal and ongoing links between partners.

This document revisits these LAs and families of schools to evaluate their continuing work and draws on their collective experiences and expertise.

Effective work to strengthen transfers and transitions through partnership working is notoriously difficult to sustain. The case studies outlined in this document indicate answers to the question:

How can LAs and schools sustain improvement and build capacity for accelerating pupils' progress through effective transfers and transitions?

Successful approaches support children to develop the confidence and skills to take responsibility for their learning while providing them with the conditions to demonstrate and build on that learning.

The best schools manage this within their institution through a strategic approach to raising standards rooted in whole-school improvement.

1. www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies

2. DCSF, Ref: 00083-2008BKT-EN (available at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies)

Achieving it within overlapping partnerships of schools throughout an LA is significantly more complex. It begins with the LA providing a foundation through their strategic approach to raising standards rooted in the Every Child Matters agenda.

Local implementation of the Every Child Matters agenda offers the opportunity to improve continuity and progression in learning...

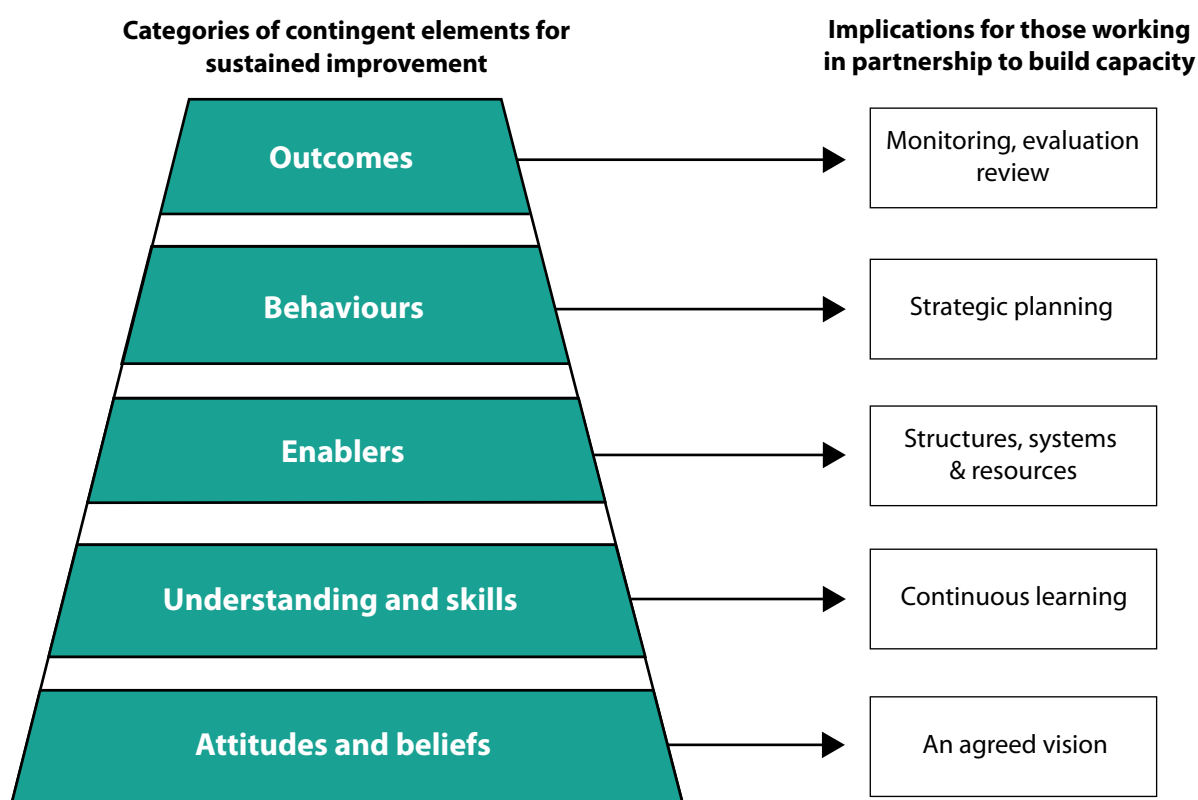
Our vision for 2020 is one in which all children and young people achieve higher standards and the gaps in average attainment between different groups of pupils are reduced. To realise this, all levels of the system must focus more strongly on the progress of all pupils...

2020 Vision: Report of the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group, 2006

Conclusions

Significant elements for sustaining improvement and building capacity

The first year of this action research identified what underpinned effective practice. The key objective of the second year has been to identify what conditions are necessary for impact to be sustained and improvement to be ongoing.



The long-term success of plans to strengthen transfers and transitions is reliant on elements that can be categorised as: outcomes, behaviours, enablers, understanding and skills, and attitudes and beliefs. Each layer's resilience is contingent on the one beneath it.

This has significant implications for those working in partnership to improve cross-phase progression. Building capacity for ongoing improvement can be achieved where shared values are established, skills and understanding are developed within a culture of continuous learning for all, improvement is facilitated through formal structures and systems with sufficient resources, everyone's contribution sits within an agreed strategic plan, and monitoring, evaluation and review inform ongoing developments.

Outcomes

Methods for collating and analysing evidence of impact should be established at the outset. Quantitative data is particularly important where it relates to pupil progress, attendance and behaviour. Qualitative information should include pupil, staff and parent voices and aim to uncover what has made the difference.

Solid data analysis is important for ongoing improvement as it informs future planning and provides evidence of investment value to potential partners.

Behaviours

Strengthening transfers and transitions is more than a collection of initiatives. To be sustained, improvement needs to be through a strategic plan with intended outcomes, responsibilities and expectations understood by all stakeholders.

Enablers

Systems and structures should support formal and ongoing links between partners. Time and resources invested to support the social, emotional, curricular and pedagogical aspects of transfer will contribute to improving attendance, behaviour and achievement.

Understanding and skills

Stakeholders need to develop the understanding and skills to work together to deliver effective transfers and transitions. This is a continuous process for all:

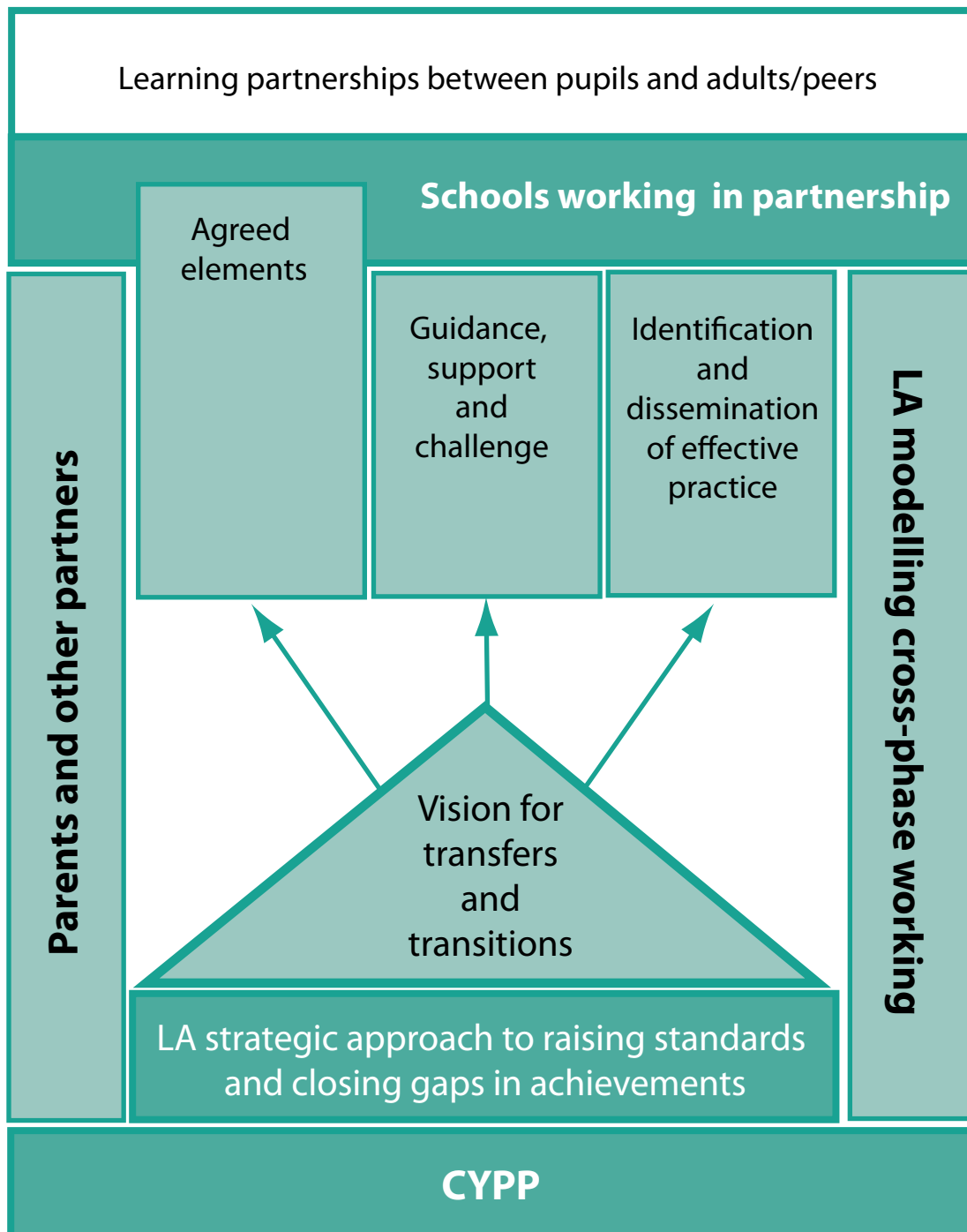
- where trust and respect between skilled practitioners is based on mutual understanding they can collaborate on to provide children with continuity of learning underpinned by AfL;
- where pupils build the appropriate confidence, understanding and skills with which they can advance their progress through learning partnerships with adults and their peers;
- where parents/carers feel empowered to support their child's learning so that they can become a powerful influence throughout the pupil's educational journey.

Attitudes and beliefs

Success starts with stakeholders recognising transfers and transitions as key drivers to raising standards and understanding that partnership working is essential. Ongoing impact is most likely where a common vision is based on shared values and a sense of joint responsibility. The overarching mindset frames the work in terms of the pupils' whole learning journey rather than a key stage or institution and partners recognise how their contribution fits in the bigger picture.

A strategic framework for partnership working at all levels

At its strongest, a strategy clearly illustrates how partnership working links high-level planning with outcomes for children.



Partnerships for learning between pupils, their peers and adults to promote the dialogue that underpins effective AfL and encourages children to have ownership and responsibility for their progress.

Partnership working within and between schools to plan for continuity and progression from one key stage to the next.

The agreement of key elements by stakeholders to facilitate continuity and progression, for example:

- an agreed protocol throughout the LA for data and information transfer;
- a common transfer day;
- the adoption of a transfer unit by all primary and secondary schools³ within a locality;
- alignment between departments within a secondary school to build on prior learning and skills development.

The LA's role within its partnership with schools is vital:

- through consultation it can provide a vision for transfers and transitions based on partnership, mutual professional esteem and the concept of a single learning journey;
- through dialogue and data analysis it can tailor its guidance, support and challenge to establish an effective route through education for every child;
- through celebrating the contribution of previous stages of the journey to later success it can develop a culture of shared responsibility for pupil progress from the start of formal education;
- through disseminating effective practice and facilitating opportunities for networking it can enable schools to support each other's improvement;
- through establishing systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing practice it can build an evidence base to inform planning.

Most importantly, the LA can lead by example through modelling cross-phase approaches within the school improvement service and the wider children's services; it can establish partnership working with parents, community groups and local/national organisations.

For this approach to have sustained impact and build capacity for ongoing improvement it needs to be integrated into the LA's wider strategy for raising attainment and closing gaps in achievement.

Effective transfers and transitions contribute significantly to the Every Child Matters outcomes and work to improve them should have its roots in the LA's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

Individual research projects

Each LA or family of schools has continued to strengthen their ability to support pupil progression through expanding or consolidating their work.

Partnership A

The functionality of a cross-phase pupil tracking system has been improved to support personalised learning and provision to address underachievement has been expanded.

Partnership B

The focus on the continuity of pedagogy with an emphasis on skills development in science has been embedded. Recent work has emphasised inclusion with a focus on provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Partnership C

The initial success in developing 'professional learners' who take greater responsibility for their learning has been sustained. The focus was mathematics. The work has been expanded into science and the role of the transition teacher has become a central element.

Partnership D

Cross-phase alignment within the LA has continued to strengthen along with the commitment to support further families of schools to develop their cross-phase collaboration. Partnership working within the initial family of schools has continued to grow.

Partnership E

The LA has identified five 'minimum requirements' for continuity of teaching and learning and has plans to enhance partnership working and strengthen consistency throughout the LA.

Partnership F

The LA has expanded its support to significantly more schools and is using the work to build capacity for all schools to improve. Its focus is continuity of teaching and learning through greater cross-phase understanding.

Partnership G

Partnership working between practitioners has become embedded as standard practice in the schools. The work to equip pupils with the confidence and skills to engage in dialogic learning has deepened and expanded to more schools.

Partnership H

The successful establishment of a foundation year in Year 7 with cross-phase target setting and teacher exchanges has been consolidated. The LA has built on this work with its pilot 'Building bridges: the transitional learning to learn approach'.

Suffolk

Two families of schools were involved in the initial action research. They each used their project focus as a vehicle for addressing the LA's research question:

Which generic principles underpin effective and sustainable transfer and transition throughout the learning journey?

The LA organised termly network conferences for the nine schools. Each conference included focused workshops, providing structures for professional dialogue, analysis of pupil and parent voice, and reflection on the generic principles that underpin effective practice.

The LA has published the conclusions from this work in *Acorn to Oak: successful transfer and transition in Suffolk* where the principles are used as a foundation for building essential structures for successful transfer and transition. These are identified as strategic planning, use of information and personalised teaching and learning.

The document explains how partnership working will support this approach and the role played by pupils, parents and carers, school staff and senior leaders.



3. Image of Oak Tree sourced from *Acorn to Oak: successful transfer and transition in Suffolk* © Suffolk County Council. Used with kind permission.

Suffolk – Partnership A

Background

A small pyramid within rural Suffolk; around 100 children transfer from the primary schools to the middle school at the end of Year 4. The headteachers have a strong sense of shared responsibility with a jointly funded development plan to improve the outcomes for all the children in their schools. Transfers and transitions are at the forefront of their action plan.

Summary of the first year of the project

A whole-school data system was developed, enabling reading, writing and mathematics to be tracked regularly against numeric targets and working at levels for both core and foundation subjects on transfer to middle school. The middle school has faith in the assessments of its partner primary schools and does not test pupils on entry.

A common cohort transfer book and close liaison ensure all information that might support planning for a child's move is shared between schools.

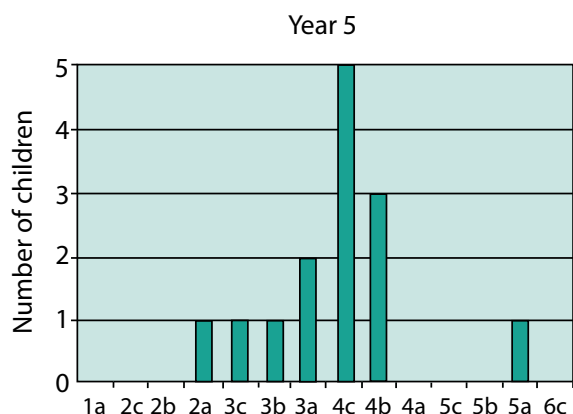
Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Accelerated progress in mathematics.
- Increased continuity of the curriculum and of teaching and learning.
- Increased consistency of assessment and curricular target setting between schools.
- Reduced pupil anxiety before and after transfer.
- Reduced parent/carer anxiety before and after transfer.

How has previous work been built upon?

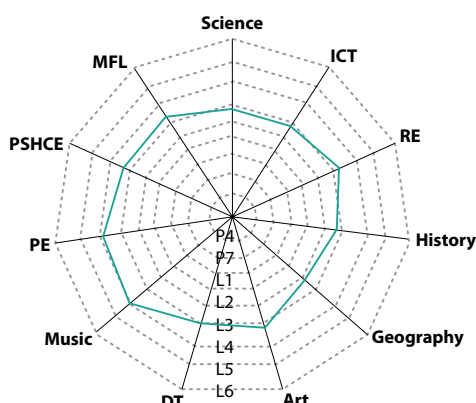
The tracking system makes use of termly data to produce a series of simple tables and charts at cohort and individual pupil level. Progress is monitored in relation to age-related expectations and a trajectory is plotted from Year 1. This allows teachers to see where pupils have made the most progress and where they have slowed. It is aligned with a complementary target-setting package that ensures continuity of curricular target setting between schools. The focus is on progress rather than threshold attainment.

The capacity to monitor progress has been enhanced in the year following the initial pilot, enabling staff to revise targets easily for children whose progress exceeds expectations. Its functionality has also been improved in relation to foundation subjects.



	Below expectations	Meeting expectations	Above expectations
Y5	21.43%	50.00%	28.57%
Boys	42.88%	28.57%	28.57%
Girls	0.00%	71.43%	28.57%

Attainment across the curriculum



The tracking system is passed to the middle school via electronic communication and is fed into the middle school system. Middle school staff access the information well in advance of September to inform curriculum planning and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Gifted and Talented (G&T) programmes. The data is seen as belonging to the pyramid rather than individual schools.

Plans are in place to support children whose rates of progress are at risk through transfer or are considered vulnerable. This includes schools working collaboratively to build self-esteem, improve organisation skills or reduce anxiety as need requires.

‘To facilitate his transfer, [middle school SEN coordinator] attended his statement review meeting, his PEP meetings and a “professionals” meeting with social workers, parents, etc. The child had a smooth transfer to [the middle school] and because of [SEN coordinator’s] knowledge of the child’s background, appropriate support was put in place for him.’

(First school headteacher)

The commitment to supporting a child’s progress throughout their learning journey has prompted the start of a planning process aimed at aligning transfer practices from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4.

Evidence

Recent Ofsted inspections have recognised the strength of this work on both sides of the transfer:

Ofsted report – First school, September 2008

- *‘The headteacher and staff have established a comprehensive tracking mechanism to use assessment information very effectively to check carefully on the progress of every pupil.’*
- *‘They frequently review this information to identify any areas of under-performance and target extra support or extension work to ensure that all achieve exceptionally well and fulfill their potential.’*
- *‘They liaise closely with the pre-school to know exactly what each child knows and understands before starting in the Reception class.’*

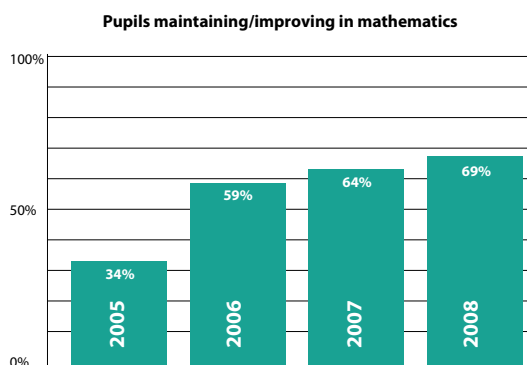
Ofsted report – Middle school, June 2008

- *‘Excellent systems have been developed to provide detailed information on pupils’ progress and establish challenging targets.’*
- *‘Excellent links with other schools enable staff to work in different settings and ensure smooth transition for pupils.’*

The schools have continued to measure impact on pupil performance following transfer.

The percentage of pupils maintaining or improving their attainment in mathematics between the end of Year 4 and October in Year 5 has continued to increase year on year.

'There is unequivocal agreement that the tracking data we are sent is extremely useful and gives a much better picture than a simple end of Year 4 grade...greater confidence in the data.' (Middle school headteacher)



What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?

Trust is a vital component for ensuring transfer and transition is effective across the pyramid. The middle school staff demonstrate professional trust in the judgements and assessments made by the first school staff and that data becomes the baseline for on-entry provision into middle school.

Mutual respect is incredibly important. First schools do not 'prepare' children for life at middle school, both settings are part of the children's continuing learning journey and, in this pyramid, are seen as such. Mutual respect enables conversations about cohorts to take place in a challenging and constructive way – the children's success is the goal.

Regularity. The schools meet throughout the year on various levels; from core subject coordinators to liaison group meetings between Year 4 and Year 5 staff. Conversations on improvement are a natural part of the relationship.

'As headteachers we meet at least twice a term. These meetings take a very high profile across our pyramid. We take a whole day for each meeting and they have one purpose: to further develop our provision for all the children of our pyramid.' (Primary school headteacher)

Suffolk – Partnership B

Background

The middle school has two main partner primary schools and one main partner high school. It operates a County Specialist Support Centre for children with moderate learning difficulties. The partnership working has expanded in the town, with stronger links with the high school and the emphasis being less on individual projects and more on the development of a culture of shared responsibility among schools for all the children in the area.

Summary of the first year of the project

Prior to the initial action research project systems had been established to support the social side of transfer. The focus of the project was to explore how greater understanding of each school's approaches to learning could support skills development and accelerate progress. Collaborative planning for learning in science was at the heart of the initiative.

Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Accelerated progress in science.
- Accelerated progression in pupils' development of science-related skills.
- Increased continuity of curriculum and of teaching and learning.
- Increased levels of professional understanding.
- Shared confidence in teacher assessments across all schools.

How has previous work been built upon?

Joint planning and delivery by middle and primary teachers of a transition unit exploring animal habitats has become an established part of preparing for pupils' transfer. It increases mutual understanding of approaches to teaching and learning and cements the shared responsibility for their progress. The pupils from the primary schools are merged so they can be taught in their future Year 5 classes. Teachers are able to see how they interact and learn together.

Pupil voice has influenced further developments and there is an increasing focus on continuity of skills development rather than curriculum content. Children indicated that they wanted to use their prior learning to tackle new topics rather than continue with one started in primary school. The focus is now to provide them with the challenges that allow them to demonstrate their skills and abilities in fresh areas of learning.

At the heart of the approach is to develop children's overall capacity to engender their own progress. This has been achieved through the schools' mutual trust and their faith in pupils' ability to demonstrate responsibility when given the chance. The middle school selected 25 children based on information given by the primary schools to lead on improving school energy efficiency.⁴ The children ran an assembly, created an action plan which they presented to the headteacher and governors, produced a newsletter and monitored energy use. There was an 11 per cent saving in energy in the focus week.

Recent work to improve transfer for all children has included provision for children with ASD. A parent and pupil were interviewed to identify what made the difference for them with regard to transfer from primary to middle school.

4. As part of a project run by The National Trust, 'Energy busters' (www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Parent	Child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Telephone contact and meetings with pastoral and inclusion staff. ● Transfer evening for parents of Year 4. ● Visits by middle school staff to primary school. ● Opportunities for her child to get to know teachers and peers before transfer – especially through the science project and transfer day where children spend time in their Year 5 classes. ● Photographs of the middle school. ● The positive attitude of school staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visiting the middle school with his parents to have a look around. ● Having science lessons with children who would be in his class. ● Middle school teachers coming to his primary school. ● Seeing pictures of the middle school before coming. <p>He viewed meeting his new teachers and classmates as one of the most important parts of the transfer, saying he made 'new friends' before the summer holidays. He identified that more maps would have helped as he was worried he would get lost.</p>

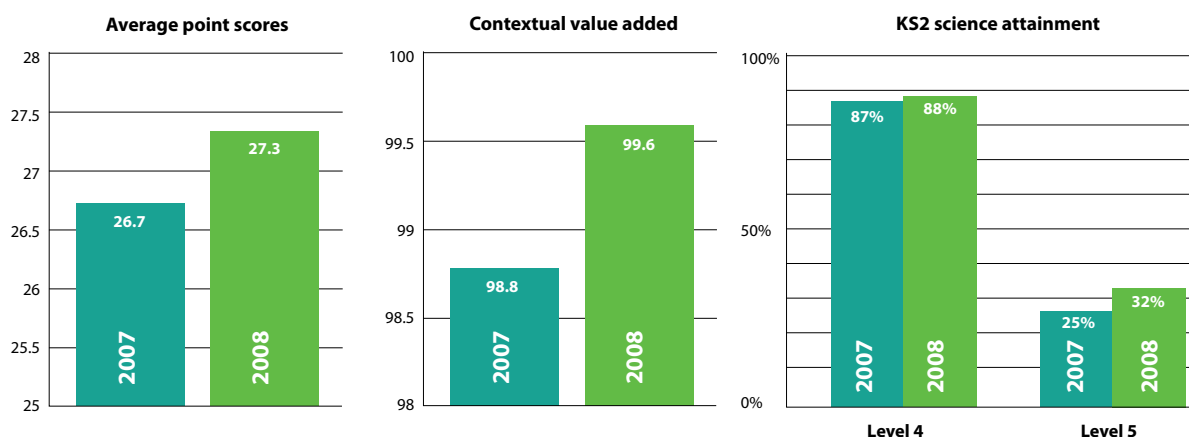
The nature of meetings between local primary, middle and high schools has evolved. Discussions are framed in terms of education within the locality rather than in terms of individual schools. They are exploring how differences in structures between schools impacts on learning across phases and strengthening the collegiate response to developments in education.

Early in 2008, in preparation for September, the middle schools and high schools came together to look at the needs of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum. This built on a history of middle schools' alignment of curriculum content and moved towards an agreement of how skills development will be supported in the middle schools and on into the high schools.

Evidence

Evidence of ongoing impact for the original cohort involved in the project is impressive when Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results are compared with the previous cohort.

The success of the project has been repeated with the second cohort to benefit from the jointly planned and delivered unit. A total of 72 per cent of pupils made at least one sub level progress between the end of Year 4 and the end-of-unit test in Year 5.



The inclusion work has also shown impact. The parent interviewed as part of the work to strengthen transfer for children with ASD rated the experience as 9 on a scale of 1–10 (1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being completely satisfied). The pupil rated his experience as 10 and said that apart from a few 'silly boys' he likes school. He said that he doesn't cry as much any more.

What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?

Links between schools are most effective where headteachers make their high esteem for colleagues from different schools explicit and invest the appropriate time and resources.

A child's capacity to learn is at the centre of his or her progress. The educational environment should be as concerned with *how* a child learns as it is with *what* he or she learns. It must support children's capacity to engage with their own strategies for learning and making best use of their environment and what it offers.

It is essential that all stakeholders have an opportunity to influence planning. Only through providing regular opportunities for parent voice do you get the necessary strength of support and community cohesion.

With open and supportive dialogue, the expectation that middle school is inevitably more remote from parents than primary school has been broken. It is easier to maintain a relationship with parents than establish one so the family of schools work together to provide continuity for parents as well as pupils.

In all, 93 per cent of parents attended the last parent consultation evening at the middle school.

Ongoing improvement requires a culture of learning for all where staff are open to innovation and where the reasons for successes are pinned down and built upon in future planning.

Hampshire – Partnership C

Background

The secondary school is an 11–16 mixed comprehensive with Technology status and approximately 1000 pupils on roll. The four partner primaries involved in this project provide 60 per cent of its intake and the remaining 40 per cent are from approximately 20 other primary schools.

Summary of the first year of the project

The original motivation was to have closer links with primary partners in developing a structured programme for transfer. The aim was to create a situation where the primary model/mindset was recognised in terms of how pupils' learning was managed and to use learning styles of pupils as a springboard for their continued independent learning and accelerating progress across Key Stages 2 and 3.

- Structured observations were undertaken to determine the similarities and differences between Year 6 and Year 7 lessons.
- Pupils and teachers completed a questionnaire to identify their preferred learning styles and this was used to stimulate pupil-teacher dialogue and increase pupils' awareness that they have the ability to expand their learning style.
- 'Active learning' lessons were introduced to develop pupils' capacity to learn.
- A transition teacher was appointed to provide vulnerable Year 7 pupils with lessons closer to their primary experience.
- In mathematics – equipment used in Year 6 and Year 7 was standardised and an Advanced Skills Teacher was employed to strengthen continuity of teaching and learning with an emphasis on pupils' understanding process.
- Cross-phase partnership extended beyond transfer with Year 6 teachers being invited to the secondary school to discuss their Year 7 work with pupils and give feedback to Year 7 teachers regarding pupils' standards and rates of progress.

Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Accelerated progress in mathematics.
- Increased pupil engagement in learning.
- Increased pupil responsibility for their own learning.
- Increased continuity of curriculum and teaching and learning.
- Accelerated progress in science.







How has previous work been built upon?

- Innovation and investment in this area has continued.
- The number of hours given for secondary school staff to work in partner primary schools has increased since February 2008: three hours per week has risen to seven and a half hours per week.
- Partnership has expanded to include another primary school; not a designated 'feeder', but one from which the secondary school receive approximately 60 per cent of their Year 6 cohort.
- The focus has extended to science as well as mathematics.

- More detailed profiling of learning/behavioural needs in Year 6 including tracking through behaviour logs, identification of learning needs (e.g. where the child has a statement, an Inclusion Partnership Agreement⁵ or is on the G&T register).
- Work to ensure a consistent approach with regard to learning styles and how this impacts the learning across the curriculum. Starting this in Year 6 and continuing in the first term of Year 7 is making the Year 7 pupils more aware of how to approach their learning. This influences teaching and learning throughout the curriculum and has been embedded within the Year 7 personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum scheme of work, consolidating and reinforcing the learning styles work done with the pupils in their Year 6.
- An extra one-hour 'booster' literacy lesson was included this year to support those pupils struggling. It was identified that they go from five to six hours per week at the end of Key Stage 2, to three hours at Key Stage 3. This extra lesson targets reading/phonics/spelling recovery.
- The addition of a transition 'portal' as part of the whole-school virtual learning environment (VLE) initiative. This portal gives primary pupils access to college information and includes video links, site maps and a question and answer forum. This will include links for parents and Year 6 teachers next academic year.
- Student consultation has increased to support the ongoing evaluation and review of transfer arrangements.
- The secondary school now starts with Year 7 when it comes to whole-school timetabling. The Year 7 curriculum is given equal status to Year 11. Ensuring provision is appropriate for each child from their first year of secondary school will result in raised attainment at GCSE.
- A specific PSHE transfer unit, starting in Year 6 and finishing in Year 7 allows pupils to discuss issues and strategies to support transfer and induction.

Evidence

Using the National Strategies' self-evaluation diagnostic toolkit, the following progress has been made in the second year of action research.

	Focusing	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
Use of data and information				
Targeting supporting and intervention				
Continuity of curriculum, teaching and learning				

Evidence of accelerated progress has been maintained in mathematics. The average progress over Year 7 in terms of points score remains significantly better than the year before the changes were introduced.

5. An alternative to some statutory assessments that records information about a child's strengths and needs, arrangements already in place to meet those needs and identifies what new arrangements might be required.

Accelerated progress in mathematics

A pupil survey reflects the importance of this work to their experience of Year 7.

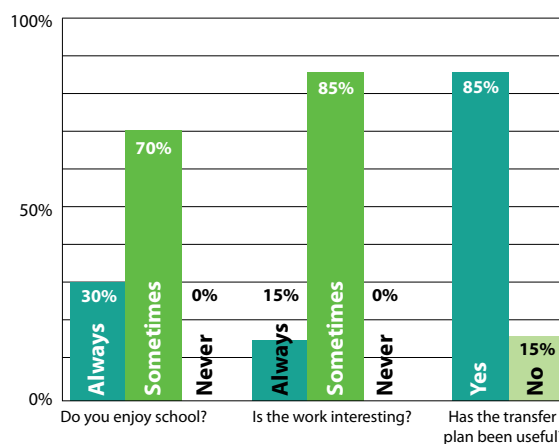
Comments from pupils reinforce this.

'You get to have the confidence to go to different lessons and you get to have different teachers. So now I am really enjoying the school, so don't worry!'
(Year 7 girl)

'I have one piece of advice – pay attention to the tour and then you will know your classrooms. Remember never be nervous as you will get through it. Just have fun!' (Year 7 girl)

Although mathematics was the original focus of the initial project, similar work was started in science where improvements in progress can also be measured. By the end of December in 2006 Year 7 pupils had made an average of 1.95 points progress; in 2008 the average was 2.64 points.

Individual pupils have also benefited: one child at risk of completely disengaging from education at transfer has improved attendance from 50 per cent in Year 6 to 61 per cent in Year 7. Working with his primary school the secondary school was able to build a strong team to support his needs.

Pupil survey**What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?**

There are a number of elements needed for sustainable improvement:

- a relationship of trust between the leadership teams at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3;
- the development of a shared vision for learners over Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3;
- professional dialogue between practitioners leading to a greater shared understanding of the differences and similarities;
- a willingness to collaborate with innovation.

Strengthening transfer is not a job that can be 'done'. Formal, focused and ongoing partnership is essential. The agenda for the next meeting⁶ of schools includes planning for further collaboration with regard to:

- developing learners;
- extended schools;
- provision for pupils with SEN;
- improving the use of the VLE to support pupil transfer.

Initial stages of this work can be teacher/personality reliant but it is sustainable where there are structures and resources to support cross-phase joint planning and implementation to:

- improve subject area progression;
- develop 'professional learners';
- support children's development of social and emotional resilience and competence.

Swindon – Partnership D

Background

The primary and secondary strategy managers work closely together and align their planning for progression. The value of the initial project has prompted the LA to provide further funding to expand the action research into other families of schools. Practitioners involved in the original project have shared their experiences with these schools and a teacher involved in the work has been appointed as a lead teacher for transfer within the LA.

Summary of the first year of the project

The initial family of schools aimed to accelerate progression in two ways:

- jointly planning an English transfer project with an emphasis on aligning pedagogical approaches and ensuring Year 7 teachers had appropriate expectations for each child;
- supporting vulnerable underachievers in Year 7 within a group where they are taught the majority of subjects by one teacher, ensuring continuity and cross-curricular links (the 'Discovery pathways' group).

Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Accelerated progress in English.
- Reduction in pupil anxiety before and after transfer.
- Increased continuity of curriculum and of teaching and learning.
- Parental satisfaction with transfer arrangements.
- Increased consistency of assessment and target setting between schools.
- Accelerated progress for underachieving pupils.

How has previous work been built upon?

LA level

The LA sees strengthening transfers and transitions as a key lever for raising standards and is committed to integrating it into its broader strategic planning.

'We no longer see transfers and transitions work as a collection of individual projects but as part of a strategic approach to accelerating pupil progress. Partnership working between schools improves continuity of learning and supports professional development through sharing attitudes, knowledge and skills.' (Secondary Strategy Manager)

Liaison between LA primary and secondary strategy managers has increased significantly since the start of the project.

'We have found that the more we work together, the more we recognise our shared aims and appreciate each others' expertise. It is important that we model the partnership we expect between schools. All letters to schools relating to transfers and transitions are now signed by both of us.' (Primary strategy manager)

Shared vision and joint planning are seen as vital to success. The primary and secondary strategy managers will run a cross-phase development day in May 2009. It will be attended by:

- primary and secondary school improvement partners;
- Early Years, primary and secondary advisory teams;
- the principal adviser.

Its focus is to identify the most effective interventions for raising standards, explore the implications for cross-phase and cross-programme working and plan for implementation.

Schools level

Pedagogy has continued to be a key focus and there is an increasing alignment of use of language across both phases. The schools have refined their use of cross-phase, personalised targets based on descriptions of competency from Ros Wilson’s writing levels and those from Assessing Pupils’ Progress (APP).

The partnership has continued to strengthen as:

- the content and delivery of the transfer unit has been jointly reviewed and improved;
- moderation has been expanded to include pupils’ work from Year 6 and Year 7 – this has dispelled any perception that Year 6 teachers mark more leniently;
- joint planning is now informed by Year 7 teachers’ observations of Year 6 teachers delivering the unit.

The teacher leading ‘Discovery pathways’ has increased her cross-phase work and aligned curriculum provision with the English project to ensure mutual reinforcement. The emphasis is on skills development and building pupils’ capacity to learn.

Pupil voice has grown, surveys have been refined and are now used pre-project, at the end of the Year 6 element and at the end of the Year 7 element of the project.





There is also a ‘celebration’ in December where pupils have the opportunity to share their Year 7 work with their Year 6 teachers. As well as being extremely motivating for the children, it also informs discussions between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers.

An important contributor to the success of the project has been the support given by senior leadership teams (SLTs). They have recognised the value of the work and its contribution to pupils reaching their potential.

The action research work is set within a strong transfer package within and between the schools. Social, emotional, academic and administrative considerations inform holistic planning.

Evidence

Using the National Strategies’ self-evaluation diagnostic toolkit, the following progress has been made in the second year of the action research.

	Focusing	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
Use of data and information				
Targeting supporting and intervention				
School ethos and climate for learning				
Parent partnerships				

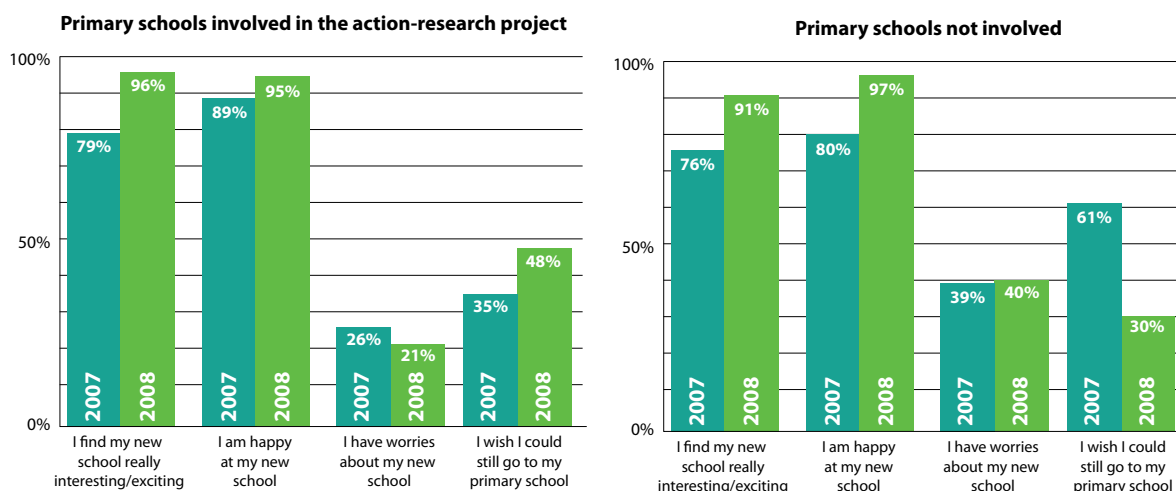
In 2006 (before the action research project) 73 per cent of pupils maintained or improved attainment in English by December in Year 7. In 2008 (after the second year of the action-research project) this had increased to 85 per cent.

In 2006 61 per cent of pupils supported through ‘Discovery pathways’ maintained or improved attainment in English by December in Year 7. In 2008 this had increased to 95 per cent.

The secondary school repeated a pupil survey undertaken in the first year of the action research.⁷ The feedback indicates that continuing work to support transfer has delivered even more positive responses in relation to children’s engagement with their new school context. The responses to the third and fourth questions are particularly interesting. The pupils from schools involved in the project are overwhelmingly

7. Minor changes were made to the wording of questions in the follow-up survey

interested in and happy at school with half as many reporting worries, when compared to pupils from schools outside the work; and yet significantly more appear to miss their primary school.



Parents have continued to be impressed with arrangements and how they have developed.

	2007	2008
(Of parents who already had a child at the secondary school) felt the new arrangements were an improvement	89%	97%
Thought the 'boy' project had been useful for their child's transfer	96%	99%
Knew where their child was in their learning	94%	86%
Knew which areas their child needed to focus on next	82%	79%
Happy with information about secondary school	100%	100%
Felt able to share their concerns about transfer	99%	99%

In direct response to this survey the secondary school introduced a 'Curriculum information evening' in the spring term. Teachers from core subjects show what and, critically, how children are learning. This is followed by time for discussion and aims to empower parents to support their children with learning at home.

What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?

LA level

Key ingredients are:

- support from senior leaders within the LA;
- shared understanding and commitment;
- an investment of appropriate resources;
- a mindset that aims at increasing pupils' progress throughout their education and not just within particular key stages.

'It is not about promoting your own area but about working together for the benefit of every child.' (Primary strategy manager)

School level

Building strong relationships between staff has been key to developing the professional understanding and mutual respect necessary for this kind of work.

It is significant that, until this project, Year 6 teachers across the five primary schools did not meet to discuss pedagogy. Capacity for improvement is greatly enhanced by partnerships within the key stages as well as between them.

It is important to ensure that skills and understanding are transferred when staffing changes. Adults that are new to the work should bypass the misconceptions and cultural barriers that needed to be overcome in the early stages.

Leeds – Partnership E

Background

The LA recognises that continuity of educational provision is crucial for progression. It is supporting schools to work together in planning for a positive experience for children, parents and teachers. Since the beginning of this project, the emphasis has evolved from creating a bridge between educational establishments to developing a continuous path for learning.

Summary of the first year of the project

The project involved two secondary schools and 16 partner primary schools. For the action research project there was a focus on two of the primary schools. The schools aimed to accelerate progress by developing shared understanding of effective:

- learning and teaching;
- use of pupil tracking and AfL;
- conditions for learning.

Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Increased rates of pupil attendance.
- Increased continuity of pedagogy between Year 6 and Year 7.
- Increased numbers of schools working in partnership.
- Stronger parent partnerships.

How has previous work been built upon?

LA level

The LA invested £8000 in the first year of this work to support schools. They followed this with £16,000 in the second year and £15,000 in the third year. The number of schools supported in this way has more than quadrupled.

It is expected that the funding will facilitate the early stages of a process that will lead to schools embedding the work within their overall strategies for accelerating progress. Participating schools are expected to strengthen links with each other and develop practice that can be shared. Teacher exchange is a compulsory element.

There is an emphasis on self-evaluation with schools using the National Strategies' self-evaluation toolkit. It is as much to do with recognising and celebrating existing practice as identifying areas for improvement.

The LA remains aware of the foci of different families of schools to ensure that it supports a spread of areas related to transfer (e.g. vulnerable children, core subjects, foundation subjects, personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS), data transfer, parent partnerships). The different projects inform LA planning through the transfer strategy group.⁸ The LA's overview gives it the perspective to identify where barriers can be removed and where enablers can be provided (e.g. the LA is developing a cross-phase tracking tool to support early transfer of data between primary schools and secondary schools.)⁹

The rationale behind the selection of schools has been an important element of the LA strategy.

2006–07	Schools already had strong links with each other.	The LA wanted to ensure that partnership working was at the core of the work.
2007–08	Families of schools which had demonstrated strength in this area.	The families of schools produced materials to support progression across transfer. These were then shared with all the schools in the localities.
2008–09	The LA invited bids from families of schools.	A criterion for acceptance was that the families would produce something that can be shared with other schools and a willingness to share their experiences.

8. A policy steering group made up of LA senior leaders, LA fieldforce members and school senior leaders

9. APPEL – Assessing Pupil Progress Education Leeds

The LA approach supports the priorities of individual families of schools while using the work to build the capacity of all schools to improve.

School level

Developments at school level illustrate the continued high profile given to cross-phase progression.

Secondary school teachers have been visiting primary school lessons to get a better understanding of how the children learn and have now been given further opportunities to consider what pupils are capable of. One secondary school dedicated a staff training day to progression planning. This included teachers taking a close look at pupils' Year 6 output. Teacher assessments, National Curriculum test papers and books were scrutinised to inform planning.

'We will raise our game in Year 7 now we know what they can do in Year 6' (Year 7 teacher)

Year 7 teachers' better understanding of learning and teaching in primary schools has made a significant contribution to improving Key Stage 3 curriculum and pedagogy. It is now recognised that primary school teachers would benefit from a better understanding of each others' approaches and next September Year 6 teachers will visit the secondary school to view all the Year 6 books sent by primary schools. This will give the teachers an opportunity to compare output from different primary schools and discuss its implications with primary colleagues. The teachers will then shadow a Year 7 pupil for the afternoon.

Professional dialogue between teachers and the growing appreciation of each others' learning environments has been so powerful that there are moves to encourage colleagues that don't teach Year 7 to visit primary schools and lead lessons.

One secondary school has employed two primary trained teachers to teach in Year 7 and this has impacted on practice, planning and the learning environment. Lessons look and feel more like the primary experience with appropriate levels of challenge. The changes have positively influenced the attitudes and motivation of pupils and colleagues.

There is an emphasis on establishing parent-teacher partnerships as soon as possible.

The school has introduced an event in July where parents are encouraged to visit the school for discussions with subject teachers while their children spend time with their future form tutors. The primary trained teachers' experience and expertise have contributed to a greater understanding of parents' needs and perspectives as their children move from Year 6 to Year 7.

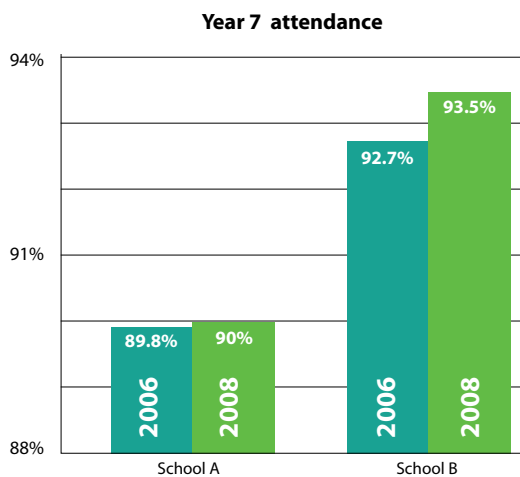
Evidence

A recent Ofsted report (May 2008) for one of the secondary schools has recognised the impact of this work on teaching and learning:

'The innovative curriculum in Key Stage 3 builds on good practice from the arts subjects and the skills of two talented primary school teachers.'

'... the specialist subjects have spearheaded improvements in Year 7 by introducing more creative approaches to teaching.'

'A more innovative curriculum in Key Stage 3 is better meeting the needs of students. In Years 7 and 8 students now undertake work designed to improve their learning skills and social and emotional development.'



Both of the original secondary schools have seen increased rates of attendance in Year 7 since the implementation of this work.

A recent focus of one secondary school has been to use the stronger links with partner primary schools to ensure that there is early and appropriate provision for individual children. The school has identified this as making a significant contribution to the reduction in the fixed-term exclusions of Year 7 pupils. These have dropped from 12 pupils in 2007–08 to 3 in 2008–09.

What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?

The resilience of improvement will depend on the levels of commitment, the quality of strategic planning and the strength of shared responsibility among stakeholders.

It is vital to identify the key people and institutions that will drive improvement and support them but also recognise where they need independence and space to innovate. Important LA roles are to collate effective practice, build a bank of materials and ensure the lessons from the process of improvement are captured and disseminated.

At the heart of work to strengthen transfer is the promotion of professional trust. It is Education Leeds policy to discourage secondary schools from retesting pupils on entry. All schools and chairs of governors have a copy of 'Transforming transfer'¹⁰ which specifies best practice as:

'...professional trust between secondary schools and primary schools with regard to the validity and use of teacher assessment data. Secondary schools use FFT data, Year 6 teacher assessments and Year 6 teacher targets to review targets for Year 7 children. Children are not re-tested on entry to Year 7.'

The rapid growth of work in this area has not diminished the LA's commitment to, or emphasis on, strengthening transfer:

'As an LA we are pleased with progress and recognise that ongoing success requires continued focus to ensure incremental and sustainable improvement.' (LA lead consultant for transfer)

10. Extract from Transforming Transfer. For children moving from primary to secondary school. © 2004 Education Leeds. Used with kind permission.

Coventry – Partnership F

Background

The LA has a history of supporting work to strengthen transfers and transitions and is developing an increasingly strategic approach to this.

Summary of the first year of the project

There were three main strands to Coventry's action research:

- one family of schools focused on mathematics;
- one focused on modern foreign languages and continuity of language provision;
- one focused on accelerating progress in literacy through building on the skills and competences developed at primary school.

All three projects have increased the LA's understanding of what will support ongoing improvement and informed its planning. This document returns to the third case study and the continuing impact of a competency-based approach following transfer.

Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Greater cross-phase collaboration.
- Increased sharing of practice and understanding of what is effective.
- Strengthened strategic approach from the LA.
- Increased parental understanding of a competency-based curriculum and how to support their children at home.
- Improved pupil attendance and behaviour.

How has previous work been built upon?

LA level

The LA has identified five 'minimum requirements' for continuity of teaching and learning.

- Teachers of core subjects in Year 7 are aware of Key Stage 2 programmes of study.
- Prior learning in Key Stage 2 informs planning for progress in Year 7.
- Teachers of Year 7 pupils are aware of classroom conventions and pedagogical practice in Year 6.
- Teachers provide opportunities for Year 7 pupils to demonstrate prior learning in lessons.
- Pupils are aware of what is expected of them in Year 7 and how what they learned in Key Stage 2 contributes to this.

The LA is using the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme as an opportunity to ensure technology is placed to achieve an integrated data system across the authority, facilitating transfer of learner data between schools and providing a personal learning space for children as they move from one phase to the next.

The benefits of a primary schools' curriculum return document is being explored. This would provide a summary of key themes and topics addressed by each school in the Key Stage 2 curriculum to enable primary and secondary schools to reflect on what is learned in classrooms across the authority.

APP is seen as an important vehicle for cross-phase consistency and collaboration. Three schools are working together to identify how this can be achieved.

Its work to strengthen transfers and transitions relies on supporting schools in their self-evaluation and policy development. It is working with two schools to explore how this can be done most effectively.

Pupil voice is being enhanced to foster greater understanding of how to improve progression for all children. This year the LA is conducting a series of interviews with G&T children to discuss transfer experiences and explore gaps between expectations and reality.

The LA emphasises working in partnership with schools to move this agenda forward. In October 2009 a cross-phase conference will provide all primary and secondary school headteachers with an opportunity to reflect on ways of developing the necessary consensus and consistency for a whole-LA approach.

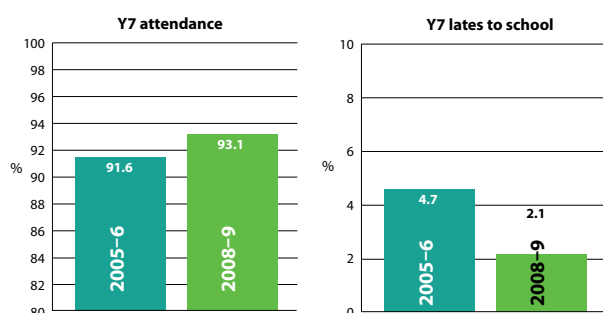
School level

The Business and Enterprise college has been working with two of its partner primary schools to develop skills to support pupils' progress in secondary school. All Year 7 pupils continue to be taught through a competency-based curriculum with ongoing success. The emphasis is to build on and extend the skills and abilities developed in primary school to increase the pupils' capacity to take control of their learning.

There are continued efforts to improve pupils' experience of continuity and progression. One primary school is rewriting its Year 6 schemes of work to give greater prominence to competence and skills. The secondary school has rewritten its competency statements to ensure they align with both those used in Key Stage 2 and also with the language of Key Stage 4 functional skills.

Evidence

The Business and Enterprise college has continued to see improved engagement with learning from pupils involved in the project.



'The changes we have made have led to better, longer lasting and more functional relationships to support learning.' (Assistant headteacher from the secondary school)

Fixed-term exclusions in the initial cohort for the pilot reduced from a total of 14 days in the year preceding the introduction of the competency-based curriculum to 3 days in the following year.

Parental voice has indicated overwhelming support. In January 2008 99.97 per cent of parents responded positively to a survey to elicit views on the changes to the Year 7 curriculum.

'[child] is sharing much more about his learning at home than I thought he would.' (Parent of a Year 7 pupil)

The secondary school's recent Ofsted report (April 2008) recognised the effective practice.

'There is a big drive in the school to improve oral and written literacy across the curriculum...and the Opening Minds curriculum in Key Stage 3 is instrumental in moving this forward.'

'The school's approach to Key Stage 3 has challenged traditional models of learning considerably and has been particularly effective in developing pupils' learning skills.'

What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?**LA level**

Schools are keen to work together to improve transfers and transitions where it is manageable and, where it can, the LA should remove barriers and facilitate this (e.g. exchange of data, common transfer day).

For the LA to support schools to develop a strategic approach it must be apparent that its own approach is coherent, cross-phase and strategic.

The rate of developments in education means that opportunities for transfers and transitions should be identified and exploited (e.g. BSF, APP, National Curriculum developments).

School level

The attitudes and skills of those delivering the curriculum are vital. The secondary school's recognition that pupils need the skills and attributes that give them the opportunity to grow as learners underpins its learning ethos. Significant support is given to existing staff to develop their understanding and, where appropriate, to facilitate entry onto the Graduate Teacher Programme to ensure high-quality delivery.

Gateshead – Partnership G

Background

The secondary school is an 11–18 mixed comprehensive with Specialist Arts College status. It has five main partner primary schools that provide about 66 per cent of its intake. The school's commitment to strengthening cross-phase progression has led to transfers and transitions being a stated responsibility for five curriculum areas under teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) arrangements.

Summary of the first year of the project

The project investigated the processes and structures needed to align schools' approaches to AfL with a particular focus on how dialogue can support the composition of success criteria, feedback, peer- and self-assessment across the key stages.

This work built on the existing LA's AfL action research work in both primary and secondary schools. Central to the work was:

- cross-phase lesson observation before and after transfer – with a focus on pedagogy, dialogue and expectations of pupils;
- cross-phase teacher network meetings;
- reflection of the quality of pupil dialogue using the AfL questioning and dialogue progression table;¹¹
- cross-phase headteachers' network meetings to develop structures that embed effective practice and necessary commonality between schools;
- pupil voice.

Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Accelerated progress in mathematics and ICT.
- Increased pupil confidence in their ability to build on learning from primary school in secondary school.
- Improvement in the quality of discussion, extended answers and pupils' ability to build on each other's contributions.
- Increased professional understanding of AfL application.
- Raised teacher expectations regarding pupils' ability to engage in dialogue and develop independent learning skills.

How has previous work been built upon?

- Innovation and investment in this area has continued.
- The number of primary partners has increased to eight.
- Discussions at teacher network meetings have fashioned a common approach to feedback, peer assessment and self-assessment underpinned by shared principles:
 - work sampling and mutual lesson observations have enabled teachers to consider whether children understand success criteria and receive clear feedback that prompts them to improve;
 - a compendium has been compiled under three main themes:
 - strategies for giving specific positive improvement feedback
 - developing pupils' responses to improvements
 - developing opportunities for pupils to explain what they have learned;

11. Assessment for Learning (AfL): unit 7, questioning and dialogue (available at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies)

- to support this, a glossary of technical terms has been created to promote common usage across schools, e.g. talking partners, learning intentions and peer assessment. This was distributed among parents of Year 6 and 7 pupils and school staff.
- More detailed discussion and identification of learning/behavioural needs of vulnerable pupils in Year 7.
- The use of a VLE to store examples of pupils' work.
- Pupil voice has been increased, including Year 6 and 7 interviews to support ongoing evaluation and review of transfer arrangements.
- Practice has been embedded into structures within schools/departments.
- A transition teacher has been appointed to coordinate and evaluate the programme and systems. The role includes analysing and monitoring pupil progress across Key Stages 2, 3 and 4; assessing feedback from staff, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders; coordinating liaison between schools and teaching Year 6 for half a day per week in each of the partner primary schools.

Evidence

Using the National Strategies' self-evaluation diagnostic toolkit, the following progress has been made in the second year of action research.

	Focusing	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
Continuity of curriculum, teaching and learning				→
School ethos and climate for learning				→

Work to improve pupils' use of dialogue has continued to have an impact. The first year of the project saw an improvement in mathematics and ICT. Both subjects introduced 'talking partners' and used success criteria to increase pupils' ownership of their learning and enhance peer coaching. Pupil progress in Year 7 remains better than in the year before the changes were introduced, with particular success in mathematics. The proportion of children achieving Level 5 increases at an impressive rate throughout Year 7. The percentage of children assessed at Level 5 in the first cohort to benefit from the project grew from 25 per cent on arrival to 43 per cent by the end of Year 7. The following cohort is showing similar signs of progress, with 27 per cent at Level 5 on entry increasing to 34 per cent after just one term.

'Two of the primary schools decided to see if the developments in dialogue could be used to enhance the children's writing. At the autumn headteachers' network meeting these schools reported a significant improvement in their Key Stage 2 English Writing scores. They identified involvement in the project with the focus on dialogue as a contributory factor.' (Secondary teaching and learning consultant)

The improvements were measured in Key Stage 2 pupils achieving level 4+ in Writing.

	2007	2008
School A	78%	90%
School B	63%	83%

Pupil interviews reflected the continuity of learning from Year 6 to Year 7. One boy observed that:

'At secondary school you use traffic lights, thumbs up, smiley faces to say how you are doing. They all do the same thing.'

Another boy reinforced his ongoing learning journey with his teachers:

'I've been going to school for years man!' (Year 7 boy)

What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?

There are a number of elements needed for sustainable improvement:

- cross-phase opportunities for teachers to observe how lessons support pupils' progress;
- identified people with responsibility for transfer and transition;
- a relationship of trust between the leadership teams at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 with the development of shared expectations of learners.

Focused and ongoing partnership is essential for:

- improving commonality of learning routines to raise expectations and promote progress;
- developing 'autonomous learners' confident in their use of dialogue to support their learning.

The agenda for the next meeting of schools includes planning for further collaboration with regard to:

- developing feedback and pupils' responses to it;
- provision for vulnerable pupils;
- improving the use of the VLE to support pupil transfer.

Salford – Partnership H

Background

Salford LA has viewed transfers and transitions as key drivers to raising standards for many years and used the national project to continue this momentum towards sustainable and ongoing improvement.

Summary of the first year of the project

The original pilot project focused on how a secondary school works with its nine main partner primary schools to provide children with the conditions for continued progress. Since September 2006, pupils moving to Year 7 at the secondary school transfer to a foundation year with its own competency-based curriculum designed to build on skills developed in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Key features of this initial phase included:

- curricular targets set by Year 6 teachers and reviewed, October, Year 7;
- cross-phase moderation;
- speaking and listening skills taught explicitly in Years 6 and 7;
- teacher exchange visits and professional dialogue regarding teaching and learning.

There are now seven secondary schools following a competency-based curriculum with some or all Year 7 pupils. Several have been supported by the schools involved in the national project. The LA has played an important role in facilitating partnership working and promoting the opportunities afforded by national developments in assessment guidance and curriculum frameworks.

Ongoing and additional outcomes

- Accelerated pupil progress in English and mathematics.
- More effective use of data and information.
- Increased continuity of teaching and learning.
- Increased levels of professional understanding and trust.
- Expansion of cross-phase partnerships across the LA.
- Increased multi-agency partnership to support pupil transfer.

How has previous work been built upon?

Since being established in September 2006 the structure and curricula of the foundation year has been modified in response to ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Pupils now attend discrete English, mathematics and science lessons in addition to foundation lessons, with curricular planning informed by item-level analysis of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests.

The LA has continued its commitment to the project and is using it to inform how transfer can be strengthened throughout Salford.

- A *Learning Walk* in October 2008 gave a valuable insight into the practice of the foundation team.
- A literacy consultant supported the school with Year 7 pupil interviews which identified how pupils felt they could improve their writing across the curriculum.
- A secondary mathematics consultant supported the school in mapping the mathematics curriculum for foundation to key indicators for Year 6. Key language and prior knowledge were also mapped to the curriculum.
- A literacy consultant modelled using Ros Wilson's *Big Writing* and the sequence for teaching writing.

The LA is building on this work with its pilot, 'Building bridges: the transitional learning to learn approach'. Eleven primary schools are involved and it aims to support and complement the competency-based curriculum and PLTS work going on in Salford secondary schools. Six of these primary schools are partners of secondary schools who currently run a competency-based curriculum in Year 7, or are planning to do so from September 2009.

The LA is clear that continued improvement in transfers and transitions requires a strategic approach with coordinated actions within and between different levels. Strong consultant links and an emphasis on pedagogical, as well as curriculum, continuity have underpinned implementation.

Transfer conference

Salford LA holds an annual Transfer conference for all Year 6 teachers and secondary heads of English, mathematics and science; providing training and facilitating cross-phase workshops. Secondary schools and partner primaries are allocated time to action plan for transfer with primary and secondary teaching and learning consultants available to support these sessions.

The aim of the Transfer conference held in November 2008 was to encourage clusters to develop cross-phase transfer projects which would directly influence classroom practice in both Key Stages 2 and 3. Cross-phase workshops included focused on AfL and APP, social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and cooperative learning. Funding of £2500 was allocated to each cluster from the Standards Fund to support these projects.

- There is an expectation, from the LA, that representatives from secondary schools and partner primaries will meet to plan for Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transfer in addition to the Transfer conference.
- Action plans developed at the Transfer conference are shared with secondary strategy managers and primary headteachers.
- Developments are reviewed annually at the Transfer conference.

Common in-service training (INSET) day

Salford has found continuing professional development (CPD) to be a powerful lever for developing a shared vision. Each year it holds a common INSET day for secondary schools; all secondary schools are closed for the day and teachers attend subject-specific training. In 2007, teachers of Key Stage 3 mathematics and English visited best practice Key Stage 2 lessons. This developed cross-phase understanding and teachers reported a significant influence on their planning for Key Stage 3.

Linking of the Primary and Secondary Frameworks for English

The Salford secondary teaching and learning consultant for English has given support to secondary English subject leaders and Year 6 teachers in aligning the Year 5 and 6 primary literacy objectives with the Framework for secondary English. This has emphasised building on prior learning to maximise pupil progress from Year 5 to Year 9.

Multi-agency approach

A recent emphasis has been the partnership between agencies for improving transfer, for example:

- a representative from the Family Action Team led a workshop at the Transfer conference in 2007 to provide support for schools wishing to involve parents and carers in Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transfer;
- at the Transfer conference in 2008 a member of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service provided information for both Year 6 teachers and heads of English, mathematics and science on the issues surrounding attending secondary school for traveller children.

The LA lead for transfer is doing some joint work with the Family Action/Common Assessment Framework (CAF) team on using the CAF to support vulnerable pupils during Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transfer.

Evidence

School level

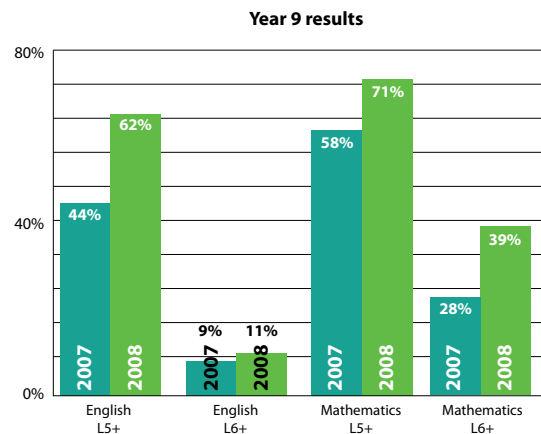
Using the National Strategies' self-evaluation diagnostic toolkit, the family of schools involved in the original pilot have made the following progress between November 2007 and January 2009.

	Focusing	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
Use of data and information		→		
Continuity of curriculum, teaching and learning	→			

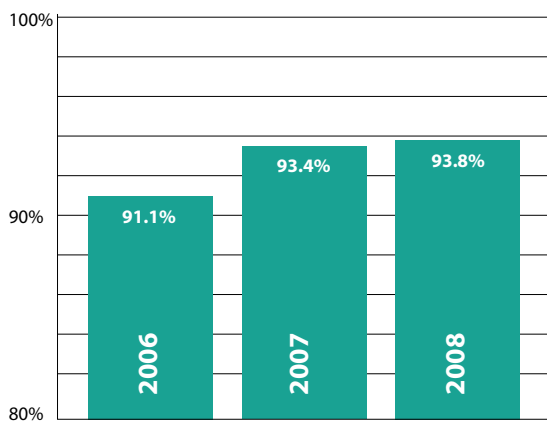
'Good links with feeder primary schools and the introduction of the foundation curriculum help to ensure that the transition for Year 7 students runs smoothly' (Ofsted, March 2008)

'The foundation programme in Year 7 eases the transition from primary school with a clear emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills and encouraging independent learning.' (Ofsted, March 2008)

2008 saw the first cohort of pupils to have been taught the foundation curriculum in Year 7 take national tests for Key Stage 3. There was significant improvement compared with the previous cohort which did not benefit from the competency-based curriculum.



Y7 attendance to end of December



'Year 7 attendance continues to improve, as has the attendance of the current Year 8. The attendance has improved from 91.1 per cent in 2006, to 93.4 per cent in 2007 to 93.8 per cent for the autumn term 2008. Behaviour incidents of Year 7 remain consistently below those of other year groups.' (SLT report to governors, Analysis of foundation curriculum January 2009)

LA level

Salford schools' engagement during the Transfer conference has improved year on year, both in terms of attendance and the participants' evaluation. Attendance of the conference has risen from 66 per cent to 79 per cent from 2006 to 2008; the number of participants evaluating the conference as good or better has improved from 83 per cent in 2006 to 95 per cent in 2008.

The quality of cluster action plans that are developed at the Transfer conference have improved year on year and now all include a focus on pedagogical dialogue between the secondary and primary phase.

The LA results for the Year 9 National Curriculum tests have continued to improve at a greater rate than the national average.

What do those involved think is needed to sustain improvement and build capacity?**School level**

Success has been founded on:

- senior leaders providing a clear message that effective transfer and literacy across the curriculum are key to raising standards;
- strong links between partner schools, e.g. foundation teachers from secondary schools undertaking regular visits to partners' primaries and high-level professional dialogue.

LA level

- Strategic leadership of transfer and transitions at LA level.
- Providing a high-quality annual conference with inspirational speakers. This has helped to disseminate effective practice, build on successes and promote cross-phase partnerships.
- Allowing clusters to personalise their transfer focus according to their priorities.
- Allocating funding to projects.
- Consultant support for developing effective practice and aligning improvement with other priorities, e.g. the secondary English consultant has provided support for primary literacy consultants in the implementation of APP at Key Stage 2.

Appendix 1

National Strategies materials to support strengthening transfers and transitions

All the materials can be found in the National Strategies area of the standards site: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies. Search using the DCSF reference numbers included in the table below. The materials are located under five headings. A selection of what is available is outlined below.

Building effective partnerships	
Title	Description
Strengthening transfers and transition: Partnerships for progress	Evaluation report outlining the work done by LAs and families of schools participating in the first phase of this research to explore what strengthens transfers and transitions and makes an impact on standards. It identifies key messages, significant elements of practice and implications for LAs and schools. DCSF: 00083-2008
Curriculum continuity – effective transfer between primary and secondary schools	A booklet to help schools consider what they can do to ensure curriculum continuity between the primary and secondary curriculum. DCSF: 0116-2004 G
Effective Consultancy model Programme 9: Strengthening transfers and transitions	A model for effective consultancy to support LA consultants working with schools. www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies Access requires registration.
Transfers and transitions PowerPoint presentation	A 'roadshow' presentation for use by LAs to engage senior leaders. This is not available at the National Strategies website and a CD-ROM was distributed to all primary and secondary strategy managers in 2008.

Narrowing gaps	
Title	Description
Gifted and Talented (G&T) e-learning modules for leading teachers	Module 6: Transfer and Transition Activities and resources for G&T leading teachers on developing successful primary-to-secondary school transfer programmes.
Raising Black children's achievement e-learning modules	Module 4: How do we get there? E-learning module addressing school culture, partnerships, transfer and transition, barriers to successful teaching and learning, and literacy and mathematics strategies to raise Black children's achievement.

The early years transition and special educational needs (EYTSEN) project	Research brief containing investigation of the aspects of SEN in children between three and four years old. Uses a range of information to identify the children who may be at risk to develop in terms of cognitive or behavioural development. The early years transition and special educational needs (EYTSEN) study builds on data collected as a part of the survey of pre-school provision. This document is a part of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) resources (Ref: 00012-07CDO-EN).
Transition at Key Stage 2–3: Supporting positive behaviour and regular attendance	Introduction to the professional development materials from the Behaviour and Attendance pilot, covering: transition as a process of change; key components of a framework for supporting children; whole-school systems to support transition; a framework for preparing children for the social and emotional aspects of transition through activities; working with partners to ensure a smooth transition; identifying and planning to meet the needs of individuals who may be 'at risk'. DCSF: 1754-2005
Secondary SEAL: Class teacher, Year 6 – Pupils' transition	Video showing class teacher of Year 6 talking about the feelings of the pupils undergoing transition to new school. She also emphasises on the importance of SEAL in their social and emotional development.

Teaching and learning

Materials relating to teaching and learning are located under the following headings, with hyperlinks to take you to the appropriate section.

- Early Years to Key Stage 1.
- Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.
- Primary Framework transition units.
- Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.
- Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.
- Key Stage 4 to post-16.

Effective practice

Title	Description
Transfers and Transitions newsletters	Includes information on the Assessment for Learning (AfL8) schools project, pupil tracking in Suffolk, Leeds and the new secondary curriculum, new materials to support LAs and schools and an introduction to WhatWorksWell.
WhatWorksWell – learning improvement case studies	WhatWorksWell is a growing database of case studies with a section dedicated to transfers and transitions. www.whatworkswell.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/

School self-evaluation and improvement	
Title	Description
Supporting school self-evaluation	<p>Primary and secondary self-evaluation toolkits supported by an ePD¹² designed to guide senior leaders through next-step activities and to provide CPD opportunities identified through the self-evaluation process.</p> <p>Toolkits: www.supportingselfevaluation.org.uk/</p> <p>ePD: www.supportingselfevaluation.org.uk/training/d4/index.html</p>

12. Electronic professional development package

Appendix 2

Profiles of participating schools

Partnership A

	Middle school	Primary schools				
		1	2	3	4	5
Roll	444	125	136	85	83	59
% FSM	2.7	7.9	4.4	-	6.0	11.9
% SEN	16	18.4	14.7	10.6	16.9	23.7
% EAL	-	0	-	0	0	0

Partnership B

	High school	Middle school	Primary schools	
			1	2
Roll	1344	401	221	221
% FSM	6.5	10.7	6.3	14.9
% SEN	17.6	23.2	8.1	26.7
% EAL	1.0	2.0	-	0

Partnership C

	Technology College	Primary schools			
		1	2	3	4
Roll	991	407	190	213	343
% FSM	6.3	9.8	7.9	12.7	2.6
% SEN	13.8	13.8	17.4	18.8	16.6
% EAL	9.3	17.1	5.6	5.3	3.2

Partnership D

	Mathematics, science and computing college	Primary schools				
		1	2	3	4	5
Roll	983	440	348	390	260	296
% FSM	26.1	14.8	31.9	11.0	39.6	42.4
% SEN	32.6	13.4	29.6	9.5	24.2	36.1
% EAL	26.9	68.5	23.8	4.5	9.5	7.4

Partnership E

	Secondary school arts college	Secondary school	Primary schools	
			1	2
Roll	1029	871	456	434
% FSM	27.5	21.7	24.6	21.0
% SEN	42.1	25.0	23.0	20.3
% EAL	2.0	14.1	0.9	2.9

Partnership F

	Secondary school	Primary schools	
		1	2
Roll	693	244	583
% FSM	23.5	16.8	10.6
% SEN	25.0	21.7	5.3
% EAL	12.1	22.0	23.9

Partnership G

	Secondary school	Primary schools							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Roll	1345	328	322	209	153	180	137	150	311
% FSM	19.5	26.2	19.6	29.0	22.9	6.1	49.6	12.7	20.9
% SEN	18.9	18.9	25.2	33.5	14.4	26.7	38.7	16.7	22.2
% EAL	1.9	-	0	-	-	1.9	6.3	0	4

Partnership H

	Secondary school	Primary schools								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Roll	813	232	191	216	153	178	223	162	305	216
% FSM	45.6	34.9	72.3	39.8	32.7	61.2	25.6	45.7	42.3	43.5
% SEN	39.2	17.7	39.8	4.2	17.6	39.3	8.1	21.6	20.7	7.4
% EAL	2.7	4.6	3.5	1.9	5.5	10.9	-	2.4	-	1.9

Audience: Local authorities and schools
Date of issue: 06-2009
Ref: **00510-2009BKT-EN**

Copies of this publication may be available from:
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further information at: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk**

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Children, Schools and Families

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