TRANSITIONS AND SCOTTISH TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES

A review of international transition models and insight from practitioners in Scotland to improve 0-18 transitions for travelling communities
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KEY TERMS

In this document, the terms ‘travelling communities’ and ‘Travellers’ are used as an umbrella term for the different groups of travelling communities including Gypsy/Travellers, Showmen, and Roma families. The term Traveller is a traditionally accepted terminology among different groups, who have, at their core, shared commonalities of unpredictable mobility patterns.

It is important to emphasise the heterogeneity of these groups, each of whom is defined by different history, culture, and lifestyle. These groups also have varying levels of engagement with formal education, perceptions of and access to schooling and the curriculum.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the outcomes of ‘Transitions and Scottish travelling Communities’ (STEP 2015). This piece of research sought to better understand educational transitions from a local and international perspective in order to improve 0-18 transitions for travelling communities in Scotland. The research reviewed existing national and international models of transitions and involved consultation with Scottish teachers about effective strategies to support transitions. Based on the strategies and approaches which proved most effective across practice, the project developed a model and associated Toolkit for achieving successful transitions.

Rationale

Transitions for 3-18 year olds from home to nursery, primary and secondary school and further educational and employment destinations have been identified as a key priority in policy and practice with its presence clearly visible across policies set by stakeholders and the Scottish Government such as Early Years Framework (EYF, Scottish Government, 2008), Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC, Scottish Government, 2012) and Curriculum for Excellence.

Due to the mobile lifestyle of travelling communities, factors such as maintaining continuity in learning, lack of resources, or limited access to curriculum content during periods of mobility means that families often feel unable to support their child and ensure a smooth transition. Other factors such as low literacy levels and unfamiliarity with formal education contribute to poor engagement with education among travelling communities, with children typically withdrawn from school around P7, and few continuing beyond the age of 14.

Individuals from travelling communities often have no formal qualifications, are more likely to be identified as having special educational needs, and have the lowest educational achievement and attendance rates. Strategies are therefore necessary to improve transitions so that children and young people from travelling communities have more positive educational and economic destinations.

The key issues

Research findings suggest that there are a range of complex and interlinked issues as to why travelling communities do not experience smooth transitions. Poor and non-transitions lead to families feeling unsupported, excluded and disengaged from formal educational routes. The key issues identified by the research are: mobility, low literacy and language levels, school bureaucracy, unfamiliarity with school culture and rules of engagement, and cultural differences and discrimination.
Strategies for smooth transitions

STEP’s review on effective transitions for families from mobile cultures showed that smooth transition to, between and beyond schools relies on the ‘readiness’ of all those involved in the transition process. Building on these ideas, STEP developed a model (right) which outlines strategies central to achieving ‘readiness’.

Promoting school readiness of schools, families and pupils ensures that all parties are prepared for the transition, culture, the new context, and that educational settings are knowledgeable and have appropriate tools for supporting practitioners and travelling families during transitions.

Effective approaches to positively influence transitions include:

**Multiagency collaboration** to draw on the expertise of local services and professionals in the community to support mobile families.

**Strong relationships** so that partnerships are built on trust and respect.

**Effective knowledge exchange and communication** such as identifying appropriate modes of communication for families.

**Parental involvement** to foster meaningful dialogue, address specific barriers to smooth transitions, and improve continuity of learning and home-school links.

**Flexibility** so that parties can adapt to new contexts, situations, cultural traditions, and provide a responsive and needs-led transition process.

**Collaborative and whole-school approaches** to address the wide range of factors which affect smooth transitions and provide adequate support to children, families and staff.

**Early intervention through outreach strategies and targeted intervention programmes** to foster school readiness, target specific barriers to participation, and improve and support family engagement in education.
Conclusion

Due to the heterogeneity of travelling communities, factors which may be a barrier to one group or family (such as language), will not be a concern for other groups. Each will have different experiences and capacities with regard to formal education and transition procedures - emphasising the need for an individualised approach to transitions with travelling communities.

The research suggests that a focus on the school ‘readiness’ of all those involved can be an effective approach to transitions. A model to support smooth transitions must therefore adopt whole-school approaches, involve the all staff, parents and students, use expertise and support from a range of agencies, and be flexible, creative and needs-led. This ensures that families receive an individualised service to target specific barriers to achieving smooth transition experiences.
THE RESEARCH

The Transitions and Scottish Travelling Communities project sought to gain a greater understanding of the factors affecting educational transitions for children and young people from travelling communities, and report on effective strategies for ensuring smooth transitions. This was achieved by conducting a systematic review of existing transition models, and consultation with Scottish practitioners about effective strategies to support transitions.

Research objectives were two-fold:

- To investigate the complex and interlinked issues as to why travelling communities do not experience smooth transitions
- To identify strategies that can lead to or support smooth transitions.

The research addressed the following three questions:

1. Why is it important to put structures in place to improve and ensure smooth transitions?
2. What are the contributing factors to poor and non-transitions?
3. What types of strategies and approaches might be effective for improving educational transitions for travelling communities?

These questions provided a framework for the project which was structured as two independent strands.

Strand one was a review of existing national and international transition models. The purpose of the review was to identify key characteristics of programmes which lead to smoother and more positive transitions.

Strand two focused on transitions in Scottish contexts. Practitioners from 10 local authorities in Scotland were consulted through interviews and questionnaires to
gather personal experiences of successful pupil transition in a Scottish context and successful strategies to support their transition.

The research illustrates the context for transitions among Scottish travelling communities and delivers key messages from the review and consultation with practitioners about effective strategies to support educational transitions for mobile children and young people.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A SMOOTH TRANSITION?

Smooth transitions can be described as the successful and positive experience of transitions from home to the education system such as entry into nursery, primary school and successful progression to secondary school, Further Education or work destinations. Smooth transitions require the child to be socially, emotionally and intellectually prepared as well as having the skills required for learning (Dockett, Perry and Kearney, 2010).

Markers of a smooth transition include experiences during pupils’ settling in phase and progression. For the child, a smooth transition should be: a positive experience with smooth integration into school culture, class and routines (Evangelou et al, 2008), with consistent or improving academic achievement, retention and engagement (Cauley and Jovanovich, 2006). For schools and parents, smooth transitions were characterised as parents having no or minimal concerns (Giallo, et al. 2010; Hirst et al. 2011), curriculum continuity, acknowledgment of parents’ recommendations for transitions, and when the process is managed smoothly (Evangelou et al. 2008). Transitions are also smoother when parents’ choice of
schools is received on time and they receive their first choice of school. This means fewer appeals and the transition process can progress more efficiently.

Finally, based on children’s views, smooth transitions meant looking forward to attending the new school, moving to schools with their peers, having older siblings in the school, and finding new schoolwork interesting (Evangelou et al, 2008).

THE IMPACT OF TRANSITIONS ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children and young people experience many forms of transition in their lives such as starting a new school, moving house, new siblings entering the family, puberty and so forth (Young Minds, 2015). These times can be stressful with physical, social and philosophical discontinuities (Fabian, 2002) and can negatively impact children’s wellbeing, everyday routines and academic achievements. Legislation and policies, including the UNCRC, The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Additional Support for Learning Act 2004, and Curriculum for Excellence, are clear in setting out every young person’s rights and entitlements to a coherent education from 3-18 as well as a responsibility by all to ensure their wellbeing (GIRFEC). Yet for children from Traveller families, there are many challenges to ensuring children are, for instance, achieving, active, healthy and included. Engagement in Education remains poor among travelling communities and of particular relevance to this document, significant educational transition periods, such as entering pre-school and the transfer from P7 to secondary school, are where children from travelling communities are most vulnerable to being lost from education.

TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES, EDUCATION AND TRANSITIONS: THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Travelling communities remain the most socially excluded groups in Scotland, experiencing widespread discrimination and prejudice in their daily lives (Lloyd and McClusky, 2008). Although there is some evidence of increasing economic and educational outcomes for travelling communities, The Office for National Statistics 2011 census revealed that 60% of Gypsy/Traveller families had no formal
qualifications, are more likely to be identified as having special educational needs, and are four times more likely than any other group to be excluded from school (Department Children, Schools and Families [DCSF], 2009). Based on statistics of S4 pupils’ educational attainment, this group were also noted as having the lowest educational achievement and attendance rates in comparison to the average population (Scottish Government, 2013; Wilkin et al. 2010). Statistically these children will always be behind, make slower progress, and achieve less academically.

The issue of improving educational outcomes for Traveller families has been a focus of research and policy for decades. Yet attempts to improve Traveller children’s engagement and retention in education have had little impact. Though pupils may successfully transition to secondary school, their attendance is unlikely to continue beyond the age of 14 (Derrington and Kendall, 2004), with at least half of young people from travelling communities becoming completely disengaged from education by the age of 16 (Foster and Norton, 2012). Some smaller studies revealed that in some populations the average drop-out rate can be even younger - with children leaving formal education at 11.5 years old (Franks and Ureche, 2007).

TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES AND TRANSITIONS: THE KEY ISSUES

Where non-mobile children contend with one or two major transitions in any given period (for instance, moving to high school and having new teachers), the same move for children from travelling communities may involve considerably more forms of transitional change.

There are a variety of complex and interlinked issues as to why travelling communities do not experience smooth transitions which can leave families feeling unsupported, excluded and disengaged from formal educational routes.

MOBILITY

A complex web of factors such as unpredictable work and mobility patterns (Jordan, 2000 SCRE) and frequent evictions (Richardson, 2007) lead to high mobility among
travelling communities. The transient nature of travelling communities means that there are continuous and significant interruptions to children’s learning (Padfield, 2008), and family engagement with schools and local services (Cemlyn et al. 2009). This then leads to: a lack of information about educational past (Kerbow et al. 2003; Smrekar and Owens, 2003), gaps in knowledge, unfamiliarity with formal schooling, loss of supportive school peers and friends (Jordan and Padfield, 2003), and difficulties maintaining relationships and communication with schools. The gaps in education children experience as a result of transient school attendance (Estyn, 2011) means that it is difficult to move past adjustment and begin to thrive and gain academic momentum.

On account of many children and young people from travelling communities experiencing frequent changes of schools, children may encounter recursive learning shock (Griffiths et al 2004) and difficulties in establishing the necessary secure attachment relationships with teachers (Birch and Ladd, 1997) which are vital for academic achievement, support, socioemotional wellbeing and overall positive educational experiences (Bergin and Bergin, 2009; Riley, 2011).

Children entering school for the first time are facing an environment which is qualitatively different from their learning experiences at home (Margetts, 2002). Families as a whole may have to adapt to significant cultural differences (Thomas, 1995) associated with the people, physical context, approaches to communication, values, traditions, expectations, and structure of the day. Children will suddenly experience unfamiliarly long periods of separation from their parents and siblings (Bowlby 1969), first assessments, the pressure and unfamiliarity of new contexts and approaches for learning (Griffiths et al. 2004; Zhou et al. 2008); all of which can negatively impact children’s wellbeing and ability to thrive.

Research examining the learning and health outcomes of children’s transition to school demonstrated that the experience of starting school causes a stress response in children (Turner-Cobb, 2005), and can negatively impact attitudes and pupil progress (Galton et al, 1999, 2003; Padfield, 2008). To this end, transitions, for
Travelling communities, may become a stressful, negative experience with little return or visible academic progress (Kerbow et al. 2003).

Due to the highly mobile lifestyle of travelling communities, these children may be more vulnerable to the negative factors associated with not only transitions, but on account of the high frequency of these transitional periods.

LITERACY & LANGUAGE

Many families from travelling communities may have poor literacy (Franks and Ureche, 2007), or English as an additional language which can impede effective communication. In the most recent Scottish census analysis, approximately 8% of Gypsy/Travellers do not read or write, have poor English proficiency, and less than 1% were described as having no English skills (Scottish Government 2014).

Without adequate literacy and language support, parents may be unable to access or understand information required during the transition process and may find paper-based induction procedures intimidating. Lack of literacy may also engender in tentative engagement with public service providers if additional measures are unavailable. Parents may also feel unable to provide academic support or home education due to a lack of ability and confidence in their own literacy. This leads to discontinuities in children’s education and greater gaps in learning during periods of mobility.

SCHOOL BUREAUCRACY

There are variety of barriers embedded in the educational systems and school structures which can cause concern for parents. For the most part, the formal education system requires a Traveller child to adapt to an established system with majority values (Barnardos, 2002:7). Rigidity of school induction such as choosing schools, registration, and induction periods occurring at set times in the academic year can be challenging for most travelling communities on account of their
unpredictable mobility patterns. Where systems are in place to ensure smooth transfers through effective strategies and protocols (e.g. school visits, social events, information gathering and sharing), occur at set times in the school year. The school calendar and many Traveller communities’ calendars simply do not coincide (Padfield and Cameron, 2009); hence, many travelling communities do not receive the benefits of these established induction and transition procedures. Further complexity is added on account of different procedures being used across different local authorities. Therefore, where families have been supported in one area, they will not receive the same level of support in another which can result in children being lost from Education. Traveller Education Services have been shown to elicit positive responses and educational engagement of Traveller communities (Bhopal and Myers, 2009). However, many authorities will not have a specific Traveller support service. Very few authorities, in England, for instance (Evangelou et al. 2008), have training specifically on transition delivered centrally meaning that good practice varies across settings with the majority of schools will have no special transition arrangements for pupils from travelling communities (Estyn, 2011:14). The induction process for any school requires particular information and specific practices in order to successfully receive and integrate the pupil. Subsequently, the absence of necessary information will cause delay or significant challenges for the school and practitioners to ensure a smooth transition for children and families (Kerbow et al. 2003). The absence of birth certificates, for instance, means that schools may not be privy to a child’s chronological age which can be helpful in ascertaining the child’s educational level, especially in the absence of learning history (Evangelou et al. 2008).

UNFAMILIARITY WITH SCHOOL CULTURE AND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Children’s induction and successful integration into life at school is greatly influenced by their level of familiarity with schooling itself: in other words, being in the habit of
attending school and the routines and practices which this entails. For instance, if a child has little experience of formal educational settings, or these experiences are sporadic, children may be (or become) unfamiliar with institutional conventions. These include (Evangelou et al. 2008):

- Prolonged periods of time where children must be seated or must remain quiet.
- Negotiating a large, indoor physical environment.
- Rules of engagement such as turn-taking, appropriate interaction with adults, raising your hand before offering responses, asking permission to leave classrooms or use equipment, specific meal times, or playground boundaries.
- Having to socialise with unfamiliar peers.
- Wearing uniforms and changing in front of non-family members (Gym class).
- Pressure of homework or not having the facilities or space to complete it at home.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND DISCRIMINATION

For some travelling communities, there are underlying barriers to entering any form of schooling on account of experiences of prejudice and discrimination (Lloyd and McClusky, 2008) and families’ negative perceptions of formal education and curriculum content (Myers, McGhee and Bhopal; 2010). Histories of social exclusion and discrimination and racism (Foster and Norton, 2012) have resulted in tentative relationships with schools and services. Roma families, for example, may possess views which are embedded in a history of marginalisation as a minority within a minority. Many were unable to access education due to societal attitudes toward bilingualism and cultural differences resulting in the Romani language not being taught in schools and being forbidden in public places (Hristo, 2007). To this end, parents may prefer not to send their children to school on account of fears
surrounding them experiencing the same violence and marginalisation (Lloyd et al. 1999). These attitudes extend to their experiences or perceived view of the labour market hence many families cannot see the advantages of work and time spent in school if young people cannot penetrate barriers to employment.

The cultural relevance of curriculum, especially at secondary level, is often questioned by travelling communities (Padfield and Cameron, 2009). Parents fear increased risk taking and loss of cultural values and beliefs in the absence of appropriate resources and materials (Jordan and Padfield, 2003).

PRACTITIONERS’ INSIGHT INTO TRANSITIONS: THE KEY ISSUES

The following five themes emerged from practitioners’ accounts of key factors influencing smooth transitions:

Challenges of existing strategies: Some local authorities had no specific transition strategies for Traveller communities therefore families may not receive the necessary support and guidance. One practitioner stated that families from travelling communities require more support and an extended length of time pre and post transition. If schools do not have the time or resources - the process will likely result in poor or non-engagement in education.

MOBILITY

On account of travelling communities’ often spontaneous and unpredictable mobility patterns, families will miss the entire induction process. One practitioner noted that unless the families reached out, it was very difficult to reach them or maintain contact. Educational continuity was also an issue despite the schools best efforts contacting previous schools and gathering necessary information. This was particularly challenging when families have moved from England.
Practitioners stated that although a family may want their child to be educated at home, they do not have the necessary literacy or resources, or understand that the child must still enrol in school to gain qualifications.

**ATTITUDES**

Families may have negative feelings toward formal education and fear that their children will experience bullying, increased risk taking and loss of cultural values. Deep rooted traditions with clearly defined gender roles mean that young people may be given responsibilities such as girls caring for family and boys working with their fathers from a very young age.

**CULTURE AND CURRICULUM CONTENT**

It was noted that reference made to travelling communities’ culture, traditions or values was very much dependent on the school. ‘Secondary school curriculums are now too tightly structured to allow flexibility in these areas’ Practitioner C

“A ONE SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH DOES NOT WORK. YOU FACE DIFFERENT CHALLENGES WITH DIFFERENT FAMILIES...DIFFERENT TRAVELLERS HAVE DIFFERENT ISSUES. UNLESS THE FAMILIES COME TO YOU, IT’S VERY DIFFICULT TO REACH THEM OR MAINTAIN CONTACT. IT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO TRACK FAMILIES AS THEY MOVE AROUND...TEACHERS HAVE NO IDEA OF CHILDREN’S LEVEL BECAUSE THERE IS A LACK OF INFORMATION. THEY ALSO DON’T KNOW WHERE FAMILIES ARE GOING TO GO SO TEACHERS CAN’T PASS INFORMATION FORWARD.”

PRACTITIONER A
STEP’s research into transitions and mobile communities identified a wide range of models and strategies for achieving smooth transitions. The issues raised in the previous section can be considered barriers to achieving smooth transitions for many mobile communities. Many of these issues affect families’ preparedness or ‘readiness’ for formal schooling.

WHAT IS ‘READINESS’ AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO MOBILE FAMILIES?

Historically, children’s readiness for school has been judged by their chronological age dictating readiness based on developmental stages and associated abilities such as language and cognition. Many argue that children should be socially, emotionally, and intellectually prepared (Dockett, Perry and Kearney, 2010) with an intrinsic motivation to learn, the ability to focus attention, flexibility, self-regulation, persistence and an interest in learning (Hyson, 2008), where ‘readiness’ for school is more than academics (Daily et al 2010; Scott-Little et al. 2006).

Readiness is, in fact, a multi-faceted construct that includes the capacity of families, early care and education programs, and the broader community to support children’s early learning and development, and the capacity of schools to effectively educate children once they start school (Kagan, 1990; NAEYC, 2002; UNICEF 2012; Scott-Little & Maxwell, 2000). We adopt this broader view of ‘readiness’ where we consider the ‘readiness’ of all those involved in the education of children (Figure 1). We view readiness as:

(i) A child having tools for learning in the formal context of school (which may be foreign to mobile children with little experience learning outwith the family)

(ii) Children being prepared for school life (this may include confidently negotiating the physical environment, the ability to establish and maintain new peer groups, interacting with teachers, knowledge of routines and practices, awareness of classroom conduct and so forth), and
(iii) Families, schools and communities having the knowledge and effective mechanisms to support all aspects of children’s formal schooling.

For children to be ready, they and their families, must be provided opportunities to acclimatise with this new environment and school culture, and acquire knowledge, understanding and respect for school culture, routines and practices, and necessary tools to successfully integrate and achieve.

For a range of complex reasons, mobile cultures often exhibit sporadic or non-engagement with the schools or other educational settings meaning they many children receive no formal schooling (McKinney, 2001; Padfield, 2005). It is therefore important to emphasise the distinction between readiness for learning and readiness for formal schooling. Many children from mobile cultures will be successful learners and possess the necessary tools and mindset for learning. Where they may face challenges is learning within the formal setting and culture of school. Because of this limited experience of formal schooling, children and parents may not have adequate mechanisms and tools to support smooth transitions, integration into school life or academic achievement.

![Diagram: The Transition Model (STEP 2015)](image)

**Figure 1: The Transition Model (STEP 2015)**
PUPIL ‘READINESS’

Gradual familiarisation is the key to achieving school 'readiness' for pupils from mobile cultures. Where most settled pupils will be surrounded by a culture of going to the local school, young people from mobile cultures may be the first in their families to make these transitions and they may have to learn new social practices, behaviours, rules, and learning styles. Approaches should aim to build gradual connections. Provide opportunities for pupils to meet school staff or other pupils informally, participate in school-type activities, rehearse social practices but show flexibility until the pupil is 'school ready'.

PARENT ‘READINESS’

Parental involvement in transitions is essential. Positive relationships between the school and home will reassure pupils. Parents and carers from mobile communities are likely to have heightened concerns about children's safety, social relationships and whether their children will be treated fairly. Provide opportunities for parents to meet staff, voice their concerns, and address specific issues well in advance. Share school inclusion strategies in formats that parents understand, and maintain regular dialogue in the lead up to transitions. Be aware that there may be tensions within families with some members viewing school more positively than others.

SCHOOL ‘READINESS’

Many strategies can be adopted to improve the 'readiness' of educational settings and prepare staff for engaging highly mobile families. The 'readiness' of an educational setting is achieved by adopting three key approaches: (i) a whole-school approach where schools adopt a clear transition framework, a positive culture, consistent teaching and relevant curriculum, (ii) outreach to improve and support family access and engagement with education, and (iii) targeted programmes for early intervention, to foster school 'readiness' and target specific barriers such as family literacy.
STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING SMOOTH TRANSITIONS AND ‘READINESS’ FOR SCHOOL

The research elucidated key factors which contribute to achieving smooth transitions for travelling communities: the central aim being to promote ‘readiness’ for school by all parties. Promoting school readiness of schools, families and students ensures that all parties are prepared for the transition, culture, the new context, and that educational settings are knowledgeable and have appropriate tools for supporting practitioners and travelling families during transitions. Effective approaches to positively influence transitions include:

**Multiagency collaboration** to draw on the expertise and broad range of information on mobile families based on the experiences of local services and professionals in the community.

**Relationships** should be nurtured and sustained so that partnerships are built on trust, respect and ongoing development of understanding about the other.

**Effective knowledge exchange and communication** such as identifying appropriate modes of communication for families and ensuring students and parents remain informed.

**Parental involvement** to foster meaningful relationships and dialogue, address specific barriers to smooth transitions, and improve continuity of learning and home-school links.

**Flexibility** so that parties can adapt to new contexts, situations, cultural traditions, and provide a responsive and needs-led transition process.

**Whole-school approaches** to address the wide range of factors which affect smooth transitions and provide adequate support to children, families and staff.
Early intervention through outreach strategies and targeted intervention programmes to foster school readiness, provide individualised support to target specific barriers to participation, and improve and support family engagement in education.

SUPPORTING FAMILY ‘READINESS’

The focus of strategies varies according to the needs or practices of particular schools. On the whole, strategies aim to foster ‘readiness’ for school on the part of the parent, the child and the educational setting and this may begin well before formal school attendance and may continue once the child has started school. Strategies are most effective when adopting a whole-school approach and implementing a ‘systematic proactive process’ (DFES, 2003a). All those involved can therefore work toward creating a positive transition experience.

Strategies to support families include:

- Head Teacher visiting Traveller sites works toward building relationships with families and tailoring support according to specific needs (Estyn, 2011).

- Traveller Education Service staff visiting families and accompanying them to visit new school (Estyn, 2011). They can act as mediators or a gateway between travelling communities and schools (Bhopal et al. 2000).

- Having assigned staff members to individual families or transitions issues (DFES, 2003b).

- Establishing links and support networks between families, community link workers and Traveller Education Services.

- Providing moving schools packs (ID 19 appendix 5).

- There are also a variety of outreach strategies which have proved effective such as engagement activities and delivering alternative educational provision (Jordan and Padfield, 2003) on site where practitioners, parents and young people can build home-school links and increase school readiness.
- Hosting student Q&A for parents and children to gain information from personal experiences and pupil voice regarding school life.

- Various approaches can be adopted in an effort to make events informal and use familiar contexts. Initial meetings between parents and the new secondary school teachers were considered to be less intimidating when held at the familiar primary school rather than the new context (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

- S2-6 Pupils from travelling communities attending the school giving talks to newcomers about their experience of school life and positive outcomes of education (See Id 20 in Appendix 5).

- Additional and early visits as well as discussions with parents and pupils prior to transition to implement early intervention and provide time for families to digest information and further explanation if necessary (Barnardos, 2012).

- Ensuring parents have applied well in advance to desired schools (Evangelou et al 2008).

- Supporting the application process (Barnardos, 2012; Reading Borough Council, 2008) which includes: help with choosing schools, assistance with form filling to mitigate language or literacy barriers during registration and induction process.

- Parental involvement through running crèches, breakfast clubs and after school clubs.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S ‘READINESS’ FOR SCHOOL

Strategies targeting children and young people aim to provide coping skills, support measures for integration and acculturation, and improve school readiness and familiarisation. Many strategies address specific social and academic needs so that
support measures can be put in place for pupils who have gaps in education or are unfamiliar with school culture. Common strategies include:

- Buddy systems to support familiarisation to the new physical context, routines, and rules of engagement in school life.

- 6th year pupil mentors who can offer support and advice; answering any questions or concerns from personal experience.

- Initial assessments are carried out in children's native language so that pupils’ aptitude can be measured fairly and not be limited by language comprehension.

- Bilingual staff and information translation supports pupil comprehension of matters that affect them and mitigates barriers to inclusion and feelings of isolation.

- Part-time schedules supporting phased integration into formal education.

- Parent involvement ensures that parents can best support their children during transitions. Strong home-school links ensures that issues can be addressed early with the parents and suitable measures can be put in place.

- Clear roles for staff and students so that new pupils know who to approach with concerns.

- Delivering alternative educational provision (Jordan and Padfield, 2003) on site where children can extend learning, address gaps in learning and increase school readiness.

SUPPORTING SCHOOL AND STAFF ‘READINESS’
Many strategies seek to improve school readiness and prepare teachers for dealing with highly mobile families, new arrivals, and improve cultural understanding. These include:

- Having clear transition procedures and strategies for supporting travelling communities. For example, schools may create a transition checklist to ensure best practice and support measures are put in place for families, staff and children (Appendix 2).

- Forming good relationships with feeder schools (Evangelou et al. 2008).

- Promoting a positive school culture around transitions such as welcoming new students and families.

- Demonstrating cultural sensitivity demonstrating by incorporating cultural perspectives and material into learning and curriculum content (ID 30, Appendix 5).

- Knowledge exchange and identifying needs early should make use of all support staff, external agencies and forming local partnerships.

- Effective transfer and sharing of information about previous learning, needs and achievements.

- CPD exchange programmes where staff visit children's native countries as a way of enriching cultural awareness - providing teachers with experiences of their pupils traditions and culture (Id 4: Appendix 5).

- All those involved must have clearly defined roles and responsibilities (DFES, 2003a).

- Identifying those parents who need additional support with the transition process (Evangelou et al 2008).
TARGETED INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

In addition to various strategies implemented during the transition process, many schools and local authorities deliver intervention programmes as supplementary or early intervention to target specific barriers which families and young people may face in achieving smooth transitions to positive educational and employment destinations. These programmes may be short-term, ongoing, delivered at the school or outreach teams on sites (Jordan and Padfield, 2003), may target engagement, skill building, or support literacy and language learning. Some example programmes are described below. A number of models also used more unique initiatives to target highly specific challenges arising from very mobile, culturally diverse, and inexperienced users of formal education. These included: A ‘Transition Council’ to address issues central to pupils from Occupational travelling communities (ID 1, Appendix 5); and a drop-in ‘Transition Centre’ providing a central, expert service and which is can be accessed for transition queries and support at any time of the year (Case study 1).

Further case studies can be found in a thematically structured table in appendix 1, which considers the most common themes around mobile communities and educational transitions.

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND FAMILIES

- Parent-education programs such as “Strategies for Maximizing Homework Completion” (Cauley and Jovanovich, 2006: Id 22: Appendix 5) or language and literacy development.
- Programmes to increase social and support networks.
- Parent awareness programmes demonstrating the importance of family/child literacy and health.
- Whole family interventions such as the 'Transition to school' programme fostering parental involvement (parents and community involved in planning and delivery) and preparing the family for school and the transition process covering literacy, numeracy, social skills needed to support school life; and supported learning activities and 'Family Readiness Groups' (See case study 2).
SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Summer programmes to improve children's school readiness (Case study 3).
- Pen pal programme between children in the UK and pupils in their native countries (Id 4: Appendix 5).
- After-school programmes (e.g. ‘The Learnery’ in Messing, 2008) to support and extend school learning.
- College Enrichment and Transition programmes for young people to attain necessary prerequisites and skills for Further Education and work destinations. These may include cultural and social components, community based opportunities, work-based learning, opportunities where various subjects can be delivered on-site to young people. Programmes can have strong industry partnerships to increase work experience, skill building and employment opportunities (Id 30: Appendix 5).

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

- CPD such as staff cultural awareness and sensitivity, dealing with new arrivals, creating culturally relevant resources and lesson plans (Case study 4).
PRACTITIONERS’ INSIGHT

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Many practitioners championed adopting a personal and individualized approach as this allows schools and practitioners to identify and then meet the child’s and parents’ specific needs (see case study 5). This could relate to different aspects of the school system or routines such as creating a flexible timetable or arranging transport. Strategies may include staff visiting Traveller sites, ensuring families are provided with and understand information such as start dates and curriculum subjects, providing parents assistance with form filling, and offering direct forms of contact with Traveller Education workers who can form helpful links between families and schools.

'BEING ON SITE ENABLED ME TO BUILD UP MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANY FAMILIES WHOSE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES HAD BEEN LESS THAN SATISFACTORY.'
PRACTITIONER C

'I INFORM THE FAMILIES ABOUT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ...AND ARRANGE FOR A MEETING AT THE SCHOOL WITH THE PARENTS AND A MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES THE PARENTS MIGHT HAVE REGARDING SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION. IF THE PARENTS DECIDE NOT TO SEND THEIR CHILD TO A SECONDARY SCHOOL, I INFORM THEM ABOUT THEIR RIGHT TO HOME EDUCATE AND PROVIDE THEM WITH SUITABLE TEACHING MATERIALS AND WEBSITES.'
PRACTITIONER D

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

Training, CPD and good practice guidance are vital to support staff, schools and foster a sympathetic understanding of Traveller culture.
Partnerships with other agencies such as STEP, TENET, community link workers, Bilingual and Traveller support services, and health services enables targeted support, knowledge exchange and implementation of outreach provisions so that schools can help travelling communities achieve smooth transitions.

'THE LOCAL AUTHORITY HAD PORTACABINS ON SITE WHERE VARIOUS SUBJECTS COULD BE TAUGHT TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE...FOR EXAMPLE, A BIOLOGY OR MATHS TEACHER COULD DELIVER LESSONS AT THE SITE. THEY HAD HAIRDRESSING SKILLS DELIVERED IN PORTACABIN SETTINGS FOR A WHILE - THIS WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL AS SOME OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED TO TAKE THIS FORWARD AND WENT ON TO ATTEND THE LOCAL COLLEGE.'

PRACTITIONER G

---

AN INDIVIDUALISED APPROACH TO POSITIVE TRANSITIONS

The majority of practitioners emphasised the need to adopting an individualised approach to positive transitions. Strategies should be sensitive to the specific needs of a family.

THERE WAS A SPECIFIC CASE - A GIRL - A SCOTTISH TRAVELLER. THE FAMILY WANTED THEIR CHILD TO GO TO SCHOOL. INITIALLY, THE SCHOOL WAS INFLEXIBLE REGARDING THE ENROLMENT SYSTEM OR ATTENDANCE. FOR THIS FAMILY, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE CHILD DID NOT HAVE TO BEGIN SCHOOL FULL-TIME AS THERE WAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE OF PREVIOUS SCHOOLING. THE FAMILY HAD CONSISTENT HEALTH ISSUES WHICH WAS A BIT OF A BARRIER TO CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION. IT’S IMPORTANT FOR A SCHOOL TO BE FLEXIBLE AND OFFER PART-TIME PLACEMENT FIRST. THE BEST STRATEGY IS TO PROVIDE A VERY INDIVIDUALISED SERVICES AND APPROACH. YOU NEED TO ENGAGE IN ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CHILD....VISIT THE SCHOOL WITH
The child. In this specific case, the school offered additional visits so that the girl could familiarise herself with the setting. But the school extended the length of the tour so that the girl was shown around the entire school....this intimidated the girl and she thought this meant she had to attend the school full time. So communication is key. You need to keep the child and family informed and reassure them.

Interagency partnerships are very important...support for learning is very helpful and 'keep well' nurses visit the families on site. You need to take a holistic approach...everyone has important roles.

The girl is still attending school.

Practitioner F
CONCLUSION

This research offers insight into practitioners’ experiences of transitions and travelling communities’ and offers a glimpse into the complexity of these periods for all those involved. There are cases which resulted in positive transitions - for a range of complex reasons, this is not the case for the majority of travelling communities. For many families, despite the schools’, communities’ or practitioners’ best efforts, there remains little sustained engagement with education.

This research suggests that smooth transition to, between and beyond school relies on the ‘readiness’ of all those involved in the transition process. Building on these ideas, our model outlines strategies central to achieving 'readiness' for pupils, families and schools.

Good practice involves strong partnerships between different authorities, services and agencies to support smooth transition for children and young people from travelling communities. Successful transitions requires invested and long-term support and input from schools, Traveller Education Services, practitioners, and effective sharing of necessary information during transitions. Successful initiatives highlighted in the review were creative, targeted and worked in partnership with families and pupils. Beyond that, perceptions of formal education and barriers such as discrimination must be addressed for any significant impact on educational engagement is to be made.
REFERENCES


Mokapu Elementary School website http://www.mokapuelem.org/ Accessed 7.01.15


Young Minds Scotland websites http://www.youngminds.org.uk/ Accessed 12.1.15
## APPENDIX 1: THEMATICALLY ORGANISED APPROACHES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS RESULTING FROM THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME /TARGETED ISSUE</th>
<th>APPROACH &amp; STRATEGIES</th>
<th>CASE STUDY EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION (SEE APPENDIX 5 FOR MORE DETAIL USING REFERENCE ID #)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The student:**      | Emphasis on pupil voice and listening<br>Effective knowledge exchange and data gathering | **Id 1:** Swansea comprehensive school and innovative arrangements to help improve transition for Gypsy Traveller pupils.  

The school has created a ‘Transition Council’, organised and run by a pastoral assistant comprising of four Year 10 pupils and Year 6 representatives from each of the six feeder primary schools. They meet every six weeks over year and discuss central issues for pupils e.g. bullying. Council also answers questions that Year 6 representatives voice on behalf of their peers and then reported back.  

Transition Council has had a very positive impact on Year 6 attitudes to transition. The school has included its Year 10 Occupational Traveller pupil on the Transition Council.  

**Id 9: Transition strategies in American High school, California, USA.**  

One successful strategy is the 'Transition assessment' comprising of a questionnaire gathering feedback and information regarding pupil’s situation, wellbeing and... |
perspectives. Includes sections on personal management (I have a birth certificate, I know what to do in an emergency), personal power (I know how to control my emotions), social skills (I respect the property of others, I accept correction or advice), communication (when I talk to adults I am respectful and positive), self-advocacy, work habits, life-long learner (I feel positive about what I have learned in school, I can locate and use the library), getting a job, community participation (I know how to use public transportation, I respect and obey the laws of the community), technology skills. It promotes student’s self-awareness and provides educators with an idea of abilities, views and school readiness.

Online information such as Transition Success Tips and study guides for assignments, accessible as pdf file from their website.


**Id 20: Guidance on Improving Secondary Transition and Retention for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils, Cambridgeshire County Council**

The school took on board mother’s suggestion that her older daughter come to speak to current Year 6 pupils as believing that Traveller pupils may be more inclined to continue with Education if older Traveller pupils explained the challenges of employment without having been at school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Language and literacy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Id 7: Research in early childhood services in rural New South Wales, Australia, Successful transition to school</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualised and needs-based approach</td>
<td>A parent awareness program was implemented to advise parents on literacy, numeracy and health issues. Aboriginal children and families are encouraged to participate in supported learning activities. Encourage parents and community to participate in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the transition program. Facilitators of the programmes include a transition teacher and an Aboriginal Education Worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising awareness of the importance of literacy</td>
<td><strong>Id 22: Effective transition programmes for pupils entering into middle school and High school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing resources and activities to support literacy and learning in the home</td>
<td>Programmes and strategies adopt varied modes of presenting and communication information to pupils and families. For instance, collaborative work between teachers, families and students helped develop and present an “Introduction to Middle School” program using video, chat groups, and a visual handbook. Aspects of school routines are explained in practical ways in context whereby instead of giving written instructions, young people receive their locker and access combination prior to starting school which they are invited to practice during an informal visit. Coping skills workshops are provided around organization and homework completion, and students are contacted by practitioners prior to starting school via phone calls or postcards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translators/ bilingual staff members to support induction process</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing information in visual, creative and contextualised ways; and involving families in developing approaches to mitigate literacy and language barriers</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| School Bureaucracy: Access, induction and application process | Emphasis on building and maintaining relationships, personal contact
Individualised approach
Knowledge exchange
Raising awareness and understanding of transition and transfer procedures and requirements
Using a variety of means for communication and information sharing
Ensuring up-to-date information
Providing uniforms, transport and school meals | Id 10: ‘Chicago’s Staying Put’ project
School programs included providing lesson plans for teachers. E.g. Teachers assist in "My Best Year" folder for each student for duration of school year to document achievements, learning content and other information to help when transferring to a new school. Counsellors are also provided a set of entrance and exit questions designed to gather detailed information about transferring students.
A "If You Move: Your Children Could Lose More Than Their Next Door Neighbors" brochure was developed for families about the possible consequences of transferring to a different school. It provides information on potential negative educational consequences; explains parents and children rights; provides suggestions about alternatives to changing schools and advice on how best to handle unavoidable moves.
A "Don't Leave School Without It" checklist supports parents with a smooth transition suggesting the information they need or things they may need to know. Also, emphasising parent role in transition such as paying extra attention to the child’s schoolwork during the move, helping to organize around any new subjects, books, and schedules. |

Id 19: Transition strategies for service children in England
A handy practical tool for ensuring smooth transitions is the ‘Moving schools pack’ is
available online for families to access as a pdf. The pack contains three main resources for children and parents to support transitions

1. Information for parents
2. Children’s Activity Pack

The Children’s Activity Pack includes sections on ‘what do you enjoy doing?’ ‘Looking forward, looking back’ where children are to reflect on experiences and feelings about past and future learning and school life. The activities encourage children to record experiences such as photos, objects, examples of work. The pack also offers advice on how to maintain contact and sustain friendships such as using the templates for postcards and an address book to stay in touch. (Access the 20 page document to adapt for your own school at via the link in Appendix 5, Case study 19.)

| School Readiness: Unfamiliarity with routines, context, and rules of engagement | Flexible, whole-school approach  
Buddy system  
Induction Mentor  
Assigned staff member  
Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all those involved | **Id 12:** Transitions in Halton, Canada: School readiness through experience, familiarisation and skill building

The ‘EvenStart’ Program is a half-day summer program for children who have not experienced any form of educational setting such as nursery or childcare. It aims to help familiarise children with school structures and routines. The program also provides a context to develop social and literacy skills for children who may not have experienced contexts where these could adequately support these. Children are given
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Culture: Relevance of curriculum and cultural sensitivity</th>
<th>CPD</th>
<th>Id 4: A holistic approach to meeting the needs of new arrivals: many languages, many cultures, one community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using local cultural expertise from the community</td>
<td>New members of staff might accompany the head teacher on trips to countries of pupil origin thus gaining knowledge and awareness of children’s cultural, social and educational background. A ‘pen pal’ programme between children and schools in their country of origin allows children to share experiences and ideas. The school also draws from resources in the local community to ensure cultural relevance of curriculum, children’s learning and resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culturally relevant resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuity of Education and Relationships</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Id 3: An innovative approach used by a Swansea comprehensive school to help ensure continuity of learning and maintain school relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Learning:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Addressing interrupted learning experiences and gaps in education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parent involvement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis on individualised and multiagency approach</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Distance Learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting home-school links</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This pilot project provided the target pupil with a laptop (with mobile Wifi access) to take with him when his family were out of school and the local area. The Year 7 pastoral assistant kept in regular email contact with pupil and family and ensured that work in all subjects was sent to him electronically, with deadlines for completion. The programme allowed pupil to stay in regular contact with his friends from school and his tutor and this was invaluable in helping a smooth return after a long period of absence. It also supported some continuity of education.
**APPENDIX 2: PRACTITIONER CHECKLIST**

### Supporting transitions for pupils from travelling communities

**Before arrival**
- Identify a member of staff who will have responsibility for pupils from travelling communities and act as a family liaison.
- Make all staff aware of the expected arrival and any other important information about new pupils from travelling communities. This may include planned length of stay, cultural background, previous experience of schooling or languages spoken.
- Provide options of numerous visits to the school prior to arrival so that families can familiarise themselves with the setting, staff and have any questions answered.
- Adapt existing structures to ensure smooth transition and integration of pupil e.g. offering flexible timetables; phased induction; recognition of pupils existing skills; collaboration with Traveller Education Service to develop a culturally relevant curriculum.
- Gather accurate information on pupil’s academic level, support needs, and educational history.
- Ensure families have information on obtaining school essentials including school uniforms, school diary, and stationery.
- Explain school policy, practice, expectations and routines to the family.
- Identify most apt form of communication with families i.e. phone, text, visits, written correspondence.

**On arrival**
- Make families, children and young people feel welcome.
- Gather any additional and up-to-date information about the pupil and conduct initial assessments.
- Ensure the family is given a tour of the school. This should be done by an appropriate staff member or older pupil who can continue to act as a key person/buddy for the pupil once attending the school.
- Pupils should be provided with a map of the school that meets their level of literacy. Ensure the pupil can use it and explain where/ when they can access facilities such as toilets and water fountains.
- Pupils’ daily timetable and structure of the school day should be explained ensuring understanding.
- Inform families of whom to contact with any concerns.

**During and post-transition**
- Make sure that staff are regularly informed of any additional needs pupil may have and that this is disseminated across all relevant staff and departments.
- Put plans in place to improve and sustain relationships with parents to ensure regular contact, feedback and up-to-date information.
- Ensure parents continue to receive all necessary information by a means that they can access (e.g. phone call rather than a letter; visual guides).
- Provide and encourage parent (if appropriate) and pupil participation in school support strategies such as homework clubs, crèches, reading groups, extra-curricular activities and social events.
- Maintain and review support strategies with the aim of providing pupils with full curriculum access.
- Maintain partnerships with other agencies so that issues are pre-empted and necessary support can be put in place by all those involved (e.g. health/housing issue affecting child’s learning or attendance).
Supporting smooth transitions for pupils from travelling communities - Have you tried....

With support from parents, organising and running breakfast clubs, crèches and after school clubs? This can be a useful way of increasing parent involvement which in turn can improve relationships and communication between school and parents. Having parents organise clubs can give them the confidence and opportunity to suggest other initiatives that could be implemented to support them and other families. (See case study ID 4: DfES 2007)

Running classes for parents and caregivers such as language lessons or ICT workshops? These types of classes and workshops can improve essential skills for learning, daily life (e.g. Communicating with the school, seeking other services or advice) and supporting their child's learning (e.g. Extending learning from school, completing homework). Organising field trips to galleries, libraries, youth clubs, museums, can encourage families to use and visit these services, form relationships with each other and educators, as well as extend literacy i.e. Create travel e-journals to share with other families or family members, or new class teachers. (See case study ID 5: DfES 2007)

Helping parents and students to create DVD based lessons and information sharing? By supporting families to create their own useful resources means that tools will be relevant and personalised. This may include topics such as, equipping students with knowledge and understanding of how to access online or public information...covering topics such as 'using media' 'research or study skills' or they could document personal experiences of transitioning to school. (See case study ID 6)

Creating online tools so that resources and information is accessible to families 24/7? Websites could include links to useful information, resources and websites and blogs and Vlogs documenting experiences of transitions - what to expect, challenges faced, highlights, positive outcomes, useful tips for achieving smooth transition (e.g. Things to do in
preparation, people to speak to, networking opportunities, information about teachers, school, local community and so forth). (See case study ID 12: Ready, Steady, Whoa!)

Organising involvement events with activities to encourage engagement with future classmates and other families? This could be in the form or a sports day, summer BBQ, or bringing in an artist to build relationships, create support networks, and encourage creative collaboration and consultation with families. (See case study ID 17)

In order for new families and pupils transitioning, talks from older Traveller pupils can be an effective and meaningful way for sharing experiences to which families can relate. Established Traveller pupils can provide insight into positive experiences and outcomes of transition as well as the employment opportunities offered by Education. (See case study ID 20)

Organising weekly coffee mornings for parents provides a strong social network for families to seek advice, share experiences and offer support. If parents organise these events then they can ensure that the structure and content of meetings meets their needs. (See cases study ID 22)

Using pictorial forms and letters to encourage and support parent-school communications? For instance, parents can indicate with a tick the reason for a child's absence (next to image of poorly child, or an image of Dentists surgery and so forth). This will mitigate the challenges arising from poor literacy and intimidation of heavily text-based communications. (See case study ID 28)
APPENDIX 4: SEARCH MECHANISMS

Objectives: To systematically explore Scottish and international case studies on successful transitions models to identify characteristics of programmes which lead to smoother transitions in education.

Approach to review

The review will begin by identifying key literature, educational bodies and relevant websites in order to collate a list of key words and phrases. This list of key phrases and terms will be used in generic search engines and databases to source relevant case studies on transition models.

Search phrases and key words:

Successful transition models, successful transition to school, successful transition from primary to secondary school, family engagement and transitions, school transitions, effective transitions, transitions programmes, transitions strategies

Focus of review:

Review of successful models of transitions

Period:

2000-2015
APPENDIX 5: LITERATURE REVIEW

ID 1: SWANSEA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AND INNOVATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO HELP IMPROVE TRANSITION FOR GYPSY TRAVELLER PUPILS.

Source

(Estyn, 2011:14)

Context

Penyrheol Comprehensive School in Swansea. Pupils from the families of Occupational Travellers who are based in the school’s catchment area for part of the year.

Issues

Pupils are out of the area during summer causing problems with transition between Year 6 and Year 7.

TRANSITION STRATEGIES

School has built good links with families. Parents try to bring their children back to the area for the transition day visits. This is not always possible therefore the school has alternative strategies in place by building more transition links with feeder primary schools.

Action: The school has created a ‘Transition Council’, organised and run by a pastoral assistant comprising of four Year 10 pupils and Year 6 representatives from each of the six feeder primary schools. They meet every six weeks over year and discuss central issues for pupils e.g. bullying. Council also answers questions that Year 6 representatives voice on behalf of their peers. The answers are then reported back.

OUTCOMES

Transition Council has had a very positive impact on Year 6 attitudes to transition. The school has included its Year 10 Occupational Traveller pupil on the Transition Council.
ID 2: INDUCTION INTO SECONDARY SCHOOL, NORTH OF ENGLAND- STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION.

Source


Context

Secondary College in North of England

Issues

Families have negative view of formal education.

Transition strategies

- Providing support with various admission procedures such as form filling.
- Guided tour of school including meeting staff and pupils
- Home visits by staff
- Ensuring important aspects of school routines are explained through various means of communication
- Phased integration
- Named staff member or ‘buddy’ for children
- Ensuring parents-staff maintain communication over the course of induction periods
- Staff CPD – positive models of Gypsy/Roma families/ images/publications- identifying and awareness of specific issues affecting families.

Outcomes

School identified that effective transitions may help children have more positive feelings towards learning and school in general as well as raise children’s motivation and overall achievement in school.
ID 3: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH USED BY A SWANSEA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL TO HELP TO ENSURE CONTINUITY OF LEARNING


Context

Penyrheol Comprehensive School in Swansea. Four pupils from Occupational Traveller families.

Issues

Occupational Traveller families - parents work on fairs across UK April to October. As a result, pupils miss significant amount of school – negative impact on academic attainment and ability to re-integrate into school life after long absence. In order to tackle problem, the school and Swansea Traveller education service, conducted a pilot project in 2010 with a Year 7 pupil where the school considered a number of ways to maintain closer contact with the pupil when travelling. These were discussed with the family before a final strategy was agreed.

Transition strategies

This pilot project provided the target pupil with a laptop (with mobile Wifi access) to take with him when his family were out of school and the local area. The Year 7 pastoral assistant kept in regular email contact with pupil and family and ensured that work in all subjects was sent to him electronically, with deadlines for completion.
Outcome

On the whole, the strategy was considered a success.

Allowed pupil to stay in regular contact with his friends from school and his tutor and this was invaluable in helping a smooth return after a long period of absence. It also supported some continuity of education.

On account of successful impact of pilot on achievement and social skills- the school intends to make similar provision for all other pupils from Occupational Traveller families over the spring/summer months.

ID 4: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF NEW ARRIVALS: MANY LANGUAGES, MANY CULTURES, ONE COMMUNITY. DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (2007)

Source


Context

School- large (411 pupils + 59 nursery children) urban/community primary school in the north
west of England.

**Issues**

School has high mobility rate (e.g. in 2006 only six children transitioned through the full school system- from Nursery to Year 6). 98% of children are from minority groups. 11% of children have been identified as having learning difficulties and two children have special educational needs (SEN).

**Transition strategies**

The school prioritises the forming of strong relationships between school and parents, local community and religious leaders and other national and international agencies so that children and staff benefit from a range of expertise. Another key aim of the school is to respect and value the cultural heritage of the children. These priorities are achieved using the following strategies:

- New members of staff might accompany the head teacher on trips to countries of pupil origin thus gaining knowledge and awareness of children’s cultural, social and educational background.
- Pen pal programmes exist between children and school in home country to share experiences and ideas.
- The school draws from resources in the local community and relationships with international schools.

The school also understands the important of the induction process and thus a number of key initiatives are in place for new arrivals joining the school during the year:

- New arrivals go into class with bilingual teaching assistants.
- New students are assessed once settled to review whether appropriate intervention strategies and support are present.
- Buddy system - matches new arrivals to children who (possibly) speak their first language. Lunchtime buddies help children select food they would like and to supervise in playground.
- Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) coordinator developed new arrival assessment pack for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. All teachers provided with this and suggested
strategies for working with bilingual learners.
– The school employs multilingual and multicultural staff – therefore many of the
  languages spoken by children are spoken by members of staff.
– Opportunities for initial assessments to be in home languages.
– The school provides a breakfast club, after-school clubs, crèche supported by
  parent helpers, runs classes for parents and caregivers.
– Provides prayer room and halal food at all meal times.

Outcomes

The strategies contribute to providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment for
children. Children’s satisfaction is clearly articulated by the School Council. Having bilingual
staff considered a great advantage as inclusive approach and contributes to success of
integrating new arrivals.

ID 5: PARTNERSHIP WORK TO MEET THE LANGUAGE AND LEARNING NEEDS OF NEW
ARRIVALS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Source

Department for Education and Skills (2007), New Arrivals Excellence Programme: A resource
to support the development of induction procedures for new arrivals, Case study booklet,
Primary and Secondary National Strategies: Guidance- Curriculum and Standards, Crown:
Context

Large urban primary in London with 440 children. Over 96% bilingual. Located in an area of socio-economic deprivation and there is considerable mobility.

Issues

50 newly arrived bilingual learners between September 2006 and March 2007. These new arrivals speak Panjabi, Urdu, Somali, Tamil, Malayalam, Pashto, Farsi, Russian, Albanian, Polish and Romanian. Many children arrive in the school new to English and without prior schooling. Some children have had to wait without schooling for up to nine months until a place becomes available.

Transition strategies

- Prioritising communication and teamwork with parents, carers, and staff
- Before admission, the head teacher meets with parents and caregivers to find out about their background and to see what problems they are facing e.g. housing and transportation
- Forms are completed together with support from translators
- Children are introduced to (bilingual) teaching assistants
- Buddy accompanies children on a tour of the school and offer general support in the playground/ lunchtime.
- Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) coordinator - works in partnership with class teachers - suggests resources and strategies that can help. Ensures that new members of staff understand how the school’s induction procedures should be implemented. Provides teachers with an induction pack. Includes:
  - A profile of each child using their home language
  - An initial language assessment using the QCA English as an additional language (EAL) step descriptors.
  - Suggests small achievable targets for child, teachers, and parents.
Various classes organised e.g. ICT classes, refugee support classes – include external visits to the library, galleries, museums and gardens.

Outcomes

Most of Year 6 attained at least level 4 in all three subjects at the end of 2006.

Children expressed their appreciation of the support from buddies, class teachers, teaching assistants and the EMA coordinator.

Staged support is built into inclusive classroom practice.

Cross-cultural issues are dealt with in a sensitive and positive way.

Overall positive effect on children in school.

ID 6: ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN THE CURRICULUM (A COURSE FOR STUDENTS IN KEY STAGES 4 AND 5)

Source


Context

Large mixed (11-18) urban comprehensive high school in west London.

Issues

60
High Mobility. Intake is ethnically very diverse - 60% of pupils are learning EAL. Attainment on entry is below average - outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 have risen over the past few years. A specific feature of the school is the provision it makes for students who arrive in the UK at 16 and over with minimal or no English.

Transition Strategies

EAL department in the school has developed a wide range of strategies to support developing bilingual learners:

- Buddy system for new arrivals
- Initial profiling
- Short-term induction courses
- In class partnership working with subject specialists
- Support for pupils to gain accreditation in their first languages
- Mentoring by sixth formers

The English Language and Literacy in Curriculum Learning (EL&L in CL) course provides accreditation for EAL learners aged 14–19. Students in both key stages follow academic or vocational courses in addition to this course. Two main themes: (i) Negotiating social relations in school, such as making informed decisions, asking for help and responding to racism and sexism, (ii) Finding and using curriculum information, including topics such as using media, note-taking, using libraries, using public sector and public information (Topics are relevant to the students in their other curriculum courses).

Lessons filmed for DVD - part of the ‘Using media’ and ‘Using public sector and public information’ topics (part of Theme 2, Finding and using curriculum information). The aim of the Year 12 lesson, for example, was to equip students with the understanding and knowledge of how to access public information.

Outcomes

In summer 2006 the first group of students completed the EL&L in CL course and all received accreditation at level 1 (GNVQ equivalent) or level 2 (GCSE equivalent). All the students chose to continue with their studies either at a local college or at the school. Fostered diverse career aspirations in young people. Young people enjoyed the research and plan of activities part of the programmes most.
ID 7: RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES IN RURAL NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Source


Context

10 sites across rural New South Wales.

Issues

High proportion of Aboriginal/Indigenous school enrolments; high rates of mobility; limited or no access to preschool.

Transition Strategies

- The Transition to School program for Indigenous children involved: Preparing children in the areas of literacy, numeracy and social skills; Encourage Aboriginal children and families to participate in supported learning activities; Encourage parents and community to participate in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the transition program.
- Parent awareness program: Advise parents on literacy, numeracy and health issues
- Facilitators of programmes include a transition teacher and an Aboriginal Education Worker within each school who were trained in topics such as cross-cultural awareness.
- Home visiting programme (with half of families)
- Using culturally-appropriate tools for assessment at entry into Kindergarten
Outcomes

All participating children entered preschool the following year.

Improvement in smoothness of transition from home to kindergarten.

92/100 pupils satisfied services’ standards of (pre)school readiness in literacy and numeracy.

Following one term of school there was an increase in achievement in numeracy while speaking and listening, reading and writing was matched non-Indigenous children (i.e. targeting gap in learning).

Aboriginal community became more involved in school activities.

Successful outcomes attributed to:

- The positive partnerships developed between the schools and communities.
- The positive partnerships developed between school staff, children and families.
- Fostering and maintaining home-school contact.
- Having a permanent/familiar teacher employed for the transition program (i.e. familiar with school routine, context etc.).
Source


Context

Karama Primary School, Darwin, Australia. Approximately 440 primary age pupils; 72 in preschool. Large Indigenous population.

Issues

Low socio-economic area. Up to twenty extended family members in a house; High dropout rates from primary to secondary school; High proportion of Indigenous pupils perceiving high school system too rigid. Unfamiliar environment and routine e.g. many different teachers-whereas in primary- extended contact with one teacher. Or- in primary school where suspension is not common practice, to high school where it is very common which can lead to multiple suspension then eventual drop out.

Transition strategies

Counseling pupils to increase awareness that they need to be responsible for their own actions as there are due consequences.

- Make them feel appreciated, valued
- Develop understanding that front office is a safe place.
- Listening to children
- Show respect
- Addressing issues such as fears of transition, bullying, academic achievement

Outcomes

Stage two of the project- teacher spends four mornings a week at the High school and the rest of the school week in primary school to bridge years.

School reviewing courses so that they can provide ones which children feel comfortable with
and engaged by.

ID 9: TRANSITION STRATEGIES IN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL, CALIFORNIA, USA.

Source

Context
Freemont, California, USA.

Transition strategies
Transition assessment: The assessment comprises of a questionnaire gathering feedback and information regarding pupil's situation and wellbeing and perspectives. Includes sections on personal management (I have a birth certificate, I know what to do in an emergency), personal power (I know how to control my emotions), social skills (I respect the property of others, I accept correction or advice), communication (when I talk to adults I am respectful and positive), self-advocacy, work habits, life-long learner (I feel positive about what I have learned in school, I can locate and use the library), getting a job, community participation (I know how to use public transportation, I respect and obey the laws of the community), technology skills.

Transition Success Tips FUSD accessible as pdf file from website.

Further materials to support transition in form of knowledge and study assistance such as a ‘Study Guide in Assignment’.

Early Assessment Program assesses whether pupils have colleague level math and English.
ID 10: ‘CHICAGO’S STAYING PUT’ PROJECT

Source

Context
Chicago elementary school only 50% of its students remain enrolled in the school over three-year period.

Issues
Highly mobile student population- challenges and disruption: interruption of students' learning, disruption of classroom routines; school planning and organisation, affecting student achievement, classroom instruction; lower academic progress of highly mobile students than that of settled students- can be almost a year behind in progress. Schools often do not have a systematic approach i.e. organizational response.

The majority of the responsibility falls to the classroom teacher. Teacher generally has limited information about mobile students e.g. past performance or current needs. Teachers cope in various ways to the high levels of student instability in classrooms. Slowing down the curricular pace also decreases the opportunity to learn for all students. Teachers’ focus tends to be immediate issues and solutions e.g. which class to place new students or how to deal with disruptive behaviour.

Transition strategies
- Encouraging the cooperation of schools, local authorities, communities, and families who all play interdependent roles in successful transition and overall education of the child.

- ‘Staying out project’
  o Focusing on reducing mobility and supporting transitions
  o Clearly outlined roles for school administrators, principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, parents, and pupils.
  o Individual school programs- providing lesson plans for teachers. E.g. Teachers assist in "My Best Year" folder for each student for duration of school year.
  o Counsellors are provided a set of entrance and exit questions designed to gather detailed information about transferring students.
  o "If You Move: Your Children Could Lose More Than Their Next Door Neighbors" brochure developed to inform the community of the possible consequences of transferring to a different school. Provides information on potential negative educational consequences; explains parents and children rights; provides suggestions about alternatives to changing schools and advice on how best to handle unavoidable moves.
  o "Don't Leave School Without it" checklist supports parents with a smooth transition.
  o Paying extra attention to the child's schoolwork during the move, helping to organize around any new subjects, books, and schedules

- ‘Community Schools in Chicago’ initiative
  o This project combines educational practices with various in-house services to ensure that children are prepared to learn.
  o Children given range of opportunities to play chess/ sports, work on computers, engage in art and music, get assistance with homework and so forth.
  o Families and community leaders encouraged to play very active roles in these schools.
  o Parents encouraged to be involved in their children's education. Therefore there are also adult education classes, advice and support, opportunities to network or create their own programs.
  o All stakeholders are encouraged to be involved in the planning and monitoring of programmes. All programmes are flexible and offered at different times during day, out of school hours and terms (e.g. summer months, evenings etc.)
ID 11: TRANSITION STRATEGIES IN PLACE AT MOKAPU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN HAWAII, USA.

Source
Mokapu Elementary School website http://www.mokapuelem.org/ accessed 7.01.15

Context
Mokapu Elementary school, Hawaii, USA. Located on the Marine Corps Base, which is under continual deployment and serves both Marine and Navy personnel and their families. Approximately 800 students Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 6.

Issues
Mobile populations- some schools in Hawaii have large volume of incoming military children/families.

Transition strategies
The Transition Centre

- 'Transition and orientation experience addressing the needs of mobile students'.
- Supports transition process for all incoming and outgoing pupils and their families
- Offers information in response to any questions new families may have
- Support Children and families achieve successful adjustment through e.g. assessments in maths and reading, promote new ways for parents to be involved with children and school.

The School Liaison Program is a Marine Corps Community Service (MCCS) which provides families with information relating to the education. A School Liaison officer facilitates this process. Services include: support for inbound and outbound transfers; Promotes parent involvement in Hawaii schools; Assists families with familiarisation to policies and procedures;
Secures access to resources for schools serving military children; Aims to foster communication between families and schools.

ID 12: TRANSITIONS IN HALTON, CANADA

Source
Accessed 5.01.15.

Context
Halton District schools, Ontario, Canada.

Transition strategies

- Visits to school before starting
- During kindergarten, parents encouraged to look ahead to preparing children for school
- Various programmes to support different stages of children’s transitions
- EvenStart Program: Half-day summer program for children who have not experienced nursery, childcare or preschool. It helps familiarise children with routine and structure of school and develop social and literacy skills
- Ready Set Go! And Parent connection workshops: Parent workshops to provide tips and guidance about e.g. Playing with Children, feeling in control and confident with the process of starting school.
- Ready, Set, Whoa! ‘Supporting Your Teen to Thrive, Not Just Survive, the Transition to High School’. Materials, support for parents and students transitioning to high school. Links, blogs by parents and students about experiences.
ID 13: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES TO FOSTER SMOOTH TRANSITION FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Source


Transition Strategies

Continual Professional Development

The Military Children through School Transitions: Foundations-MCEC is an interactive professional development institute focusing on the military connected child’s experience with transitions. 2-day course includes face-to-face instruction and group work with up to 50 people per session.

Topics covered include: specific issues relating to military children and transitions, Smooth and effective transitions, academics and implications of transitions, military culture, navigating a New School, Community, and Culture, Creating an Action Plan.

Outcomes

CPD initiative provides an environment for educational practitioners in formal settings and community to have access to professional networks, technologies, resources, and support systems. The MCEC assists professionals remain expertly trained and current on the dynamic
and diverse educational experience that impacts the transitioning student and issues arising from highly mobile populations.

Learning outcomes for staff include understanding how transition and separation impact the military family and using research and networking activities educators.

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**ID 14: TRANSITION GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Source**


**Strategies**

Providing guidance and information on topics around transitions and the guide includes many quotes from young people’s about their experiences.

- How young people are feeling about the transition
- What can I do to get ready? (offering advice on what young people can organise or do to make the transition easier and smoother)
- Starting at secondary school
- People who can help
- Bullying
- Things to do in school and out of school.
ID 15: TRANSFER STRATEGIES AT BANNERMAN HIGH SCHOOL, GLASGOW, UK.

Source
Bannerman High School website 2001-2015
http://www.bannermanhigh.glasgow.sch.uk/TextList/TextList.aspx?SectionId=2d54b67a-56a4-47fb-9149-df71b79ba72b

Context
Bannerman High School, Glasgow Road, Glasgow, UK. Comprehensive school with approximately 1300 pupils S1 to S6.

Transition strategies
Primary/Secondary Transfer Arrangements
- Regular meetings between Heads of feeder Primary Schools and Heads of management to discuss curriculum and procedure.
- Pupils visit secondary school and secondary staff attend primary school to answer questions.
- Parents are invited to meet with Head Teachers to discuss organisation of the school and curriculum, philosophy and available support.
- Identifying the particular needs of the new intake of pupils by meeting their teachers and discussing progress or challenging.
- Induction booklets provided to pupils.
- Throughout the year, Support for Learning teaching staff, from secondary school works within associated primary schools as a co-teacher, building rapport with pupils.
- Pupils attend school for 3 days prior to entry.
Source
Leith Primary School website http://leithprimary.org/wordpress/information/transition/

Context
Leith Primary School. The school serves a diverse catchment area and has approx. 270 children P1-P7 as well as a nursery.

Transition strategies
Nursery to primary school transition.
Each child has a ‘transfer of information’ record which is created by nursery staff. This ensures a smooth transition as well as continuity of education for children.
Families and children are invited to visit the associated primary school.

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ID 17: TRANSITION MODELS AT DUDDINGSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

Source
Duddingston Primary School website http://www.duddingston.edin.sch.uk/

Context
Duddingston Primary School, Edinburgh, UK. Approximately 380 pupils.

Transition strategies
Transition to High School Policy

- Identify and provide additional support for individuals who might find transition especially difficult and implement appropriate support e.g. visiting on alternative/earlier times
- Communication and build relationship between primary and secondary school-sharing information on attainment and achievement. Including: Cluster Transfer Form; Assessment results in Reading and Mathematics; Health Care and Learning Plans; P7 Profiles (from Session 2011/12); Cluster Writing Jotter; PPR files

- Communication and building relationship between school and parents e.g. through meetings/visits, tour of school

- Implementing a holistic view of the child inclusive of social, emotional and behavioural issues. E.g. through effective information sharing and communication

- Staff meetings to discuss and implement transitions strategy

- Close collaboration between Primary School staff and ASL staff at high schools to ensure continuity and consistency of meeting specific individual needs.

- P6 pupils go through a ‘Planning for High School’ process. Encourages smooth transition for high school colleagues through forward planning.

- Involvement events to engage in activities with their future classmates e.g. Sports days

- Prospective high school staff included in important meetings such as Child Planning Meetings or Literacy Consultations to ensure a shared understanding/future action.

- Two day visit to high school. Pupils follow a timetable of lessons with their new class as they would in S1. A group work session for P7s led by high school pupils offering insight into school life and opportunities for P7 pupils to ask questions. Practical topics are discussed such as lunch routine and uniforms.

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of students, policy and practice.

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**ID 18: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE EDUCATION ACTIVITY (DODEA) SCHOOL SYSTEM.**

**Source**

Context

Examining a system characterised by high student mobility: The U.S. Department of Defence Education Activity (DoDEA) school system. Research sites include 15 middle schools located in 10 school districts across the USA, Germany, and Japan.

"High mobility is "just part of life," as one teacher remarked during our site visit, not part of the problem" p167. Study conducted by the Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University focusing on system wide governance structures, school conditions, instructtional policies, teacher characteristics, and administrative practices. 130 interviews were carried out with teachers, parents and other stakeholders as well as classroom observations. school and district documents were gathered such as curriculum guides and benchmark standards, staff development plans, student/family demographic data, school handbooks, and parent newsletters.

Issues

Military personnel spend approximately three years at a military post before reassignment. school populations are in constant flux with highly mobile students. Missing school records from previous educational experiences.

Transition Strategies

- Staff in DoDEA schools share a deep understanding of military life such as high mobility, redeployment, and time away from home

- Despite high transience of students, teachers are unfazed by the constant flux - low staff turnover - stable staff team who have a sense of personal accountability, very experienced dealing with mobile students, and have a proactive approach to educating a highly transient population. Individualised approach- e.g. When previous school records are not forwarded for students staff will conduct informal assessments of student progress by asking students a course related questions on content and material individualised, immediate, flexible response to learning needs. "We find a good starting point for them or we provide an alternative assignment until we find one. With so much mobility, we've learned to adapt." P172.
- Assigned counsellor who meets incoming families and takes through orientation. Sets up buddy system.

- High Staffing necessary to meet the technical challenges posed by high mobility e.g. full-time registration and records clerks who are focus on quick and efficient transfer of student records.

- Schools are prepared for special circumstances and stresses which mobile families may face such as particular care and attention given to students as part of mainstream "teaching" who may face unsettling Family periods where a parent is away from home for long periods for training etc. as well as Family Readiness Groups and individually developed Family Care Plans function.

- 'Chain of concern'

- "The MoA requires schools and districts to model "best practices" in terms of communication and coordination strategies associated with transitioning high school students. These efforts include timely transfer of records; efficient record keeping, articulated graduation requirements, and clearly specified course transfer agreements. This system wide and outside of the system coordination effort signifies a heightened awareness and a commitment to the issues associated with high mobility students. It also underscores the value of an approach that considers high mobility "a way of life" rather than an intractable problem. This is perhaps the "best lesson" to be learned from Department of Defense schools." P175.

ID 19: TRANSITION STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE CHILDREN IN ENGLAND

Source


Context

Schools in England. SCE provides schools and educational support for children of the UK armed forces, Ministry of Defence personnel and MOD sponsored organisations stationed overseas. SCE is part of the MOD Directorate Children and Young People together with the Children’s Education Advisory Service.

Issues

Mobile students, continuity of Education, access and enrolment.

Transition strategies

‘Moving schools pack’: Available online as a pdf. The pack contains three main resources for families to support transitions: Information for parents; children’s activities; Schooling History.

Children’s Activity Pack: Includes sections on ‘what do you enjoy doing?; ‘Looking forward, looking back’ where children are to reflect on experiences and feelings about past and future education/school life. Encourages children to record experiences e.g. photos, objects; examples of work; offers advice and ways of maintain friendships and contact e.g. templates for postcards and address book.


‘Service pupil premium’: The service premium is additional funding provided to schools under section 14 of the Education Act 2002 for the purposes of supporting the pastoral needs of the children of Armed Services personnel. Admission authorities must not refuse a service child a place because the family does not currently live in the area, or reserve blocks of places for these children; b) ensure that arrangements in their area support the Government’s commitment to removing disadvantage for service children.
ID 20: IMPROVING SECONDARY TRANSITION AND RETENTION FOR GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PUPILS.

Source

Context
Cambridgeshire, UK

Issues
Low level of academic attainment and achievement

Low levels of successful transitions to and retention at secondary education.

Highest reported rates of Special Educational Needs and exclusions.

Parents may have had little or no experience of school structures and systems of the secondary education setting; challenge the relevance of the secondary curriculum and may have concerns about the cultural; cultural and family issues will take precedence over education.
Parents having real and perceived fears for the safety and well-being of their children.

**Transition Strategies**

Providing guidance to help schools overcome barriers and bring about successful transitions of GRT primary children to secondary education.

*Year 6-7 transfer and newly-arrived and highly mobile pupils (at any stage of education).*

**Three key elements for success:**

1. *Children’s coping strategies*

2. *Home-school relationship*

3. *Partnership working*

- Ensure families have named staff members for individualized support
- Flexible induction programme
- Create culturally affirmative and inclusive ethos
- Support structures such as homework clubs and buddy systems
- Visits between partner schools
- Meetings to be held with staff from both primary and secondary schools and parents
- Collaborative transition approach
- Partnerships through effective communication, discussion and review
- Recognition of pupils existing family and life skills
- Personalised learning approaches
- Flexible curriculum opportunities
- Distance learning programmes (internet or paper-based)
- Talks from older Traveller pupils to provide insight into positive experiences and employment opportunities offered by education
ID 21:  HEAD START CHILDREN GO TO KINDERGARTEN.

Source


Context

USA. This report is the fourth of series documenting the progress of a cohort of 3- to 4- year olds who entered the Head Start programme in 2006.

Transition strategies

Based on teacher reports, the most common activities to ensure smooth transition from preschool to school were:

- Families visiting the preschool programme and providing parents with orientation opportunities
- Providing information to parents via either phone or mail
- Parent involvement in/engagement with preschool e.g. attending parent-teacher conferences
ID 22: EFFECTIVE TRANSITION PROGRAMMES FOR PUPILS ENTERING INTO MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

Source

Context
Department of Foundations of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

Issues
High drop-out rates and poor achievement at middle school/high school at these stages. Unsuccessful transitions can be due to poor parental support, pupils not adequately prepared (Anderson et al. 2000) academic success, work habits, conformity to adult standards, and coping strategies for activities such as keeping track of assignments and resolving conflicts with peers.

Transition strategies

Strategies for Academic Challenges

- Provide information about academic content through school counselors and administrators of visits, invite students to visit school Teachers at new school present information about expectations, homework, responsibilities at feeder school.
- Hold open day for families to showcase current students and activities
- Provide coping skills curriculum: good study skills, organization, skills to get homework done

Strategies for Procedural Challenges
- Introduce school procedures before children begin school.
  - Invite students to visit school and shadow students at next level, orientation programs, tour of new school, meet students, receive locker and combination to practice, receive schedules, and find classrooms
  - Meet school guidance counselors and administrators to give pupils an idea of a “typical school day”
  - Work with teachers and students to develop and present an “Introduction to Middle School” program (video, chat groups, handbook).

- Support adhering to new routines and procedures
  - Distribute school handbook
  - Address concerns about logistics, finding classes, lockers, use student ambassadors to establish personal links.

Strategies for Social Challenges

- Support students deal with social concerns
  - Plan panels of students from new school for questions and answers, dispelling myths; Host spring social at new school; Create pen pal programs between students. Assign students to teachers and/or teams before the end of the school year and encourage teachers or teams to contact students over the summer by phone or postcard. Send letters home in summer welcoming students and inviting them to school activities.
  - At the new school: sponsor big sister/brother program; Identify students with behavior problems and provide needed counseling or social support from peers; Use student ambassadors to establish personal links, awareness groups where students discuss common problems, establish first-year support groups for counselors to help students with transition issues; develop activities for new starts a picnic, and a “don’t wear this to school” fashion show; provide more personal learning environment—small classes, cooperative learning, team teaching to facilitate friendships, belonging, motivation and academic success; Identify ways for students to be comfortable in new school.

- Transition strategies for parents
  - Invite parents to meet with administrators and counselors before transition to discuss curriculum, policies, learn about challenges ahead from staff and students, tour the building/classrooms, and meet teachers; Invite parents to visit new school with students and participate in conferences with counselors; school newsletters to incoming parents, provide each parent with courses, registration forms, brochures, parent support group information.
- Host a parent coffee morning each week during the initial months to discuss policies, issues, provide information, design parent-education programs such as “Strategies for Maximizing Homework Completion”. Conduct sessions for parents of ESL students, translators.

- Transition strategies for Counselors/Teachers/Administrators
  - Identify students at risk and inform necessary staff
  - Conduct meetings and share information between counselors and special education teachers
  - Collect information to learn about students/teacher/parents views
  - Invite staff members of the new school so that families can have questions answered.

Outcomes

The ‘school within a school’ showed promise – demonstrating a decrease in dropout rates and increases in pass rates for the state math test.

Effective transition system involved continuous/adaptable planning among teachers and school management (Bottoms, 2002).

Support needs to be informational, tangible, emotional and social (Anderson et al., 331), and be provided by parents, peers and teachers.

Transition activities can target students academically, behaviorally, or socially – with follow up.

Assuring that every student has an adult in the new school committed to his or her success.
SOURCE


Context

Primary School, Australia.

Transition strategies

- Strengthening parent knowledge and confidence to manage the transition process
- Increasing parent involvement in children’s learning
- Improving children’s adjustments to starting school.

Outcomes

- Parents participating in the program had positive outcomes in parental self-efficacy, involvement.
- Overall parents expressed high program satisfaction.

ID 24: MODELS OF EDUCATION FOR ROMA FAMILIES, INCLUDING TRANSITION STRATEGIES, IN BULGARIA.

Source

Kyuchukov, Hristo (2007) Good practices in Roma education in Bulgaria during the years of transition, Intercultural Education, 18:1, 29-39, DOI: 10.1080/14675980601143645

Context

84
Bulgaria during transition to democratic society including projects carried out in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools and with parents.

**Issues**

Challenges of Roma education due to changes in societal attitudes towards the bilingualism of Roma children and cultural differences, little to no cultural sensitivity, no equality, bilingualism not valued considered disadvantage e.g. During communist rule- Romani language forbidden in public places therefore Roma language not taught in schools (instead national tongue- Bulgarian).

**Transition strategies**

Diversity Balkan Foundation for Cross-Cultural Education and Understanding (‘Diversity’ BFCCEU- NGO) and the Socrates project implemented/funded various initiatives.

*Home literacy project* - to support parents prepare children for schooling e.g. children’s language skills.

*Intercultural education in kindergarten project* - reinforce bilingual education in an intercultural environment within the kindergarten.

*Domestic Kindergartens* - where teachers would engage street children. Support school readiness for transition into first grade of school.

*Desegregation project* - ‘Bussing’ model (from USA during 1950s-1960s) to decrease segregation- providing transportation of children to school, provided pupils with free breakfast/ textbooks; establishing good connections with the schools, lectures for parents.

- Developing technology for education in a multiethnic environment.
- CPD for teachers e.g. democratization and acceptance of multiculturalism for educational purposes.
Valuing culture, fostering cultural sensitivity through e.g. culturally relevant and appropriate resources and books.

ID 25: ARBROATH ACADEMY [AND ONLINE TOOLS TO SUPPORT TRANSITIONS]

Source

Parenting across Scotland & Arbroath Academy websites


Context

Arbroath Academy, secondary school, Arbroath, Angus, UK.

Transition Strategies

- Transferring educational data about pupils through the ScotXed [Scottish Exchange of Data] programme. National ‘School to School Transfer System’ acts as a ‘hub’ for supporting data exchange within the education system in Scotland. Data on pupils collected by schools, local authorities and ScotXed e.g. DOB, postcode, registration for free school meals, whether a pupil is looked after by his/her local authority ASN, EAL, attendance, absence and exclusions. Data is also shared with NHS ensuring the council and NHS databases are as accurate and up-to-date.

- Education Maintenance Allowance: Weekly payment of up to £30 to pupils from low income families who are 16 years of age, and staying on at school.

- Transfer to secondary school protocol e.g. step by step procedures such as ...In the December prior to pupil transitioning, parents receive a letter with information on catchment area school; Parents must make a ‘placing request’ to go to a different school if they so wish.
Referral to “Top ten tips for parents and families” pages on parenting across Scotland’ website. Help and advice for parents to support child’s transition to secondary e.g. talking and listening/ discussing the move, visiting the new school, show interest, school activities and contact.

ID 26: GOOD PRACTICE FOR SCHOOL INTEGRATION IN HUNGARY

Source


Context

Formal and non-formal educational settings in Hungary. Specific case study focuses on Turna primary school- 90 pupils. Socially disadvantaged are with Roma children making up approximately 60% of school population.

Issues

Early dropout, negative experiences, discontinuing education if father drops out of labour market. Not very good relationship between school and community, families not interested in education. Roma parents fear that their children will experience racism and face violence against secondary school.

Transition strategies
Study aimed to identify key elements of good practices for integrating Roma/Gypsy children. These include creative pedagogical methods, individualized approach to children with learning problems, a multicultural curriculum, teacher CPD, extracurricular activities, community building and parental and family involvement.

Governmental policy changes - resulted in structurally new and long-term education strategies and programmes aimed at fostering equality for different ethnic groups and minorities in Hungary.

The National Network of Integrating School (NNIS) Government programme (introduced in 2002). NNIS promoted integrated education by providing:

- Additional funding (‘integration quota’) for schools that take initiative to integrate socially disadvantaged children
- Methodological assistance for teachers – schools and teachers participating in NNIS were provided CPD - regular training, special curriculum, teaching resources, educating teachers how to teach in ethnically and socially heterogeneous classes.
- Professional, infrastructural and financial support for participating schools.

Gypsy Self Government (GSG) initiated an after-school programme (‘Learnery’) in the village for children from primary and secondary schools in 2005. Run by minority community with support from school.

**Outcomes**

Improved school performance, decrease in dropout rates, improvement in community relationships, decrease of interethnic conflicts within the school.

Overall more positive for children’s school experience.
ID 27: WELCOMING TRAVELLER CHILDREN IN TO YOUR SCHOOL- TRAVELLERS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Source


Context

Gloucestershire Council. Throughout the council’s school system, there are approximately 20 children in pre-school settings across the council, 350 traveller children across 35 Primary schools, and 40 students in 11 Secondary schools.

Transition Strategies

- Traveller Education Team (approx. five full-time staff members).
- The ‘Good Practice Guide’ offering advice to teachers and schools about integrating Traveller families e.g.
  - Solid policy and practice relating to inclusion
  - To implement prompt assessments of new pupils.
  - Maintain contact and build relationships with parents.
  - That practitioners should accept personal responsibility for every child regardless of their time in attendance and to expect more time and energy required to engage families and possibly the need for outreach.
  - Schools should have resources which reflect the diversity of Traveller cultures.
- Supporting Year 6 Traveller pupils transfer to secondary school:
  - Preemptive identification of those students who made be vulnerable or at risk of not successfully transferring
  - Involving Traveller Education workers
  - Class discussions about transitions
Engaging in dialogue with parents and children in 5th year prior to transition. Gathering information on families view of secondary education or possible challenges.

Arrange early and additional visits to schools.

Arrange a visit from a Traveller pupil already attending secondary school to talk to those about to transfer.

Use secondary school resources about transfer e.g. school made videos/books etc. and possible support offered by secondary school.

Helping pupils to settle in by having designated staff members, a safe place for Traveller pupils to go to when in school, ensuring that all members of staff are aware of the needs of the family relating to their culture or specific issues.

Offering part-time or flexible timetables.

ID 28: RAISING EASTERN EUROPEAN GYPSY/ROMA ACHIEVEMENT: A GUIDE FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTITIONERS

Source


Context

Castle Hill Centre, Castleton Street, Bolton, UK

Issues
Due to historical experiences of persecution and marginalisation by the general population as well as authorities means that Roma populations fear ‘officials’. Families are unfamiliar with extensive bureaucracy.

Living circumstances are inadequate spaces to study due lack of space, overcrowding, a peaceful area, resources or literate adults with school experience. Family needs may be seen as more important than formal education. There is also a general belief that school work belongs to school time and should not cross into family life. Children may be the first generation to access literacy.

The ever changing living circumstances, lack of English, lack of literacy and fear of authority, may present challenges to home/school links. Families and children from oral cultures with no history of formal education may view school curriculum as irrelevant. Some families may not understand the importance of school record keeping and their own responsibilities regarding communication, uniforms and equipment. Within the formal school context, children are unfamiliar with concepts such as homework. No tradition of non-confrontational communication may lead to difficulties for children understanding of rules of engagement in school. Emotions are expressed openly and immediately.

Roma migrant workers' families are often subject to short term lets thus experience high mobility.

**STRATEGIES**

Cultural awareness

- Culturally appropriate curriculum to encourage attendance and increase pupils’ awareness of Roma history and culture
- Adding a Romani dimension in multicultural celebrations
- Gypsy/Roma pupils can be marked T (authorised absence) in the register whilst travelling or attending cultural events

Supporting continuity of learning
- Distance learning packs and homework packs can be provided by the school
- Lunch time homework
- Ongoing availability of the library or appropriate quiet areas
- Careful explanation to families as to why homework is helpful

Support for schools and staff

- Good home school liaison will encourage necessary communication
- Identify a designated member of staff to get to know the community so that families have a known trusted contact.
- Identify any Roma family members who can speak some English.
- Ensure anyone offering additional support/assessment understands Gypsy/Roma history and culture and its impact on the learning process
- Be familiar with DFES/OFSTED Guidance on good practice ‘Aiming High’
- Affirm respect for Gypsy/Roma culture within the context of ‘but school ways mean that…….’
- Remember that a child/family member direct speaking is not meant to intimidate
- Emphasise speaking and listening skills in the classroom
- Gypsy/Roma parents may be unable to send in absence notes so should be encouraged to ring in. School could also provide picture form letters where the parent(s) could indicate with a ‘tick’ the child’s reason for absence
- Make use of EAL advisory support
- Further support set in place for persistent or particularly challenging issues- Traveller Education services and liaison officer.

Supporting families

- ‘Literacy Booster Classes’
- Build relationships with parents using positive remarks, face-to-face personal approach as well as phones calls rather than written correspondence. (Avoid metaphor and jargon) Only send letters if the child/parent can read. In this instance, teachers should explain the letter face-to-face with the child to entrust responsibility
- Use of translators
ID 29: E-LEARNING AND TRAVERLLER EDUCATION E-LATES IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

Source

Issues
Transient families, difficulty in accessing the curriculum, pupils self-excluding from school due to fear of actual or perceived discrimination and bullying.

Transition strategies
Pilot programme providing access to online distance learning and teaching to provide young people with equal educational opportunities. Elates is an e-learning community for Scottish Gypsy/Travellers; managed centrally by STEP. The Virtual Learning Environment is hosted by GLOW Scottish Schools Digital Network providing 24/7 flexible teaching and learning. It builds on children’s existing IT skills and content is taught a blended-learning approach.

Netbooks distributed to families or they could use their own computers. Learners received training on how to use Glow and the wider Internet responsibly. The curriculum is tailored to meet each pupil’s needs. Each young person has an individual support plan contained in a virtual folder held in the Glow. Teachers can access the folders to provide follow up work and monitor student progress.

Mobile bus in this local authority called 'Y sort it' which visits the site to offer support in learning and opportunities to communicate with teachers during periods of transition.
ID 30: ABORIGINAL PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE ENRICHMENT AND TRANSITION

Source

Red River College Website:
http://me.rcc.mb.ca/Catalogue/ProgramInfo.aspx?ProgCode=ABOPF-CT&RegionCode=WPG

Context

Aboriginal transitions to Further Education, Manitoba, Canada

Transition Strategies

This Aboriginal Program for College Enrichment and Transition is a one-year certificate, delivered at two campuses in rural parts of Manitoba. The programme provides a one-week orientation process and information session. This program is a means for Aboriginal students to attain prerequisites and skills necessary for FE College programs.

Specific modules include: cultural and social components and perspectives of First Nation, Inuit, Metis communities.

The college implements community based opportunities, work-based learning and has strong industry partnerships. The specific programme integrates Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum content. The College adopts a holistic approach to supporting students which nurtures academic, spiritual, emotional, physical needs.
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\[1\] It is important to note here that due to the heterogeneity of these groups, each of whom is defined by its different history, culture, and lifestyle, communities will have varying levels of engagement with formal education and school-based learning (Padfield, 2008) support seeking efforts, and perceptions of and access to schooling and the curriculum.