A Review of Scottish and International Models of School Transitions

The objective of this review was to explore Scottish and international case studies of successful transition models to identify characteristics of programmes which lead to smoother transitions in education. The review examined cases studies from 2000 to 2015.
ID 1: Swansea comprehensive school and innovative arrangements to help improve transition for Gypsy Traveller pupils.

Source

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.


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.

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**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

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.

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**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**

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.

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**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.).

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**ID 8: Supporting students in transition to secondary school**
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.

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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’
  - Focusing on reducing mobility and supporting transitions
  - Clearly outlined roles for school administrators, principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, parents, and pupils.
  - 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.
  - Counsellors are provided a set of entrance and exit questions designed to gather detailed information about transferring students.
  - "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.
  - "Don't Leave School Without It" checklist supports parents with a smooth transition.
  - 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
  - This project combines educational practices with various in-house services to ensure that children are prepared to learn.
  - Children given range of opportunities to play chess/ sports, work on computers, engage in art and music, get assistance with homework and so forth.
  - Families and community leaders encouraged to play very active roles in these schools.
  - 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.
  - 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.mokapuelelem.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
Halton Regional website. 

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**

Enquire website- the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning: ‘An Enquire Guide for Young People- Going to a New School’


**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.

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**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.

ID 16: Transition model at Leith Primary School, Edinburgh, UK.

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.
ID 17: Transition models at Duddingston Primary School, Edinburgh.

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

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, instructional 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.

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**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.

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**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
  o 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.
  o 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
  o Identify students at risk and inform necessary staff
  o Conduct meetings and share information between counselors and special education teachers
  o Collect information to learn about students/teacher/parents views
  o 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.
ID 23: An evaluation of a transition programme for parents

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

Context
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.

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**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.

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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 Traveller 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.

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**ID 30: Aboriginal Program for College Enrichment and Transition**

**Source**

Red River College Website:
http://me.rrc.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.