

Children and Young People Select Committee		
Title	Transition from Primary to Secondary School – Second Evidence Session	
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	Item 4
Class	Part 1 (open)	11 January 2017

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1. As part of its work programme the Committee has agreed to undertake an in-depth review into successful transition between primary and secondary schools (Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3).
- 1.2. At a meeting on 11 November 2016, the committee heard evidence from Jackie Jones, Service Manager for School Improvement and Intervention, and from the Young Advisors. This report provides further evidence in response to the Key Lines of Enquiry that were set out in the scoping paper as agreed by the Committee on 12 October 2016.
- 1.3. A final report will be considered by the Committee at the meeting on 28 February 2017.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Select Committee is asked to:
 - Consider the contents of the report
 - Consider the evidence from Frances Rice, co-author of the School Transition and Adjustment Research Study (STARS)
 - Consider comments raised by the Young Advisors taking part in the review process

3. Key lines of enquiry

- 3.1. This evidence session is designed to enable members of the Committee to address the key lines of enquiry as set out in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.4 of the scoping report. In particular to consider the local and national context in terms of successful transition, transition in Lewisham, and what good practice looks like and how can this be successfully embedded and emulated.

4. Schools visits

- 4.1. It was agreed at the meeting on 12 October 2016 that officers would arrange for Committee members to visit schools to gather evidence of good practice in transition, and to identify areas where improvements could be made.

- 4.2. Members of the Committee visited Rangefield Primary School, Baring Primary School and Conisborough College. A visit to Prendergast Vale is scheduled for 6th January. As this report will be published ahead of the Prendergast Vale visit, verbal feedback will be given at the meeting.
- 4.3. All Year 6 children who are starting secondary school in a Lewisham school are invited to attend a Transition Day in the summer term of Year 6, where they spend the day at their secondary school.
- 4.4. Once secondary offers are made, a meeting is convened for all primary and secondary SENCOs at Kaleidoscope to ensure that plans are in place for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHP) or a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- 4.5. These two events are common to all primary and secondary schools in the borough. Beyond these, transition varies on a school by school basis.
- 4.6. A summary of the evidence gathered at the schools visits follows.

Rangefield Primary School

- 4.7. Councillors Sorba, Klier and Monsignor Rothon met with Caroline Hussey (Deputy Head Teacher), Annisha Thomas (SENCO) and four of the current Year 6 children. Rangefield is a 2-form entry school located on the Downham estate. A high proportion of pupils at Rangefield qualify for Pupil Premium.
- 4.8. The school arranges a meeting at the end of September for Year 6 parents to outline the application process and timetable, and to impress upon parents the need to visit schools with their children. The school's experience was that some parents lack the literacy or IT skills required to complete the online secondary application form and that while free internet is available in libraries, lack of face-to-face support is an issue for some parents. While no obligation exists to do so, the school, acting in the best interests of its pupils, allocates resource to helping parents complete application forms. The school noted that there had been Lewisham-run workshops but felt that these had been inadequately advertised and had not come to the school's attention in time to be useful.
- 4.9. Rangefield students move on to a proliferation of secondary schools, including Bromley and Bexley schools. The large numbers of schools involved meant it was not possible for Rangefield to invite all secondary schools in to talk to the children. Intended destinations of the four children that Members met at Rangefield reflected this diversity – Conisborough College, Ravensbourne, Bonus Pastor, Dartford or Wilmington Grammar Schools.
- 4.10. In Year 6 Rangefield pupils are streamed according to ability for Maths. This was implemented in part because of the wide range of abilities in the class but also to begin to prepare the children for secondary school where they would have to move around the school for different subjects. The school also supports Year 6 children to develop good homework habits and to work more independently, and focuses on this kind of practical preparation in the summer term.

- 4.11. Prior to applying, most children have visited secondary schools, and the school felt that visits and open days were helpful to the children, as they got to see school in progress to give them a 'feel'. Some secondary schools come to Rangefield to talk directly to the children. Some secondary schools offer individual visits to pupils once places are allocated, others do not. Members were given an example of where one pupil had been accepted to a secondary school that no other children from Rangefield were going to. In that case, Rangefield had made arrangements for the child to have an extra visit to the secondary school.
- 4.12. The children revealed that their biggest worries about secondary school were around the behaviour of older children, and going from being the biggest in primary school to the smallest in secondary school. They were also worried about the amount and frequency of homework, and about safety on the journey to school.
- 4.13. When asked how transition could be improved, the school felt that secondary schools needed to do more to support children with challenging behaviour to settle, and to keep the academic momentum going, particularly for high achievers.
- 4.14. As regards the first, Ms Hussey said all primary schools could very easily identify the children who would struggle with transition. She called for secondary schools to come into primaries after offers had been made to observe the more challenging children in the classroom setting. She felt strongly that secondary schools could learn from the nurturing style of primary school and continue some of the primary interventions over into secondary school. Speaking about her school, Ms Hussey described the area as having a lot of children and families with complex needs, and issues such as temporary housing, chaotic home lives, nowhere to do homework. For these children, achieving a seamless handover was critical, and the pastoral care provided at school was, in some cases, intensive.
- 4.15. In terms of learning and attainment, Ms Hussey said that the top learners in maths at Rangefield were learning at the level of Year 7 or 8 students and that there was a problem with students being allowed to coast in Year 7. The school was working to make links with local secondary schools to try to mitigate this.

Baring Primary School

- 4.16. Councillor Sorba and Monsignor Rotheron met with Diane Brewer (Head Teacher) and Teresa Cooper (Pastoral Manager).
- 4.17. Baring is a single form entry school in Lee, with a (partial, due to children leaving the school) bulge class in the current Year 6. In the older classes, 40-50% of children qualify for Pupil Premium. The figures are lower in the infant classes but the Head said this was more to do with changes to eligibility rules than the area becoming more affluent. One third of Year 2 children live in L&Q Housing. The school has several No Recourse to Public Funds families, as well as homeless families in temporary accommodation either in or out of borough, with some children travelling to the school from as far away as Croydon or Enfield.
- 4.18. The school uses its Pupil Premium to partially fund a range of support staff. The emphasis at Baring is firmly on nurture: happy and settled children make the best learners.

4.19. Some of the transition activities that Baring carries out:

Application Process

- Transfer leaflets sent to parents in 1st week of September (any sooner and they get 'lost')
- Baring hosts a meeting for all Year 6 parents to talk through the application process, provide a steer for parents on what to look for when visiting schools, examples of things to ask. Parents are advised to take their children to see schools.
- In the first half of the autumn term, the previous year's leavers (now Y7) return to Baring to talk to the current Year 6 children about their experiences. Baring uses this as a way of monitoring how transition has been for its leavers.
- Parents are offered a 1-1 meeting at which the school can provide practical assistance with the application form, and make sure that at least one of their choices has a realistic prospect of the offer of a place. Some parents require several meetings. School takes care not to influence parental choice.
- Baring invites secondary schools to come in and talk to the children.
- Some schools in neighbouring boroughs 'court' children from Baring. Good transport links make schools such as Kent grammar schools a viable option
- School chases parents to ensure applications are made on time. Staff continue to offer support with the form

Post-offer

- SENCO attends the Kaleidoscope meeting. The Pastoral Manager is proactive about following up with secondary schools to ensure plans are in place for SEN children
- Additional speech and language support is put in place for those children who need it. Children with additional needs create a 'Passport' to take with them to secondary school. This is a handy quick reference leaflet that contains key information about the child.
- School sets up a Team Around the Child meeting for very vulnerable children in the summer term of Year 6, to which the secondary school is invited, along with any relevant agencies.
- School provides counselling for children who the school anticipates will find transition a cause of high anxiety
- The school runs a transition event for Year 6 children. This operates like a drama workshop and any particular concerns/ anxieties are fed back to the class teacher and shared with the secondary schools
- Every child is provided with a transition box file into which they collate all the practical information/advice that they receive at the various transition events, as well as their thoughts/ work following the workshop. The children take this with them so they can refer back to it in Year 7.
- School provides anti-gang lessons to Year 6 children
- Primary files, which contain detailed information about the child's journey through primary school, and includes things like school progress reports, incident reports, details of attendance and illness, any involvement with SENCO or pastoral support, are sent to the relevant secondary schools in the summer holidays. Occasionally files go over once term has started. This is usually because of movement in the summer holidays that results in a child being offered a higher preference school

- 4.20. Baring does not monitor academic progress beyond Year 6, and the Head Teacher did not feel able comment on whether the academic work at KS3 was sufficiently challenging. When the Year 7 children return to the school to talk about transition, they focus on the social and practical aspects of secondary school life rather than talking about their school work.
- 4.21. When asked how transition could be improved, Baring's view, like that of Rangefield, was that pastoral care in secondary school needs to improve to effectively continue the nurturing support that children receive at primary school. While recognising that the format of secondary school made this harder - having a form tutor and a range of subject tutors rather than a single teacher that you build a relationship with - secondary schools need to pay more attention to primary school recommendations to tailor support to each individual child. The school had experience of vulnerable children who had moved onto secondary school, only to be excluded because the recommended support was not in place to help manage behaviour.

Conisborough College

- 4.22. Councillors Sorba, Klier and Monsignor Rother met Head Teacher, Stuart Mundy, as well as support staff involved in transition and some Y7 pupils.
- 4.23. Conisborough College is a community comprehensive 11-16 school in Catford with 900 places and an ASD Unit on site. The Head Teacher joined the school in April 2016. The school is popular with local parents and receives around 600 applications (across all preferences) for 180 Y7 places. Just under 50% of students qualify for Pupil Premium.
- 4.24. Conisborough is fed by as many as 30-50 primary schools, with local schools such as Torridon, Sandhurst, Athelney, Elfrida, Forster Park supplying the largest numbers.
- 4.25. The school has a SENCO with 4 Teaching Assistants (TA). Each faculty has one Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and one or two TAs. TAs are only placed in classes where there is a child with an ECHP plan. They will support other high needs students but if there is no statemented child in the class, then there is no TA to provide that additional support.
- 4.26. Schools outside the borough actively seek to attract the more able students from local primaries, which impacts on the school's ability to attract the most able students. Mr Mundy's view was that if Conisborough's reputation was better, this would be less likely to happen.
- 4.27. Students are streamed from Y7, based on KS2 test results. The school relies on receiving prompt and correct data from primary schools. In the first term, students are assessed in the core subjects which serves as a baseline. There can be a marked difference in students' assessments at the end of primary and their secondary baseline level. Generally they are assessed to be higher at the end of primary school.

- 4.28. Mr Mundy felt that KS2 and KS3 teachers are not always familiar enough with their counterpart's curriculum, and this can result in a dip, particularly in creative writing, at KS3. He argued that some repetition in Maths was essential to properly embed knowledge and to achieve instant recall.
- 4.29. To smooth the continuation of academic learning between Years 6 and 7, Conisborough had been involved in moderating primary work. This enabled the school to revise its KS3 curriculum in light of what was being taught in Year 6. Mr Mundy found this collaborative working to be very useful.
- 4.30. Some of the Transition activities that Conisborough offers:
- An information pack is sent to Y6 parents upon offer
 - Parents are invited to a 2 hour evening session which covers practicalities like school uniform, catering menus, etc. Parents are also given an individual interview so they can tell the school about their child. The school makes follow up visits to any children who are identified as vulnerable or more challenging
 - The SENCO visits primary schools of children with EHCP or SEN and attends the Transition Day in July
 - Conisborough offers a summer school to help the children build new friendships prior to starting Y7, for which there is a charge (except for children in receipt of the Pupil Premium).
 - The first day of Y7 is spent doing team building activities. In the early weeks the school runs assemblies that look at transition issues. All Y7 pupils have access to their form tutor, pastoral support, and the Y7 achievement leader
 - Focus groups for Y7 children who are struggling, either socially or with literacy and numeracy. Strategies are reviewed at the end of term
 - Coffee afternoon for parents – this enables the parents to raise any concerns and for the school to hear feedback. Feedback from parents is collated and put on the school website
 - Visits to Y6 children in July who have been offered a place at Conisborough. ASD children receive an extra visit
 - Lunch club for children who struggle outside of class time.
- 4.31. The school was working hard to build relationships with other local schools, both primary and secondary. Members heard that PE teachers from Conisborough College had gone to Donderry Primary School to teach some PE lessons.
- 4.32. When asked what primary schools could do better to aid a smooth transition, Conisborough felt that more could be done to foster independence in Year 6 children, such as taking responsibility for their belongings, finding their way to a classroom on time.
- 4.33. The other concern they raised was around late availability of files from primary schools. Children's files are often received after term has started which means plans cannot fully be in place at the start of term as the school will not have a complete picture of the child's needs. To adequately prepare, the school needs the files in the summer term to have arrangements in place for September.
- 4.34. The students all felt they had settled well. Their fears prior to starting had been around safety on the journey from school, particularly in the winter months in the dark, around the behaviour of older children and feeling vulnerable as the youngest children in the school. The children had also worried about levels of homework. All

found that their fears had soon dissipated and that the older children looked out for them and were generally helpful. Year 11 prefects help the Year 7 children with reading. All reported an overlap in the curriculum and felt they had already covered much of their work in primary school.

Evidence of Jackie Jones following a visit to Bushey Meads School

- 4.35. Having heard him present at a conference on Transition, Jackie Jones visited Jeremy Turner, the Executive Head Teacher (EHT) at Bushey Meads School (BMS). Her evidence follows.
- 4.36. Prior to taking up executive headship at BMS, Jeremy was the Head Teacher at Friern Barnet School. This was not a school of choice when he took up his post, but he set about establishing good links with the local primary schools and 'sold' the school.
- 4.37. Following the publication of 'Key Stage 3: The Wasted Years', Jeremy became part of a national project which focused on transition. As part of this work he developed a range of resources and strategies.
- 4.38. Bushey Meads is an 11-19 academy in partnership with Little Reddings Primary School. Their PAN is 200 and, similar to Conisborough College, it takes children from a very large number of primary schools (over 50) covering a wide geographical spread. Little Reddings pupils do not, as yet, see Bushey Meads as their natural choice of secondary school. Little Reddings is a two form entry school, but in 2016/17 about 20 joined Bushey Meads. This was double the previous year.
- 4.39. The school runs a structured and comprehensive transition programme, the details of which can be found at Appendix 1.
- 4.40. While the school does not capture 'hard' data as to the success of the induction process they say that anecdotally it is successful.
- 4.41. The students were clear that they found all the events helpful and they had quickly felt 'at home' in the school. They said the most helpful activities were: talking with the BMS buddies, staff and students were all very supportive, emails that the school sent out to keep them posted about what was happening at the school, the tea party and the 3 days in August.

Key themes emerging from the visits

- 4.42. The visits provided a wealth of valuable evidence, with some key themes emerging.
- 4.43. Firstly, around the availability of primary files. At present, children stay on the roll of their primary school until 31 August. This means that the children's files are not sent over to the secondary schools until the end of the summer. In order to have a full picture of each student, and time to put any necessary interventions in place, secondary schools need this information in the summer term.
- 4.44. Level of pastoral support at secondary school. Unfilled secondary school places and budget deficits impact on secondary schools' ability to fund pastoral support staff.

- 4.45. Primary schools bear the brunt of supporting parents through the application process, and for some schools, this can place significant demands on the school.
- 4.46. Lack of familiarity with between primary and secondary schools of each other's curricula to ensure seamless academic transition.
- 4.47. Disparity between secondary- and primary-assessed levels. Rangefield suggested that this could be due to a natural dip that occurs when children have a break from learning, such as after the long summer holidays. Between Y6 and Y7, children cease formal learning at the end of May when they complete their SATS until September when they start secondary school.

5. UCL School Transition and Adjustment Research Study (STARS)

- 5.1. A report published by UCL entitled "Identifying Factors that predict successful and difficult transitions to secondary school" is a summary of the findings of the School Transition and Adjustment Research Study (STARS). The study followed a group of approximately 2000 pupils from South East England as they made the transition from primary to secondary school.
- 5.2. The aim of the study was to identify how and why poor pupil outcomes develop over the transition from primary to secondary school and to identify those pupils most vulnerable to adverse outcomes.
- 5.3. The report states that this is of practical benefit for two reasons:
 - 5.3.1. Identifying pupils most vulnerable to a poor transition can help to ensure that limited school resources are directed where they are most needed; and
 - 5.3.2. A greater understanding of the factors involved in poor and successful transitions can help to refine and improve existing school-based interventions that aim to support pupils during this period.
- 5.4. A link to the report can be found [here](#).

6. Transition Working Group

- 6.1. At the last meeting, the Committee heard that the Transition Working Group was developing a transition self-evaluation form for secondary schools. A draft of this is attached at Appendix 2.
- 6.2. The Group has also created a Pupil Information Form. The form is still in the developmental stage and a draft is attached at Appendix 3.

7. Further Evidence

- 7.1. The Committee will hear the evidence of Frances Rice, who was part of a small team that carried out the STARS research. Frances is unable to attend the meeting. Her evidence will be provided via Skype.

7.2. Councillor Sorba and Monsignor Rotheron will summarise the schools visits.

7.3. Jackie Jones will take questions regarding her visit to Bushey Meads School.

7.4. The Committee should bear in mind the Key Lines of Enquiry when receiving this evidence, specifically:

- What does transition in Lewisham look like?
- What does good practice look like and how can this be successfully embedded and emulated?
- What is the role of pastoral care before and after transition?
- How does student mobility (in and out of the borough/schools within the borough) and high numbers of feeder schools affect transition?

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 Details of Jackie Jones' visit to Bushey Meads School

Appendix 2 Draft Transition Self-Evaluation Form for Secondary Schools

Appendix 3 Draft Pupil Information Form

If you have any questions, please contact Emma Aye-Kumi (Scrutiny Manager) on 02083149534.

Appendix 1

These are the key actions that the school takes to ensure that both and pupils and their parents feel safe and secure when they start at Bushey Meads in Year 7:

- BMS buddies – these are Year 8 and 9 pupil who have training from the pastoral manager and are ambassadors for the school. They attend all parental events and provide refreshments. They are also available to support new pupils during the transition period. The pupils I spoke to really valued this as they had been through the experience and so understood how they might be feeling.
- There is a weekly Trust newsletter which is available on the school website so that new parents and pupils can see the range of activities undertaken at Bushey Meads.
- The pastoral team is non-teaching so are available to support new students as needed. One of the Year 7 pupils I met on the visit had said how valuable she had found their help as she struggled with starting at secondary school.
- Visits are made to 95-98% of the primary schools once they have the allocations for Year 7.
- During these visits the school meets with the pupils as well as their teachers and collects a variety of information including such information as home language, musical instruments played. They use a program on Google Chrome to collate this information.
- They also share the core values of the school so that the pupils are familiar with them before they actually start at the school.
- The core subjects as well as IT and music have transition leads who work with primary schools including Little Reddings. One of the AHTs for the Trust teachers at Little Reddings which ensures that staff at Bushey Meads have a better understanding of what the pupils have learnt and can do academically.
- The pastoral team play a key role in the whole process from visiting the pupils, being around at key events from the area Year 6 assessment tests in September, through the application process to Open Evenings and Induction events. They will also keep in contact with the primary school where there are concerns about individual pupils so that knowledge and support strategies can be shared.
- Pupils who have SEND needs are supported well. They are invited to visit Bushey Meads on a regular (fortnightly) basis at the end of Year 6. This enables them to become familiar with the school and the key staff. This helps alleviate any anxiety issues especially for those who are ASD. Bushey Meads staff attend CAF and Child Protection meetings before Year 7.
- Tutor groups are carefully planned so that there is at least one other pupil from the same primary school (avoiding those who should not be together). A number of pupils are the only ones coming from their primary school so all these children are placed in the same tutor group. The tutor groups are mixed ability.
- The school operates a house system and the aim is that siblings will be in the same house.

In the Summer term there are a number of very specific transition events:

- Tea party for pupils who are the only ones coming from their primary school. This involves the BMS buddies and activities include bonding activities e.g. finding a partner from a slip of paper with a famous duo (Tom and Jerry). The pupils I spoke to really valued this as it helped them feel less nervous.

- Induction Day where the pupils have taster lessons.
- Induction evening for the parents.
- Individual parent and pupil meetings. These are hosted by the BMS buddies. Tasks are set for the pupils to complete. These are set out in a leaflet and include making a Me Capsule, a book review and collecting a portfolio of their best work from Year 6.
- Saturday BBQ and family fun day on the Saturday after induction Day. This is run by the staff and sports leaders.
- 3 day event for the new Year 7 in August which includes activities such as cooking, trampolining, paintballing and swimming. This has to be paid for although PP students get their places free. This is a good way to get to know the people in their year group. The pupils I spoke to really valued this.

At the start of the Autumn Term the following activities are in place to support the new Year 7 pupils:

- The first day of term is just for Year 7 and the day is spent with their tutor group.
- Parents come in for the first assembly as the school wants the parents to be involved as possible so that they know their children will feel safe and secure.
- In the tutor group pupils share their My Capsules. These are boxes into which are put objects that 'tell' others about that person. Through this they get to know each other and it is a popular aspect of the induction process.
- At the end of the first day there is an assembly. Parents are once again invited and the pupils perform something they have learnt during the day e.g. a piece of drama as well as perform some music if the information collected about them shows this.
- On Day 2 they talk about their book reviews. Pupils who complete good quality reviews over the year have a reward trip to the Warner Brothers Harry Potter trip.
- In mid-September there is a parents evening where they can meet the tutors.
- For the first half term the school operates a transition curriculum. All department work to a common theme e.g. communities. At the end of this the work is presented during a celebration evening.
- In October the school has hosted a 'Come Dine with me' lunch event. At this parents had a tour of the school led by the BMS buddies, saw their child at work and then had lunch with them. Their child then showed them around the school.
- The last school day before the October half term all of Year 7 visit Kidzania.
- In November the first report is given to parents which shows progress against a flight path.
- The final event of this term is the Christmas Concert. As part of their induction leaflet pupils had to pledge to take part in the concert. They either sing or play an instrument.