
Overview and Scrutiny

Review of Transition from Primary to Secondary School

February 2017

Membership of the Children and Young People's Select Committee in 2016/17:

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Chair's Introduction

I am sure that many of us can remember our move to “big school” -as my children described it. The move to a secondary school is a major change for all children. It is a very important life transition and with this in mind, the Committee, with the support of the Young Mayor and advisors, focused on transition for our in-depth review. Many children can and will cope with such a change - but many will also find that what transpires in their first weeks and terms impacts their well-being and potential to achieve. Learning to find your way around a new work place can be stressful for adults, and 11 year olds finding their way around a new and possibly very large site can be daunting and requires support and focused planning.



This review of ‘Transition from Primary to Secondary schools’ drew on the experience of our young people in the borough, took members of the Committee out to several schools, involved hearing from key researchers, linked in to the Directorate’s Transition Working Group and we saw good and best practice examples. In 2008, the Department for Children Schools and Families reported that transition is strongest where, “social, emotional, curricular and pedagogical aspects of learning are managed”. Successful and almost seamless transition is what we need to provide for all our primary school children, regardless of their needs, backgrounds, abilities and challenges.

I would like to thank personally the members of the Committee, Jackie Jones and the School Improvement team, Dr. Frances Rice, and very importantly the Young Mayor and advisors, staff and pupils of our schools who were so welcoming and supportive.

Councillor Hilary Moore

Chair of the Children and Young People’s Select Committee

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an in-depth review on transition from primary to secondary schools that the Children and Young People Select Committee undertook between October 2016 and February 2017. It summarises evidence gathered from a range of sources and makes a number of recommendations to ensure that children attending Lewisham's schools are well supported to get the best possible start to their secondary education and to set them up to achieve their full potential as they move through their secondary education.

Transition in Lewisham varies on a school by school basis. The large number of primary feeder schools – as many as 30 or more - for every secondary school complicates the picture. Secondary schools find that many pupils entering Year 7 lack the necessary skills to find their way independently through the early weeks of secondary school. On the other hand, there are lessons to be learned from primary schools about providing individually tailored support to children with a variety of needs.

Late sharing of crucial pupil information can impact on secondary schools' ability to put support in place for more vulnerable or disadvantaged pupils. Without the necessary plans and support in place to enable a strong start in Year 7 for every student, seamless pastoral transition is difficult to achieve.

The long break from academic work between the end of SATS in Year 6 and the start of Year 7 exacerbates the natural dip that all teachers are familiar with after the summer holidays. Recovery from this dip can be further hampered by secondary schools reluctance to rely on primary assessed levels, which can lead to repetition of work done in primary school and a slowdown of academic momentum as secondary schools make their own assessments of students' attainment levels. The Committee found evidence that most primary and secondary schools are broadly unfamiliar with each others' curricula, which creates an additional obstacle to seamless academic transition.

Lewisham is working hard to create an outstanding secondary school sector, and in support of this a Transition Working Group (TWG) was set up in the summer term of 2016 to improve practice across Lewisham schools, as well as to increase numbers of pupils choosing Lewisham secondary schools. Improving transition is an important element of secondary school improvement which the recommendations from this review seek to support.

Recommendations

1. That the importance of good transition, both pastorally and academically, is emphasised to and understood by both primary and secondary schools
2. That, as part of transition preparation, primary schools include reassurance and practical advice on keeping in contact with 'old friends' from previous school
3. That vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and those likely to struggle with transition, are identified sufficiently early in Year 6 to enable secondary schools to have in place plans and support ready for the start of term in Year 7
4. That the Transition Working Group should take note of the recommendations of this Committee
5. That secondary schools consider using their pupil premium funding for transition activities
6. That secondary schools quickly identify the most able children and have a properly resourced and rigorous academic programme in place at the start of term in Year 7
7. That school governor training covers transition and that one governor in each school has responsibility for focusing on transition in each school
8. That secondary schools and primary feeders work together to design their transition programmes using the best practice available
9. That primary schools increase opportunities for children to develop their independence especially in Year 6
10. That secondary school staff observe vulnerable children in their primary settings in Year 6
11. That all relevant information/files are sent from primary to secondary schools before the end of the summer term in Year 6
12. That consideration be given to means of supporting parents in the secondary school application process and so reduce the burden on primary schools
13. That schools make better academic use of the time between end of SATS in Year 6 and start of Year 7 (e.g. bridging projects/units to introduce the KS3 curriculum in the summer term of Year 6)
14. That all relevant primary/ secondary school staff increase their knowledge of each other's curriculum
15. That secondary schools are reminded to ensure that academic needs are given the same importance as pastoral needs throughout KS3

16. That schools give a high priority to KS3 in aspects of school planning, monitoring and evaluation

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The London Borough of Lewisham is committed to raising standards in its secondary schools. In support of this aim, the CYP Select Committee agreed to look into Transition between Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS3 (Year 6 primary to Year 7 secondary school).
- 1.2. Transition from primary to secondary school is an important life transition that can impact children's attainment and wellbeing in the longer term. What happens in the first weeks and months of transition can affect psychological adjustment and academic attainment beyond the school years [Rice et al]. According to a report published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in 2008, successful transitions between key stages "are key drivers to raising standards". Where transfer is strongest, the "social, emotional, curricular and pedagogical aspects of learning are managed in order to enable pupils to remain engaged with, and have control of, their learning".
- 1.3. Although transfers between all key stages present challenges, the issues raised in the transition from primary to secondary school are the most challenging for schools, pupils and families. There are a number of reasons for this:
 - transition typically occurs at age 11 and coincides with biological changes and the start of adolescence;
 - pupils have to negotiate a more challenging school setting with unfamiliar academic structures and increased expectations upon them;
 - changes in social interactions with teachers and peers.
- 1.4. In 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector commissioned a survey, which formed the basis for a report entitled "Key Stage 3: the Wasted Years", The report highlighted that "primary schools had continued to improve but the performance of secondary schools had stalled". The report also noted that a major contributing factor to this was that the transition from primary to secondary school was often poorly handled and the gains made at primary school were not embedded and developed at Key Stage 3. Her Majesty's Inspectors found that too many schools focused on the pastoral side of transition to the detriment of the academic. Where this was the case, it was the most able children who suffered the most. For many schools, Inspectors found that KS3 was not considered a high priority for secondary leaders and this meant pupils' prior learning was not being sufficiently built on, leading to repetition of work done in KS2.

2. Purpose and structure of Review

- 2.1. At its meeting on 12 October 2016, the Committee agreed the scope of the review. It was agreed that the review would look at
 - Local and national context
 - Transition in Lewisham
 - Defining and identifying good practice

to try to identify current practice and any areas for improvement.

2.2. The timetable for the review was as follows:

- **10 November 2016** - first evidence taking session to consider the evidence of Jackie Jones, Service Manager – School Improvement, and the Mayor’s Young Advisors
- **December 2016/ January 2017** – visits to primary and secondary schools
- **11 January 2017** – second evidence session to consider the evidence of Dr Frances Rice, co-author of the STARS report and feedback from the visits

3. Policy Context and Legislative Background

3.1. The Council’s overarching vision is “Together we will make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn”. In addition to this, ten corporate priorities and the overarching Sustainable Community Strategy drive decision making in the Council. Lewisham’s corporate priorities were agreed by full Council and they remain the principal mechanism through which the Council’s performance is reported.

3.2. The Council’s corporate policy of “Young people’s achievement and involvement” promotes raising educational attainment and improving facilities for young people through working in partnership. The Council’s Sustainable Community Strategy’s priority of “Ambitious and Achieving” aims to create a borough where people are inspired and supported to achieve their potential.

3.3. The Children and Young People’s Plan 2015 – 2018 also sets a strategic vision for the London Borough of Lewisham and partners and a key aspect is “Raising the attainment of all Lewisham children and young people” and this has a number of specific outcome areas:

- AA1: Ensuring there are sufficient good quality school places for every Lewisham child.
- AA2: Ensuring all our children are ready to participate fully in school.
- AA3: Improving and maintaining attendance and engagement in school at all key stages, including at transition points.
- AA4: Raising participation in education and training, reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) at 16-19.
- AA5: Raising achievement and progress for all our children at Key Stages 1 – 4 and closing the gaps between underachieving groups at primary and secondary school.
- AA7: Raising achievement and attainment for our Looked After Children at all Key Stages and Post 16.

4. National context

- 4.1. The 2015 Ofsted report “Key Stage 3: the wasted years?”¹ highlighted the importance of pupils getting off to a good start at secondary, but found that ineffective transition was a widespread problem nationally. The report found that in many schools, academic progress and achievement was not good enough at KS3 and that lack of challenge was felt most acutely by the most able pupils. Many schools focused on pastoral support over the academic needs of pupils, which had an effect on all pupils, and was particularly detrimental to the most able pupils.
- 4.2. The Ofsted report identified that many schools do not build sufficiently on pupils’ prior learning, citing examples of pupils repeating the same work they had been doing in Year 6 (Y6), or finding the work too basic. Mathematics was the area of most concern, but for the most able, a number of subjects failed to challenge sufficiently.
- 4.3. The report also found that some school leaders were not using the pupil premium funding effectively to close gaps quickly in KS3, and that homework was not consistently providing the opportunities for pupils to consolidate or extend their learning.

School Transition and Adjustment Research Study (STARS)

- 4.4. The Committee considered a report entitled “Identifying factors that predict successful and difficult transitions to secondary school”² The report summarised the results from a UCL research study – 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. At three points, starting at the summer term of Y6 and ending in the summer Term of Year 7 (Y7), the study gathered information from pupils, parents and teachers, covering pupils’ well-being, academic achievement, and their views about school and relationships with their peers and teachers.
- 4.5. The study found that a successful transition involved functioning well in two areas: 1) being academically and behaviourally involved in the school and 2) feel a sense of belonging to the school.
- 4.6. Dr Frances Rice advised the Committee that pastoral and academic needs were linked and therefore support during the transition process was beneficial to both aspects. Children’s psychological adjustment had been shown to affect academic attainment. Rather than sticking rigidly to stated policies, Dr Rice advised that that flexibility within schools to work in the spirit of good transition was most beneficial to pupils.

¹ “Key Stage 3: the wasted years?” Ofsted, September 2015

² by Frances Rice, Norah Frederickson, Katherine Shelton, Chris McManus, Lucy Rigling, Terry Ng-Knight

Recommendation 1.

That the importance of good transition, both pastorally and academically, is emphasised to and understood by both primary and secondary schools

- 4.7. Dr Rice informed the Committee that Y7 was a state of flux in peer group friendships, in large part due to transition, but also due to physiological changes at that stage of life. Research had shown that some 75% of children listed a different best friend at the end of Y7 to the end of Y6, but that children who kept the same very best friend did better academically and like school more. Schools should be aware that pupil concerns around transition did not always align with those of their teachers and parents. Whereas parents worried about their child making new friends, children were more worried about losing old friends, and throughout Y7 this was their greatest concern.

	End of Year 6	Start of Year 7	End of Year 7
1.	Getting lost	Losing old friends	Losing old friends
2.	Losing old friends	Discipline & detentions	Discipline & detentions
3.	Homework	Homework	Being bullied
4.	Being bullied	Getting lost	Homework
5.	Discipline & detentions	Older children	Older children
...			
6.		<i>Being bullied</i>	
9.			<i>Getting lost</i>

Recommendation 2.

That, as part of transition preparation, primary schools include reassurance and practical advice on keeping in contact with 'old friends' from previous school

What does “successful” transition look like?

- 4.8. While it is widely known that the transition from primary to secondary school impacts on pupils’ attainment, there is no agreed definition of successful transition.
- 4.9. A 2008 study³, based on responses from 550 children and families living in 16 local authority areas across the country, described a successful transition as one where:
- children had greatly expanded their friendships and boosted their self-esteem and confidence once at secondary school
 - children had settled so well in school life that they cause no concerns to their parents
 - children showing more interest in school and work in comparison to primary school
 - children finding it very easy getting used to new routines
 - children finding work completed in Y6 to be very useful for the work they were doing in Y7.
- 4.10. The research revealed that children who felt they had a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in were more likely to have a successful transition. This included help with getting to know their way around the school, relaxing rules in the early weeks, visits and taster days.

Recommendation 3.

That vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and those likely to struggle with transition, are identified sufficiently early in Yr.6 to enable secondary schools to have in place plans and support ready for the start of term in Yr.7

- 4.11. Bullying, problems in dealing with different teachers and subjects or making new friends were all factors in leading to a negative transition. The report also found an association with less positive transitions for children with lower socio-economic status.
- 4.12. Dr Rice concurred: STARS found that “successful transitions to secondary school are likely to be multi-dimensional and include aspects of academic performance, behavioural involvement, perceptions of school, and affective experiences in school”⁴. The study reported that a successful transition involved functioning well in two areas: 1) being academically and behaviourally involved in the school and 2) feeling a sense of belonging to the school.

³ “What Makes a Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School?” DCSF Report DCSF-RR019 (2008)

⁴ “Identifying factors that predicts successful and difficult transitions to secondary school” Nuffield Foundation, 2014 <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/stars>

5. Local context

- 5.1. The Local Authority's statutory duties as regards transition from KS2 to KS3 principally relates to the admission process for secondary school, and to providing additional support for students who have an EHC (Education, Health and Care Plan) or a Statement of Special Educational Needs. For these students, their school of choice will be stated on their EHCP or Statement.
- 5.2. The transition process for all children is designed and managed locally on a school by school basis. The borough holds a Transition Day in July for all Year 6 children moving onto Lewisham secondary schools.
- 5.3. Within the borough there are currently 72 schools that take children of primary age. This includes five all-through schools: Haberdashers Aske's Knights Academy, St Matthew Academy, Prendergast Vale, Prendergast Ladywell and Trinity Church of England School. There are currently 15 state-funded secondary schools in the borough including the previously mentioned all-through schools. At the move from Y6 to Y7, Lewisham loses around one quarter of its Y7 students to schools in other boroughs or to private education and just 15% of the Y7 intake is made up of pupils from out of the borough. This in contrast with the average across London boroughs where 80% go to a school in their home borough and 20% come from other boroughs. In the primary sector about 10% leave Lewisham.

Parental choice

- 5.4. In November 2015 data on first preferences made by Lewisham residents for September 2016 showed that just 59% of all parents chose a Lewisham secondary school as their first choice. Three of the secondary schools were over-subscribed: 2 of these were Ofsted rated "outstanding" and the other was a faith school.

Census	Summer		=>	Autumn	
School Year	2015		=>	2016	
NC Year	6		=>	7	
Cohort	2838		=>	2484	
To Our Year 7	1882	66.3%	=>	1882	75.8%
Not to our Year 7	956	33.7%	=>		
Not from Our Year 6			=>	602	24.2%
Comparative analysis from the Summer 2015 Census to the Autumn 2016 Census shows that Lewisham retained 66.3% of the Year 6 pupils, meaning 33.7% went out of borough. In the following year 7 the retained Cohort accounted for 75.8% of that years pupils, meaning 24.2% have been educated out of borough.					

Analysis on Primary Feeders to Lewisham Secondary Schools, based on the Unique Pupil Numbers.

- 5.5. Appendix 1 provides a list of destinations of Lewisham primary school leavers not continuing on to a Lewisham secondary school.

Pupil attainment

- 5.6. In terms of pupil attainment in Lewisham it can be useful to look at the progress made by pupils from KS2 to KS4. Previous reports to the CYP Select Committee have looked at English and Maths using the RAISEonline and Ofsted definition of “expected progress” based upon measuring pupils’ progress in terms of whole levels across a key stage. In the secondary phase, a pupil finishing anywhere in level 4 at the end of KS2 in English and Maths and who goes on to gain a grade at least a C at GCSE in KS4 (3 levels of progress), has made the “expected progress”. Pupils are deemed to have made “good” progress when they make four or more levels of progress from their KS2 starting points. “Expected” progress is interpreted as “satisfactory” progress by Ofsted.
- 5.7. In 2015 the percentage of Lewisham pupils who made expected progress between KS2 and KS4 was 69.8% in English, this was lower than previous years and lower than London and National averages. The percentage meeting expected progress in Maths in 2015 was 61.9% which again was lower than London and National average.

Table 1: progression between Key Stage 2 to 4 in English

	Progression between Key Stage 2 to 4 in English - % meeting expected level or above									
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Yr. on Yr. Change	Change from 2008
DoT	-	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Lewisham	68.3	67.9	67.0	73.2	69.6	72.0	76.0	69.8	-6.2	1.5
Stat. Neighbour	65.3	68.1	72.8	74.7	73.0	76.9	78.4	76.3	-2.2	11.0
Inner London	69.5	68.6	72.3	76.2	74.0	76.9	77.4	76.8	-0.6	7.3
London	68.4	70.6	74.6	77.1	73.8	77.0	78.2	76.1	-2.1	7.7
England	64.1	64.7	69.3	71.8	68.0	70.4	71.6	71.1	-0.5	7.0

Table 2: progression between Key Stage 2 to 4 in Maths

Progression between Key Stage 2 to 4 in Maths - % meeting expected level or above.										
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Yr. on Yr. Change	Change from 2008
DoT	-	□	□	□	=	□	□	□	□	□
Lewisham	57.0	59.9	58.1	68.4	68.4	70.5	62.4	61.9	-0.5	4.9
Stat. Neighbour	60.4	64.2	67.4	70.7	73.7	77.6	71.0	70.0	-0.9	9.6
Inner London	61.0	63.6	67.7	72.5	75.2	77.0	71.4	70.7	-0.7	9.7
London	63.2	66.0	69.2	72.5	75.3	77.4	72.0	71.6	-0.4	8.4
England	56.8	57.9	62.0	64.8	68.7	70.7	65.5	66.9	1.4	10.1

Data Collection

- 5.8. Lewisham state schools use a data collection system called 4Matrix. There is no statutory obligation for schools to collect KS3 data and so any KS3 data that has been collected will have been done locally within the school(s) and for internal use. Year 11 data is collected most regularly, between 3 and 5 times a year. The most up to date information held would be the outcomes for Year 11 pupils who left at the end of the previous academic year. Current data is expected to be published on RAISEonline in March 2017. School Improvement Officers, as part of their Autumn visit to schools, collect what data the school has available for the different year groups, however this is not nationally validated until the GCSE outcomes are known.
- 5.9. Currently, pupils' results are measured at the end of KS2 and again at the end of KS4. The cohort at KS4 is markedly different to the cohort at the end of KS2 and therefore a direct comparison between expected progress and actual progress must consider that in addition to the loss of 25% of primary school pupils to schools outside the borough and the intake of 15% of Year 7 students from outside the borough, in-year admissions further complicate the picture with some students arriving new to the borough with no KS2 results.
- 5.10. Most schools benchmark Y7 pupils in the first half term so they can assess progress. Schools generally collect progress, attendance and behaviour data to report to parents, with each school using its own benchmarking assessments. This data is not collected by the Council but is available in each individual schools. Looking in more depth at the data collected could be useful for the transition review to assess good practice both in terms of how the data is collected, how this links to data from primary schools, how schools are using it and to what level of success in terms of ensuring progress and successful transition.

Transition Working Group

- 5.11. A Transition Working Group (TWG) was set up in Lewisham in the summer term of 2016 to improve practice across Lewisham schools, as well as to increase numbers of pupils choosing Lewisham secondary schools. The TWG consists of Jackie Jones, Service Manager for School Improvement and Intervention, as well as secondary school leaders and governors, primary school leaders and governors and a representative of the local authority's admissions team. At the time of writing, the TWG was working to improve collaboration between schools by looking at clusters of schools working together in improving sharing best practice, curriculum development, maintaining academic progress and sharing of pupil information.
- 5.12. The TWG is working to produce a pupil information form aimed at providing a standardised and simple way of pupils sharing key information about themselves with their secondary school. This form will include information such as favourite subjects, extracurricular activities, languages spoken at home, what the child is looking forward about secondary school, worries about secondary school, things that the child might need help with, friends, whether there is anyone they would like to avoid being in the same tutor group as, etc.
- 5.13. The TWG is also working on a self-evaluation form for schools aimed at identifying areas of relative strength and areas for improvement.

Recommendation 4.

That the Transition Working Group should take note of the recommendations of this Committee

Secondary Challenge

- 5.14. The Lewisham Secondary Challenge is a collaborative programme involving all secondary schools in Lewisham working with the London Borough of Lewisham to develop an outstanding secondary school sector. All state funded mainstream secondary schools are part of the collaborative regardless of status. The council is working with schools to develop and deliver a programme of support and challenge over the next five years that will help achieve the vision of:

'Every Child Achieving, Every School Outstanding, No One Left Behind'

Additional support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children

- 5.15. In Lewisham, children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or Special Educational Needs (SEN) are additionally supported through transition. In April of their final year of primary school, a meeting between SEN Coordinators at their primary and secondary schools is convened to put in

place any additional support that the child may need during the transition process.

- 5.16. Some schools use Pupil Premium funding to support transition. School websites are required to show how they use their Pupil Premium funding as well as the impact of their spend. The following schools use some of this money to support transition:
- Bonus Pastor – funding for the Y7 residential trip. 3 months additional progress made by pupils attending this outdoor residential.
 - Deptford Green – additional transition teacher to support the funding of smaller class sizes so that students received individual attention when needed. Impact PP students made greater progress than non-PP students in English between 1 and 3 sublevels.
 - Prendergast School (Hilly Fields) – summer school and supporting 25 students to attend school journey to Kent.
 - St Matthew Academy - supported 85 students attending summer school which included development of social skills.
 - Sydenham School – supported PP students to attend Year 7 residential trip.

Recommendation 5.

That secondary schools consider using their pupil premium funding for transition activities

- 5.17. Schools are practiced at targeting vulnerable, disadvantaged and low-ability pupils and the “Wasted Years” report concluded that in many schools, pastoral transition for the most vulnerable children was an area of relative strength.
- 5.18. Ofsted has recommended that secondary schools focus as much on their most able pupils as on their low-ability, vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, including the “most able” in its definition of “disadvantaged” pupils.

Recommendation 6.

That secondary schools quickly identify the most able children and have a properly resourced and rigorous academic programme in place at the start of term in Yr.7

School Governors

- 5.19. At present, training for school governors does not provide any transition-specific training, and there is no requirement for any one governor to have oversight of transition arrangements.

Recommendation 7.

That school governor training covers transition and that one governor in each school has responsibility for focusing on transition in each school.

6. Transition

- 6.1. To gain an understanding of what transition involves, Members of the Committee visited two primary schools, a secondary school and an all-through school in the borough, and heard evidence from Jackie Jones, Service Manager – School Improvement, following a visit she had made to a secondary school out of borough. On these visits, Members heard evidence from head teachers, key staff involved in transition, and a range of pupils in Y6 and Y7. In addition, the Mayor’s Young Advisors met with the Chair and attended Committee where they shared some of their experiences of transition.
- 6.2. Common to all schools was the wide and disparate range of schools that their children with came from or went on to. Secondary schools reported as many as 50 feeder primary schools, and primary schools reported up to 20 leavers’ destinations in any one year group.
- 6.3. This range of schools presents a number of challenges for primaries and secondaries alike, particularly in terms of sharing information about pupils and building on prior learning.

Recommendation 8.

That secondary schools and primary feeders work together to design their transition programmes using the best practice available

Preparation/ life skills for secondary school

- 6.4. Transition activities vary on a school by school basis. Typically, primary schools increase the amount of homework given to Y6 children in preparation for the increased workload at secondary school. Primary schools also arrange activities such as anti-gang lessons, drama workshops aimed at confidence building, and counselling for highly anxious children.
- 6.5. Secondary schools find that many pupils entering Y7 lack the necessary skills get to the right place at the right time, bring the necessary equipment to each lesson, take responsibility for their personal possessions and navigate their way around the school to their subject-specific lessons. They called for primary schools to do more to foster this kind of independence. In reality, in the comparatively small setting of a primary school where children are well

known to their teachers, these skills are not easily gained. Children do not generally have the opportunity to travel around the school between lessons, since lessons are provided by the class teacher.

- 6.6. An example was given regarding PE kit. In primary school, children who forget their PE kit often have the safety net of a parent reminding them, a spare kit being available, or doing in regular school uniform or normal clothes (where there is no mandatory school uniform). At secondary school, failure to bring PE kit would likely involve a sanction.
- 6.7. Primary children are usually escorted to school by a parent/ carer, whereas secondary children usually take themselves to school. Secondary schools would like primary schools to encourage children to start making their journey to school independently in Y6.
- 6.8. Secondary schools provide some information to parents/ children in the summer term of Y6, after offers are made. Some schools host summer school or allow the Y7 new starters into school before term begins, to give the Y7 students a chance to find their way around the school and to meet their peers in a calmer environment.

Recommendation 9.

That primary schools increase opportunities for children to develop their independence especially in Yr. 6

Special Educational Needs

- 6.9. Once secondary offers are made, primary and secondary SENCOs attend an event organised by Lewisham council to share information about children with EHCP and Statements of SEN, to ensure a seamless transition in terms of support for these children. How effective this support was depended on the individual secondary school. Often the primary school SENCO had to be proactive about chasing the secondary school to make sure arrangements were in place.

Nurture

- 6.10. Nurture is a dominant feature of primary schools, and the primary schools visited felt that more needed to be done by secondary schools to create a nurturing environment. While recognising that the format of secondary school presented challenges - having a form tutor and a range of subject tutors rather than a single teacher that children can build a relationship with – secondary schools need to pay close attention to primary school recommendations to tailor support to each individual child. To quote the Head Teacher at Baring primary “happy and settled children make the best learners”, a view that is supported by the findings of STARS.

Recommendation 10.

That secondary school staff observe vulnerable children in their primary settings in Yr.6

- 6.11. However, unfilled secondary school places and budget deficits impact on secondary schools' ability to fund pastoral support staff.

Pupil Information

- 6.12. Although there is no standardised practice, primary schools are easily able to identify children that are likely to require extra support with transition. At Baring Primary School, vulnerable children create "passports" to take with them to secondary school as a handy quick reference for secondary staff. These passports contain key information about the child.
- 6.13. Too often, no plans are in place for vulnerable children at the start of Y7. Primary school files, which contain detailed information about the child's journey through primary school, and include 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, or in September.
- 6.14. Children remain on the roll of primary school until 31 August which creates a situation where primary schools are unable to part with their paperwork during the summer term, with some retaining the files until the children leave the roll, which is too late for secondary schools to make arrangements for the start of term.

Recommendation 11.

That all relevant information/ files are sent from primary to secondary schools before the end of the summer term in Yr.6

Support with application process

- 6.15. For primary schools, supporting parents to complete secondary school applications is resource intensive, and begins at the start of Y6. Secondary school application forms must be completed online, which creates issues for some parents who lack the skills to complete the form. While free access to computers is available in libraries, knowledgeable face-to-face support is not always available, and this can place significant demands on primary schools who bear the brunt of having to support parents through the process.

Recommendation 12.

That consideration be given to means of supporting parents in the secondary school application process and so reduce the burden on primary schools

- 6.16. Primary schools encourage children to visit secondary schools with their parents, not least because it is not always possible for the children's preferred secondary schools to visit their primary schools due to the broad range of schools involved. It is common for the children in the borough's primary schools to go out of borough for secondary school, with some of the most able children going to grammar schools in Bromley and Bexley. Both primary and secondary schools referred to marketing strategies of schools from out of the borough which actively sought to attract the most able children from Lewisham primary schools.
- 6.17. Throughout Y6, primary schools work towards preparing the children for secondary school by supporting good homework habits and encouraging independent work. Primary schools focus on practical preparations in the summer term following the completion of SATS.

Academic momentum

- 6.18. Members of the Committee heard conflicting accounts of attainment levels at the top end of primary school.
- 6.19. Primary schools say their children work hard and achieve good results, with the most able children achieving at Y7 or Y8 level. Baring Primary School felt unable to comment on the level of work in Y7. Rangefield Primary felt that too often good progress made in primary school with the most able children was lost upon transition to secondary school.
- 6.20. There exists a degree of mistrust in secondary schools regarding the accuracy of primary-assessed levels, with secondary schools regarding these as over-inflated. Some secondary schools undertake a benchmarking exercise early in Y7, finding that children are not working at the level at which they were assessed in Y6.
- 6.21. Y6 children largely cease academic work in May when SATS are completed, until starting September when they start Y7. This extended break from formal learning could account for a dip in attainment.

Recommendation 13.

That schools make better academic use of the time between the end of SATS in Yr.6 and the start of Yr.7 (e.g. bridging projects/ units to introduce the KS3 curriculum in the summer term of Yr.6)

- 6.22. The visit revealed a general lack of familiarity between primary and secondary schools as to their respective curricula, which impacts on schools' ability to produce a seamless academic transition. Ruth DeGroot-Incoom, Head of the primary phase at Prendergast Vale, having teaching experience of both KS2 and KS3, was confident that the primary assessed levels were accurate, and that rather than questioning the progress made in primary school, secondary schools should rise to the challenge of building on that academic success. She could cite examples of children who had achieved and behaved well in primary school, disengaging upon reaching secondary school, and called on secondary staff to identify and address the reasons for the slowdown in achievement. The Head of Conisborough College acknowledged that the best creative writing in primary school can exceed anything produced in Y7 or Y8 as the secondary curriculum focuses less on this kind of work.

Recommendation 14.

That all relevant primary/ secondary school staff increase their knowledge of each other's curriculum

- 6.23. For secondary schools, the time commitment involved in delivering the pastoral elements of transition can impact on classroom teaching, particularly in an environment of increasing competition for ever-decreasing resources.

Recommendation 15.

That schools give a high priority to KS3 in aspects of school planning, monitoring and evaluation

- 6.24. As a way of maintaining academic progress, the STARS report recommended the use of bridging units – pieces of work started in primary school and completed at secondary school. These are not used in Lewisham schools, mainly due to the numbers of schools involved in transition.

Recommendation 16.

That secondary schools are reminded to ensure that academic needs are given the same importance as pastoral needs throughout KS3

From the children's perspectives

- 6.25. Y6 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. Fears about the school journey were most acutely felt by children having to travel significant distance such as those hoping to go to Kent grammar schools.
- 6.26. Y7 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, 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.
- 6.27. Y7 pupils reported an overlap in the curriculum and felt they had already covered much of their work in primary school. Some children viewed homework as a positive as it gave them something to do in the evening.
- 6.28. Without exception, every pupil that Members spoke to as part of this review was full of ambition and able to clearly describe their career and life plans at Y6/7.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The review summarises evidence received by the Committee regarding transition practices across Lewisham. It draws on the experiences of current Y6 and Y7 pupils, the Mayor's Young Advisors, and key staff involved in transition in Lewisham's primary and secondary schools. It presents this evidence alongside the national context, as defined by academic research and the national findings of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted).
- 7.2. There are many examples of good work in Lewisham in providing supporting children in making the transition from primary to secondary school. This needs to be further developed and emulated to ensure that the high standards achieved in Lewisham's primary schools are built upon and that children receive the best possible start to their secondary education.

8. Monitoring and Ongoing Scrutiny

- 8.1. The recommendations from the review will be referred for consideration by the Mayor and Cabinet at their meeting on 22 March and their response reported back to the Children and Young People Select Committee within two months of the meeting. The Committee will receive a progress update in six months' time in order to monitor the implementation of the review's recommendations.

Sources

“Identifying factors that predicts successful and difficult transitions to secondary school” Nuffield Foundation, 2014 <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/stars>

“Key Stage 3: the wasted years?” Ofsted, 2015

“What makes a successful transition from Primary to Secondary School?”
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008

Appendix 1

Destinations of 2016 Year 6 Leavers going to non-Lewisham secondary schools

LA Name	School Name	Qty	% Of
Greenwich	Eltham Hill School	58	7.8%
	Thomas Tallis School	52	7.0%
	St Ursula's Convent School	31	4.2%
	International Academy of Greenwich	30	4.0%
	Harris Academy Greenwich	18	2.4%
	The John Roan School	15	2.0%
	Colfes School	7	0.9%
	St Thomas More Roman Catholic Comprehensive School	6	0.8%
	Blackheath High School	3	0.4%
	Stationers Crown Woods Academy	2	0.3%
	Riverston School	1	0.1%
Southwark	Kingsdale Foundation School	72	9.7%
	Harris Boys' Academy East Dulwich	34	4.6%
	Harris Academy Bermondsey	24	3.2%
	Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich	22	3.0%
	The St Thomas the Apostle College	19	2.6%
	Bacon's College	13	1.7%
	Ark Globe Academy	5	0.7%
	University Academy of Engineering South Bank	5	0.7%
	Ark Walworth Academy	4	0.5%
	Harris Academy Peckham	3	0.4%
	St Michael's Catholic College	3	0.4%
	Sacred Heart Catholic School	2	0.3%
	The Charter School	2	0.3%
	Compass School Southwark	2	0.3%
	Dulwich College	2	0.3%
	Notre Dame Roman Catholic Girls' School	1	0.1%
	St Saviour's and St Olave's Church of England School	1	0.1%
	Alleyn's School	1	0.1%
	James Allen's Girls' School	1	0.1%
	City of London Academy (Southwark)	1	0.1%
Newlands Academy	1	0.1%	
Bromley	Harris Girls Academy Bromley	53	7.1%
	Chislehurst School for Girls	27	3.6%
	Newstead Wood School	26	3.5%
	Kemnal Technology College	16	2.2%
	Coopers School	16	2.2%

	Harris Academy Beckenham	16	2.2%
	St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar School	14	1.9%
	Bullers Wood School	7	0.9%
	The Ravensbourne School	6	0.8%
	Langley Park School for Boys	3	0.4%
	Langley Park School for Girls	2	0.3%
	Bishop Justus CofE School	2	0.3%
	Bishop Challoner School	1	0.1%
	Baston House School	1	0.1%
	Ravens Wood School	1	0.1%
	Darul Uloom London	1	0.1%
	Darrick Wood School	1	0.1%
	Hayes School	1	0.1%
	Harris Academy Orpington	1	0.1%
Bexley	Townley Grammar School	21	2.8%
	Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School	17	2.3%
	Bexley Grammar School	7	0.9%
	Beths Grammar School	3	0.4%
	Cleeve Park School	2	0.3%
	St Catherine's Catholic School	1	0.1%
Croydon	Coloma Convent Girls' School	11	1.5%
	Harris City Academy Crystal Palace	10	1.3%
	Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior School	2	0.3%
	St Mary's Catholic High School	1	0.1%
	Al-Khair School	1	0.1%
	Edenham High School	1	0.1%
	Harris Academy South Norwood	1	0.1%
Kent	Dartford Grammar School for Girls	8	1.1%
	Dartford Grammar School	7	0.9%
	Wilmington Grammar School for Girls	2	0.3%
	Tonbridge Grammar School	2	0.3%
	Weald of Kent Grammar School	1	0.1%
	Wilmington Grammar School for Boys	1	0.1%
Lambeth	La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School	2	0.3%
	Bishop Thomas Grant Catholic Secondary School	2	0.3%
	The Elmgreen School	1	0.1%
	St Martin in the Fields High School for Girls	1	0.1%
	London Nautical School	1	0.1%
	Lilian Baylis Technology School	1	0.1%
		74	100.0
		3	%