

## Children and Young People Select Committee

<b>Report Title</b>	6 month update: Transition from Primary to Secondary School in-depth review	
<b>Key Decision</b>		Item No. 5
<b>Ward</b>		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Children and Young People	
<b>Class</b>		Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2017

### 1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 As part of its work programme the CYP Select Committee undertook an in-depth review into transition from primary to secondary schools.
- 1.2 This paper summarises the recommendations from the review and provides a 6 month response from the Children and Young People Directorate for the Mayor to note.

### 2. Context and Background

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.

- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.

- 2.4 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 other's curricula, which creates an additional obstacle to seamless academic transition.
- 2.5 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.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note and endorse the report.

### **4. Recommendations and responses**

#### **4.1 Recommendation 1**

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

- 4.1.1 The Transition Working Group has definitely raised the profile of transition this academic year. Information has been shared with all schools in the weekly e-newsletter, at Headteacher and Governor briefings and 100% of schools attended the Transition Day in April 2017. Both primary and secondary schools recognise the importance of both academic and pastoral transition.

- 4.1.2 While this aspect had a higher profile at the end of the academic year 2016/17 it is recognised that this needs to be kept as a high profile as it has become clear from visits to secondary schools that information and suggestions for activities have not always been taken up.

#### **4.2 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.*

- 4.2.1 Documents will be going to all primary schools that includes advice on a variety of transition matters. This will be included. See Appendix A and Appendix B

4.2.2 The documents went via Schools Mailing, but the uptake of recommendations seems to have been patchy. The evidence has come from both primary headteachers as well as those in our secondary schools.

4.3 Recommendation 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.*

4.3.1 A very successful information sharing day is held every year at Kaleidoscope. Traditionally this has focused on SEND pupils, but this year the information form was amended to include vulnerable pupils as well. The Transition Day took place on Tuesday 18 April. 100% of schools attended. This will continue. In addition, New Woodlands School Outreach Service are offering Transition workshops for Y6 pupils in primary schools who have been identified as those who may struggle at transition.

4.3.2 This is a clear area of success and will continue. The New Woodlands work needs improving, but this is part of the review of their offer to schools being undertaken by the New Woodlands Advisory Board made up of headteachers and advisers across Lewisham.

4.4 Recommendation 4

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

4.4.1 Information was shared with the Transition Working Group and has been used to inform documentation circulated to schools. See Appendices A, B and C.

4.4.2 It has become clear that this will need to be highlighted to schools on a regular basis.

4.5 Recommendation 5

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

4.5.1 Some schools already do this, but it is up to schools how they spend this money. All schools must report how they spend their pupil premium activity and what impact this has. This information must be shared with the Governing Body and be published on the school's website. The Transition Working Group can recommend this.

4.5.2 No further update.

4.6 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 Year 7.*

4.6.1 All secondary schools will identify their most able pupils and make the necessary arrangement e.g. setting, identifying for teaching staff and tracking progress. This year all Lewisham Year 6 pupils will take with them a great piece of writing to their secondary schools which all class teachers will have a copy of to stick in the front of their exercise books. This should ensure that all pupils and especially the most able will be expected to produce high quality written work.

4.6.2 The piece of writing referred to in 4.6.1 was received by some secondary schools, but the coverage was patchy in year one so we will communicate this expectation again this year using a wider range of channels.

#### 4.7 Recommendation 7

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

4.7.1 Governor training took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> May led by Jackie Jones, Service Manager for School Improvement and Intervention. Recommendations from this review were shared with governors and schools were advised to have a governor to look at transition. There was also an article about this in the summer term Governor Information Pack which was distributed to schools in April.

4.7.2 No further update on this recommendation.

#### 4.8 Recommendation 8

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

4.8.1 All schools have received, via Schools Mailing, a suggested menu of activities for successful transition. In addition separate documents have gone to secondary schools and primary schools identifying what each can do. This includes teachers from the primary school, including the SENCO visiting their ex-pupils in their secondary school in the first half of the autumn term. Many schools already do a wide range of activities to support transition.

4.8.2 This is for schools to arrange. An item has been put in Schools Mailing reminding schools that this would be good practice.

#### 4.9 Recommendation 9

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

4.9.1 Many Year 6 pupils are already independent in their learning as well as taking responsibility for younger pupils as Prefects for example or Peer Mentors, or contributing to School Councils etc. However, this recommendation was also added to the primary document mentioned in recommendation 8.

4.9.2 Secondary schools usually elect school council members in the first half of the autumn term and this is an early opportunity for Year 7 pupils to continue their leadership roles from their primary schools. Other opportunities can include sports captains, taking part in clubs and societies.

4.10 Recommendation 10

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

4.10.1 This has been included in the menu of activities. The Working Party also suggested attending TAC/early help meetings and any CP meetings that might be appropriate for individual children.

4.10.2 This is something that does happen where possible as it certainly helps the secondary school staff understand some of the problems. It would tend to be the Inclusion lead who attends or the head of year whichever is the most appropriate. If this information is provided in a timely manner by the primary school or other parties, then the secondary school can deal with the pupil's behaviour, for example with a proper understanding of what might be triggering the issues.

4.11 Recommendation 11

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

4.11.1 This has been included in guidance sent to primary schools. All schools will complete a Transition Form for each child who is moving to Year 7. In addition, all Lewisham Year 6 children have been given the opportunity to complete their own document outlining their hopes and concerns as well as their strengths and hobbies as part of the commitment to improving the quality of information which is transferred from primary to secondary schools.

4.11.2 The Pupil information form was sent to all primary schools after the KS2 STAS had been completed. This timing was agreed by the transition working party on the advice of the primary Headteacher on the group. The form was sent out via Schools Mailing as well as WebDav, our secure information sharing platform. Anecdotally, this was welcomed by primary leaders, but speaking to secondary headteachers not all these forms were received. If we are to do this again in the summer of 2018, there will need to be greater clarity on the value of this information and how to best utilise it, and it will need to be well-publicised and communicated.

4.12 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.*

4.12.1 The proposal was made that secondary schools would open their IT rooms during twilight sessions or Saturday morning to support parents in completing their applications.

4.12.2 This proposal has not taken off. However, one of our other secondary schools is having an open morning on a Saturday: one of our admissions team will be in attendance and the Headteacher has been approached to offer this facility. A number of primary schools do support parents in this way.

4.13 Recommendation 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).*

4.13.1 All primary schools make good academic use of the time between end of SATS in Year 6 and the start of Year 7. Often pupils engage in creative activities developing a leavers play using their independent learning skills and working across the curriculum. There has also been a bridging unit in the Agreed RE Syllabus, but this is currently under review as part of the work of SACRE. Many secondary schools already provide teachers to deliver a range of subjects across the curriculum for different year groups in different schools. There has been an agreement from all primary schools that they will provide a piece of high quality written work for the secondary school. Secondary schools will use this to illustrate to all Year 7 teachers the standard that their pupils can achieve.

4.14 Recommendation 14

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

4.14.1 This has already been a focus of professional development this current academic year. The development of the school wide partnership for Lewisham will further develop opportunities for this cross-phase work.

4.14.2 This is one aspect of the work of Lewisham Learning in partnership with the Secondary Challenge and the teaching schools. It is being planned into the professional development provided by the teaching schools for this coming academic year.

4.15 Recommendation 15

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

4.15.1 Secondary schools know that this is a priority. All secondary schools have actions in place to ensure quality teaching and learning across the curriculum in all year groups.

4.15.2 Peer reviews are taking place during the autumn term which will look at, among other aspects the quality of teaching across the school. These reviews will provide an assessment of the quality of provision at all key stages and, therefore, the academic progress pupils are making in Year 7.

4.16 Recommendation 16

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

4.16.1 Secondary schools know that this is a priority. All secondary schools have systems in place to monitor the progress of all pupils including those at KS3. Data is regularly reviewed to ensure progress and each school will have a robust structure to ensure that regular and effective monitoring takes place.

4.16.2 This is an on-going process throughout the academic year. This enables schools to track the progress made by all pupils as well as different pupil groups such as those entitled to the Pupil Premium, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, students for whom English is an additional language as well as the different ethnic groups in their schools. Therefore, the progress made by pupils in Year 7 will be scrutinised as part of their monitoring, evaluation and review processes.

5. **Financial Implications**

There are no specific financial implications to consider.

6. **Legal Implications**

There are no specific legal implications to consider.

7. **Environmental Implications**

There are no specific environmental implications to consider.

8. **Equalities Implications**

There are no specific equalities implications to consider.

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