



Improving the quality of transition from Year 6 to Year 7 for pupils with SEND.

A local authority commissioned project

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With thanks to

Bevois Town Primary

Swaythling Primary

Portswood Primary

Upper Shirley High



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Transition Project

Improving the quality of transition from Year 6 to Year 7 for pupils with SEND.

As identified within the research carried out into provision for pupils with SEND across Southampton secondary schools (Belli, 2019), students with SEND sometimes struggle to access education, often because of organisational practices that include limited transition arrangements for pupils transferring from primary to secondary phases of education. For some pupils the school environment can be extremely challenging due to constant changes throughout the day, the complexities of social groupings in adolescents and what can be a noisy and chaotic environment. Such difficulties require schools to go beyond integrating these pupils into existing systems and to seriously consider the levels of institutional change needed to achieve equity for this pupil group.

[<https://www.southamptoninclusion.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Version-11-Secondary-research-2019.pdf>]

This project aims to:

Improve the quality of information sharing between Key Stages 2 and 3 for pupils with SEND in order to secure a successful transition between primary and secondary schools that impacts on pupil progress.

The Local Authority commissioned project was created by the Southampton Advisory Outreach Service and Southampton Inclusion Partnership in collaboration with Cantell School. Schools that were also consulted and interviewed as part of the initial information gathering stage were Bevois Town Primary, Portswood Primary, Swaythling Primary and Upper Shirley High.

This transition project includes:

- Detailed checklists for primary and secondary schools that are joined up with clear guidelines and recommendations for consideration.
- A transition document highlighting key information that should be provided by primary schools and discussed at transition meetings.
- Information card examples.
- Guidance on extra transition visits.
- Ideas for encouraging independence within the primary school setting.
- Ideas for parents on encouraging independence at home.
- Parental views on what makes successful transition.
- Parental concerns and advice for transition.
- Pupil voice on the experiences that made their transition successful (to be added later on).

We would welcome any feedback on the effectiveness of these materials and how they could be improved in order to secure successful and consistent transition for pupils with SEND across Southampton.

CHECKLIST FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

SUGGESTED ACTIONS	NOTES/ACTIONS
YEAR 5	
Staff from the intended secondary school to be invited to the Annual Review (EHCP pupils).	
Encourage parents/carers to visit a variety of secondary schools with and without their child.	
Plan in opportunities to increase independence such as taking messages to the class next door, organising their own bag, selecting resources independently etc.	
Plan in opportunities for familiarisation with different staff members. Ensure that work is completed with different people.	
<u>YEAR 6 Autumn/Spring term</u>	
Ensure that the school choice has been confirmed.	
Discuss any SATs arrangements.	
Start to create a portfolio of best work to transfer with the pupil so that work expectation and quality of independent work is clearly evident.	



Encourage pupils and parents to write down any concerns or questions they have about transition to secondary along with what they are looking forward to.	
Provide opportunities for the pupil to be as independent as possible in the primary school setting (appendix d).	
Meet with parents to discuss promoting independence at home (appendix e).	
<u>YEAR 6 Summer</u>	
Invite key people from the secondary school to attend a transition meeting.	
Staff to fill in the transition proforma providing relevant information for the secondary school (appendix a). Including pupil and parent voice.	
Staff to fill out a pupil passport and/or information card (appendix b) about the pupil including pupil voice.	
Clarify a transition plan with dates for extra visits and the aims of the visits (example in appendix c). Ensure the parent and pupil are involved.	
Pupil begins their transition visits initially supported by a member of the primary school leading to being supported by the secondary school staff.	
Provide opportunities for the pupil to express their thoughts, questions and concerns to the secondary school staff.	
Ensure discussions have taken place around what support for the pupil will look like at secondary and prepare the pupil.	



Look through the information provided by the secondary school with the pupil on different occasions (example timetable, homework expectations, uniform, map of the school etc.)	
Access photographs of the secondary school to create a transition book.	
LSA from the secondary school to visit the pupil and shadow in the primary setting (EHCP pupils)	
Pupil to meet the staff they will be working with at the secondary school (Tutor, SENCo, TA, ELSA)	
Create a social story for transition and starting in a new school.	
Share portfolio of best work with staff at the secondary school.	
Pass on to the secondary school key resources that support the child e.g. social stories, task boards, schedules etc.	



CHECKLIST FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SUGGESTED ACTIONS	NOTES/ACTIONS
YEAR 6 - Spring term	
Ensure that a key person has visited the pupil in their primary setting.	
Ensure that you receive a transition proforma (appendix a) with all relevant information at the transition meeting or before. Add your own notes onto the form where necessary.	
Make sure that primary schools have updated copies of example timetables, homework expectations, uniform, map of the school etc. to prepare their pupils.	
Provide the school with transition dates and discuss if there is a need for the pupil to have extra transition visits and the aims of these.	
YEAR 6 - Summer term	
Identify a key adult at the secondary school who will be the pupil's key contact. Provide the primary school with details of who this person is, a photograph and where they can find them.	
Provide the pupil with a map in advance, identifying key routes the pupil will need to take during the day.	
Provide the primary school with information of who the pupil's teachers will be, along with pictures for their transition book	



Ensure that the pupil has a list of what they will need on their induction days and what will happen on the day so they can be prepared	
Provide the primary school with the pupil's timetable for September. This is so that they can support the pupil with understanding it (e.g. drawing clock faces of the time a lesson starts/finishes, if telling the time is an issue).	
Ensure discussions have taken place around what support for the pupil will look like at secondary and so that the primary school can prepare the pupil.	
Ensure that someone attends the annual review for the pupil.	
Ensure that you receive a Pupil Passport and/or an Information Card (appendix b) about the pupil and this is distributed to all the adults who will work with the pupil.	
Ensure that examples of best work are seen by a member of staff so that expectations for work and independence have been evidenced.	
Identify if any more additional visits are needed beyond the original plan.	
Ensure that the identified 1:1 TA for secondary has visited the pupil in the primary setting to observe strategies (EHCP pupils).	
Ensure at least one meeting or conversation has taken place with parents so that their views are considered.	
YEAR 7 – First half term	



Meet with parents to discuss concerns and measures in place to support their child.	
Ensure that the pupil has a clear timetable and colour coded map of the school. Routes to different rooms could be identified.	
Ensure there is a system in place whereby the pupil can communicate to an adult if they need time out of a lesson due to identified needs (e.g. visual symbols, exit card etc.)	
Ensure that the pupil has a key person with whom they can meet regularly and contact in an emergency.	
Identify with the pupil where they should go if they need support e.g. the SEND room.	
Check that all staff who work with the pupil have a copy of their Pupil Passport and/or their Information Card (appendix b) and understand the needs of the pupil.	
Consider where the pupil is seated in their classrooms in relation to physical and/or sensory needs.	
Ensure that the pupil knows the areas that they shouldn't go and why they shouldn't go there.	
Identify with the pupil where the toilets are, fire drill arrangements, where they come in and out of school, changing room expectations etc.	
Plan check-ins with the pupil, staff and parents to monitor how the pupil has settled into school and if the provision is right.	



Meet with staff to discuss planning and differentiation for the pupil especially if working significantly below age related expectations.	
Set up any interventions that are needed.	
If transition has proven tricky, troubleshoot with the primary staff and parents to plan a way forward.	



Transition Document – Primary to Secondary School

Name:	
D.O.B:	
First language:	
Method of communication with parents:	
Primary School:	
SEND status:	SEND K/ SEND E
EHCP status:	EHCP/EHCP declined/In progress
EHCP hours:	
Main area of need (including diagnosis if appropriate):	
Additional visits needed?	

External Agency Support	From	To

Assessment	
KS1 phonic assessment score:	
Current reading age:	
Teacher assessment for Reading:	
Teacher assessment for Writing:	
Teacher assessment for Maths:	
Pre-Key Stage Standards (if appropriate):	



Transition Document – Primary to Secondary School

Areas of need	Main points for discussion
Cognition and learning	
Communication and interaction	
Sensory and Physical	
Social, emotional and mental health (Including behaviour)	

Interventions received	From	To	Impact

Useful strategies and resources:
This pupil needs...



Transition Document – Primary to Secondary School

Pupils feelings on transition to secondary (including hopes and concerns)

Parents feelings on transition to secondary (including hopes and concerns)



Transition Document – Primary to Secondary School

Name:	Pupil A
D.O.B:	**/**/**
First language:	English
Method of communication with parents:	Email is best as both parents work full time
Primary School:	***** School
SEND status:	SEND K
EHCP status:	No EHCP
EHCP hours:	n/a
Main area of need (including diagnosis if appropriate):	Cognition and Learning
Additional visits needed?	Yes (to meet some new faces)

External Agency Support	From	To
SAOS Support	**/**/**	**/**/**
SALSA	**/**/**	present

Assessment	
KS1 phonic assessment score:	failed first attempt, Year 2 scored 32
Current reading age:	6 years, 2 months
Teacher assessment for Reading:	Pre-Key stage standard 6
Teacher assessment for Writing:	Pre-key stage standard 5
Teacher assessment for Maths:	Working at Year 5 age related expectations (reading skills are holding him back)
Pre-Key Stage Standards (if appropriate):	See above



Transition Document – Primary to Secondary School

Areas of need	Main points for discussion
Cognition and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor concentration, easily distracted. • Can task avoid but not in a disruptive way. • Needs visual resources to remember what he needs to do. • Finds it difficult to work independently due to confidence, sometimes a TA needs to get him started. • Has a lot of letter reversals. • Needs over learning as he finds it difficult to retain new learning especially phonics and abstract concepts. • Progresses at a slower speed than his peers. • Reading is the main barrier which is impacting on his writing.
Communication and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be very shy and reluctant to communicate with people he doesn't know. • Will answer questions when asked but hates being put on the spot. • Will interact with peers but does not like to show his work to others.
Sensory and Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wears glasses and prefers to sit on near the front but on the edge of the classroom. • Some bladder issues (see attached doctor's letter). • Likes to be near the door so that he can go to the toilet without others noticing. At the moment he uses a card to show when he will leave to avoid asking the teacher in front of others.
Social, emotional and mental health (Including behaviour)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is very aware that he is behind his peers. • No behavioural needs but we are concerned about his anxiety and self-esteem. • Has friends and is socially fine.



Transition Document – Primary to Secondary School

Interventions received	From	To	Impact
Precision Teaching	**/**/**	present	This works well, reading common exception words has increased by ** words.
SOS spelling	**/**/**	present	Spelling has improved, in independent writing the words that have been focused on are now consistently correct. He learns 3-4 a week which form his spelling lists for the term.
Personalised reading programme: Daily reading to an adult, daily reading skills practise and adults reads to him daily.	**/**/**	present	Confidence is increasing. The skills sessions have impacted on what he can now read when reading to adult.

Useful strategies and resources:

This pupil needs...

- Time to process instructions
- A flap down task board
- Red acetate when reading
- A familiar adult to check in with him away from his peers
- Warnings of when he will be asked for an idea
- Subtle systems of showing he doesn't understand something
- Reading and spelling support

Pupils feelings on transition to secondary (including hopes and concerns)

"I feel nervous because I won't know any of the teachers. I know everyone here. I don't want people to think I am stupid and treat me like a baby. I just want to read like the others. I would be happy for support like I have been having but don't want anyone to know about it. I am really good at sport and technology so I am hoping to have more opportunities to do these at secondary. I love football and basketball."



Transition Document – Primary to Secondary School

Parents feelings on transition to secondary

"We want him to be happy. We are concerned that he is working so far below his peers in reading and writing and would like the interventions he has been receiving to continue as he has made a lot of progress with them. We would like him to do more of the lessons he loves like sport as he excels in this and it gives him confidence. We really don't want him to miss these lessons for interventions and would rather he missed something like languages which he will find extremely difficult. We would like to stay informed of his progress and will help in any way we can."





Information Cards

Rosie, Year 7

- I don't like to ask questions in class so please check in with me once I have started working.
- I find it difficult to work in large groups as I am easily overwhelmed.
- I work best if I am sat near the front of the class at the end of a row so that I can leave easily if I need to.
- I sometimes rock in my chair if I am anxious. I am not doing this on purpose.
- If I am anxious it helps if I can leave the classroom and stand in the corridor for a minute. I will always come back when I am calm.

Toby, Year 7

- I find writing with a pen difficult because I have fine motor difficulties. Please allow me to use a computer for longer pieces.
- I get anxious when changes are made to the timetable without warning me.
- I can often call out in class when I know an answer as I struggle to remember to put my hand up. If my hand is up, please ask me quickly as I will forget what I wanted to say.
- I work better at a table by myself as I don't like others getting too close to me.
- Busy corridors frighten me so I find it much better to leave 2 minutes before the bell to get to my next class.

Sam, Year 7

- I find organising myself very difficult which embarrasses me. Please lend me a pen discretely if I don't have one.
- I can take time to process what you have said so please give me time to do what you have asked before asking me again.
- When overwhelmed I can get angry at others so please follow the steps on my behaviour plan.
- I wear a different jumper and often like to keep my coat on due to overwhelming sensory needs. I will take it off when I am able to.
- I need a task board to work but I don't like others seeing it so please share it with me 1:1 at the start of the lesson.



Guidance for Transition Visits

Below are some ideas on what the focus for additional visits to secondary schools could be. These will not be relevant for all pupils. However, it is important for Primary and Secondary schools to consider in partnership, which ideas could be appropriate for some children with SEND.

There isn't a one size fits all approach to transition. To ensure a smooth transition for children with SEND aim to provide bespoke visits when needed.

Standard transition days

All children, including those with SEND, need to attend transition days as a whole cohort. This will familiarise them with the school building, teachers, structure of lessons etc.

Extra visit 1

Additional visit for SEND children from different primary schools to build links. They could meet key TAs and the SENCO. Exploring the SEND areas they can access would be beneficial.

Extra visit 2

Visit to the secondary school after school hours with parents to have a look around while it is quiet and ask questions.

Extra visit 4

SEND pupil attends a Year 7 class supported by a staff member at the secondary school and transitions to lunch to experience the corridors and lunch hall.

Extra visit 5

Visit for the end of the day routine and experience how they will get home, supported by an adult or parent.

Some experiences from schools locally and further away:

- One school provides a week of transition for all pupils and additional days for pupils with SEND. This takes place once the Year 11s have left and the Year 10s are on work experience.
- Some schools invite pupils from local primary schools for subject specific days (e.g. history, science, art etc.) and for sporting events.
- Other schools set up after school clubs run by Year 9 and 10 for children in local primary schools.



Encouraging Pupil Independence for transition from Primary to Secondary

Where possible independence should be encouraged within the primary school setting to ensure pupils are leaving primary school with appropriate independence and organisational skills.

Managing their own timetable

Move lessons and intervention locations around. Get the pupil to write the room on their weekly timetable and encourage them to find it independently (once modelled). This encourages transition between lessons in a building they know well.

Avoid doing too much for a pupil. Create checklists for getting organised for the end of the day or changing for PE so that they can prompt themselves without an adult supporting them.

Ensure the pupil writes their homework in their diary themselves or sticks in a label from the teacher about homework. Provide small pieces of homework that are due in on different days to develop personal organisation.

Taking control of their learning needs

Implement a vocabulary book/card holder that can be used to store important information. This could contain how to work out key maths concepts, key spellings, check work reminders, punctuation meanings etc. This then prompts the pupil to help themselves before asking for help from an adult.

Implement task boards so that a pupil can manage their learning in class and become more independent. Ensure the task board that works for the pupil is transferred with the pupil to secondary school for consistency.

ELSA sessions

ELSA sessions consisting of work on how to form new friendships, how to stay calm when things go wrong, understanding what to do if they are upset and how to ask for help from someone they do not know.

Basic life skills

Teaching pupils some basic life skills at primary school will help at secondary school. For example:

- using money in a real-life context
- telling the time by pointing out the time that lessons start and finish
- getting changed independently
- personal hygiene skills
- packing a bag with lots of books so that it closes
- reading a bus timetable or map reading

Essentials:

- Task board
- Visual symbol
- Differentiated planning
- TEACCH tasks
- Checklists
- Own stationery
- Planner



Encouraging SEND Pupil Independence at Home

Where possible independence should be encouraged within the primary school setting and at home to ensure pupils are leaving primary school with appropriate independence and organisational skills.

Developing independence

Avoid doing too much for your child. Try asking them to do some of the following:

- Selecting their own clothes and getting dressed independently.
- Making their own bed.
- Finding what they need for a home school lesson e.g. pencil, workbook etc.
- Deciding the order that they will do their tasks in.
- Pouring their own drinks and making snacks.
- Using task boards to structure what they need to do.

Small jobs around the house

Try introducing small jobs around the house for your child to complete. This gives them responsibility for something and builds their self-esteem. Try some of the following:

- Sorting washing into colours.
- Hoovering.
- Helping younger siblings get dressed/organised.
- Laying the table for dinner.
- Hanging out washing.
- Learning how to cook some basic meals.
- Taking rubbish out.
- Washing up.

Emotional support

You can support your child transitioning to secondary by having conversations around:

- How to talk to new people.
- What friends do and do not do.
- How to stay calm when feeling angry.
- What to do when things go wrong.
- What to do if they need help.

Basic life skills

Build your child's independence by teaching them life skills such as:

- How to add up money and knowing the value of all the coins.
- How to tell the time.
- How to pack a bag.
- Personal hygiene skills.
- Folding clothes when getting changed.
- Trying new school uniform on and knowing how to do a tie.
- Walking to the school and back as part of daily exercise so the route is familiar.
- Road safety rules.
- Stranger danger rules.
- Setting an alarm and getting up when it goes off.

Contact the secondary school

- Explore the secondary school website with your child and create some questions you and your child would like to ask.
- Read the SEND policy and SEND Information Report on the website.
- Contact the SENCo to arrange a chat over the phone or via email.



Initial parental concerns before transition

- I was concerned that my son would be overwhelmed by the huge number of students and would generally be unsupported (he did not have an EHCP).
- My son might get lost.
- That he would have no friends.
- Where would my son go if he needed a quiet space?
- My son was so anxious about going to secondary even though he had a brother at the school already. He had already been there several times.
- Despite knowing people who were going to the school his best friends were going to other schools so he was concerned he would have no friends.
- My worries were around social situations. Where would he go if he couldn't cope? What would he do at break and lunch times? How would his sensory needs be addressed?
- Moving from having one teacher to lots of teachers was a concern. How would we make sure everyone understood his needs? How would we communicate with them? How would he manage his anxiety of a bigger school? What if his ASC traits were misunderstood or misinterpreted? How could we avoid an awful summer due to his anxiety?
- I was worried that there was a lot of information for all staff to take on board to support my daughter.
- I thought that staff would struggle to get over the idea that many aspects are difficult for her and therefore would be less motivated to include her in their planning and thinking about a lesson.

Useful quotes from parents:

"I hadn't appreciated quite how much the school functions as a community. There isn't the same parent contact as primary school but communication and contact is really good. I hadn't realised how many 'issues' I wouldn't be able to pre-empt. I didn't realise that the perception of chewing gum under the tables would set off his OCD and make him feel sick. He thought he could smell it and so would hold his breath in the 'worst' rooms. I hadn't factored that they would be cooking tuna and sweetcorn pasta bake in week 2 which led to a teacher phoning me to ask if my child really might be sick at the smell of it or whether he was pulling a fast one. I'd advise parents to keep communication with the school open and regular. They have a lot of children to get to know and teach so my child is not always going to be uppermost in their minds (with the best will in the world) and they are not mind readers. Keep the school informed, make e-mails polite, constructive and not too long! It will take time. Not all teachers will get it straight away and not everyone will 'get it'. Work with them, be patient, be polite, be persistent, help them get to know your child and work with them as a team."

"Some of what was done would not work for another child with SEND but every child is different and therefore getting the right advice and training before the child comes is important. The time that you as SENCO gave me as a parent during visits to the school and answering my questions was amazingly helpful because it meant that I knew what I needed to do to help the process along. The headteacher's description to me of how pastoral care in the school works and how accepting and kind other students are made me feel confident that this would be a school in which my daughter would be safe and cared for! The very obvious presence of senior staff during the school day on the various occasions on which I visited the school made me think that when a problem happens, it will be known and that way stands a better chance of being dealt with."

These views were provided by Parents of pupils in Year 7 at Cantell School



Parental comments on what made their child's transition successful

Our son was invited to visit the school as many times as he wanted. By September he felt very at home there.

The transition week was one of the best things my child did.

We met with the SENCo and our son and spent an hour asking questions.

Help getting to know other pupils going up was good.

My son was able to come into school once a week and go into a class so he could get used to the school.

I was able to support my son and answer his questions because I had met the SENCo first.

It was immensely helpful for my child to have extra visits to the school in small groups.

Having time to talk through calmly what will happen on transition days so that it wasn't unknown really helped me.

Keeping communication open and regular is important.

The school has been willing all along the line to make little adjustments to help my son settle and blossom.

After a week I was able to meet with the school and brief them on key things. In the early days I received many phone calls with updates and to talk about any issues.

I really appreciated the chance to meet with the SENCo face to face and talk through the things I anticipated that my son would find hard.



Pupil views of Transition to Secondary

Pupils with SEND at Cantell Secondary School were asked the following questions regarding their transition from primary school:

1. *What worries and questions did you have before coming to secondary school?*
2. *How did your transition help with these worries?*

Student 1

1. I wondered how busy the school would be, what people would be like, where I needed to go (obviously I know that now). I also wondered how would the classes be, would they be different to primary school ones or the same or similar?
2. It helped me having the extra transition visit day as it helped me find new friends quicker and easier. It helped that we got to see a working school day in action, so I had a preview of what it would be like.

Student 2

1. I was worried about not knowing where to go and I liked having the map - that was very helpful to keep on me and check it if I got lost rather than having to ask someone.
2. It was good knowing which tutor I was going to be in and meeting them on a visit in the summer, helped it feel familiar. Having a buddy for the class / tutor was helpful as they could answer questions more specifically than the teachers because they could talk about their own experiences and give advice.

Student 3

When I came on the extra visits, it helped me because I would know where all my classes were and I thought I was going to get lost but I didn't.

More pupil views will be gathered at a later date in response to the transition materials.