



CASE STUDY REPORT

Strengthening Transfer and Transitions (Improving progression from Year 6 to 7)

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This study was originally published in 2009 as part of the 'What Works Well' initiative, part of the National Strategies for Education in England.

Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study was to improve transfer and transition from primary to secondary school by introducing a Foundation curriculum for Year 7, providing CPD for teachers, and tracking pupil progress.

Aims: The main aim of this development work is to improve the transfer and transition of pupils from primary to secondary school by introducing a Foundation curriculum and providing CPD for teachers in literacy.

Methods: The participants in this case study are teachers, senior management, local authority staff, and the Regional Adviser. They are working together to improve transfer and transition from primary to secondary school. Methods used include CPD training, teacher exchanges, network meetings, data comparison, observation outcomes, periodic teacher assessment, and test results.

Findings: The main findings of this case study are that effective dialogue between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers, CPD for Year 7 Foundation Curriculum teachers, and teacher exchanges have led to improved literacy teaching and learning, increased progression in literacy, and improved communication between primary and secondary schools.

Implications: The findings suggest that effective dialogue between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers, CPD for Year 7 Foundation teachers, and teacher exchanges can lead to improved literacy skills and increased progression in literacy in Year 7.

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Keywords: Secondary education; Transfer and transition; English - writing

Introduction

What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

Transfer is a priority for the authority, the high school and its associated primaries. Progression from Key Stage 2 to 3 is a key area for development.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Teacher

Description

What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

- Transfer and transition
- English - writing

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

By the introduction of a Foundation curriculum for Year 7 in order to ease their transition from primary to secondary school. The curriculum is integrated and project based.

We intended to impact on pupil learning in these ways:

- Increased progression in literacy in Year 7.
- Curricular targets set by Year 6 teachers at the end of KS2 and transferred to the high school.
- Training for Year 7 Foundation Curriculum staff ('Foundation teachers') in key areas of teaching literacy (The sequence for teaching writing, active reading strategies and levelling of writing).
- Teacher exchanges set up between Year 6 and 7, to observe good practice.

What were your success criteria?

- Continuity of curriculum - Teachers in partner schools meet together to discuss aligning teaching and learning approaches and to plan aspects of the curriculum jointly.
- Parent partnerships - There are procedures for parent and teachers to jointly review progress and guidance on how to support their children's learning.
- Use of data and information - Effective links enhance the transfer and use of data, teacher assessment and information about pupils' achievement and prior experience to set challenging targets for year 7.

What information or data did you use to measure progress towards your success criteria?

- Data comparison of cohorts
- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

The LA English consultant provided training for Year 7 Foundation teachers in the sequence for teaching Writing, active reading strategies and the levelling of writing.

Year 6/7 teacher network meetings have taken place termly. At the first meeting between Y6 teachers and Foundation Curriculum teachers in June 2007 the Foundation Curriculum Coordinator provide information to Year

6 teachers about the Foundation Curriculum and answered any queries.

At this meeting training was provided for the Year 6 and Foundation Curriculum teachers in Dialogic teaching. Teachers also took part in cross phase standardisation of recount writing. Both Foundation Curriculum teachers and Y6 teachers brought examples of pupils' recount writing to the meeting. This enabled Foundation Curriculum Teachers to learn more about levelling from primary specialists. This also helped to develop a mutual trust in assessment between the phases.

At the second meeting in October 2007, Year 6 teachers and Foundation Curriculum teachers reviewed the writing targets, which Year 6 teachers set for pupils in the summer term. This enabled Year 6 teachers to remain involved in their past pupils' progress and opened up a dialogue about the teaching of literacy, mainly around pedagogical continuity and progression. The impact of the dialogic teaching training from the June meeting was discussed. Teachers who had been present at this training had used the methods with their classes (both Year 6 and Foundation Curriculum).

Teachers were also introduced to Socratic discussion at this meeting.

What CPD materials, research or expertise have you drawn on?

Expertise of LA English and literacy consultants.

Relevant National Strategies resources:

Who provided you with support?

- Local authority staff
- Senior management

How were you supported?

The support provided by the National Strategies has been invaluable in supporting the work in strengthening transfer. Progress meetings have provided an opportunity for reflection and networking with other Local Authorities. The support and challenge provided by the Regional Adviser has helped to shape the strategic direction of the project.

School visits from the Regional Adviser have provided an affirmation of good practice for the work of the Foundation Curriculum. Relating this to the partner primaries has also raised the positive profile of the Foundation Curriculum in primary schools.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

Foundation lessons specifically address the key competencies and rates of progress in literacy are improved.

At the second network meeting in October 2007, Year 6 teachers and Foundation curriculum teachers reviewed the writing targets, which Year 6 teachers set for pupils in the summer term by reviewing Year 7 pupils' writing produced in Foundation lessons.

Senior Leader observations of Year 7 Foundation lessons have shown an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the schools involvement in the pilot. Pupil progress was tracked from end of Year 6 National Curriculum test data to end of year 7 using Optional and Progress tests. Pupil attendance data was also gathered (see below).

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

The Year 7 Foundation curriculum provides an opportunity for one teacher to develop cross-curricular literacy skills with a particular class and to focus on and develop the curricular targets set from Year 6 for writing. Literacy is now at the core of the Foundation curriculum.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Pupils interviewed from Year 7 for the filmed case study for this work said the following:

"Foundation is where you can learn more about English, science and numeracy, and you can get used to your teacher. Once you get used to your teacher you can go to other teachers. When you are in Year 8 you have to move to different classrooms with different teachers."

"It's helping me learn more and... they're giving you hard work and a better level."

"Foundation year's helped because you could get better levels in maths, science and English. And your teacher could help you out and give you harder work... and you could get more for your GCSEs when you are in Year 11."

"The young people in Years 7 and 8 are definitely making better progress in terms of levels in English, maths and science." (Antony Edkins, executive headteacher, Harrop Fold Specialist Arts College)

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Data comparison of cohorts
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Observation outcomes

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Pupil progress from Year 6 KS2 Tests to end of Year 7 has shown that pupils have made more progress in 06-07 than was made in 05-06.

What has been the impact on teaching?

- Literacy more effectively taught in the Year 7 foundation curriculum.
- Curricular targets for writing have been used to tailor wave one teaching for Year 7 pupils.
- More challenge in Year 7 Foundation curriculum.
- Speaking and listening skills explicitly taught in Year 6 and 7.

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Improvements in curriculum documentation
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Year 7 Foundation teachers are more confident in the teaching of literacy, specifically writing. This is evident in their day to day and long term planning. Through SLT observations, there is evidence of improved quality of teaching and learning. Specific times for assessment of reading and writing are built into the year plan.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

Network meetings were already taking place between the deputy headteachers of Harrop Fold's nine partner primaries and a deputy headteacher from Harrop Fold, facilitated by the Excellence in Cities Action Zone (EiCAZ). As a result of the pilot, the Strategic Lead for transfer from the high school now attends these meetings.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

This has improved the communication between primaries and the Year 7 Foundation team and these teachers have been directly involved in steering the direction of the arrangements for transfer.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

Effective dialogue between Year 6 teachers and Year 7 Foundation teachers via network meetings and teacher exchanges has led to a more focused approach to the teaching and assessment of literacy within the Foundation curriculum.

What key resources would people who want to learn from your experience need access to?

- Curriculum Continuity – effective transfer between primary and secondary schools. This was used as a starting point when planning the network meetings.
- Targets Manual by Jackson McCormack Education Services

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

CPD for Foundation Curriculum Teachers:

Network Meetings for Year 6 teachers and Foundation Curriculum Teachers:

If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

Complete the Self-Evaluation Toolkit Transfer and Transitions with as many partners as possible (primary Year 6 teachers and senior leaders, Year 7 teachers, middle level leaders, senior leaders from high school and LA personnel).

To develop a manageable and achievable action plan to address the areas for development identified through the self-evaluation.

What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

- Continue CPD for Year 7 Foundation Curriculum teachers using the PAT analysis of strengths and weaknesses of current Year 7 pupils from the KS2 Tests to identify areas for CPD.
- To continue the teacher exchanges to share best practice between KS2 to KS3.
- Set up a teacher forum for Year 7 Foundation teachers and Year 6 teachers on the authorities Virtual Learning Platform.
- The high school and partner primaries will be involved in the next phase of the introduction of use of

the VLE for electronic transfer of Year 6 pupils work to high school.

- Dissemination of the above through the LA's annual transfer conference.

Supplementary Materials

This report is accompanied in the library by the following supplementary material:

- Letter to parents re the Foundation Curriculum
- Video files - Chapter titles and explanatory notes
- Chapter 1: Introduction and Year 6 lesson (part 1)
- Chapter 2: Year 6 lesson (part 2)
- Chapter 3: Cross phase meetings of staff
- Chapter 4: Year 6 pupil interviews
- Chapter 5: Introduction to Year 7 Foundation Year and Curriculum
- Chapter 6: Year 7 lesson (part 1)
- Chapter 7: Year 7 lesson (part 2)
- Chapter 8: Interview Secondary Headteacher (part 1: Rationale)
- Chapter 9: Interview Secondary Headteacher (part 2: Implementation)
- Chapter 10: Year 7 pupil interviews
- Chapter 11: Conclusion
- Attendance data evidence
- Report to Governors on Foundation Curriculum
- Extract from Strengthening Transfers and Transitions, re Salford (May 09)

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This case study was originally published as part of the 'What Works Well' section of the National Strategies for Education in England. The National Strategies were professional programmes aiming for improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in schools in England. 'What Works Well' involved teaching practitioners from all phases and areas of education sharing accounts of real developments which had improved learning and teaching, and made a difference to pupil progress. 'What Works Well' case studies were designed to support practice transfer and include sufficient detail and resources to enable others to implement the effective practice described. They were reviewed by experts prior to publication as 'User Generated Content' (UGC) under a licence which encouraged reuse and derivative works, but which precluded commercial use.

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