Effective Transition

An Action Research Project from Reception to Year 1

Directorate for Children and Young People

Lancashire County Council
Acknowledgements

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St Leonard’s Church of England Primary School, Walton Le Dale
St Oswald’s Roman Catholic Primary School, Accrington
St Peter’s Church of England Primary School, Chorley
St Wilfrid’s Church of England Primary School, Halton
Whalley Church of England Primary School
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Overview of the project:

Nationally the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 has been identified as an area for development.
Key issues include:
- Ineffective use of assessment
- Lack of continuity and progression in provision for learning in Year 1
- Lack of understanding of the importance of a practical approach to learning by parents.

Lancashire LA provided funding for an action research project involving 12 schools to explore this issue in depth and draw together some practical guidance to be disseminated across the authority. The case studies in this document are intended to illustrate the journey that participating schools went through, in reflecting on and exploring the key issues of transition.

The project took place over a 12-month period, and involved training and support from Assessment and Early Years Consultants/Teacher Advisers, action research based in school, in depth discussion, feedback and evaluation. The project was based on national research and initiatives including:

- National Foundation for Educational Research
- Continuing the Learning Journey
- Seamless Transitions
- EYFS
- HMI Report 2004

A key feature of the project was the development of good practice in Assessment for Learning throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Aims of the Project:

- To form a learning team of teachers as action researchers, with an expectation that they will develop approaches to transition
- To update teachers in the learning team on recent, significant research findings which underpin effective transition;
- To enable schools to continue to develop a high quality and appropriate learning culture that will impact on the progress of children;
- To support teachers in reviewing, modifying and developing existing practice;
- To share and celebrate achievement.
Key principles of transition addressed in this project:

At the initial meeting, practitioners explored the key issues related to transition and considered research material and national guidance. Four key principles of effective transition were identified which would underpin the action research. The main findings of the group are set out under the following four headings with examples from the research, given in the following section, ‘Principles into Practice’. Detailed case studies from each school give further exemplification in the final section of this document headed ‘Case Studies’.

1. A whole school approach to successful transition

2. A similar environment for Reception and Y1 with the opportunity to initiate activities independently

3. On going assessment to support planning for the next steps in children’s learning

4. Parental understanding and awareness of the value of practical approaches to teaching and learning
Principles Into Practice

1. A Whole School Approach to Successful Transition

Key issues to consider

- Whole school training should take place to ensure all SMT, Staff, and Governors understand and subsequently are involved in developing an appropriate transition policy. (Refer to the document ‘Continuing the Learning Journey’)
- Identify the specific needs of the school and ensure transition targets feature on the School Improvement Plan.
- Inform parents of transition arrangements.
- Raise awareness of the principles of effective practice in the Foundation Stage and how this can be developed into Key Stage 1.
- Audit provision (resources, staffing, space, time, etc.) to provide effective support during the transition process and beyond.

Examples from Research Project:

- ‘Moving up to the new class’, planned opportunities for visits to the new class in the summer term.
- Parents were invited to ‘meet the teacher’, informally for after school ‘pop in’ sessions.
- Whole school activity weeks were initiated, which enabled all year groups to integrate. For example, science week, Christmas Victorian market, multi-cultural week.
- Relocation of classroom – Year 1 moved next to reception to maximise use of resources, staff and space.
- A letter from the new teacher was sent to parents of all year groups, encouraging a response about child’s feelings regarding the next class.
- A questionnaire was developed for staff to share ideas on a successful transition.
- All staff were involved in developing a transition policy.
2. A similar environment for Reception and Y1 with the opportunity to initiate activities independently

Key issues to consider

A. The Learning Environment:

- Provide an environment both indoors and outdoors, which is stimulating and inviting, in order to provide opportunities that will engage and challenge children.
- Create a flexible workspace which can be changed and adapted throughout the year, e.g. tables, display areas, role play (include interactive displays at child’s height)
- Provide elements of continuous provision (e.g. role play, writing area, construction, small world, sand, water) to support teaching and learning

- Establish a well labelled classroom with clearly accessible resources
- Ensure the classroom responds to the needs of a wide range of learners, including diversity, SEN, AGT and different learning styles e.g. visual, auditory or kinaesthetic.

Examples from Research Project:

- The layout of the classroom was redesigned to create better working spaces for the children
- Provision changed to include similar features in Reception and Year 1 classrooms, e.g. role play, sand, water, writing area, construction. Introduce colour coding e.g. tables and chairs for different areas of provision, e.g. Maths, ICT, literacy
- Children were involved in planning the outdoor environment

- Following discussion the use of outdoor space was changed to allow both Reception and Year 1 children to have access, e.g. changes in timetable, division of space, shared resources.
- A shared role play area was developed to promote progression in writing
The Year 1 environment changed, – not a ‘space’ at a desk for each child, no teacher’s desk, role play area, writing and reading area

B. Organisation and Management:

Key issues to consider

- Structure the timetable so the children have continued and frequent opportunities for child initiated activities to consolidate and extend their learning
- Give the children opportunities to become familiar with the environment, show them how to use it, and share expectations
- Provide opportunities for children to be independent, having access to their own resources, and taking responsibility for caring for the environment
- Plan time for formal and informal assessments, including observations
- Involve familiar adults who can promote continuity in learning from the foundation stage

Examples from Research Project:

- The structure of the day in Year 1 changed to ensure continuity of routines e.g. self registration, system for number of children in areas of provision, e.g. coloured bands/ signing in, organisation of snack time
- Timetable developed for familiar support staff to work with children in Reception and Year 1
Observational assessment was timetabled for staff
The outdoor curriculum was planned to ensure access for all children throughout the day
Joint planning was initiated between FS and KS1 to audit and prepare resources linked to specific curriculum areas, for both indoor and outdoor provision

Planning for literacy and mathematics changed to be more flexible in Year 1
Independent activities have been developed

C. Teaching and Learning

Key issues to consider

- Develop manageable planning systems to promote high quality teaching and learning
- Create opportunities for group work, individual work and whole class teaching
- Provide opportunities to support independence when children are involved in their own learning, e.g. interactive displays
- Have a range of practical activities to allow children to explore and interact with resources, to consolidate learning
- Develop positive relationships between adult/child, adult/adult, child/child, adult/parent/child
- Use a range of assessment for learning strategies, to establish where the children are and to move them on in their learning
Examples from Research Project:

- Reception and Year 1 topics and themes were planned together to ensure the continued development of key skills.
- Reception and Year 1 staff made time to discuss and share ideas and planning and continue to do so on a daily basis.
- Continuous provision was developed in Year 1 to enhance child initiated learning.
- Specific learning objectives were planned for, in shared activity areas.
- Plans were adapted to incorporate outdoor activities.
- Cross curricular links were developed.
- Plans were changed to incorporate continuous provision into literacy and mathematics lessons.
- Assessment for Learning through improved questioning and more opportunities for solving problems was developed.
- Interactive displays were developed using table tops, unit tops and display boards.
3. Ongoing assessment to support planning for the next steps in children’s learning

Key issues to consider

- Identify the processes of learning which support ongoing assessment and use appropriate assessment for learning strategies
- Assessment should be used to gain information about where children are in their learning and identify next steps
- Information from FS should be used to build on and extend children’s learning in Key Stage 1
- Observations should be planned for in a range of situations and activities, predominantly self initiated/independent activities
- Assessments should come from a range of perspectives, including parents, welfare staff, support staff, peers
- Involve parents in the assessment process throughout the year
- Involve children in their own assessment.

(Planning cycle EYFS, DCFS 2007)
Examples from Research Project:

- All staff were involved in developing a shared understanding of the assessment process.
- Evidence gathered from children’s own recording was used to establish where they are at in their learning, e.g. for writing.
- Regular observational assessments were planned for to monitor the use of the areas of provision, and identify opportunities to take learning forward.
- Samples of children’s writing from continuous provision were annotated and related to FSP/NC.
- Observations of the children during focused lessons and continuous provision were made on sticky labels.
- Information from ‘show us how you feel’ sheet was used to establish starting points at the beginning of the school year.
- Parents were invited on two evenings to discuss their child’s progress and received a report at the end of the year.
4. Parental understanding and awareness of the value of practical approaches to teaching and learning

Key issues to consider

- Invite parents to specific meetings about the curriculum, the learning environment and activities in each class as the children move from Reception to Year 1
- Inform parents about the daily school routines relevant to their child, e.g. days for PE
- Include parents in transition process and keep them up to date with ongoing developments, e.g. introduce new teacher, be familiar with the new classroom and feel confident to approach staff
- Provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the child’s learning through newsletters, termly topic focus, helping with homework
- Create strategies to promote and maintain good communication and cooperation between school and home
- Develop guidelines and procedures to ensure continued good practice, e.g. reflected in school policies

Examples from Research Project:

- Parent questionnaires were developed to improve the transition from reception to Year 1
- Children were invited to bring their parents to meet the teacher in the summer term prior to them moving up into a new class; this involved an introduction to the new classroom environment
- Parents were given a timetable of the first week at the beginning of a new year
- Parents were welcomed into the classroom at the beginning and at the end of the day to talk about any issues
- Coffee mornings and afternoons for parents were provided
- Parents were encouraged to become involved in school projects, e.g. setting up gardens/vegetable plots
- Booklets were produced to explain the transition process to parents
- Portfolios of annotated photographs of children working in different ways were shared with parents
- An overview of the current topic was sent home termly
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The children became more independent

We became more confident and began to take risks

**The focus of our transition project:**

- To share the philosophy of smooth transitions to Y1
- To promote continuity between the two phases
- To plan activities which encourage free access play that is skills based and progressive
- To design planning sheets focussing on the skills we are trying to develop

**The reasons for this focus:**

- To help children to settle into a new class (working with different children and adults)
- To make children’s learning more exciting and accessible
- To involve staff in Y1 more by information swapping and helping them to gain a better understanding of the FSP
- To initiate KS1 meetings to discuss the FSP points with a particular focus on PSE and motor skills

**Our initial steps:**

- ‘Smooth Transitions’ read by all staff individually including TAs and key elements discussed
- Discussed good practice in Reception – what works? Why? What is continuous provision?
- Held lots of meetings – what should we do first?
- Issues addressed - timetable, end of year FSP, the environment, organisation, displays
- Action plan, discussed end of FSP, moved furniture around, took furniture out, re-organised areas, made displays more interactive
- We considered resources – people, room (space)
- Ordered equipment (small world),
- Organised support -TA’s (right person in right place)
How the project developed:

- We changed our planning
- We changed the organisation of the learning environment
- We were more aware of how children’s learning style differs
- We concentrated on the learning needs of boys, the population in KS1 is 70% boys
- We became more confident and began to take risks, particularly in organisation of the classroom

The outcomes of our project:

- The staff became more aware of where children were at any one time
- It became easier to plan for individuals and problem solving activities
- Resources were re-organised
- We became more enthusiastic, as the more we knew, the more we understood the philosophy of children’s learning

The impact on learning:

- The children became more independent
- They became more competent and quicker in the skills we practised
- They made greater progress with their social and communication skills and seemed happier as the organisation became familiar

Reflection and next steps:

- The project brought us closer together as a team and there is more information sharing
- There is more social interaction between all staff
- We plan to write a policy explaining ‘Smooth Transitions’ for parents
- We hope to begin to involve parents more in the transition process

What we have learned from the project:

- The importance of sharing information among practitioners
- It emphasised that children learn in different ways through a variety of stimuli
- That the development of personal and social skills is fundamental to achieving success in all areas of learning
**Name:**  Vicki Tapping, Claire Blacow  
**School:**  Carnforth North Road  

**Case Study Focus:**  Outdoor Play throughout R/Y1/Y2  

**The focus of our transition project:**  

To provide more opportunities for outdoor play and to incorporate outdoor activities throughout the day (especially for class 1/2 who up to now have had limited access to the outdoors. To look at our move towards a creative curriculum and try to incorporate more literacy and numeracy into outdoor learning.

**The reasons for this focus:**

- Having developed a more creative curriculum in KS1 we wanted the children to work together more.
- We already have a good Transition Policy and we wanted to maintain and develop children’s interest, motivation and confidence.
- To plan and share all areas as a complete unit.
- To make learning in literacy and numeracy more active and fun.
- To use the Breathing Space and Vegetable Garden in all areas of the curriculum.

**Our initial steps:**

- Audit of resources including learning areas inside and outside
- Looked at outdoor area and visit from Anne Conroy
- Asked HT for money for shared outdoor resources, sand, delta sand, trays
- Adapted planning/plan together
- Plan time for outdoors on literacy/numeracy plans
How the project developed:

- KS1 children continue to work together well in a range of groupings.
- A shared outdoor area for Literacy and Numeracy.
- Developing a shared book of enjoyable ‘tried and tested’ outdoor activities/games especially for Literacy and Numeracy.
- Using books such as Featherstones - Little Books of..., and Letters and Sounds for ideas.
- Continuing to plan and work in the Breathing Space area and Vegetable Garden using cross-curricular links.

The outcomes of our project:

- All children have regular access to outdoor play/learning area, and look forward to time outside – desperate to go out
- Children aware of their environment and becoming more independent, asking questions, solving problems, e.g. how to keep birds off the vegetable garden
- Literacy and numeracy activities more enjoyable – children have more space
The impact on learning:

- Children are happy, motivated and love being outside – more space to learn
- Speaking and listening skills improved. Children realised that they needed to listen
- Literacy and numeracy skills have improved because it is fun and active
- Learning relevant to children’s lives and environment
- Parents becoming more involved in children’s learning – looking at and discussing vegetable garden/ creating own patch at home as a result

Sharing resources between the two classes:

Year 2 and Year R children working together to make cakes for the coffee morning
Parental Involvement:

• Parents already involved in School Transition Policy from pre-school to Reception and are now involved in Year R and Year 1 transition.

• Parents are making and developing outdoor area and resources such as benches, easels, bird boxes and bird feeders.

• Parents volunteering to help plant trees, vegetables and supporting weekly coffee afternoons (helps us fund resources/activities).

Reflection and next steps:

- Continue planning and using outdoor space for all curriculum areas. (Different groups out throughout the day.)
- Teachers/staff are better at planning, adapting activities for outside
- Helping KS2 plan a similar curriculum due to enthusiasm and sharing of good practice

What we have learned from the project:

- Children enjoy being outside in all weathers
- We are better at adapting our teaching and planning to make learning fun/interesting
- We have started to think ‘outside the box’ (not be restrained)
- We have seen children of all abilities develop and enjoy success (children, who may fidgety on the carpet are more engaged when moving about outside)
- Sharing resources is time saving and a wider range of activities can be offered to children
- Children enjoy working in different groups and helping each other
- Planning for activities is very important
Case Study Focus: Integration of teaching between Reception and Y1

The focus of our transition project:
Integration of teaching between Reception and Y1 – by using the wider environment to enrich this curriculum.

The reasons for this focus:
- To see if we could develop links to enable a smooth transition and enrich the curriculum
- A whole school project using this as a focus within; ‘using the wider school environment’ to enrich the curriculum on offer to these mixed aged groups.

Our initial steps:
- Curriculum planning meetings between R and Y1 staff
- Organisation of mixed aged groups and timetabling

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<th>Monday am</th>
<th>Tuesday pm</th>
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How the project developed:
- Weekly meetings to discuss curriculum, update on assessments and especially information for pupil profiles
- Further meetings to discuss pros and cons, develop the curriculum further, especially outdoor and wider environment issues
The outcomes of our project: (so far)

- Certain aspects have been positive, e.g. speaking and listening activities, story and role play
- Planning – less of it but difficult to develop continuous curriculum with links across curriculum areas
- We tried to do too much - need to focus on activities that this would really benefit

The impact on learning:
We thought that we had been too ambitious which was:

- At first detrimental to the children’s learning (especially year 1)
- Time wasted moving between three classrooms
- For reception – too much, too soon
- Unsettling and we felt unnecessary for the majority

But the Reception children said:

And the Year 1 children said:
They also said:

I like my classroom best.

It’s noisy!

I miss the other children.

Reflection and next steps:

We decided to home-in on, not so much the children moving, but on the provision of the environment both indoors and out. Therefore we focused on planning, assessment and the general learning environment, but still giving opportunities when we felt it was appropriate for mixed class (group) learning.

What we have learned from the project:

- Confirmed our view that aspects of Foundation Stage style learning and provision can be transferred into Y1, even though it is a more formal learning environment.
- You can be too ambitious and that our school/environment is different to many others and you have to look at your own situation and realise what is already in place and what realistically you need/want to develop and all the time ask ........

We have a successful induction process with children visiting, spending mornings, having the Reception teacher visit pre-school etc. This meant a smooth transition into school and so when we moved them around into other rooms it had an overall negative effect.

The school already works on whole school topics and issues and so we're all aware of differentiation, providing opportunities etc in topic/buzz weeks; the children move around classrooms/teachers and so experience the wider environment. Example – flight week in July. The whole school experienced seeing a kite demonstration, hot air balloon etc and
Examples of whole school topics/initiatives when all pupils experience different teachers/rooms for learning

- Literacy – classes had a different teacher every day for story time
- Numeracy – maths week moved to different rooms to complete problem solving activities
- Others – European week – each class teacher a different country and pupils move each day one of them
- Flight week – whole school as well as different activities
- Science week – using the whole school to complete activities

- History / geography – A Time and Place – all children viewed each class’s presentation on a specific day
- FS and KS1 plan a joint topic for the final half term every year on a rotating programme – pirates, seaside, castles, monsters. The children then go on a trip together and have a fun day with all the staff involved photos, zoo, dinosaurs.

The next stage for the whole school is to use the wider environment.
Name: Dinah Lord & Claire Tuffin
School: Sherwood Primary School
Case Study Focus: Induction into Year 1

The focus of our transition project:
To ease the induction into Year 1 involving both parents and children.

The reasons for this focus:
- Successful Foundation Unit (55 pupils) already established
- Desire to extend principles of FS curriculum into KS1 curriculum
- To ensure a developmental continuum is maintained for all pupils
- To develop a seamless, gradual transition from play-centred learning to more formal practice
- To keep lines of communication open between all stake holders: staff, pupils and parents.

The children in Year 1 are now experiencing a more practical curriculum.

If the children feel secure and confident with the staff they will talk about any issues.
Our initial steps and development of the project:

- Questionnaires sent home for parents to complete with children – likes, dislikes, worries, hopes
- 1:1 pupil conferences – Foundation Stage children and staff
- “Move up” visit to new environment and staff
- Staff visiting Foundation Unit in the summer term
- 1:1 staff liaison Foundation – Year 1
- Children prepared samples of work to take up with them (ideas in place for developing a transition folder to accompany children to Year 2 and possibly through school)
- Parents meeting in June to meet new staff and ask questions
- Foundation Stage staff ‘pop-ins’ to Year 1 especially in the autumn term
- Sharing of pupils’ work – Year 1 children actively encouraged to return to Foundation

Reception questionnaire

I have been in the Foundation Unit at Sherwood Primary School for twelve months and I am ‘Continuing My Learning Journey’ when I move onto Year 1 in September. I would like my new teachers to know a little about the things I like to do and those I find more difficult. If I need help, my teachers in Foundation will help me write my answers.

I am looking forward to:

I will miss:

I hope Year 1 will be:

Am I worried about anything?

In Foundation I like to:

In Foundation I don’t like:

I would like my new teacher to know:
The outcome of our project:

- The children settled very well into their new environment after initial steps to ease the transition – lots of discussion and reassurance with the children about the move, together with the initial steps as listed above.
- The children in Year 1 are now experiencing a more practical, play based curriculum.
- The project is viewed positively, so the transition preparation will now be introduced when the children are moving onto Year 2.
- The questionnaires to parents gave very positive feedback about both the Foundation Unit and their progression to Year 1.
- The questionnaires picked up some small concerns from parents, however, nothing that we hadn’t already envisaged.
- The meeting for parents in June was very well attended and received. No unforeseen questions arose.
- The children enjoyed the Foundation 1:1 conferences, and answers were as expected.
- The Year 1 – 1:1 conferences, in some instances highlighted other issues – concerns or worries which included a possible child protection issue and possible bullying. If the children feel secure and confident with the staff they will talk about any issues.
The impact on learning:

- The children viewed Foundation as play. As this type of curriculum has been extended to Year 1 they have continued to enjoy learning through play based activities.
- The 1:1 conferencing has cemented the relationships between the children and staff further building trust and security. The welfare of the children is paramount as it affects all they can do.
- Learning through practical, investigative methods builds independent learners.
- There is to be a gentle introduction to a slightly more formal curriculum as the year progresses for those children that are ready.
- The planning in Year 1 has been modified to accommodate practical investigative learning.
- The project has highlighted the need for the development of on-going assessment, as there is not the same amount of tangible paper evidence.

Reflection and next steps:

- To continue with 1:1 conferencing to assist in building a safe and secure environment.
- To continue with transition questionnaires trialled in this project.
- To continue to develop transition materials by extending to Year 1/Year 2 transition.
- To continue to inform and keep open ‘talk’ policy with parents and possibility of more ‘open pop-ins’ for parents so they can see the children in their setting.
- To write and develop a Transition Policy.
- To further develop a transition folder for each child to accompany them at least to the end of Key Stage 1.

What we have learned from the project:

- This has eased the transition from Foundation to Year 1 because all the participants – staff, children and parents – were central and kept informed about all aspects of the transition.
- That it is possible to promote a more practical play-based curriculum which ensures continuity in method of independent learning.
- That the time spent on 1:1 conferencing is very worthwhile. The trust built between staff and children in the classroom is paramount because it can sometimes highlight important issues.
In our school, transition is regarded as the learning journey from YR to Y6 providing continuously for the needs of individuals in response to their individual rate of change.

The focus of our transition project:
To extend planning and provision for transition throughout KS1

The reasons for this focus:
School organisation, results in mixed age classes, parental concerns, and other transition issues which were already being addressed, e.g. role play, continuous provision, group swaps. Headteacher keen to extend topic based planning in both KS in the style of FS. Already had some success with special weeks, i.e. multicultural, science and problem solving.

Aims of our project:
- To ease transition of all children by providing similar experiences at all levels.
- To help staff to support each other in planning a cross-curricular topic in the style of Foundation Stage planning.
- To provide effectively for mixed age classes.
- To increase staff confidence to extend planning in this way to include other topics.
- To provide a planning model.

Our initial steps:
Medium/short term plans prepared and delivered over 4-week induction period
Meeting 1 (June) - topic discussed and title agreed. Exemplar planning grid distributed. Staff asked to consider how to implement plans.

It was decided to choose an overarching theme of ‘Ourselves’ which could be further broken down into topics which would allow relevant parts of the National Curriculum to be included.

Infant 2 Houses in the town

Infant 3 Food Preparation - DT
How the project developed:

Topic completed and evaluated. Issues that arose – planning format, continuous provision developing/changing over the 4 weeks. Organisational issues.

Meeting 2 (July) - individual plans and ideas discussed in detail concerns shared - planning format amended. At this meeting staff were struggling with the freedom to plan away from the normal routine and pressure to ‘get things moving’:

- We needed to convince ourselves that there would be some benefits.
- We needed to remind ourselves of our aims.

We agreed that:

- Our class system already meets the needs of individuals very well. We are aiming for the same end product but the route followed may vary.
- Although the class topics would be different, the objectives may well be the same.
- Our priority would be to get to know our children and establish routines in order to facilitate future provision, whilst still retaining a thread of familiarity.
- The regime in each class will naturally change and evolve from week 1 to week 4 as things become established.

The outcomes of our project:

Topic completed and evaluated. Issues that arose – planning format, continuous provision developing/changing over the 4 weeks. There were some organisational issues.

Evaluation of Project - Infant 2:

- Planning – written planning was problematic, i.e. what to record and how. A format gradually evolved.
- Implementation – moved from all elements of Numeracy and Literacy taught in short bursts and through a variety of tasks throughout the whole day in week 1, to recognised Literacy and Numeracy hours in the final week. On days when TAs were involved in Reception getting to know new children, it was difficult to keep all activities going.
- Children – settled quickly and confidence increased. Y1 children provided good role models for reception children when they were integrated into class. No negative comments from parents or children.
- Teacher – enjoyed flexibility of cross curricular planning. Would refine planning next time.

The impact on learning:

Staff have better grasp of individual personalities/abilities, routines/expectations embedded.

Reflection and next steps:

- What would we change? – Incorporate more themed planning. Communication/organisation is vital.
- We would do it again.

What we have learned from the project:

- One planning format doesn’t fit all.
- General theme gives continuity.
- Planning like this takes more time.
**Case Study**

**Focus:** Developing Continuous Provision in FS and Y1

**The focus of our transition project:**
Developing Continuous Provision in FS and YR1 - to ensure progression through focused objectives in Year 1 and to promote continuity through routines

**The reasons for this focus:**

- To make full use of the environment, creating areas of learning in Reception and Year 1
- To develop continuous provision in the Year 1 classroom
- To further develop continuous provision in Reception, both inside and out

**Our initial steps:**

Planning areas within the new build. Research in other schools, adopt ideas. Yr 1 and R teachers to discuss areas already established in Reception, with a view to the areas to be set up in Yr 1, ways of working, e.g. self registration

**Reception class extension – Up and running:**

**How the project developed:**

All staff involved in initial discussions. FS & KS1 teachers agreed on same topic/unit coverage on a half termly basis. Audit of resources done so everyone shares resources. Role play boxes made for all to use. Questionnaire – feedback form children

**The outcomes of our project:**

Still developing in Year 1. Changing ways of working depending on the activity. Working more as a department, sharing topics, building collection of resources and using them well. Children more secure with a similar way of working (same as Reception).

Monitoring includes:
- Where children have been
- Who they have worked with
- Ability groups, friends, mixed so that they can learn from each other
The impact on learning:

Social skills gradually improving. Children more confident in class – time is given every day to explore independently, as well as having directed time with adult support. Found we need to check some children who are off-task. Use of self registration helps (ticket system). Directed groups working well using horseshoe table, teacher working with focused groups throughout the morning – identifying success and problems when working – able to pick up on this in plenary. Use of space, e.g. new resource area means we can now accommodate phonic groups – these are vertically grouped across foundation stage and key stage 1 and are working well.

Work is marked at the table with children present – immediate feedback providing good assessment. More quality time with ability groups in maths and literacy. Appropriate differentiation at the directed activity. In independent learning children are learning through their own successes and mistakes. Allowing time to investigate and explore in their own time. They come up with great ideas which haven’t come from the teacher at all! They will use skills taught to make their own models of DT for example - so it was good sometimes not to have an adult intervening too much. This now happens in Year 1 as well as Reception. Children are making more progress – Headteacher observed with positive feedback.

Reflection and next steps:

As the year goes on, change the format of Year 1 in preparation for Year 2 – current format of continuous provision plus one directed group plus one supported group works for now. Change to two directed groups plus two manageable independent groups working in the learning area. Sensory area in Reception (developing, never had space before). Must continue with role play in KS1 including Year 2.

Now that we have tried different ways of working, Year1 teacher now feels more confident to be flexible in their approach. Won’t be back to literacy hour and numeracy hour which is how Year 1 were working last year. Time wasted changing over resources plus impractical putting practical activities for different lessons. Continue to develop outdoor areas.

What we have learned from the project:

Valuable to rethink current practice in key stage 1. The Year 1 teacher has been able to focus on what is happening in Reception, looking at current practice. Gained from discussions with other teachers, visited other schools to see what works and how they organise their classrooms. We now plan buying resources more carefully that can be used by all KS1 and FS classes. More discussion with support staff across the classes than before; the project has sparked off discussion between them all.

To be flexible and open to change and suggestions. Not to be frightened of trying new approaches as long as the children remain secure and confident around the classroom.

Now maybe work with mixed groups of Y1 and Reception for some subjects. Y1 children may give Reception children more ideas.
Our Targets:

- To send a questionnaire – Nursery through to Y2, parents and all staff to contribute
- Establish a ‘Transition Policy’ covering transition into Reception, Reception to Y1, Y1 to Y2 and Y2 to Juniors (Woodlea)
- Revise the information given and the content of handouts in support of transitions
A 'Show us how you feel' sheet with example responses

Our initial steps:
Continuing the learning journey……..
- Questionnaires have been distributed and the information is being processed
- In R, Y1, Y2 children completed a:
  - ‘Show us how you feel sheet’,
  - general questionnaire about how they felt in school,
  - friend sheet (social map)
- Parents completed a questionnaire
- Staff and Governors completed a questionnaire

How the project developed:
- Currently collating information from the questionnaire – Assessment for Learning identified as a whole staff training issue
- Information on social relationships with the children was considered when sorting class groups
- We worked on issues raised from ‘Show us how you feel’ sheets with the children
- We held a Y1/Y2 Parents meeting to discuss ‘smooth transitions’ and the curriculum

The outcomes of our project:
- Tweaking of transition unit timetable – staff concerned that more opportunity needed to extend learning when appropriate to pupils.

Parent questionnaire – changed focus of induction from Reception and KS1 meetings for parents by:
- Making them less formal
- Giving more opportunity for discussion class teachers and their children / provision

Staff questionnaire
- Communication – whiteboard in the staffroom
- Request for coordinator time - ½ day per term (help with monitoring)
- Meeting TAs re planning
- Consultation with children re continuous provision

Draft policy
- Re transition ready for discussion with whole staff

The impact on learning:
- Happy, enthusiastic children who enjoy and feel secure in their learning environment
- Independent learners – positive impact on behaviour

Reflection and next steps:
- Crèche facilities at meetings
- More information for parents re curriculum in KS1
- Involvement of parents in contributing to assessment
- Establish Assessment for Learning throughout the school – a similar approach in all classes
Name: Catherine Rigby and Cathy Berry
School: St Oswald’s RC School, Accrington

Case Study Focus: KS1 Learning Environment and Outdoor Play

The focus of our transition project:
To develop the environment in the Year 1 area to provide more continuous provision, and to develop the outdoor play area

The reasons for this focus:
The Yr 1 environment needed adapting to allow more continuous provision to take place. The outdoor area was used mostly by the Nursery. Since it has been redeveloped, we want Reception and Yr 1 to benefit from the area.

Our initial steps:
- Role play area set up in YR1
- Writing area set up in YR 1
- Reading corner
- No teacher’s desk

How the project developed:
- Change of environment for Y1
- Change to planning for Y1 (literacy and mathematics mornings)
- Changed focus for play based activities for Y1
The outcomes of our project:
- Environment changed
  - not a ‘space’ at a desk for each child
  - no teacher’s desk
  - role play area
  - writing and reading area
- Planning and daily structure changed
- Independent activities have been developed

The impact on learning:
- Independence continued from FS into KS1
- More time for independent tasks
- More quality teaching time with groups of children because of structure of mornings
- Children continuing to make good progress

Impact on adults:
- Quality teaching time with all groups everyday
- Flexibility
- Planning easier, e.g. objectives can be planned for termly as well as weekly
- Fewer interruptions when children are engaged in independent activities
- Support staff have clearer understanding of daily tasks and their role
- More effective use of resources

Reflection and next steps:
- To continue to develop role play provision in Year 1
- To plan for the development other areas of continuous provision for Year 1 and Year 2 for September 2008
- To begin to develop use of outdoor provision for reception and Year 1/Year 2
- To continue to monitor the impact of continuous provision on children’s progress

What we have learned from the project:
- Independent tasks don’t have to be linked to the daily objectives (i.e. they can link to a weekly/termly lesson objective)
- Our new flexible approach is beneficial to the Year 1 children and staff in terms of quality provision, time and flexible delivery of curriculum
- How to set up a PowerPoint
Effective Transition: Action Research

Name: J Neal & P Chisnall
School: St John’s Catholic Primary
Case Study Focus: Improving writing in shared area through providing role play experiences
Project One Focus: ‘Tiger who came to Tea’ into café/role play
Project Two: Post Office Role Play

The focus of our transition project:
- Improve and build on experiences
- Assist children to read and write more effectively
- Use shared and guided writing in the role play area
- Develop positive attitudes towards writing
- Provide opportunities for peer learning within the key stage and above.
- Provide cross curricular opportunities/holistic approach to learning
- Use speaking and listening as a springboard for writing

The reasons for this focus:
- Raise the level of writing in the Foundation Stage and Y1 and extend current established transition arrangements
- Provide opportunities for peer learning and parental involvement
- Included as part of whole school development plan – improving writing.

We created a dedicated role play area in the corridor
Our initial steps:
- Staff planning meetings/action plan/objectives established
- **Resources** and creation of area - dedicated area in a corridor
  Whiteboards, pens, paper, pencils, crayons, exercise books etc
  Props, Story book, Story map etc

**Planned opportunities for working in the area not just a reward for completing work.**
Clear learning objectives for the children – what I would like to see, know etc
Appropriate activity sheets for focused work including labels and printable resources (available on Sparklebox and Espresso)
Support - adult and peer and parental
Record of children visiting the area. Introduce parent/children to the area (Ensure parent understands tasks and objectives)
- Model use of area/introduce resources and activities slowly. Learning and establishing agreed rules for independent work (children to have input into setting rules).
- Organising appropriate tasks and activities – objectives “What we are going to do” (see PowerPoint for examples)
- Monitoring use of the area through discussion, planned observations and evidence through levelling of work

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**More joint planning and linking of topics between Reception and Year One**

What did the tiger eat?
Write a list of all the things he ate.

What should Sophie buy?
How much did she spend?

**Provision of enjoyable joint experiences taking into account ELGs and National Curriculum**
How the project developed:

- Slowly at first
- Now established and children becoming confident and excited by the provision
- Children now keeping their own records of visits to the area
- Regular evaluation meetings between class teachers to assess successes and ways to improve provision.
- Organised new set of resources and reorganisation of area which the moving of furniture etc for second part of project.
- Shared planning time to look at shared topics and objectives.

The outcomes of our project:

After discussion and evaluation it was decided that the initial focus area was too narrow. The Post Office provided a broader role play focus and allowed for more meaningful opportunities for writing. As it was Christmas this allowed the children to write lists, letters, Christmas cards and participate in number of alphabetical order activities. They also wrapped and sent parcels which involved cross curricular skills.

It was necessary to change the physical environment to make more space for the Role Play area and allow us to resource it more effectively.

It became apparent that it was necessary to ensure that differentiation of expectations for Reception and Year One was incorporated into planning to allow children to take their learning forward.

We also decided that we needed to ensure we allocated time for more planned observational assessment.

Planning
The environment
Observational assessment
Role play
The impact on learning:

Developing independence skills.
- Meaningful PSHE opportunities
- Speaking and listening
- Leadership skills – opportunity to help others (particularly benefiting younger and lower ability children.)
- Enthusiasm and confidence for writing
- Improvement in attitude towards writing – more willing to experiment
- Increased motivation to write
- Drama and role play increased and improved vocabulary of a group of children feeding into written work
- Evidence of a measurable increase in levels using the Ros Wilson criterion scale
- Ability to focus on child initiated work for longer periods of time
- Increased collaboration between Reception and Year 1

Reflection and next steps:

- More joint planning and linking of topics between Reception and Year 1 whilst maintaining clear view of requirements of both curricular in order to ensure transition related issues are not pushed on to Year 2.
- Provision of enjoyable joint experiences taking into account ELGs and National Curriculum levels.
- Regular timetabled observational assessment to monitor use of area and ensure opportunities to take learning forward.
- Summer Term Project – to involve current Reception parents and their children in Let’s Get Cooking Club facilitated by Year One and Reception teachers to allow parents to work together and meet the new teacher in an informal and enjoyable activity.

What we have learned from the project:

We consider that an effective and well planned transition between Reception and Year 1 is of paramount importance for the pupils, parents and key stage.

This project enabled us to add to our current provision by planning teaching and learning opportunities that aided transition, whilst having a positive impact on writing standards.

All children seemed to benefit from the project but in particular those children in Year 1 who were young in the year and/or of lower ability; these were the children who progressed most noticeably in their writing skills.

We have also considered the implications and methods of matching the ELGs with National Curriculum objectives for Year 1, whilst still maintain the Foundation Stage unique curriculum.
Effective Transition: Action Research

Name: Wendy Renton & Nicola Taylor
School: St.Peters’ CE Primary School Chorley
Case Study Focus: Parental Involvement

The focus of our transition project:
- To involve parents in the transition process so that they can be fully informed of their child’s next steps.

The reasons for this focus:
Parents were not familiar with their child’s new learning environment until they had been in school for eight weeks. We felt that parents and children needed informing before the summer holidays to ease the transition process. Hopefully this would prevent any unnecessary worries during the long holiday.

Our initial steps:
- We spoke to the Head about inviting the Reception parents to informally meet the new teacher and look at the new classroom.
- This was to happen on the day the whole school moved up to their new class for the afternoon.
- The Head liked this idea and decided to adopt it for the whole school.
How the project developed:

The project developed building on the existing good practice we had built with parents:
- Invited in to Christmas productions, class assemblies, Harvest, Easter etc.
- Parents’ coffee morning every Friday
- Two parents’ evenings a year to discuss children’s progress
- Parents are encouraged to help with visits and classroom activities
- Reading/homework records are also home/school diaries
- Overview of topic sent home termly
- Parents courses offered, i.e. phonics for Y1 and ELS
- Open afternoon for all present and new parents
- Encouraged to support extra curricular activities
- FS/KS1 staff there at start and end of day for any issues that may arise
- Parents are asked for support in topic/events - their experience or for resources etc.

New for the project
- A booklet was produced explaining the transition project to parents.
- A questionnaire was enclosed for Reception parents to discuss with their children. Only a few were returned so it was adapted to include the words – “Please return to school”!

The outcomes of our project:
- Results from questionnaire sent home in October – eight were returned.
- All very positive appreciating the transition process.

Parents liked the idea that their children still had access to continuous provision and were still learning through challenging and play based activities.

The impact on learning:

Children were confident with their new surroundings so did not need a settling in period but continued where they had left off. No emotional worries from parents or children.

Reflection and next steps:
To develop session where parents visit in July. Parents to be invited in for one hour to do an activity with their child and use the continuous provision.

What we have learned from the project:
We already cover a lot of areas involved with transition. Involving parents and getting them interested is our next challenge!!! The big one!
Name: Jenny Kershaw, Nicola Morville

School: Padiham Primary School

Case Study: Developing Role Play from Reception through Key Stage 1

Focus: Building on speaking and listening

Our initial steps:

- Role play introduced into Year 1 class
- Timetable of role play areas for Reception class, Reception/Year 1 class and Year 1 class
- Role play areas based on topics
- Objectives in continuous provision
- Writing areas introduced up to Year 1
- Reading areas introduced up to Year 2 and beyond

The reasons for this focus:

- Poor speaking and listening skills
- Impact on reading and writing
- To improve literacy in general

How the project developed:

Planned role play areas for the year for reception, reception/year 1 and year 1 based on topics

- Role play areas in each of the classrooms.
- Differentiation between role play in different classes.
- Opportunities for reading and writing.
- Observations for Foundation Stage Profile.
- Role play areas change on a half-termly basis.
- Shared support throughout Foundation Stage/Year 1.
- Similar topics throughout Reception and Year 1.
Autumn 1 – Ourselves:
- Home corner. (R)
- Doctor’s surgery. (R/1)
- Hospital (Y1)

Spring 1 - Fairytales
- Castle. (R)
- Cottage (R/1)
- Palace (Y1)

Spring 2 – Plants and Animals
- Garden centre.
- Percy’s potting shed.
- Pet shop.

Autumn 2 – Around our school and local area
- Café. (R)
- Supermarket. (R/1)
- School. (Y1)

Summer 1- Keeping Healthy
- 5-a-day café.
- Fruit and veg shop.
- Doctors and nurses.

Summer 2 – Journeys
- Space station.
- Travel agents.
- Transport – vehicles.

The outcomes of our project:
- More opportunities for role play and drama
- Role play timetable introduced
- Role play extended to Year 1
- Role play used to aid literacy and mathematics and KS1 programmes of study

The impact on learning:
- Writing - children choose to write using resources in the role play area, e.g. labels, menus, magic spell books, shopping lists
- Reading – children read familiar words, e.g. cottage and castle
- Speaking and listening, e.g. children using story book language
- More confident in speaking and listening in drama activities and better interaction
- Improved understanding, e.g. more ideas for writing, concept of ‘change’ in shop situation

Reflection and next steps:
- Difficulties – staff changes in Reception and Year 1 since the start of project
- Chance to work closely with other staff in FS and Year 1
- Use observations to assess in Year 1
- Find further opportunities to link role play to Year 1 curriculum
- Opportunities for children to go into role play in different classes

What we have learned from the project:
- Children’s literacy and maths skills can be enhanced through role play
- Older children still enjoy play
Name: Emily Craven, Christine Tagg
School: Holy Saviour RC Primary
Case Study Focus: Collaborative planning and teaching

The focus of our transition project:

To create a successful child initiated learning environment to support the transition including topic based planning, and collaborative teaching.

The reasons for this focus:

- To develop more effective transition and promote positive relationships with staff/pupils
- To create learning environments for Reception and Year 1 which compliment each other
- To provide appropriate outdoor provision for FS/KS1

Our initial steps:

- New classrooms for reception and Year 1 with adjoining door
- Designed layout for both classrooms to ensure we had similar provision and designated areas of continuous provision
- Joint topic planning
- Joint ‘golden time’
- Team teaching
- To plan a timetable so we could share a nursery nurse

How the project developed:

- Once building work was finished, we resourced the classrooms and organised them into the following areas of provision - role-play, sand and water, writing area, religious board, computer tables and continuous provision in both rooms.
- We colour coded areas so that the children feel comfortable moving between rooms and recognise familiar features - yellow table and chairs for literacy/language, blue for mathematical area, green for construction and computers and red for creative area.
In Reception and Year 1 staff have been working together to plan topic themes and share teaching skills and ideas. We have initiated a Golden Hour where FS and Y1 play and learn together moving between both classrooms freely.

- Joint planning for continuous provision
- Nursery nurse moves from YR to Y1
- Team teaching which is to be further developed

The outcomes of our project:

- Children more confident
- Both classrooms promote topic learning
- Improved relationship between FS and KS1 teachers

The impact on learning:

- Speaking and listening has improved through the use of joint role-play
- Children’s confidence has grown, especially YR, feeling comfortable with Year 1 staff and peers
- During ‘Golden hour’ YR & Y1 join up to play and work together in both classrooms. The shy children in Y1 are more confident and go into YR to help build models and construction (especially the boys). YR are really proud to show their teachers their models and are excited the ‘big’ children in Y1 have helped them
- Some children with speech and language difficulties feel more confident to attempt expressive language in the different KS1 role play areas/classroom

‘The speaking and listening in both classes has improved and the children have developed confidence both in and out of the classroom.’
Reflection and next steps:

It has been a really interesting learning curve, we feel it has been beneficial and are looking towards implementing these strategies into Y2 so we have good transition throughout FS and KS1.

‘As well as the inside learning environment, we wanted to enhance the Early Years outside curriculum and learning area. We asked the children what they would like outside to play with. They came up with some interesting ideas! Unfortunately we couldn’t provide a swimming pool or a tree house but we did provide some seating areas and have plans for a pond in the Spring Term.’

What we have learned from the project:

- Practical approaches/continuous provision in Y1 builds children’s confidence and it makes learning fun
- Better communication between FS/KS1 staff has made for a happier team and we feel better and more confident about asking each other for advice
- Relationships between YR and Y1 teachers have improved, due to re-location of classrooms. Y1 teacher feels it has opened her eyes to a new way of planning
- YR having all resources in class helps utilise all areas of continuous provision all the time, e.g. sand/water, role play, computers, construction.
- Planning together, chatting between staff, including TAs, has made everyone feel more comfortable, relaxed and confident to discuss children and teaching ideas
- Sharing TA has helped identify the needs of individual children, bridged the gap between Key Stages, improved communication between all staff and given the children confidence. One child asked ‘will you be coming to Y1 with me?’. I explained ‘No, but Mrs Aherne will be there to look after you.’ They were satisfied with that answer.
- Joint planning for role play areas means we can develop the same topic with slightly different themes, e.g. hospital in YR and gym in Y1.