



Moving On Well Award

OBJECTIVE 4: TEACHING & LEARNING

ACCREDITATION GUIDANCE

The movement for pupils between Year 6 and Year 7 brings with it a huge number of changes in both pedagogy and curriculum which are exciting and engaging. Research tells us that children look forward to learning new things, in new ways and in new environments; this is one of the main draws of secondary school for pupils. For this to be most effective for pupils there needs to be a mix of both continuity and discontinuity, leading to sustained engagement in lifelong learning and a greater awareness of themselves. As Ofsted's The Wasted Years Report highlighted there are too many children experiencing a repeated curriculum in Year 7 and 8:

Only about half said that their Year 7 teachers built on what they had learnt in primary school most or all of the time. For example, one Year 9 pupil said, 'When I began Year 7, it was as if I had started my education again; nothing from primary school continued. (Ofsted, 2015)

Primary to Secondary Transition: Main changes in Teaching & Learning

Pedagogy:

In primary school, pupils are typically taught in mixed-ability classes for all subjects. In secondary school, pupils may experience ability-based sets for core subjects and, in some cases, for additional subjects as well.

In primary school, pupils are usually taught by one main classroom teacher, providing familiarity and a consistent teaching style across all subjects. In secondary school, pupils are taught by multiple teachers, each with their own teaching styles, expectations, and approaches to learning.

In primary school, teaching staff can spend significant portions of time working one-to-one with pupils, circulating the classroom and providing individual support throughout lessons. In secondary school, lessons are typically shorter and teachers are more likely to deliver learning from the front of the classroom. There is also a greater expectation for pupils to work independently and to seek help using their own initiative when needed.

In primary school, paired discussion and group work are often used throughout much of the learning process, encouraging collaboration and shared thinking. In secondary school, there is typically a greater expectation for pupils to work silently and independently during lessons.

In primary school, core subjects such as literacy and numeracy are often taught in the morning to maximise pupils' concentration and learning potential. In secondary school, core subjects are usually timetabled throughout the day alongside other curriculum areas.

Primary to Secondary Transition: Main changes in Teaching & Learning

Behaviour, Routines & Expectations:

Primary school pupils are more used to being seated around tables to encourage collaboration and group learning. Once at secondary school, the majority of classrooms are arranged in rows, often to support independent work and whole-class teaching.

In primary school, classroom behaviour is often managed by one main classroom teacher, allowing pupils to become familiar and confident with consistent boundaries, routines, and expectations. In secondary school, pupils are taught by a variety of teachers, each with their own approaches to classroom management. At the start of Year 7, pupils not only have to adjust to the different expectations and routines of secondary school, but also to the variations in classroom management, and expectations between subject teachers.

In secondary school, pupils arrive from a wide range of primary schools and therefore bring with them differing experiences of behaviour policies, routines, and expectations. As a result, pupils must adjust to a new and often more consistent whole-school approach to behaviour and expectations across the secondary setting.

Homework:

In primary school, pupils are often set one or two pieces of homework each week, if any, which commonly include spellings and daily reading activities. In secondary school, pupils are typically expected to complete a larger volume of homework across a range of subjects, with both the frequency and amount of work increasing significantly.

In primary school, where a homework policy is in place, homework is often structured and planned on a weekly basis, with tasks given out and returned on set days. In secondary school, homework is set by different subject teachers and can therefore vary in expectations, timeframes, workload, and level of explanation provided. The type of homework may also differ considerably, with a greater emphasis on independent learning, revision, and research-based tasks.

As the table above demonstrates there are a number of differences for pupils to come to terms with throughout their school transitions. Pupils in a **bronze** setting will be supported by staff who have a strong understanding of these differences from training and cross-phase visits. They will visit their high school for an open evening, and a cross-phase event like a musical production or a athletics day. Their school will understand the academic level they are working at and seek to use information from their partner Primary school to have the right expectations on the quality of work they can produce.

This awareness is further established in **Silver** award schools by the sharing of teaching policies and methodologies between Primary schools and Secondaries. Teachers are given opportunities by Senior Leaders to team teach in a partnering school, to experience the differences and share these with colleagues on their return. A common language is identified to use eg. learning objective, plenary, response partner, between partners and joint curriculum decisions or bridging units are evidenced. There is a common understanding of expected progress for pupils between Year 5 and 8.

In **Gold** award schools children are engaged in new areas of learning from Year 6 that are linked to the curriculum and pedagogical style of Year 7, they arrive in Year 7 confident of the exciting differences and expectations they are likely to see. They have met staff from their new school regularly and been to their new school for lessons or extracurricular activities. There is a strong balance between continuity and discontinuity which is discussed and transparent, through which pupils become lifelong engaged learners.

This Gold standard is evidenced by cross-phase teaching visits taking place within common agreed curriculum areas. Discussions take place between partners, in which curriculum maps are shared and agreed, to create continuity and discontinuity in Year 7. Partners evidence shared teacher training days on mutually beneficial areas, and form professional networks across phases. Schools in both phases discuss and consider practical changes to routines, classroom layouts and assessment processes to agree approaches.

Best Practice Examples

In the borough of Hackney all 52 Primary schools and 11 Secondary schools agreed to deliver Spanish as their first language choice, with pupils having four years of Spanish before they arrived at Secondary school. Secondary schools provided Spanish teachers to support teaching staff and training to native speaking teaching assistants in Primary settings. Using a common agreed curriculum children experience less frustration, higher familiarity and their learning progresses further.

Willow Tree Community Primary School and Buile Hill Academy (Secondary) in Salford began lesson observations and book reviews cross phase to improve writing outcomes for Key Stage 3 pupils. It was quickly identified by Primary staff that expectations on the length of writing and standard were too low and changes could be made to improve consistency of standards for Year 7s.

The Education Learning Trust in Stockport provide a member of Secondary teaching staff to go into their feeder Primaries to provide Maths lessons, lessons to prepare for High School, and offer a sports enrichment activity to the Year 5 and 6 pupils at the Secondary school. These cross-phase lessons enable pupils to adjust to the learning style and begin to build relationships with Secondary teaching staff. The trust have ongoing conversations regarding curriculum with their feeder Primary schools and look for areas where cross-phase support can have maximum impact.

‘During the visit, I was able to observe a Year 7 maths lesson, and also join in a maths departmental team meeting to see how planning takes place. I learnt that I should try and make the children in primary school more independent in their work – they need to be more in charge of organising themselves and should be less reliant on me as the teacher. I need to develop their confidence so that they don’t feel they have to check every decision with a teacher. I think we also need to make maths more ‘use and apply’ based, and try and relate questions to real life situations where possible since this is a key aspect of the secondary maths curriculum.

By the end of the visit. I felt like I had a far better understanding of the structure of a maths lesson in Year 7 and how the teacher might go about planning the lesson. I learnt that independent work should take up the vast majority of the lesson - less teacher talk is more effective. We also need to build in more opportunities for children to apply learnt methods in maths to real life context questions.’ Emma Goddard, Teacher’s perspective

'The most significant thing I learnt was that our Year 7s require further stretch and challenge when they arrive at secondary school. During the visit, it became apparent that the level of maths the learners were engaging with was higher than I had expected; they were learning about percentage increase and decrease, a topic my Year 9s were struggling with at the time! I was also able to see how nrich activities were effectively employed as a way of differentiating through problem solving. Over the next year I would like to increase the frequency with which I use nrich as a basis for lesson plans. The experience has shown that the department and I need to develop the stretch and challenge within our Year 7 Schemes of Work.' Becca Mitchell, Secondary Teacher's Perspective

Local authority initiatives to schedule Primary and Secondary teacher development days on different dates has enabled teaching staff to visit a school in a different phase from their own and observe. As the quotes above demonstrate this has been a very eye-opening process and supported the development of units of work which 'bridge' across the two phases.