



Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network: Third Call for Student Papers – June 2018

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Abstract

This interpretivist research is focused on specific elements of transition from reception to year one within the English school system including school readiness, emotional resilience, and discontinuity between curriculums; this was explored through Bronfenbrenner's '*ecological system*' (1979), which helped to conceptualise the process of transition. Data was collected using open-ended questionnaires distributed to a large scale of Year 1 parents and semi-structured interviews with Early Years and Key Stage 1 practitioners from a primary school setting and found that participants shared similar understandings of transition and how the themes investigated can influence how children cope with the transition process.

Literature Review

Transition is broadly defined as times when an individual changes their roles within the structure of their community (Rogoff, 2003). This definition pinpoints transition within social and cultural contexts and highlights interactions between individuals and institutions as sources of probable support and tension. Research has found that educational transitions have become a topic of increased interest due to the level of success during both transition from school and phases of education within school, which can become a crucial factor in determining children's future progress and development (Ghaye and Pascal, 1989).

There are distinct absences of transitional links between the Foundation Stage curriculum and the subjects of the National Curriculum. Sanders *et al.* (2005) suggest a level of discontinuity between the Curriculums; the pedagogy of Reception and the new environment of Year 1 increase transition difficulty, particularly when there is insufficient collusion between the two. As a result, efforts need to be made to provide definite links between the two curriculums and for children to find transition a smooth experience. Research conducted by Ofsted (2017) found Reception and Year 1 teachers agreed these smooth transitions between curriculums become difficult, as early learning goals (ELG) are not coordinated with the increased expectations of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014).

Distinction between the two curriculums can become blurred, as the early learning goals of the EYFS are not easily aligned with the formal standards set out in the National Curriculum. Proposing the idea that introducing more formal procedures into Reception would be challenging for children to adjust to but more beneficial long-term. Bold Beginnings (Ofsted 2017) suggests Reception is an essential bridge between the EYFS and the beginning of the National Curriculum. The document found that Reception leaves children exposed to risk of falling behind in their learning and is therefore vital to deal with such dangers at the earliest opportunity. As Reception practitioners do not follow clear guidance on what four and five year olds should be taught at the beginning of their school experience there are increased opportunities for practitioners to introduce formalities into Reception that are tailored to each class and school. Proposing the idea of such formalities being introduced into the Reception routine it is vital this is introduced at the beginning of the school year. However, challenges may arise as children are conditioned to the play-based requirements of the EYFS, which may be difficult to change. Formal procedures must be small but effective, including less carpet time and more formal teaching styles within the classroom. Introducing these types of formalities will have potential to enable transition to be an easier experience for children.

Research from Kennedy, Cameron and Greene (2012, pg. 20) has found “*culture shock*” a significant factor when explaining why children do not experience smooth transition through primary school. Throughout Pre-school and Reception children are set into the play-based culture of the EYFS (DfE, 2017) and therefore may find their transition into Year 1 a huge disruption to their classroom routine, learning techniques and teaching styles. In Year 1 children are expected to learn in a formal setting with less choice and formal routines, which can be a huge culture shock to children. On placement it was clear that during this transition many children struggle with the frustration of becoming competent in a culture that is considerably more formal than one they have been conditioned to throughout the EYFS (DfE, 2017).

Bronfenbrenner’s *ecological approach* (1979) defines transition as an event, which occurs when an individual’s position within their ‘ecological environment’ has shifted as a product of change in their role, setting or both. Bronfenbrenner created an ‘*ecological*’ model which he defined as;

“the progressive mutual accommodation between an active growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by larger contexts in which the settings are embedded” (pg. 21).

This ecological approach to understanding an individual’s development recognises that people are affected by different levels of context (Hayes, O’Toole and Halpenny, 2017). Bronfenbrenner explained how influential contexts were stationed at a range of distances from the child’s everyday personal experiences. The nearest, most familiar proximate known as ‘*microsystems*’ are most crucial to children. This system includes family and educational settings; similarly followed by the second proximate known as ‘*mesosystems*’. Bronfenbrenner argues these are systems including social places where relations between children and those within their microsystem are expected to form basic relationships of attachment to support children within their development (Rozsahegyi, 2017). Suggesting children can only developmentally thrive during educational transitions if parents and practitioners form close-knit relations to support them. Bronfenbrenner’s theory predominantly suggests children need these close relations with adults in order to succeed in new experiences. Research carried out by Howes *et al.* (2008) found that the concept of ‘*school readiness*’, defined as the outcomes of the interaction between children and other environmental factors which boost children’s development and reinforced through positive child-teacher interactions focussed around skill development.

Suggesting strong, stimulating and emotionally supportive interaction between children and practitioners is key for enhancing children's learning. Similarly Evangelou (2009) states due to lack of skills relating to emotional resilience, children with low levels of confidence and self-esteem are more vulnerable during the event of transition. Social-emotional development indicates children's increasing capacity to experience, process and express emotions. As well as allowing children to form tight-knit, secure bonds and explore new learning environments to broaden their developing knowledge. Furthermore, Parlakian (2003) found children's competency of their emotional well-being becomes a vital component of *'school readiness'*.

Understanding attachments is an important element towards understanding two crucial aspects of transition, a secure base and emotional resilience. Bowlby's *'attachment theory'* (1965), describes attachment as a bond that develops from a child's instinctive need for security. Children gain a sense of security from bonds they build with their parents, so when they become unsettled they rely on parents to fix it. Similar to transition, children can find the process disruptive so rely on attachments with parents to offer them support. As a result they are able to build up all-important *'emotional resilience'*, essential in development. A key feature of Bowlby's theory plays significance in enabling children to develop into adulthood feeling emotionally secure. This notion has symbolic links with transition as the reassurance of attachments reinforces positive sense of self and most importantly maintains emotional stability during times of change (O'Connor, 2017). Bowlby (1965) concluded the absence of attachment figures in children's lives could have detrimental effects to their future development.

Kennedy, Cameron and Greene (2012, pp.20) suggest Bronfenbrenner's inclusion of individuals and their environments prevent emphasis of one over the other; suggesting each of these factors should interact with one another. Moreover, Brooker (2002) investigates experiences of children, parents and teachers relating to another of Bronfenbrenner's "macro system" factors such as, class and religion. Brooker explored children's successful initiation into classroom discourse, suggesting this depends on the match between home culture and the school. In order to transition into Year 1 smoothly children require positive interaction and guidance from both parents and practitioners. Thus ecological models of transition propose many individuals with different skills will contribute towards making transition smooth and positive (Dunlop and Fabian, 2007).

Pelletier and Carter (2005) report child outcomes in transition are related to the quality of interactions between parents and teachers, so if children are supported by practitioners and parents working together this is likely to make their experience of transition more positive. Parents should be regarded as

partners in their child's education and therefore strong relations between teachers and parents as well as clear and regular communication are essential for children's transition. In my experience these partnerships can help children feel more secure and stable during transition. Additionally, practitioners should draw upon the "expert knowledge" of parents to build up detailed profiles of each individual child (McDowell Clark, 2017).

Methodology

To understand differing perspectives on how children transition from Reception to Year 1 a variety of qualitative data using an interpretivist approach was collected. Qualitative data is rich in subtle understanding on human behaviour and perspectives, which is vital when understanding individuals differing cultures (Klenke, 2016). Interpretivist research embraces the view that knowledge is unforeseeable as human practices are constructed in and out of interactions, therefore participants will construct their own perspectives depending on differing environments, interactions and social contexts (Golfashani, 2003). Practitioners were interviewed to gather professional perspectives and distribute questionnaires to parents to gain personal experiences on children. Analysis of the collected data will be thematically based on the literature.

Triangulation

Two types of data collection methods were employed; both questionnaires and interviews were used to increase the scope and depth of my methodological proceedings. This will enable me to gain differing perspectives around transition and strengthen validity. To retrieve larger samples of data I will use questionnaires to allow parents to share information anonymously. Furthermore I will use semi-structured interview with "experts" to allow me to obtain professional perspectives to complement perspectives obtained from the questionnaires. Triangulation will develop a more coherent account of transition from differing perspectives. Overall this will validate and increase credibility (Green, 2007).

Research Methods

The questionnaires included a series of open-ended questions based around transition and they were distributed face-to-face to primary school parents in year one to gain maximum response. Questionnaires are beneficial as the results collected can be clearly analysed and provide a range of results which are cheap to conduct and less time-consuming.

Similarly to other research methods, questionnaires carry limitations. When using questionnaires it is important to consider the possibility that they may

receive a low response rate especially when replying on participants to return questionnaires (Greetham, 2014). Questionnaires tend to favour more literate respondents, which may open opportunity to bias results, potentially affecting the validity of the research. The face to face distribution will hope to alleviate this issue.

Semi-structured interviews of two year one practitioners, based around a series of open-ended questions have investigated practitioners perspectives and further my enquires. Semi-structured interviews are beneficial to research as they allow opportunity for flexibility, modification and to ask questions that prompt discussion. Parker (2005) states an interview in qualitative research is always “semi-structured” because it reveals what the researcher wants to happen. Moreover, this style of interview is favourable as it allows further questions based on the flow of the interview and the responses received (Bell, 2014).

Ethics

When carrying out research it is vital to consider ethics. BERA (2011, pg. 5) defines ethics within research as fair, sensitive and dignified treatment of individuals whilst using ethics of respect with freedom of prejudice. All participants provided an ‘informed consent’ agreement to ensure complete understanding of the research.

Participants gave consent freely and recognised their right to withdraw at anytime. Full confidentiality could not be offered due to safeguarding and research reporting but no personal details were disclosed and anonymity was provided.

As well as following BERA (2011) ethical guidelines, full ethical consent was gained from the University of Wolverhampton and regular supervisory sessions were undertaken.

Discussion and Analysis of Findings

Twenty-nine questionnaires were distributed to parents of Year 1 children and received a response rate of one third, which enabled a range of parent perspectives on transition. Three practitioner interviews were conducted constructed from open-ended questions based on transition. The data was transcribed using line numbers for clearer referencing (Flick, 2002) and transcripts were thematically colour coded. Using thematic analysis enabled me to clearly identify themes within the data as it provides a means of arranging the findings from the data (Pope *et al.*, 2007).

RQ1: How can Bronfenbrenner's ecological system conceptualise transition?

Practitioners interviewed on 22nd March 2018, were asked how school prepares reception children for their transition from reception to year one both 'Participant A' and 'Participant C' shared similar perspectives, explaining teachers understand transition has many strands, therefore will only be successful if preparation strategies are provided by school, to aid children through transition. 'Participant C' explained during the last term of Reception, practitioner's work collaboratively to ensure smooth transition is achieved, hosting a "moving up" day for children to spend a session in their new classroom. Responses were comparable with Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach (1979, pg.21), supporting the idea that mutual accommodation between the growing individual and changing properties of their immediate settings, known as the '*mesosystem*', work collaboratively to allow children to succeed during transition. Reception practitioners use circle time to discuss transition, so anxieties can be resolved and children are prepared for transition. 'Participant C' explained "once children have transitioned into Year 1, teachers adopt an EYFS style curriculum for three weeks of the first term" (Appendix 1, 107-108). Practitioner's felt this allowed children to transition more smoothly into Year 1 and reduced the impact of '*culture shock*'.

Kennedy, Cameron and Green (2012) suggest '*culture shock*' from transition can impact learning. When considering whether transition for reception to year one was disruptive 'Participant A' explained "teachers try to make transition, in all aspects, as smooth as possible. For the first three weeks in Year 1, the learning environment is set up similar to Reception so children feel comfortable and confident in their new classroom" suggesting practitioners understand that to achieve smooth transition they must work collaboratively with parents. This perspective is similar to Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggesting systems must work together around the growing individual during times of change for them to thrive successfully. Emphasising that practitioners believe working collaboratively will bridge the gaps found between curriculums.

In contrast, I found the majority of parents felt children's learning is not affected by transition. Some believed transition is an inevitable progression children must undergo, whilst another felt "good transition establishes the foundations that enable children to make good progression" (P1, 89-90). A minority of parents reported that transition process does impact children's learning articulating that children's learning was disrupted during transition as children struggle to settle into new learning methods and concentrate less on learning itself (Appendix 2, 15-18). These responses were similar to literature from Sanders *et al* (2005) who suggested levels of discontinuity between curriculums can have a substantial impact on how smoothly children transition.

RQ2: How can a child's microsystem influence how they transition from Reception to Year 1?

Parents were asked how they prepare children for transition. Most participants placed significant emphasis on "positive attitude towards the new class" believing this was the best method to prepare children for transition. 'Participant 4' suggested the key to preparation for school is to excite children about the change and the new things they should expect as this will build up their confidence.

Parents were asked to compare their child's transition into year one with what they had experienced into reception. The majority of parents felt their child did not cope better with transition into Year 1, and a more formal curriculum and less emphasis on play was cited. Ghaye and Pascal (1989) state the level of success during transitions can become a crucial factor in determining children's future progress. Responses suggest children are more able to cope with transition into Reception due to the similarities it shares with Nursery and Preschool. The EYFS (DfE, 2017) support this suggesting children often struggle with the frustration of becoming competent in a culture with differs considerably to the one they have previously been conditioned too.

This element of 'school readiness' also proved prevalent during practitioner interviews. One practitioner suggested it is equally as important for parents to understand school expectations, thus endorsing schools 'meet the teacher' sessions. Consequently marking the beginning of parent-practitioner interaction, vital throughout children's education, to achieve successful transition with support from their 'microsystem' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

RQ3: What are practitioner and parent perspectives on the topic of transition?

When parents were asked "How well does your child cope with transitioning into a new class at school?" and found all participants felt children coped either 'very well' or 'well'. No parents divulged that their child struggled with transition, suggesting parents consider young children as 'emotionally resilient'.

Parents felt practitioners should work collaboratively with parents to support children through times of change and struggle. Suggesting parents understand that for their child to thrive emotionally within their education setting it is vital that practitioners and parents have regular communication to ensure both 'systems' are able to support the child and ensure they feel confident in their learning environment. All participants believed the practitioner is a crucial aspect in preparing children with the skills needed to emotionally cope with transition. Most participants agreed preparation is a key aspect of how well children cope with transition, supported by O'Connor (2017) who suggested

transition has symbolic links with reassurance of attachments that maintains emotional stability during times of change.

Practitioners concurred that emotional resilience can hugely impact how children cope with transition and so programmes of transition are vital. For example, sessions with the new teacher which allow opportunity to build emotional resilience and children's confidence. One participant shared that in their experience, children who do not cope well with transition are more susceptible to "adopting a negative attitude towards learning". Signifying that children who are not equipped with skills needed for emotional resilience are more likely to struggle during transition.

I found practitioners shared fewer insights on the subject of emotional resilience in comparison to parents. There was some suggestion that it is parent's responsibility to equip children with the skills needed to build confidence and emotional resilience, as they are more emotionally involved with preparing children for transition.

Conclusions

A significant conclusion was based on the theme of discontinuity between the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum; practitioner and parent perspectives, concluded transition between curriculums can only be successful if the child is supported by those in their nearest proximate, reducing impacts of '*culture shock*'. This demonstrates that Bronfenbrenner's theory conceptualises transition as both parent and practitioner responses support the philosophy of '*ecological systems*', signifying the progressive change between the individual child and the relationship between the shifting properties of their closest surroundings, which can impact greatly on how they develop.

Conclusions were also drawn from the theme of '*school readiness*', which was also supported by a component of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system (1979), known as the '*microsystem*'. The topic of school readiness stems from how well children are prepared by those around them and conclusions draw from this, emphasised parents held conflicting perspectives. Parents used positive attitudes and building children's confidence as strategies going into transition. In contrast, parents largely reported difficulty with transition into year one as children are likely to struggle with the disturbance of becoming competent in a learning culture that is significantly different to one they are conditioned to.

Finally there was a theme of '*emotional resilience*', which provided a rather limited perspective from practitioners. The concept of emotional resilience drew significantly more detailed conclusions from a parental perspective as all

participants felt their child had coped well with transition into Year 1. Suggesting parents feel children are more emotionally resilient during transition than expected. Parents felt it was their duty, alongside practitioners, to emotionally and academically prepare children during times of change. Likewise practitioners proposed transition periods can be challenging for children, so for them to thrive emotionally children need to be nurtured. Notably the concept of emotional resilience drew very limited perspectives from practitioners. From the limited response received I assume practitioners do not form detailed perspectives on how emotional resilience can effect how children transition as they do not form emotional attachments with children like parents. This is worthy of future study.

Transition has many complex components, such as school readiness and emotional resilience and this research demonstrated that practitioners and parents can demonstrate different priorities. Further study is recommended to consider practitioners views on emotional resilience of children and how this can be developed in transitional activities. Also further consideration of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systems, specifically the influence of the macro and exosystem could provide areas of further analysis.

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Appendix 1

Interviews conducted 22nd March 2018.

Participant A-

1 1. In your experience, how well do children cope with their transition into Year 1?

2 Most children cope well with transition into Year 1, although the time it takes
3 to settle into more traditional learning can vary. We would expect the children
4 to have moved from ELG to Year 1 by the end of the first term.

5 2. Do you feel transitioning into a new class is disruptive to children's learning?

6 We try to make the transition as smooth as possible- the first few weeks in
7 year 1 the learning environment is set up similar to Reception so that the
8 children feel comfortable and confident in their new classroom.

9 3. How does school prepare children for their transition from Reception to Year 1?

10 Children spend a session in their new classroom before the end of the
11 summer term in Reception. In this session they can become familiar with the
12 layout of the new classroom and meet the adults who will work with them.

13 4. How does school ensure regular communication with parents? Do you think this communication is effective?

14 Communication via: email, text service, parents evenings, workshops,
15 school and class newsletters. Communication via email and text can be more
16 effective than hard copy letters as the communication is instant.

17 5. How do you, as a practitioner, prepare children for transition through school?

18 During year 1, I give the children a timeline of how long it is until they move
19 into year 2 and what is expected of them. As the time nears and we know who
20 their teacher will be I will celebrate any good behaviour/learning and
21 mention that their new teacher will be very impressed. As a meeting is held
22 at the end of Summer Term between teachers who are passing children
23 between them.

24 6. What skills do you feel are vital for children to experience a smooth transition?

25 To be able to: communicate their needs, concentrate for a given period of
26 time, share, interact with peers, look after their belongings and understand
27 instructions.

28 7. For children who do not cope well with their transition into Year 1, how do you support them?

29 The curriculum needs to match their ability, some may be still working
30 towards ELG. Work in class will need to be differentiated accordingly. Some
31 children may need extra 1:1 sessions with a Teaching Assistant to help with
32 their learning.

33 8. Do you think lack of emotional resilience, such as low confidence, can effect how children cope with school transition?

34 Low confidence can effect how children cope with transition, which is why it
35 is important to have a programme of transition in place as a school, for
36 example, spend time with their new teacher. This can also happen when
37 children move schools mid-year. In this instance the child is invited to spend
38 half a day or a day in their new classroom before starting full time.

39 9. Do you think school readiness plays a significant part in how children transition in school?

40 I believe that 'school readiness' is crucial for good transition into school.
41 Children who spend time in a nursery or preschool have the prior
42 experience of a learning environment similar to a Reception class, in my
43 experience children who have not had this experience find transition into
44 school more difficult. It is also important for parents to know what is

45 expected of their children when they start school. We offer a meeting for
46 new parents during the term before their children start so that the early
47 years staff can talk about expectations. A 'starting school booklet' is also
48 given out.

Participant B-

49 1. In your experience, how well do children cope with their transition into Year 1?

50 On the whole I feel children cope quite well. The main challenge seems for
51 them to adapt from play based activities in Early Years to a more structured
52 learning approach in Year 1.

53 2. Do you feel transitioning into a new class is disruptive to children's learning?

54 No, it is a process, which they must undergo.

55 3. How does school prepare children for their transition from Reception to Year 1?

56 A letter is sent home to parents regarding the transition, the new staff
members, expectations etc. Staff meet to discuss individual children before
57 'handover'. Children visit the classroom before the end of Reception and
58 spend time with us in Year 1. Children deal with staff at playtimes so know
59 them prior to their transition.

60 4. How does school ensure regular communication with parents? Do you think this communication is effective?

61 Letter advising parents on that transition, letters regarding timetabling,
introduction letters, keep-in-touch diaries, teachers are available for meetings
62 both before and after school hours, text messages to parents, open mornings/
63 afternoons and meet and greet sessions. Yes, I cannot see that staff could do
64 much more to communicate with parents.

65 5. How do you, as a practitioner, prepare children for transition through school?

66 We have open mornings and afternoons where children are able to spend
67 time in their 'new' classroom with their 'new' staff. This allows opportunity
68 to discuss the event with the children, i.e. who their new teachers and
69 teaching assistants will be. This familiarises the children before the transition.

70 6. What skills do you feel are vital for children to experience a smooth transition?

71 In year 1, at the beginning of the school year, we allow the children to follow
72 some of the same routines they had in Reception. For example, getting a drink
73 when they want one, toilet use, limit time they are required to sit and listen.

74 7. For children who do not cope well with their transition into Year 1, how do you support them?

75 We speak to them and their parents, teaching assistants available to spend
76 time with the child, reassuring them constantly, allowing children time away
77 from the classroom, if required, for example being able to have a walk around
78 the school until the child is ready to return to the classroom.

79 8. Do you think lack of emotional resilience, such as low confidence, can effect how children cope with school transition?

80 Yes, definitely. They can be more nervous and unsure about change.

81 9. Do you think school readiness plays a significant part in how children transition in school?

82 Yes, if a child is not ready for school they will struggle to learn and may find
83 they are emotionally disturbed by school.

Participant C-

84 1. In your experience, how well do children cope with their transition into Year 1?

85 I have been surprised by how well children cope with their transition from
86 Reception to Year 1. I find that only a small proportion of children find the
87 transition challenging or upsetting.

88 2. Do you feel transitioning into a new class is disruptive to children's learning?

89 No, not really. I feel that good transition establishes the foundations that
90 enable the children to make good progress. It is all about the children in the
91 class at the time. The transition period may take longer for some but where
92 this occurs I feel that appropriate measures should be put into place to
93 further support the child in the transition process to Year 1.

94 3. How does school prepare children for their transition from Reception to Year 1?

95 School starts preparing children in Reception for the transition from spring
96 2 term where they begin to have morning and afternoon choices. Children
97 are guided to Reading, Writing and Maths activities in the morning and have
98 access to areas like construction and small world during the afternoon
99 sessions, this allows children to ease into similar routines they will
100 experience in Year 1. During Summer 2 term when staffing arrangements
101 are finalised, the whole schools has a "moving up" day where the children
103 spend a session in their new classroom with their new teachers. This is
104 further supported in Reception by circle times focussing on Year 1- what it
105 is like, any worries the children may have for example. The children are
106 given opportunities to ask any questions they might have regarding their
107 transition to Year 1. When the children return to school in September, Year
108 1 adopt an EYFS curriculum for 3 weeks. This allows the children to
109 continue working in small groups whilst the rest of the class have choosing
110 time. The amount of time spent completing activities gradually increases
111 and the support lowered to increase independence. This also allows time for
112 assessments to be carried out and for those children who are below the
113 expected level; an EYFS curriculum is continued with the help of support

114 staff.

115 4. How does school ensure regular communication with parents? Do you think this communication is effective?

116 Parents are sent a letter informing them of their child's new teacher prior
117 to the whole school transition morning during Summer 2 term. In
118 summer term parents are invited into school to meet their child's new
119 new teacher and this provides an opportunity for them to ask any
120 questions or raise any concerns they may have. I personally feel that the
121 'Meet the Teacher' meeting should be before the children come back to
122 provide reassurance to the parents. This would also make for a good
123 opportunity to inform parents of the expectations of Year 1 and the coverage
124 of the curriculum.

125 5. How do you, as a practitioner, prepare children for transition through school?

126 As well as the transition process outlined in question 3, I try to make every
127 effort to see and speak to the children that will be in my class the following
128 year. If I see them in the corridor for example and I make the effort to visit
129 the dining hall at lunchtime. I feel this helps the children become familiar
130 with me and begins to build the relationship between pupil and teacher.

131 6. What skills do you feel are vital for children to experience a smooth transition?

132 I feel staff must be nurturing and empathetic towards the children during
133 the transition process. I also think that clear routines and boundaries are
important. Flexibility is also vital as some children find the process easier
134 than others.

135 7. For children who do not cope well with their transition into Year 1, how do you support them?

136 As explained in question 3, some children will continue the transition after
137 the 3 week transition period. Some children will also continue to follow an
138 EYFS curriculum. Staff are very supportive and nurturing and provide lots of
139 reassurance to these children. Encouragement and positive praise are also
140 through the process.

141 8. Do you think lack of emotional resilience, such as low confidence, can effect how children cope with school transition?

142 Yes. It is these children that, in my experience, do not generally cope well
143 with the transition. They often adopt a negative attitude to their learning as
144 they feel they cannot do the work. As well as the strategies outlined
145 previously, these children are also referred to our learning mentor who
146 helps to raise their confidence and self-esteem.

147 9. Do you think *school readiness* plays a significant part in how children transition in school?

148 Yes, I think it does. Every child is unique and develops at a different rate.
149 This is where I think it is very important for practitioners to be flexible
150 during the transition process in order to meet the needs of all children.

Appendix 2

1 How well does your child cope with transitioning into a new class at school?

2 Participant 1- Very Well

3 Participant 2- Well

4 Participant 3- Well

5 Participant 4- Well

6 Participant 5- Well

7 Participant 6- Well

8 Participant 7- Very well

9 Participant 8- Very well

10 Participant 9- Well

11 Participant 10- Very well

12 Participant 11- Very well

13 2. Do you feel transitioning into a new class is disruptive to your child's learning?

14 Participant 1- No.

15 Participant 2- Yes, It takes young children a while to settle in, especially
16 reception to year 1 as they haven't done it before. Therefore disruptive to
17 learning as they are concentrating on new routines, however, that is part of
18 learning.

19 Participant 3- No.

20 Participant 4- Yes. It can take time for him to get used to the new routine and
21 lessons. It may take him a couple of weeks to settle into it.

22 Participant 5- No.

23 Participant 6- No.

24 Participant 7- No.

25 Participant 8- No.

26 Participant 9- No.

27 Participant 10- No.

28 Participant 11- No.

29 3. How do you prepare your child for their transition into a new class?

30 Participant 1- Talk them through what to expect, introduce them to the new
31 teacher and how them around the new room.

32 Participant 2- Try doing simple learning like phonics and counting to
33 understand basics.

34 Participant 3- Positive attitude towards the new class, focus on the positives.

35 Participant 4- Get him excited about the change and all the great new things
36 they can expect to do. Build up his confidence.

37 Participant 5- We talk over the summer about the new teacher and what work
38 to expect. The "moving up" day helps for us both to see the new classroom
39 together. I find that they are excited to show me and that takes away nerves.

40 Participant 6- She met the new teacher and went to the classroom in advance.

41 It took place at school so I can't fully comment. We talked about it at home.

42 Participant 7- Talk to him about what to expect and discuss anxieties he may
43 have about this change.

44 Participant 8- Talking about it at home and talking about the new teacher.

45 Participant 9- I explain about the new classroom and new teacher, and how
46 exciting it will be.

47 Participant 10- Discuss exciting future- make it positive.

48 Participant 11- Discuss new teacher and meet them, visit classroom, talk
49 about the types of things they will learn and reassure them their friends will
50 be there.

51 4. Do you feel Reception prepared your child for their transition into Year 1?

52 Participant 1- Yes. Reception integrates with the rest of the school really
53 nicely. My child was introduced to the new teacher, shown round the new
54 classroom and talked through what to expect. It helped she had all her friends
55 around her.

56 Participant 2- No.

57 Participant 3- Yes.

58 Participant 4- No.

59 Participant 5- Yes. The rooms are next door and there was “moving up” day.
60 too. The children already knew the teacher.

61 Participant 6- Yes and no. The reception teacher was excellent and I believe
62 they worked towards year 1. However, it was difficult to make the change due
63 to less play and more schoolwork.

64 Participant 7- Yes. My child’s reception teacher was fantastic and spoke to the
65 children about year 1 and ensured visits into their new year 1 classroom
66 to meet the new teacher before September.

67 Participant 8- Yes. The teacher went into reception class prior to the new
68 academic year so my child knew them before hand. They have a moving up
69 up day too. Being a small school means the children know all the teachers.

70 Participant 9- Yes. They had time to go and play and learn in the new
71 classroom before the end of the term.

72 Participant 10- Yes. They looked forward to learning new things.

73 Participant 11- Yes. Visits to year 1. The school staff knows all the children
74 even if they are not in their class.

**75 5. Do you feel your child coped better with the transition into Year 1
than their transition into Reception?**

76 Participant 1- No. My child cope equally well with both.

77 Participant 2- Yes and no. Knew some structure would be there but took a
78 while to settle and previously had no reading skills taught in reception.
79 Nursery to reception was just play-to-play.

80 Participant 3- No.

81 Participant 4- Yes. I think the teacher makes a huge difference and that he
82 has enjoyed the structure and difference that year 1 offers.

83 Participant 5- No. It was the same.

84 Participant 6- No. It was easier for her to start reception because she had
85 gone to Nursery and then Pre-school at the school. The issue was that year 1
86 was less play and more schoolwork.

87 Participant 7- The same. My child is very confident as he always looks
88 forward to attending school and the move into year 1.

89 Participant 8- Probably about the same. Moving from pre-school to reception
90 was easier as it was in the same room so he knew the teacher. However,
91 moving from reception to year 1 was easier as he was older and had done it
92 before so knew what it was all about.

93 Participant 9- No.

94 Participant 10- No.

95 Participant 11- No. Transition from Preschool into Reception was just as
good.

**96 6. Do you feel teachers have played a significant factor in why your child
was better equipped to start Year 1?**

97 Participant 1- Yes. They are open and approachable and understand the
98 transition periods can be a difficult time for the children.

99 Participant 2- Yes. As they knew what would be expected from him, but
100 needs to be pushed more.

101 Participant 3- Yes.

102 Participant 4- Yes. In my sons previous school the reception teacher was too
103 soft and didn't give him enough structure. He needs consistency and firm but
104 fair path to follow, also to still be able to have fun. A nice teacher makes all
105 the difference.

106 Participant 5- Yes. The school is small enough that the teachers know each
107 child even if they haven't already taught them- this helps.

108 Participant 6- N/a

109 Participant 7- Yes. Alongside my duty as a parent to also support this by
110 ensuring they are both academically and emotionally prepared.

111 Participant 8- Yes. The teacher familiarised herself with the children
112 beforehand. The teachers also talk about the next teacher and classroom
113 and what is expected of them.

114 Participant 9- Yes. They supported him with learning.

115 Participant 10- Yes. The reception teacher inspired my son.

116 Participant 11- Yes. Supported my child and prepared them.