

**AIM:** To improve transition from primary to secondary school for children, who are new to speaking English

Children, who are relatively new to speaking English, often struggle in their first term at secondary school. Even though they may have a successful Transition Day(s), due to the summer holiday, they may be lacking in self-confidence at the start of the Autumn Term. They find it difficult to navigate the new school and may struggle to put across their needs and ask questions confidently.

The purpose of this project was to

- ensure the children transferring to Djanogly Academy from Forest Fields and Claremont Primary Schools received additional transitional work in order to build confidence and begin to build a relationship with members of EAL staff from their new school
- recognise and address the importance of parental involvement
- share good practice and develop an understanding of pedagogy in partner schools

**BACKGROUND:** As part of the Local Authority 10 year plan to improve schools in Nottingham, Ambition 2025, improving transition from primary to secondary school was an initial priority. The Education Improvement Board aims to bring together ideas about how to provide the best possible education for every child and young person in the city and to promote collaboration. The Board wanted to address Nottingham's outcomes at both primary and secondary school: primary outcomes were below average and secondary outcomes were amongst the lowest in the country.

A Transition Protocol was agreed by Head teachers:

- To ensure that the needs of all pupils are met at points of transition in order that **learning is not lost**
- To encourage parents and children to attend a city secondary school
- To improve the proportion of pupils achieving ARE at the end of KS3
- To promote **consistency and collaboration** across Nottingham for all pupils and their families
- To ensure that all **communication is effective** and supports learning and progress
- To ensure that **staff, parents and pupils** understand their **role** in the transition process

Research shows that successful Transition depends on crossing **Five transition bridges**:

- Administrative bridge
- Social bridge
- Curriculum continuity bridge
- Pedagogical bridge
- Pupils' management of their own learning bridge

*"When all 5 bridges are firmly in place, this is when we see the greatest impact on Year 7 pupils."*  
Fuller 2005

**THE PROJECT:** In order to address aspects of the Social, Curriculum Continuity and Pedagogical Bridges, Djanogly Academy invited Forest Fields and Claremont Primary Schools to collaborate on a project to improve the transition for Year 6 pupils, who are new to English.

The project began in May 2017 with an initial planning meeting between Transition Coordinators from the three schools. Djanogly staff then visited Forest Fields and Claremont to meet parents (translation services were available) and observe primary EAL support staff working with the children. Sessions were followed by professional dialogue to plan further lessons and look through the pupils' work.

Djanogly EAL staff then taught sessions in each primary school, supported by primary staff.

The pupils from both schools attended a pre-Transition Day at Djanogly. Parents were invited to breakfast with their children at the secondary school. Following this, the pupils took part in short lessons and orientation exercises; again supported by familiar primary school staff.

A week later, the children attended the two Nottingham City Transition Days and experienced the same lessons and activities as their peers.

**EVALUATION:** All Claremont parents attended the preliminary coffee morning and were able to ask a range of questions to put themselves at ease. Parents said they were positively looking forward to the open evening at Djanogly and were excited to attend the breakfast. Teachers agreed this first meeting was a great success. Parents from Forest Fields were a little more reluctant to attend the coffee morning, but were approached individually afterwards.

EAL staff at the primary schools reported that the children enjoyed working with new members of staff from Djanogly. They also stated that they appreciated the opportunity to share resources and build a sequence of lessons for the pupils to follow. They said that this had a greater impact than three independent lessons.

Djanogly staff were particularly appreciative of the support given by primary staff on the pre-Transition Day and reported that the children really threw themselves into the activities. The pupils said they were positively looking forward to starting secondary school and felt more confident. Forest Fields support staff were delighted by the provision and support for their pupils. All schools stated that this pre-Transition Day was something they would like to repeat in future years.

**SUSTAINABILITY AND BARRIERS:** Following the initial planning during the Summer term of 2017, the resources and model could be revisited in subsequent years. All staff involved were keen to continue the close liaison for this vulnerable group. The main challenges in this initial project were time-related: it was a very tight schedule to plan and implement during a hectic time in the primary school calendar. In future, the links could be forged earlier on: perhaps immediately after the May half-term holiday.

**SUMMARY:** All parties found the project of benefit to the pupils involved. The children were more confident about their move to secondary school and, hopefully, better equipped to face the challenge of integrating into a new school whilst using their second language.