

“How does School A monitor and promote the emotional wellbeing of Year 7 students during the transfer from primary to secondary education?”

School Experience Report
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1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to investigate how School A assists students pastorally in the transition from primary to secondary school, and how this is monitored and promoted throughout the school. A recent review of research literature suggests the transition “plays an important part in the general development of young people” (Leaton Gray, et al., 2021, p.3). School A is a non-selective all-boys secondary comprehensive school in an inner-metropolitan borough with 1,500 pupils, 16% of which are eligible for free school meals. It has a Speech, Language and Communication SEN provision and the sixth form is shared with a local girls’ school. It gained an outstanding rating from Ofsted in 2017.

In this report, there are three lines of enquiry into what School A does to promote and monitor the emotional wellbeing of its Y7 students:

- How the transition process is set up to assist students with their emotional wellbeing.
- The pastoral curriculum in the first term and the support on offer for Y7.
- The impact of COVID on this transition and the support that was offered.

The lines are explored through a review of the literature and school policy available on the primary to secondary transition, an observation of a Y7 form time and an interview with the Head of the Transitions Team, HoT, at School A.

2. Literature review

The government does not offer clear guidance on the primary to secondary transfer, hereafter transfer, other than guidance for the admissions process. This review is therefore based around enquires done by industry professionals, along with some government guidance given to assist schools in offering transition activities during COVID-19.

Reviews by Ofsted focus mainly on the dip in attainment of students when they transfer. A survey into how Key Stage 3 is run by schools noted that the start of student's secondary education was of importance to building on student's achievements from primary school. One of the key findings of the report was that "leaders prioritise the pastoral over the academic needs of pupils" (Ofsted, 2015, p. 7) which tends to have a negative impact on higher ability students. Following this report, Ofsted released "Key Stage 3: good practice case studies" (Ofsted, 2015) that looked at eight schools and how they have successfully navigated key stage three and helping students move through the stages. This concluded that the curriculum should "develop pupils' confidence" (Ofsted, 2015, p. 17) and highlighted the need for an approach that included the whole student body, teachers and parents. Although the focus of the reports was attainment, good attainment is only possible with successful pastoral support offered by schools.

The Transition

The Education Endowment Foundation found that during the transfer students that have not been given the proper support can feel "marginalized, unwelcome, and not respected or valued" (Mould, 2020) and references the difficulty of the past few years, after many students have missed the closure that is usually offered at the end of primary school.

The University of Wollongong study found that 84% of children felt prepared to start secondary school, and of the 16% that did not, only 3% were worried or nervous after their first term at school (Evangelou, 2008). The study highlighted the different challenges a child with special

educational needs, hereafter SEN, will face during the transfer. The study found that these students are 20% more likely to be bullied. However, these students seem to adjust better, probably due to the more individualised transfer that schools offer. This shows that personalising the support offered to different students does make a difference. Though this may not be practically viable for all schools as they do not have the resources to provide this for every child. By focussing on those that will need support the most, such as those with SEN and those from lower income households, schools can ensure a relatively smooth transfer process for all students.

In a document released as guidance for parents and carers about supporting a child's transition from primary to secondary school, the Anna Freud Centre described what a successful transition looks like and how parents can recognise the success of their child's transition. This included notes on relationships with their peers, interest in schoolwork and getting used to the new routines and organisation of secondary school. It also referenced the importance of "continuity in learning" (Anna Freud Centre, 2021, p. 5) which can only be achieved by good communication between the primary and secondary schools involved in the transition.

Some believe that the solution to this continuity is All-Through Schools. In England, the number of all through schools is "small but growing" (Price, 2020, p. 5). An article on an all through school that goes from nursery to sixth form (Schofield, 2016) hails the benefits of no entrance exams putting less stress on the transfer for pupils and teachers that know the child well due to the better communication between the primary and secondary schools. There is also no application process which, as Sutherland (Sutherland, et al., 2010) states, can be one of the most stressful parts for parents. Admission authorities are legally required to operate an equal preference system meaning "each admissions authority will consider applications without referring to the order of preference on your application" (A.6). In the Local Authority, hereafter LA, around "Two-thirds of [REDACTED] children were offered a place at their first-choice secondary school and 94% place at one of their six preferences" (A.8) which is well above the national average of around 50% (The School Run, 2021).

The University of Bristol (Sutherland, et al., 2010) released a paper looking into supporting learning through the transfer by all parties involved. These include those close to the child such as parents and teachers, through to the wider community such as the local and national government. The paper sets out recommendations for these different groups on how they can best support students. One issue highlighted was the effect of a decline in parental involvement in the child's schooling which invariably leads to a breakdown in communication between the school and the parent. Some schools have combatted this by using a "a parental engagement/liaison worker" (Sutherland, et al., 2010, p. 49) or team to support some more disengaged families, that get flagged up as such in talking to the primary schools these students have come from or through the early stages of secondary school.

This report also highlighted other literature looking into parental involvement such as a 2003 study by Deforges and Abouhaar. In a flow chart in this document, they describe the different groups that shape a child's educational outcome, Figure 1. This chart helps to show the different factors that shape a child's journey. However, it fails to talk of the importance of the different groups. For example, some students will have little or no input from family support services but others have them highly involved in their lives in and outside school (Deforges & Abouhaar, 2003). In general, studies have highly conflicted views about the impact of parental involvement in the students transfer. Defourges and Abouhaar write "Early studies often showed strong positive links between parental involvement in school and pupil progress" (Deforges & Abouhaar, 2003, p. 15). But they go on to note that early studies looking into this do not consider the fact that parental involvement has a high correlation with socio-economic status, so it is unclear whether it was the parental involvement or other outside factors that impacted the child's educational outcome.

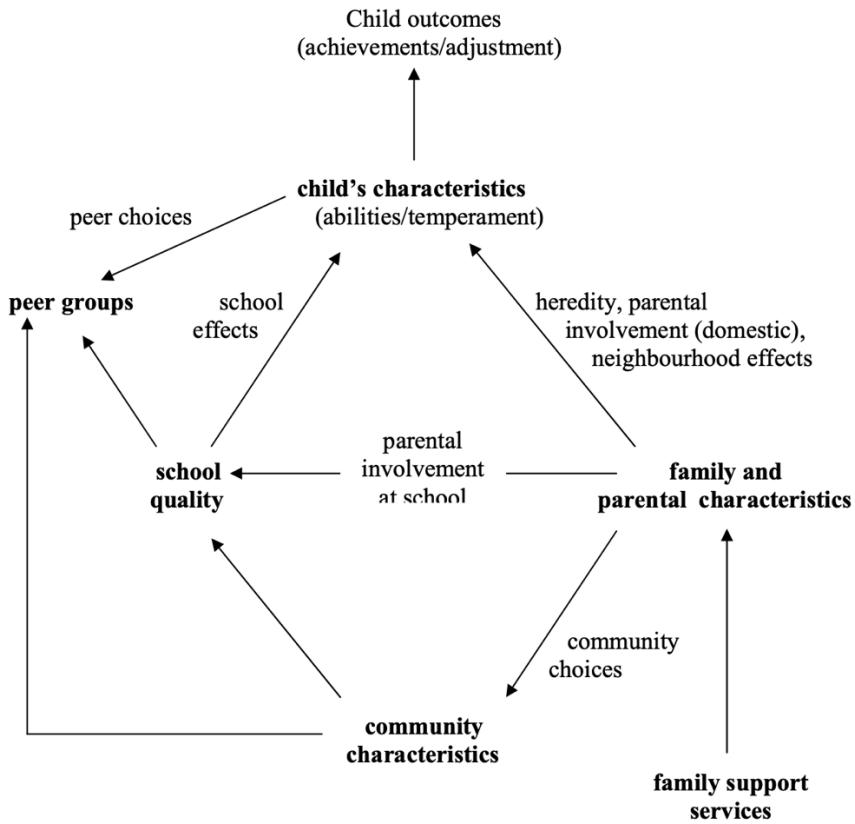


Figure 1: The different groups that shape a child's educational journey (Deforges & Abouchaar, 2003, p. 13)

Pratt and George performed a small-scale study into boy's and girl's relationships and how they change during the transfer. It was seen that the intensity of primary school relationships is created due to the single classroom setting, as one child commented in the report "...you can stay in the same class and all of your friends are in the same class as you. [Yeah] So basically you are always with them unless they are away" (Pratt & George, 2005, p. 19). Many of the students' views of secondary school were largely negative, many assuming they would be bullied and that "the boys' toilets are disgusting and the boys were smoking in there" (Pratt & George, 2005, p. 21). There was emphasis on the image of status, going from the top of the school to being the lowest status and physically being much smaller than their peers. A lot of them also worried about peer pressure and teachers telling them off. The study concluded by examining the strong links between emotional wellbeing and academic success, noting that while that was not the aim of the study, the evidence was apparent.

The Pastoral Curriculum

According to a study by Ashton (2008), the emphasis on improving the primary to secondary transfer should be done through listening to the children themselves. The study performed interviews with Y6 pupils talking through the concerns that they had about moving from primary to secondary school. The themes that were brought out by this were mainly pastoral: bullying, making new friends and generally growing up. Building relationships before they entered school life was important to pupils and the study suggested this could be achieved by meeting teachers and peers from their school to familiarise themselves with the environment before they enter the classroom. The students themselves came up with ideas to help them with the transition ranging from some more idealist such as “Could you make bullying stop?” (Ashton, 2008, p. 181), to more realistic goals “3 day or week induction” (Ashton, 2008, p. 181). This has similarities with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954) which considers deficiency needs versus growth or being needs. Once one level is accomplished, the next is what drives us and so on. Once children’s physiological needs are met, the next requirement to be fulfilled is safety and then love and belongingness. This can be negatively impacted during the transfer with students unsure of teachers and the safety that they will provide for them.

A large part of the pastoral curriculum comes from Relationships and Sex Education, hereafter RSE, and the Department for Education says the aim for these sessions in secondary school is to “give young people the information they need to help them develop healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds” (Department for Education, 2019, p. 25). Again, linking back to Maslow’s hierarchy, the curriculum’s relationship section is important in helping students feel safe in their new schools and in developing relationships with their peers and teachers so that they feel like they belong (Maslow, 1954).

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic, hereafter COVID, has affected the transfer monumentally. A parliamentary inquiry was performed by the Education Committee into the impact of COVID on education and child services. A piece of written evidence remarked, “Our research shows a whole generation could be scarred by this pandemic” (Major & Eyles, 2021, p. 7). Since March 2020, various reports have been released about how COVID has affected the transfer and how these issues can be addressed to promote student’s emotional wellbeing at a time when COVID has negatively impacted everyone’s emotional wellbeing (Mind, 2021).

In a post done by Jindal-Snape, based on the research done in Primary and Secondary schools in Scotland, there are six main factors to be considered during the transfer process (Jindal-Snape, 2020). This post outlines how COVID affected these areas and how that affect can be minimised. One point that was emphasised, which mirrors Ashton’s research, was the importance of the child’s voice and the control that they should feel over the transition (Ashton, 2008). They remark that the school closures likely disrupted many plans for transition events but “if transitions are ongoing, the preparation for them is ongoing too” (Jindal-Snape, 2020). Though this information is based of research done before COVID, it still gives a useful insight for schools on how they can continue to promote the six areas of transfer.

To further investigate the impact of COVID, current research into student’s progression needs to be looked at. The government released a report into the progress of students from 2020 to 2021 which found that by the end of the summer term 2021 primary students were roughly 0.9 months behind on their reading and 2.2 months in Mathematics (DfE, 2021). This research guided the government to offer funding for summer schools, with an academic focus, to help students bridge that educational gap. The Education Endowment fund found that students can make up 2 months of additional progress compared with pupils that do not attend (Educational Endowment Fund, 2021). The aim of this programme was to “deliver a short summer school with a blend of academic

education and enrichment activities” (DfE, 2021). Although it could be offered to any year, they expected the Y7 students would benefit most. It gave students an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with their peers and teachers, so though the programme was developed with an academic aim, it was hoped that it could also improve the students’ links to the student body, to “build a community with their fellow pupils” (DfE, 2021).

3. Ethics

This study was completed in compliance with the BERA ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018).

Permission was obtained to complete the assignment from the S3P tutor at King's and the Professional Coordinating Mentor, PCM at School A. Data collection in the form of an interview with the HoT and the classroom observation was conducted with written consent and no recordings were taken (A.3). The review of the school's policies was completed with consent from the PCM. Any reference to the school or any person/s referenced has been anonymized to protect the identities of those involved. The data will be deleted once the assignment has been passed.

4. Research Methods

Textual Analysis was used in the Literature Review, section 2. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison note “Qualitative data analysis is often heavy on interpretation and there are often multiple interpretations to be made” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p.643). In the literature review it was important to look at sources from a variety of different publications which can be cross-referenced. This qualitative form of research has been described as “an invaluable stage in the development of the theory itself” (Dowling & Brown, 2010, p. 89). It was also important to look at how the research may have changed, where much of the literature from pre-2020 referenced heavily on the need for pupil interaction and familiarisation of the new school, where for recent years this was not possible.

An interview was conducted with the HoT in School A. Cohen, Manion and Morrison suggest there are three purposes an interview can serve and here the interview served the first “acquiring knowledge on what the person is thinking” (Cohen, et al., 2018, p.508). This interview was used to inform the structure of the classroom observation, as well as pointing to key school policy to be reviewed, adding to the previously identified literature. However, interviews can be time consuming and are always subject to the interviewer and interviewee’s biases. The semi- structured nature of the interview meant the topics and questions of the interview were predetermined, however the questions posed were open ended and the interviewee often expanded on the given topics.

An observation was also done on form time for a Y7 tutor group at the beginning of the school day. This observation gave an insight into the how the policies of the school were implemented in the daily life of the school. However, as is the case with all first-hand data collection, the Hawthorne effect comes into play. It is described by Dowling and Brown as “the effects of being ‘researched’ far outweighed the influence of any physical or economic factors that the researchers were exploring” (Dowling & Brown, 2010, p. 47). This applies to the lesson observation as the teacher is made aware of the title of the study, meaning they may pay more attention to the promotion of the student’s emotional wellbeing while the researcher is present in the class. Remaining in the situation

for a long time has been one method posed to minimize this effect (Cohen, et al., 2018) and given more time for this study, a wider variety of different students and form times could be observed to minimize this effect. The teachers could also have not been informed on what the study was researching and while there would still be researcher bias, it would be less specific to this report.

5. Discussion and Analysis of Findings

The data collected from the interview with the HoT, the classroom observation with the Y7 form, along with analysis of school policy was beneficial to the study. The primary focus was the interview with the HoT, with the classroom observation and textual analysis being used to provide supporting evidence of how School A promotes and monitors the emotional wellbeing of its students during the transfer.

The Transition

The HoT believes that in School A the transition begins with an open evening in September before the parents even start the official application process. The transition process then continues until the end of the following September (A.1).

School A has many feeder schools that students come from. The number of feeder schools has vastly increased over the last decade, from four/five schools to around 40 different schools in the 2021 intake. The school prefers the idea of multiple feeder schools so there is no one large friendship group, allowing all students to make connections and get to know each other (A.1).

The school is not in charge of the admissions process, it is instead run by the LA and the school can set certain criteria for which students to accept if the school is oversubscribed. This can be where all-through schools have an advantage compared to School A as communication between the Primary and Secondary schools would be easier and largely more effective. Schofield notes that the teachers will also know their students better due to the easy access of information available on the child (Schofield, 2016).

However, the LA does help the transfer of information on students. Once the admissions have been finalised in March, data on the prospective students is sent to School A. This includes data like their name, religion, date of birth, ethnicity and information on their special educational needs (A.1). Due to COVID, information was also given on their mental health status and how well they had

coped with online teaching. This is highly beneficial to helping students pastorally through the transfer, as the Anna Freud centre notes, continuity in learning is key to a successful transition (Anna Freud Centre, 2021).

To further aid the transfer of communication between the primary feeder schools and School A, a member of the transitions team will make a visit to the main feeder schools. They will talk to the prospective students about life in School A and they do a “show and tell” to familiarise the students with what daily life will be like in the school. Most importantly, as noted by the HoT, they conduct a question-and-answer session where the transition team get a feel for the worries and concerns that prospective students may have for that academic year. As Ashton comments, the most important voice throughout the transfer is a student’s and by visiting these feeder schools the transition team can better inform the school on what kind of resources and support they should aim to provide for students that year (Ashton, 2008). This tailored approach is always the most beneficial for a student, as Evangelou noted, the better tailored the transfer experience can be for students the more likely they are to settle in quicker and be happier students in general (Evangelou, 2008). This communication also tries to reduce the “two tribes” (Sutherland, et al., 2010, p. 61) mentality where secondary school teachers have the impression they need to reteach their students everything rather than building on the previous knowledge from primary school. During their visits they can talk to subject teachers in the primary schools and see exactly where they are in the syllabus which can be fed back to heads of department at School A.

In the interview, there were various references to the ways that the school keeps up communication with parents throughout the transfer. One way was with an early “data drop” and parents evening so that “any issues can be flagged up early” (A.1). This early communication with the parents and guardians helps build a positive relationship between home and school. Sutherland highlighted in their paper that students with parents that have better communication with schools tend to have a better educational outcome (Sutherland, et al., 2010). School A have recognised this

and have ensured that parental communication is kept throughout the term, making sure to not just email home when there is a problem, but encouraging positive emails home (A.2). Celebrating student's achievement, especially during the transfer, promotes their emotional wellbeing and adds to the welcoming atmosphere School A aims to provide. As Pratt and George showed in their research, most children have a negative view of secondary school before attending which will also shift to the parents (Pratt & George, 2005). By emailing positively home, the teachers can break that negative view and help change student and parental conceptions about the school.

Another way that School A builds a relationship with the parents is through a barbecue that invites parents, students and their teachers to meet outside of the school setting. Three weeks into the first term, Y7 attend this activity day at the school's nearby grounds. Eight hundred people attended this day in 2021 (A.1) and the HoT believes the high attendance related to COVID, which meant many chose the school without even visiting or meeting teachers in person. Most literature on the transfer highlights the need for "familiarisation" (Jindal-Snape, 2020) and by meeting outside the school setting, parents and students can familiarise themselves with the teachers and their peers. Most report that a worry they have about starting secondary school is the teachers and the sanctions they will impose (Pratt & George, 2005), so by bonding without the academic pressure of the classroom helps nurture the student-teacher relationship. This is the official end to the transition; however support is offered throughout the year for any students that may require it.

These Y7 tutors will stay with students as they go up the school which also can promote student wellbeing as a familiar figure will be with them throughout their school career. School A uses Y7 tutors to assist students in building routines into the students' school lives. As the Anna Freud Centre highlighted, the knowledge of the rules and regulations of the school is important in smoothing the transfer, especially for students with SEN (Anna Freud Centre, 2021). To help parents and students familiarise themselves with School A before they arrive, they are sent a transition

handbook. In this there is detailed information about the rules, regulations and routines within the school.

The Pastoral Curriculum

The Pastoral Curriculum at School A is based around the ideals of the school and being a resilient student and young man. The school's vision states, "We seek to support our young men becoming healthy, happy, successful modern gentlemen; knowledgeable, kind, aware, confident, capable and skilful members of society" (A.4), or as the HoT team put it, they aim to build them into "decent human beings" (A.1). The pastoral curriculum for the Y7s is predominantly delivered in an hour PSHE lesson every fortnight.

School A's PSHE curriculum mirrors the RSE syllabus set by the Department for Education, choosing to begin with the relationships section of RSE (Department for Education, 2019). The full Y7 curriculum can be found in the appendix (A.7) and the first three lessons of term one has been included below (Figure 2):

Week	Year 7	Learning objective	Skills
1	SRE Term 1		
2	Learning about myself & others	To learn about myself and my classmates and to consider why teamwork is important.	The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
3	Transition	To know how transition might affect me and to consider how to manage change effectively	The differences between primary and secondary education. How to become more independent and organized and become part of the [redacted] community.
4	Emotions and Feelings	To understand what emotions are and to consider what feelings we might have for others	How to deal and cope with different emotions and how different scenarios make them feel. To learn about different feelings that humans can experience, how to recognise and name different feelings, how feelings can affect people's bodies and how they behave, how to recognise what others might be feeling and to recognise that not everyone feels the same at the same time or feels the same about the same things.

Figure 2: A portion of School A's PSHE curriculum

These lessons focus on school life and the relationships students build in Y7. The third lesson is on the transfer covering the differences between primary and secondary education and how to integrate themselves into school life. The follow up lesson to this, emotions and feelings, helps them develop coping strategies for when they struggle. Rather than just promoting student's emotional wellbeing, the school is helping students to learn how to monitor their own emotions. As Pietarinen says "the teacher's role is the central transformative force bridging the gap between primary and secondary school" (Pietarinen, 2000) and School A's pastoral curriculum assists teachers to provide this bridge for the students by carefully laying out a curriculum that can provide a consistency in a high standard of support across all Y7 forms.

In the transition lesson, the PSHE curriculum defines the learning intent as "To know how transition might affect me and how to manage change" (A.7). This lesson supports the transfer effectively as it gives students the opportunity to voice their concerns in a safe environment. The following lesson on emotions and feelings then gives them the language to explain how they are coping with their transition. By talking through this emotional language and what to do when they become overwhelmed, they can learn to better communicate when they are struggling. A recurring problem in the transition can be students being unfamiliar with reporting processes in their new school if they experience bullying or peer pressure. In Ashton's and Evangelou's study these are concerns that most students faced during the transfer (Ashton, 2008) (Evangelou, 2008).

This curriculum is complimented through whole school and year group assemblies where the curriculum tends to mirror what is happening during the year. For example, men's mental health month, pride month, Black History Month, etc. It is also reintroduced during form time where the form tutor can catch up with individual students, reminding them of any upcoming events and encouraging them to get involved with school life. This was seen in the classroom observation where the tutor was organising a team for House rugby. The tutor guided the students in making the decisions for the team sheet for themselves. By doing this the tutor was promoting self-

determination, while still being there as a guide to solve any disputes between the students. Listening to the student's voice in this way has been a proven way to help students in their transition, lining up with studies into the student's voice (Ashton, 2008) (Pratt & George, 2005).

The HoT notes that tutor groups are an important part of the emotional well-being of each student. The tutor groups are made after the data drop in March and are specifically tailored to best support the students in their time at School A. These students then stay with this form group and tutor throughout their time at School A. Behaviour needs tend to be mixed up across the tutor groups and a cross check is done to ensure each tutor group has a good distribution of pupil premium students, free school meals, good diversity, etc. This mixing of different students both mirrors the school ethos and matches literature on what a good transfer should look like. Drexel University believes that diversity in the classroom makes students become more open-minded and feel more confident and safer. Students also become more empathetic by promoting awareness and creating personal connections with a variety of different cultures (Drexel University School of Education, 2015).

During the classroom observation, it was seen that one of the children was on behaviour report where the child must meet three targets in each of their lessons. The student must then hand this to the tutor at the end of each day, where they can discuss strategies to improve on meeting the targets or can provide positive support. During the discussion the tutor highlighted that the student had made an improvement in their behaviour while on report and the positive reinforcement the tutor offered the student was used effectively. While being a sanction, it was clear that being on report had improved the child's attitude towards their learning and this had improved their enjoyment of school life.

[COVID-19](#)

Due to COVID, much of the transition process at schools had to change, whether that be moving events online, adding different events for students or simply cancelling events altogether. This was

no different at School A. However, steps were taken to try to minimise the impact on students and to promote their wellbeing in a time that most people's wellbeing had taken a hit (Mind, 2021).

One of the main parts of a child's transition is "Familiarisation" (Jindal-Snape, 2020), which speaks of the benefit of acclimatising to the new school or class. This is not just the physical act of being there but also the familiarisation of the social environment of the school. School A tried to offer some familiarisation through a five-day summer school that was offered to all incoming Y7s. This was done in conjunction with the Department for Education who had offered a grant for the summer schools (DfE, 2021). They could catch up on some of the learning that was missed and meet some of the new cohort joining them in Y7. According to the HoT, this allowed students to mix with their peers in an academic and controlled setting (A.1). It helped students to familiarise themselves with the school and build relationships with their peers which is another pillar of the transition process (Jindal-Snape, 2020). This was especially true for those students from small feeder schools who may not know as many other students in their year group. It can be seen from a news article on the school website that the students enjoyed a week filled with fun and engaging activities (A.5). This lined up with the government's aim for the summer schools when they provided the funding (DfE, 2021). According to their funding data, School A had 78 pupils in the programme (GOV.UK, 2021), this was one of the smaller uptakes in the LA but the HoT hopes to get more students involved next year if they can offer it.

Another way that the school helped to build relationships with their peers was through a phased return to the school, where the Y7 students had a relatively normal day with team building events throughout the day. The only students in school on this first day are the Y7 and Y12 students, meaning the children can get a feel for the school without the mass of students. The Y7s can also build relationships with their form tutor on that day who is a vital part of their school support network. Major and Eyles noted that the return to as much normality as possible is important for

students to adjust quickly and these induction days where the students can visit the school for the first time help with this (Major & Eyles, 2021).

Another big impact of COVID was the maturity levels of the students that were coming into Y7 and this was true across the years with the current Y8 still feeling new to the school and Y10 not yet at a stage to be taking GCSEs seriously. But for the current Y7, they missed out on the closure from primary school. They did not get to sit formal exams, visit their new schools, have leaver's assemblies etc. and thus "we need to think extra carefully about how we can best ease children's move into Year 7" (Mould, 2020). This absence of closure can mean that some students do not know how to interact in the school environment. The HoT said that more students have had to be removed from lessons, not just for misbehaving, but some get overwhelmed in lessons when they feel they could not keep up with their peers and cannot control their emotions as an 11-year-old would be expected to. This is where School A needs to improve their emotional support for their students. Nurture groups are offered for some students that they know will be most affected by the transition, but due to COVID these numbers have jumped and the school no longer have the resources available for the large increase of students that need it.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this report was to understand how School A promotes and monitors the emotional well-being of its Y7 students during the primary to secondary transfer. These pastoral concerns are shared by schools across the country. Although the research is limited due to the small sample size, some conclusions on how School A promotes and monitors its student's emotional well-being can be drawn.

School A monitors and promotes the emotional wellbeing of its students effectively throughout the 12-month induction programme (A.1, A.2, A.7) which places an emphasis on the student's voice in the transfer. The literature agrees that the best way to run a successful transfer is one that promotes the student's emotional wellbeing to ensure they are comfortable with the routines, rules and regulations of School A (Ashton, 2008). The induction pack sent out by School A helps students with this, as well as their induction day (A.1).

Throughout the research performed in School A (A.1, A.2, A.7) there was a clear cohesion between the policies, procedures and the staff's perspectives, suggesting the school provides a united transfer throughout the school. Both the HoT and the form tutor observed seem to go above and beyond for each child. This individualised approach to the transfer has proved to be the most effective from the literature reviewed (Sutherland, et al., 2010).

School A also has an emphasis on familiarisation of the school and research shows what an important part of the transition this is (Jindal-Snape, 2020). During the transfer process laid out by the HoT, there are many points at which familiarisation can take place (A.1). During COVID, some schools struggled to create the normal amount of familiarisation (Leaton Gray, et al., 2021), but School A tried to combat this with a summer school funded by the government (DfE, 2021) which was a great success for the students that attended (A.5). There was a greater emphasis on tutor groups due to COVID, with students staying within their tutor groups for much of their lessons (A.1). This allowed them to build strong relationships with their form, like the ones they would have built in

primary school (Pratt & George, 2005). This familiarity could have helped students in their adjustment, although it robbed them of being able to build more mature relationships with a variety of different students (Leaton Gray, et al., 2021).

Through the interview with the HoT (A.1) and looking into literature available on the transfer (section 2), it was found that there is very little in the way of government documentation on this subject. Schools rely on the most recent research and guidance from the LA to best assist students with their emotional well-being during the transfer (A.6). While some research is contentious most reports done into a student's view of the transfer concur with each other. The main issues that students are concerned about when it comes to their emotional well-being is usually to do with their peers, teachers and going into an unfamiliar environment (Ashton, 2008) (Pietarien, 2000). This theme was not only consistently apparent through the literature review, it also came up both in the interview with the HoT team and in looking at the pastoral curriculum.

The pastoral curriculum promoted emotional wellbeing by having the entirety of the first term focused on the different and changing relationships that they will have in Y7 (A.7). The curriculum was created in accordance with the government's RSE syllabus set out in 2019 (Department for Education, 2019) and it was being effectively implemented at School A (A.2).

It was also found through the research how closely attainment is linked with student's emotional well-being (Evangelou, 2008) (Pratt & George, 2005). The continuation of the curriculum from primary school was not only to combat the dip in attainment during the transfer, but to support the students emotionally through their transition (Anna Freud Centre, 2021). The familiarity of the curriculum can help students bridge the gap between their primary and secondary schools.

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Appendices

A.1 Interview with the Transition team lead of School A

Question One: The transition

How is the transition to the school organised? What role do you play in helping the Year 7 pupils transition from primary to secondary education? What documentation does the school have setting out what support they provide for the year seven pupils?

- Ticketed the September open evening, which worked well, there was a specific flow for the tours and as people ‘hopped off’ others ‘hopped on’
- The transition starts with this open evening in September, then parents attend open days
- School A has lots of feeder schools, used to be more like 4-5 schools but students came from around 40 different schools this year. Even the bigger schools only gave max of 25 students
- The school is not in charge of admissions however they can set criteria to the local authority about which students they would accept hierarchically
 - School A mostly goes by the distance to the school first
 - Preference given to siblings of current or past students and any students that have parents/guardians working at the school
 - The school has an ARP in speech and language disabilities (research) so are given funding to help a certain number of students per year, so some preference is given to these students
- In March, the data on the prospective students is sent to the school, like their name, religion, DOB, ethnicity, their pupil premium status, free school meals etc.
- COVID meant that information was also given on their mental health, and how well they coped with the online teaching
- The team then visit the main feeder schools and talk to the prospective students about life at School A, uniform show and tell and most importantly have a Q and A, which was noted that this is very rewarding and helps the transition team to get a better feel for the students
- They visited 35/40 of the feeder schools and called the other students that did not have a visit from the team
- Buddy given for the students that were the only one to come from a certain school
- The SENCo, EAL and inclusion representatives attend meetings with the primary school SENCos to get support ideas and the sharing of information
- The families are also invited with the students to meet the LSAs

- A character profile is built by talking to the teachers of the students

September

- There is a phased return in September, the 1st day is INSET for staff, then second day it is just years 7 and 12 that come in. They have a semi-normal day, but with team building sessions and introduction activities
- Three weeks later they have an activity day at the schools' nearby grounds, the parents and form tutors attend, 800 people attended the previous year's day
- This day is the official end of the transition
- There is also an Early Parents evening and 'data drop' so any issues can be flagged up early
- In Handbook, there is a detail of the support network, a map of the tutor system, and where to go is help is needed for them or their child.
- The key support is linked to the year group
- Inclusion and wellbeing introduced
- Place 2 Be is the in-school counselling service
- Some students during the transition are flagged up as being 'resistant to change'
- 'Nurture Groups' are used for students that are flagged up
- There is a phased nurture, they run in 6-week cycles, extra support is given to those waiting for the next cycle
- Mentoring is on offer for those that need it, they can also be referred to external mental health/support programmes within the council that can better support them if needed

Question Two: The pastoral curriculum and support

How are year 7 form groups assigned? Do you see a difference in students that have come from specific feeder schools and those that have not? What do you offer in terms of the pastoral curriculum and what are the overall aims of this?

Tutor Groups

- SEN try to cluster based on students' needs so LSAs can follow those that most need assistance
- Paired up where possible, they are grouped up first
- Then look at the character profiles and group by spreading out feeder schools
- Then the language preference is looked at- one half of school does French or German, the other half does Spanish or German

- Language preference is the first thing looked at when assigning forms, this trumps feeder school splitting etc. the only thing above this is if the SEN department need to group people
- Behaviour needs are mixed up and a cross-check is done to ensure each tutor group has a good distribution of pupil premium students, free school meals, good diversity etc.
- This then goes into SIMs and parents are informed, then the parental complaints are dealt with
- Parents then get an induction pack which has activities for the students and an invitation to the induction day and information evening.
- The induction day is mainly about team bonding whereas the information evening is more for the parents and admin staff

Pastoral Curriculum

- Resilience training, wants to try and make a school roadmap for the new students
- Building their students up, based on the school's values of what a good student at their school should be
- This is complimented in whole school and year group assemblies, where the curriculum is linked to whatever is going on at the specific time of year, e.g., Men's mental health month etc.
- The main aim is to get them to become 'decent people'

Question Three: COVID

How has COVID effected your usual transition plan with the year sevens? What were the positives and negative of this different way of interacting with them?

- No year 6 induction, the first time the students came to the school was in September 2 inset days were done as well as a summer school
- A summer school programme was offered to all schools which School A did run
- This was offered to every new student, 80 did it and the school would like to continue this as it seemed like it helped the students in their adjustment
- Online made it difficult to really get a feel of the students, it did the job but was not as good as getting to meet in person
- The visits to the primary school mainly went ahead, but had to be mindful of COVID so could only have one member of staff going in
- All the information collecting was done online, usually in one big day. The good thing about it was more work could get done around the meetings as you were in your own office, usually you are sat around waiting for long periods of time
- Tech was a big issue, if it worked it was fine, but a lot of time was lost fixing tech problems

- Getting the information in person was good to build relationships with parents and with the students

A.2 Classroom Observation Notes

Observation performed on form time for 20 minutes at the beginning of the school day (8/12/21)

- Students settled and register taken visually to make the most of the twenty minutes
- Students are setting targets for the week from their W.I.N booklets, this is done every week on the Wednesday morning
- Students are shown a PowerPoint reminding them what SMART targets are. Students are encouraged to look back on last week's targets constructively
- Form tutor circulates making sure that students are making targets
- Form tutor checks in with students that have things they need to remember for the day
- Form tutor ensures in circulation that they check on 'vulnerable students'
- One student is on report for logs
- Students are organising a house rugby team- tutor is leading discussion while house rep is in charge of final decisions about the team. Tutor is stepping in when needed but largely letting students decide teams for themselves
- Form tutor has their SIMS set up so that they can see how their form is doing at a glance with a graph on how many commendations they have got and another for how many logs and interventions the students have gotten through the week and through the day
- Form tutor has email set up for
- This is the form tutors second form group having just finished with a year 11 form the previous year that have now graduated. If the teachers are still at the school, they tend to go up to year 11 and then take on another year 7 form once they have graduated
- Year 7 form tutors are usually new teachers, this form tutor is one of the longer serving members of staff compared to the other form tutors so has often offered guidance to them

A.3 Consent Form

Information sheet and record of consent for participants in PGCE service evaluation

Title of study: How does School A monitor and promote the emotional wellbeing of year 7 students during the transfer from primary to secondary.



Thank you for considering taking part in this evaluation which forms part of my PGCE course at King's College London. I am interested in investigating how the school assists students pastorally with their transfer from Primary to Secondary school

If you consent to take part, I would like to interview you in order to collect data for my assignment. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any point during the process and you can withdraw your data up to a week after the interview/observation by contacting the email address below. I have permission from the PCM to conduct this research.

Any data I collect will be anonymised after collection so you, your students and your school cannot be identified. Any comments that could potentially identify individuals or the school will be removed. The data will be stored securely on a password protected data storage site. The data will be used as part of my School Experience Report and deleted once the assignment has been completed. No data will be shared with third parties.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at [REDACTED]@kcl.ac.uk

By signing below, I consent to take part in this evaluation and agree to the use of my data, in an anonymised form, in the assignment as described above.

[REDACTED]
Name of participant

[REDACTED]
Signature of participant

15-12-2021
Date

[REDACTED]
Name of trainee

16/12/21
Date

A.4 School A's Vision

[REDACTED] school is a high achieving local boys' comprehensive school that aims to be the natural first choice of local families. It is proud of a long local history, its [REDACTED] context, its multicultural intake and its inclusive philosophy.

Through all we do, we seek to prepare learners at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of a fulfilling later life. We aim to inspire, enable, facilitate and grow lifelong learners able to build on their individual strengths and capacities, and achieve their ambitions. We aim for our learners to succeed and strive to provide pathways to support that success. We want our learners to embrace challenge, build resilience, overcome setbacks and increasingly become independent in pursuit of their goals. For our learners to feel welcome, confident to participate in and aware of their responsibilities to contribute to our society.

[REDACTED] is a Local Authority maintained school that enthusiastically embraces the aims, values, content, depth, breadth and balance provided by fully following the English National Curriculum through Key Stages 3 and 4. With the addition of PSHE and RSE programmes built around national best practice, we are confident that following our curriculum we are able to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners and meet the needs of our local, national and international society.

We aim to coherently build upon and extend this approach through our comprehensive [REDACTED] sixth form offer shared with the local girls' school [REDACTED].

We seek to support our young men becoming healthy, happy, successful modern gentlemen; knowledgeable, kind, aware, confident, capable and skilful members of society.

A.5 School A news about Summer School Programme 2021

Our future students, joining [REDACTED] Year 7 in September attended our Summer School from the [REDACTED] August this year.

Students enjoyed a fantastic week filled with lots of fun and engaging activities. This was a hugely valuable experience for these students who will be able to help their new friends get to know the school.

They met lots of their new teachers and saw lots of different areas of the school. They even had pizza on the last day!

One activity was Creative Innovating Coding with [REDACTED]. They enjoyed being young innovators, making programs using coding in python 3 and block based coding directly from the web

browser interface using a drag and drop interface. They acquired skills in collaborative coding and learning to modify and be inventive using the approach PRIMM (predict, run, investigate, modify and make).

We hope each student enjoyed their time across the week and look forward to teaching them over the next 5-7 years.

A.6 Guide to applying by School A's Local Authority Guide to applying

The information on this page is for parents and carers with children due to transfer to secondary school from September 2022. If your child already attends secondary school and you need to know how to submit an application, please see in-year school admissions and transfers.

Before completing your secondary school application there are a few things to consider:

[REDACTED] Council co-ordinates applications for secondary schools across academies, community, voluntary aided, out-borough and free schools. If you are applying for any of the voluntary aided (Church affiliated) schools, academies, or wish to apply for any schools outside [REDACTED], you must include them in your application, or they will be unable to consider your child for admission.

You may also need to complete supplementary forms for some schools that require additional information. The information contained in the Admissions Criteria section will tell you which [REDACTED] schools need these. If you apply online, the system will automatically inform you if a supplementary form is required.

Decide which schools you would like for your child in your preferred order. Each applicant in London is limited to a maximum of six preferences on their main Transfer to Secondary School application. It is recommended that you name at least one school for which your application is likely to be successful, for example, your local community.

How places are allocated

[REDACTED] Local Authority will always try to offer a place at the school you have named as the highest preference.

Our admission process operates an equal preference scheme, which means that each admissions authority will consider applications without referring to the order of preference on your application. This means that, if your child is unsuccessful at your first preference school, they will not get overlooked by schools lower down your order of preference.

If the school is oversubscribed and has more applicants than places available, all applications will be ranked in the order described in the admissions criteria. This will show if a child's name is high enough on the ranking list to be offered a place.

If a place at more than one school can be offered your child's place will be made for the highest preference school.

A.7 School A PSHE curriculum

Year 7 Curriculum Map

Week	Year 7	Learning objective	Skills
1	SRE Term 1		
2	Learning about myself & others	To learn about myself and my classmates and to consider why teamwork is important.	The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship
3	Transition	To know how transition might affect me and to consider how to manage change effectively	The differences between primary and secondary education. How to become more independent and organized and become part of the [redacted] community.
4	Emotions and Feelings	To understand what emotions are and to consider what feelings we might have for others	How to deal and cope with different emotions and how different scenarios make them feel. To learn about different feelings that humans can experience, how to recognise and name different feelings, how feelings can affect people's bodies and how they behave, how to recognise what others might be feeling and to recognise that not everyone feels the same at the same time or feels the same about the same things.
5	Friendship	To understand the importance of friendships; strategies for building positive friendships; how positive friendships support wellbeing	To learn what constitutes a positive healthy friendship (e.g., mutual respect, trust, truthfulness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, sharing interests and experiences, support with problems and difficulties); that the same principles apply to online friendships as to face-to-face relationships and to recognise what it means to 'know someone online' and how this differs from knowing someone face-to-face; risks of communicating online with others not known face-to-face.
6	Bullying	To understand what bullying is, why it happens and how to deal with it	Understand types of bullying including cyber bullying. To know that bullying can have dire consequences. Some pupils have progressed further and: Know and understand their own friendships. Be able to explain the consequences of bullying and can discuss the nature of why bullying occurs and how it can be treated and hopefully stopped. To develop strategies to respond to hurtful behaviour experienced or witnessed, offline and online (including teasing, name-calling, bullying, trolling, harassment or the deliberate excluding of others); how to report concerns and get support
7	Peer Pressure	To know what peer-pressure is and consider some ways to resist it	strategies for recognising and managing peer influence and a desire for peer approval in friendships; to recognise the effect of online actions on others
8	Marriage and family	To understand the different types and learn how to deal with family problems	To recognise and respect that there are different types of family structure (Including single parents, same-sex parents, step-parents, blended families, foster parents); that families of all types can give family members love, security and stability
	Health and Wellbeing term 2		
9	Online safety	To understand what online is grooming and how We can recognise the warning signs	To learn basic rules to keep safe online, including what is meant by personal information and what should be kept private; the importance of telling a trusted adult if they come across something that scares them.

			How to identify harmful behaviours online (including bullying, abuse or harassment) and how to report, or find support, if they have been affected by those behaviours
10	Bereavement	To understand what bereavement is and how it affects people differently	To learn how to cope with bereavement and understand how different cultures deal with death and about change and loss, including death, and how these can affect feelings. ways of expressing and managing grief and bereavement
11	COPING STRATEGIES/ CHILDHOOD/ MENTAL HEALTH	To understand what mental health is and to be able to recognise the signs and where to get help.	To learn that mental health, just like physical health, is part of daily life; the importance of taking care of mental health. To understand strategies and behaviours that support mental health — including how good quality sleep, physical exercise/time outdoors, being involved in community groups, doing things for others, clubs, and activities, hobbies and spending time with family and friends can support mental health and wellbeing and to recognise that feelings can change over time and range in intensity
12	Puberty	To be able to explain the changes that happen during puberty	To learn about how our bodies change from children to adolescence
13	Healthy Diet	To know why it is important to have a healthy diet	To learn about what constitutes a healthy diet; how to plan healthy meals; benefits to health and wellbeing of eating nutritionally rich foods; risks associated with not eating a healthy diet including obesity and tooth decay.
14	Exercise and Sleep		To learn about how sleep contributes to a healthy lifestyle; routines that support good quality sleep; the effects of lack of sleep on the body, feelings, behaviour and ability to learn. Learn how regular (daily/weekly) exercise benefits mental and physical health (e.g. walking or cycling to school, daily active mile); recognise opportunities to be physically active and some of the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle
	Wider World term 3		
15	Money	To know what money is and to understand how I can spend and save money responsibly	<p>To learn that people make different choices about how to save and spend money And about the difference between needs and wants; that sometimes people may not always be able to have the things they want.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that money needs to be looked after; different ways of doing this • about the different ways to pay for things and the choices people have about this • to recognise that people have different attitudes towards saving and spending money; what influences people's decisions; what makes something 'good' • value for money'
16	Tax		

17	Identity & Belonging	To know what having an identity means and to consider why belonging to a community is important	To learn about the different groups that make up their community; what living in a community means, to value the different contributions that people and groups make to the community and about diversity: what it means; the benefits of living in a diverse community; about valuing diversity within communities
T	Community Citizenship	To know what a community is and to identify what makes someone a good citizen	To learn about the different roles and responsibilities people have in their community and to recognise the ways they are the same as, and different to, other people
19	Multicultural Britain	To understand what diversity is and to consider some of the difficulties and benefits of multiculturalism.	To learn about diversity: what it means; the benefits of living in a diverse community; about valuing diversity within communities and about stereotypes; how they can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others; strategies for challenging stereotypes about prejudice; how to recognise behaviours/actions which discriminate against others; ways of responding to it if witnessed or experienced

A.8 Local Authority News on Secondary School places offered

Secondary school place for every [REDACTED] family who applied this year.

2 March 2020 in Children, Schools and Families.

[REDACTED] Council has been able to offer nearly 90 per cent of schoolchildren a place at one of their top three secondary school choices, and 94 per cent have been offered a place at one of their preferred schools.

Every [REDACTED] family who applied for a secondary place, starting this September, has been offered a place. The majority of applicants are set to join one of the borough's secondary schools which are all rated 'Outstanding' or 'Good' by Ofsted.

Figures revealed today show that 88 per cent of [REDACTED] children have been offered a place in one of their top three preferred secondary schools, which is an increase compared to last year. Two-thirds of [REDACTED] children were offered a place at their first-choice secondary school and 94 per cent a place at one of their six preferences.

After the unprecedented increase in applications for secondary school places for September 2019, demand for places remains just as high this year for the borough's schools. Across [REDACTED] there was a 2 per cent decrease in the number of applications made for secondary school places compared to last year.

[REDACTED] was recently confirmed to be in the top three in the country for the progress pupils make between the ages of 11-16 in the Government's Progress 8 scores based on schools' GCSE results.