
REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR PEOPLE

TO CHILDREN'S SCRUNITY COMMITTEE

ON

Wednesday 13th July 2022

TITLE: Transition between Primary School and Secondary School in Salford

RECOMMENDATIONS: To review the contents of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Ensuring all children have quality transition experiences in order to enhance their wellbeing and performance as learners is a key priority in Salford. Supporting the transition between primary and secondary schools has been an area of focus over a number of years. A Transition policy has been in place for a number of years and recently an evaluation has been undertaken.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

KEY DECISION: NO

DETAILS:

Salford first published its Primary / Secondary Transition Policy in 2018 and it was updated again in January 2020 following meetings with primary and secondary leaders.

The Policy

The Salford Transition policy has been developed from consultation with primary and secondary school representatives across the city as well as professionals from a range of agencies. The document is a guide for everyone supporting pupils with transition from primary to secondary. This policy will help ensure all educational settings in Salford are meeting statutory legislations for inclusion and equality as stated in the Children and Families Act.

This transition policy is underpinned by the ethos that early intervention is a proactive approach to meeting the needs of young people in the city and through early investment in the young people greater gains will be seen throughout. Furthermore, it is a 'living' document and may be amended or adapted to reflect changes needed.

Salford's Vision

The Salford transition policy document ensures that every child and their family are entitled to a consistent and effective transition as they transfer between primary and secondary schools.

Transition planning will take into account the whole child and ensure that all agencies involved are working collaboratively to ensure the best outcome for the child and their family.

Aims

To ensure that all children in Salford have consistent, quality and inclusive transition experiences in order to enhance their well-being and performance as learners.

Effective transition in Salford

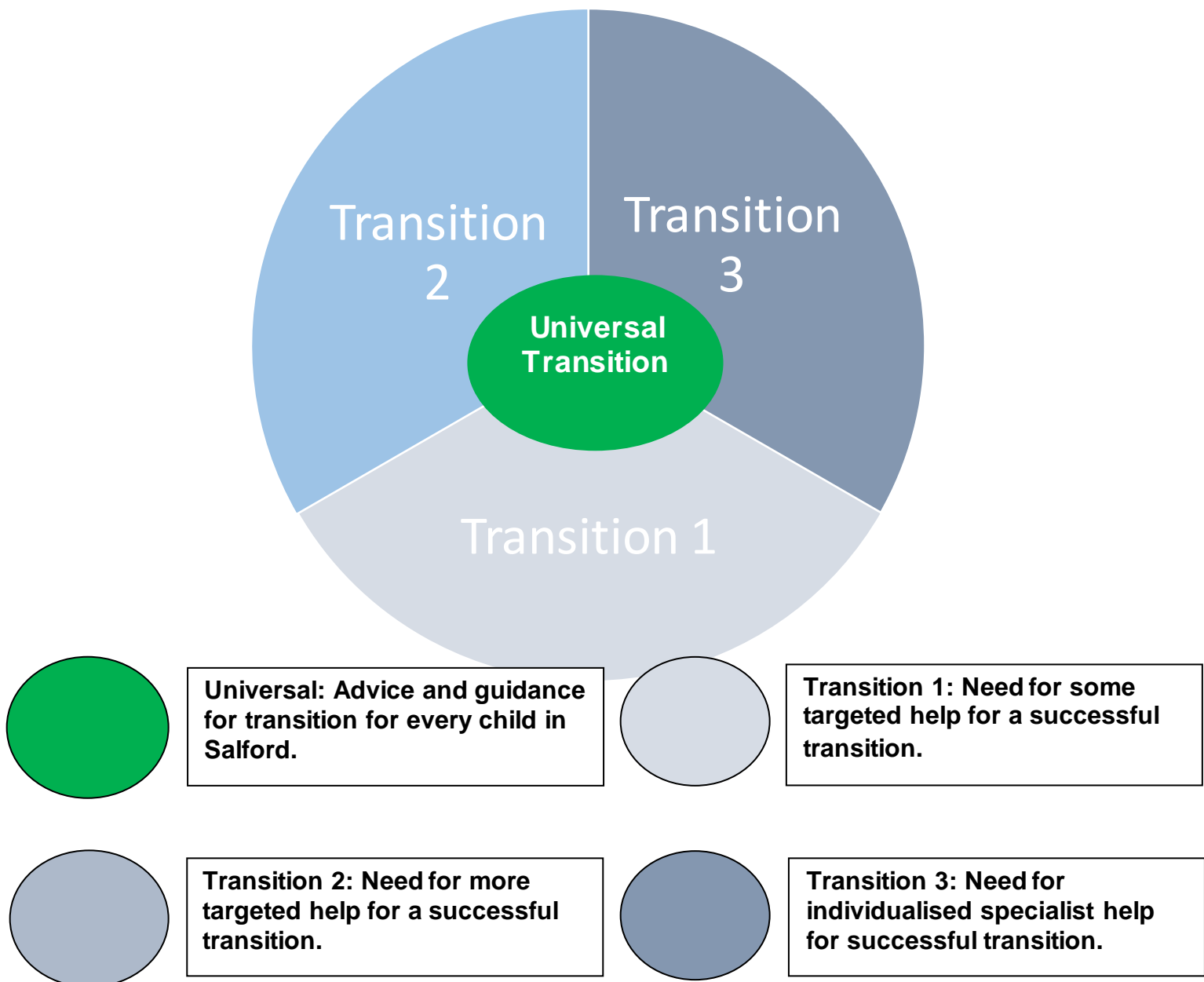
In order for effective transition in schools in Salford the following actions are required;

- Consent for information sharing obtained from parent/carer should usually be obtained in the primary setting when a child joins the school.
- Open day/evenings allocated on different dates at all secondary schools to allow parents to attend more than one.
- Secondary schools will have a Year 7 or Transition section on their website that contains information such as uniform, equipment, behaviour policy or expectations, key dates and events etc.
- Key dates shared and easily accessed on school websites.
- Secondary school application deadline 31st October
 - Parents/carers have access and support to complete the online admissions form from gateway centres and primary schools, should they require it.
- Two induction days for all Year 6 children held on, Thursday and Friday, the same week, across Salford

- In 2022: Thursday 30th June and Friday 1st July
 - In 2023: Thursday 29th and Friday 30th June
- Recommendation, induction days should include activities such as:
 - Completion of a 'This is me' booklet
 - Meeting the form tutor and other pupils in their form
 - A tour of the school to orientate pupils
 - Lessons in different parts of the school so pupils get used to moving from one classroom to another
 - Team building activities with peers
 - Introduction to routines and systems
 - Early lunch away from older pupils to introduce new pupils to lunchtime routines and systems used for purchasing lunch
 - Opportunities for pupils to learn how to organise themselves, e.g. books, equipment
 - Opportunities to meet and get to know key staff such as the Head of Year and pastoral staff.
 - Basic transfer of information (Transition information gathering spreadsheet – see appendix 9) to be completed by the primary school **by February Half Term** and sent to school.admissions@salford.gov.uk. This information will be collated and shared with secondary schools once places are allocated. The LA transition coordinator will collect this information from primary schools and distribute to secondary schools. Updates will be sent as necessary.
 - 'Face to face' meetings (or phone call conversations for small numbers of pupils) to take place between primary and secondary colleagues in March and April to share information about individual pupils highlighted as needing additional transition support.
 - Follow up information sharing conversations to take place between primary and secondary schools where a pupil's circumstances change following the face to face meetings, e.g. if the pupil is excluded, experiences a bereavement etc.
 - Accessible information to be provided to parents/carers by primary and secondary schools about the transition process including:
 - The role of the parent/carer during transition
 - The role of the primary school
 - The role of the secondary school
 - Transition Timeline for children and parent/carer
 - Key dates for events
 - Ensure effective pupil tracking and transferring of information to support continued progress e.g. best piece of independent writing, most recent maths book etc.
 - Common Basic Data Set, maintained for every child, in a school's management information system transferred from the primary to secondary school using a Common Transfer File in the summer term. (Statutory Obligation for all maintained schools)

Packages for transition

Through thorough research and reviewing of existing policies we have defined packages of support for pupils during transition from year 6 to year 7. Children can go straight in at any level and do not necessarily access the package of support previously. For example a child on an EHCP would go straight in to Transition 3; they would not need to access Transition 1 and 2 first. The decision to place a child on a package for transition should be made during the 'Face to Face' information sharing discussion (appendix 1) unless the pupil has an EHCP or is LAC, in which case additional transition arrangements will be undertaken earlier (Transition 3). It is important to discuss individual transition needs with parents and pupils in order to ensure the pupils receive the most appropriate support, particularly if pupils need more than universal transition support.



Evaluation

An evaluation took place in the Spring Term 2022 and involved discussions with a sample of primary and secondary school staff. We also talked to a small number of pupils and parents about their experiences of transition from primary to secondary school.

In total 16 meetings were held with school staff. These were equally split between primary schools and secondary schools. Visit templates with questions were compiled in advance to ensure consistency of approach.

We are grateful to all the staff in the schools for the time they gave to school improvement officers and for the information they provided to help us with the evaluation.

What we found out about current practice in transition in Salford

Overall, there is a great deal of commitment from Salford schools to get transition right for Salford children. Some excellent practice was seen, particularly in schools where it is given a high profile. Best practice is characterised by good communication between primary and secondary schools and where this is the case, children from primary schools are regular visitors to secondary schools, often from Year 4 onwards. In secondary schools where transition works well, the communication between staff in school is excellent, with a team working approach involving key leaders working together to plan support for pupils.

Awareness of Policy

- Most schools we visited had a good awareness of the policy. Some staff we talked to had been involved in the development of the policy from the start.
- Many transition leads, Key Stage leads and Year 6 teachers were using it to guide them. In some cases, the policy been shared with all staff in school. They were using the resources, including templates, for face-to-face conversations between schools, and adapting these to the needs of their settings.
- A small number of Year 6 teachers had not been made aware of the policy and it had not been passed onto them by senior leaders.
- Some leaders said they would benefit from a briefing session about the policy, and this would also be beneficial for those who are new to role.
- Some leaders would like a list of key contacts to be added to the policy, so that they know who to contact in the LA about transition matters.

Information Sharing about pupils in writing and in discussion

- Secondary schools that start transition activity from Year 4 onwards have already got good knowledge of the pupils that they are receiving at the end of Year 6. Children know their way around the school building, they have

experienced lessons and other activities in their new setting, and they are already familiar with many of the teachers and have made new friends. This works well particularly well for secondary schools that have a smaller number of primary school partners.

- Salford asks primary schools to complete a standardised information gathering form prior to children moving from Primary to Secondary school. Most schools felt that the information provided on the Salford pre-admission information gathering form was comprehensive. One or two schools said that the form was very large and involved a lot of work for their staff. On the other hand, schools appreciated that the use of one consistent form saved on duplication and prevented a myriad of different forms being sent out from each secondary school or Multi-Academy Trust.
- One primary school said that some secondary schools are still expecting primary teachers to do additional administration like filling forms in advance of face-to-face meetings and putting children into form groups. This is not in the spirit of the policy, as these forms are designed to be completed during the meetings. Clarity of expectations need to be revisited.
- Secondary school transition leaders said that this information form was used as a starting point for the face-to-face meetings that they have with primary school staff. They said that these face-to-face meetings are the most important step in the process.
- Suggestions made to improve the information gathering form included the use of more drop-down boxes to ensure consistency, ensuring that children with special needs include those with SEN Support as well as those with EHC Plans, a system to record children who have been involved in sports or music activities, ensuring that the language used to record KS2 assessment information was consistent with the national curriculum, or including the rank order of pupils according to ability. Some secondary schools would also like information about the reading ages of children.
- A few schools said that because the form is completed in March it could do with updating and some children who started after the form is completed do not get added. Information on these pupils is therefore not as detailed.
- Some secondary schools were unsure how to access Question Level Analysis after SATs.
- Where information sharing is working well, several secondary staff such as the transition lead, SENDCO and attendance officer visit the primary schools. One or two secondary schools have adapted the face-to-face meeting form to gather additional and more detailed information about SEND needs, medical needs, EP involvement and information about what might make a child anxious or stressed.
- Secondary schools provided detailed information about how they use the information that is provided to them by their primary colleagues. Information is shared with SENDCOs, pastoral leads form tutors, curriculum leaders, safeguarding leads, pupil premium leads. It is used to create form groups and seating plans and to determine nurture groups for vulnerable children. In some schools, staff use information to provide additional mentoring support. The

information is also used to provide additional transition time for pupils, over and above the official transition days and to organise events for parents whose children might be vulnerable. One school gave an example of how they provided additional support to help a child plan their route to school and to support them with undertaking this.

- Some secondary schools pay additional visits to the primary schools. An example was given of where one high school sends staff to join primary lessons to observe children learning.
- Some parents feel that information gathered by secondary staff is not always shared with all teachers.

Additional Support provided by the LA/ Other Agencies

- Some secondary schools have been involved in a funded transition project with the Salford Foundation and Life Centre to include more transition activity with vulnerable pupils. Others received some additional funding from Salford CVS. Schools that were involved were able to enhance their transition offer quite considerably by providing additional support to families and to engage children in projects such as storytelling. It would be useful to share the learning from these projects with other schools. An event will be planned in the Autumn Term 2022 for this.
- One Secondary school was engaged in a two-year project funded by SHINE Foundation. This enabled the school to run an enhanced Year 6/7 transition activity for both parents and pupils, including online activities for them to be involved in as well as events in school.
- Some primary schools said they had accessed additional support. Where the [Primary Inclusion Team](#) support was accessed, this was seen as effective. Schools have valued this support for pupils with complex needs. The support from i-Reach (a mental health support intervention) and Virtual School Transition Information to support cared for children was noted by primary schools.

Transition Days in secondary schools

- Some secondary schools organised summer schools last year as an additional opportunity to enable pupils to come into their new school prior to term starting. Several activities, both academic, sporting, and cultural were included.
- Under normal circumstances, Year 6 attend secondary school for 2 days and take part in lessons and other activities to help them acclimatise to their new surroundings. A variety of activities are planned such as sports days, trips out as well as more formal lessons. Some schools are already thinking of other ideas for future transition activities such as opportunities to use technology, including social media, to meet children and parents and to provide information, to undertake IT based curriculum activities and want to link transition to inter-house competitions. Schools also use 2 transition days to

enable pupils to get used to school routines and systems. These are calendared centrally so that children only attend on the same days across the area.

- During the Covid pandemic alternatives to transition days were provided. For example, one school provided 12 online Zoom sessions for parents and pupils. Several schools told us about how they had improved their websites to include a section on transition with video content for pupils and parents, including virtual tours of the school. Another school provided tours for more vulnerable pupils and the SENDCO provided a nurture group one afternoon. Another school did a shorter transition period for SEND children. One school told us that they had used first day of term in September exclusively for Year 7 induction, as the official transition days did not take place.
- One school told us that during pandemic they sent teachers into the primary school with some pupils to talk to Year 6 classes. Year 6 pupils planned questions that they wanted to ask the Year 7 pupils in advance.
- Primary staff said that their children enjoy the transition days as they give them confidence and help them to make new friends and get to know their teachers. They told us that they help initiate more conversations between staff about pupil's needs. One Primary school was involved in planning a transition day prior to Covid and this included a Forest School.
- Primary schools want all the secondary schools to have their transition days at the same time so that they can do Year 5/6 transition or other activity at the same time. Some primary schools feel it is best when the children are in their future form groups on transition days. Ideally primary schools would like secondary schools to have 3 days of transition, but it was felt that two should be a minimum expectation.

Transition for Vulnerable Pupils

- Many secondary schools offer additional transition activities for vulnerable pupils. This means that they come into school more often. Parents are also offered more opportunities to meet key staff before the term starts. One secondary school sees vulnerable pupils once a week for 7 weeks in the Summer Term to facilitate activities that make them feel more secure in their new setting. Summer schools have also been accessed by these pupils.
- Some secondary schools have a different organisational model for vulnerable pupils. This is operated with fewer teachers teaching the vulnerable pupils, rather like a primary school would. Children do not move around the building as much, other than to attend lessons that are practically based such as PE, Art, or Technology for example.
- Some secondary schools stagger the start to the school day and adapt their lunch breaks for vulnerable pupils in the first few weeks of term.
- Children who have previously been in resourced provision spend more time in secondary schools. Staff in secondary schools visit these pupils in their primary settings as well.

- Some secondary schools have adapted their behaviour policies to consider the needs of vulnerable learners.
- Additional services have sometimes been used to support vulnerable learners such as the Education Psychology Service. One school used additional funding this year to provide Youth Worker support to vulnerable pupils.
- The policy includes a tiered approach to transition depending on pupil need. A couple of schools said they would benefit from some training on what the transition packages mean in practice. One primary school felt that the tiered response was more of a menu of options that secondary schools could choose from and that it would be more beneficial to know from each secondary school what they were offering for vulnerable pupils.
- Some schools reported that they had not seen the additional guidance about Cared for Children. Some secondary schools said they would like to get more information about the nature of social worker involvement. Schools value additional face-to-face meetings that are separate to the Personal Education Plan meetings.
- Some schools feel there is inconsistency in the identification and implementation of appropriate transition packages for individuals and that the descriptors are not clear enough.
- One primary school said they would like to visit the children when they are in their new secondary setting in the Autumn Term.
- Some secondary schools plan to do more evaluation of their approaches to transition for vulnerable pupils.

Additional Partnership Working between Primary and Secondary Schools

- This has been a difficult couple of years for additional partnership working due to the pandemic.
- Schools reported that there were additional activities between primary and secondary in previous years and that they would like to do more activity in the future. One school said that they organised activities for children in Y4,5 and 6 and made visits to their partner primary schools. This means pupils are very familiar with the school by the time they arrive in Year 7. In addition, primary school pupils are invited to the annual school production.
- Schools that have benefited from the additional funding provided by the Salford Foundation have been able to provide additional partnership activities for pupils and families. This has involved providing additional resources for pupils and families, mentoring of pupils, online sessions for both pupils and parents and an additional mailbox for parents of primary school pupils to contact the secondary school.
- Summer schools have provided an opportunity for children and staff to get to know each other and engage in interesting activities.
- Some secondary schools have a dedicated transition website with activities for pupils to undertake.

- One school sends mentors into primary schools to meet pupils and undertake activities. This school also has a Youth Worker who visits primary schools.
- One school has engaged with a primary school on Forest Schools with an external provider.

Curriculum and transition

- Some secondary schools have provided additional lessons in primary schools in English, Maths and Science.
- Some secondary schools are planning to share schemes of work with primary schools.
- Taster lessons are offered to Year 6 pupils that give them a flavour of the Year 7 curriculum.
- In one school pupils are being taught a song that is used in the school production.
- One school offered pupils a Passport to Learning document that pupils complete during the summer prior to starting secondary school. Another school sent all pupils the same novel to read over summer.
- One school runs a Follow-On project in core subjects that is started in Year 6 and then continues into Year 7.
- Some primary schools would welcome more curriculum involvement from secondary schools.
- One secondary school used to invite primary staff in to do a book scrutiny in Year 7, but this has not taken place for a couple of years. It was seen as a useful exercise.

Parental and Pupil views of transition

What helped children to make the transition to secondary school effective

- Parents find information that is given in advance helpful. Where secondary schools have provided helpful videos for parents this has been well received. Parents appreciate email and postal contact.
- Opportunities for pupils to visit secondary schools is seen as helpful in building confidence.
- Having a named secondary school transition lead or key teacher for pupils is useful in helping children become more confident.
- Parents of vulnerable pupils would like more opportunities to visit secondary schools and meet form tutors etc.
- Pupils appreciate having pupil mentors who can help them.

Areas for Development and recommendations

Recommendations for the Local Authority

- To hold a briefing session on transition for all schools, but particularly for transition leads and year 6 teachers who are new to the role.

- To facilitate a sharing of practice session for senior leaders on transition.
- To update the policy with a list of key contacts in the Local Authority so schools know who to get in touch with.
- To review the information sharing form in the light of responses made by schools.
- Consider how pupils that are late joining primary schools are included in information sharing.
- Organise a collaborative meeting for secondary and primary English and Literacy leads, and Numeracy leads. This will assist secondary teachers to understand the standards at Key Stage 2 in English and Maths to enable them to build upon these.
- Ensure descriptors of the transition packages are clear to ensure consistency
- Organise training on the transition packages.
- Ensure communication about Looked After Children, including any involvement with social workers etc. is shared with all schools, as appropriate.

Recommendations for Schools

- Secondary schools should share best practice in transition with each other, particularly on how curriculum links can be made with their partner primary schools.
- Secondary schools to ensure key information is shared with all staff, where appropriate.
- Secondary and primary schools to consider how they can best work together to understand curriculum plans and discuss standards.
- Secondary schools to review their approaches to transition of vulnerable pupils to ensure the support they are getting is appropriate and that it has the impact is intended to.

KEY COUNCIL POLICIES: [Education Strategy • Salford City Council](#)

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

ASSESSMENT OF RISK:

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by:

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by:

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS Supplied by:

HR IMPLICATIONS Supplied by:

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS Supplied by:

OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED:

CONTACT OFFICER: Cathy Starbuck

TEL NO:

WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES: All