

## Section 3

This final section of the CD-ROM acts to consolidate all the work that has gone on so far and is principally involved with the **vision, strategy, tactics and operational** sides of putting your plans into action. Although this section is not as lengthy as the rest of the CD-ROM, it concludes the process at whole-staff level and leads on to the serious work of writing, developing and producing an action plan, scheme of work and policy. This should match and incorporate all of the work that has taken place over the previous two sessions. There are some elements of whole-staff inclusion in this section, but principally this is now the time for you to work with your appointed transition team to start implementing the changes that you and your staff have decided.

### So what is your vision?

#### Exercise 1

A good place to start, when considering your vision, is to put the comments and contributions of the last two staff sessions into bullet points and highlight them on a whiteboard or flip chart. At this point you can begin to build a vision statement that reflects the discursive whole-school nature of the process so far.

Ask staff to suggest some key words that illustrate the work that has been done and the type of transition that you feel reflects your school best. Words such as 'support', 'valuable', 'relevant', 'understand', 'changes' and 'communication' will probably surface and can then be used to start writing the vision statement.

A good example of a transition vision statement is:

'At St Anywhere Primary School, we aim to ensure that our children are supported as they move from Key Stage 2 into Key Stage 3 by offering valuable experiences that will help them to understand and appreciate what is expected of them as they grow into young adults.'

This is your opportunity to create a vision for your school that can, once it has been agreed by staff, be followed to make better transition a reality. You can refer back to it and its key words to ensure that it remains relevant, but by putting it into words you are stating your intentions and creating a benchmark to measure your success against. As a result of this, it is important that you are confident that your vision statement truly reflects your intentions.

### So what is your strategy?

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Your strategy is closely linked to your vision statement and your expectation of how transition will be improved at your school. Your strategy needs to be agreed upon by your whole school team. At this point, ask staff to use the bullet points from Section 3 to create a long-term intention that reflects the work done so far.

### **Exercise 2**

Write the following words on your whiteboard and use the statements made previously to create your strategy.

#### ***Transition at our school will...***

Here, you should write a list of intentions that reflect your vision statement and will form the tactical element of your planning. Example statements are given below.

Transition at our school will:

- help children to understand the changes ahead of them
- enable children to organise themselves appropriately
- make children aware of the different demands that will be placed on them.

These statements are designed to show both the vision and suggest activities that will be useful to children. The bullet points will help you to structure your programme and, like your vision statement, will become a benchmark for the final product and the results it yields.

### **And what are your tactics?**

Your tactical discussions constitute the end of whole-school contribution for a while. From here, sustained management is the key to keeping your improvements on track.

This part of your new transition programme is concerned with how you will achieve your strategic goals and your overall vision. It includes building a team, writing a scheme and a policy and monitoring and evaluating the process in general. Decide who is going to monitor progress and how often and decide when your scheme will be delivered. Whether you choose to discuss these decisions with your whole staff team or not, they will impact on the entire process.

Your designated transition team (usually consisting of a Y6 teacher, a member of the SMT and a governor), having completed the previous exercises, will have a lot of material to work with and should be able to develop individual activities and the overall

programme reasonably quickly. Using the pro forma from Section 2 (see below), outline your lessons and organise activities into the three constituted areas:

- Organisation
- Learning
- Socialisation

Then begin linking them to the National Curriculum and your own PSHCCE scheme of work, as done in Section 2. If you have decided that other schools, parents/carers or outside agencies will be able to help you to achieve your goals, this is a good time to add them into your plan by adding another section to the pro forma (see below).

### **Transition plan - organisation**

#### **Element of change**

- Amount of homework
- Managing time

#### **Skills required**

- Organising time
- Devoting dedicated homework time
- Using a homework diary
- Referring to previous learning
- Using the internet to get required results
- Communication skills to ask for help

## **Transition plan – organisation (cont.)**

### **Activities to address the changes/external agencies**

- Homework tester week
- Giving a one week homework diary
- Year 7 pupils to come in and explain how it works
- Liaison with High School Transition Coordinators
- Comparing Year 7 timetable with Year 6 timetable

### **Curriculum / Policy / SIP plan links**

- QCDA personal and emotional skills 5: to work independently, knowing when to seek help, dealing with pressures and deadlines.

### **Who else can help?**

- High school - give permission for students to visit
- Give examples of homework diaries etc.
- Talk to students about managing time etc.

This pro forma can be used as the basis for medium-term planning (depending on when you intend to implement your transition programme (see the ***What's your timescale?*** section below) but, however you choose to use it, it will be a valuable tool in the development of your transition experience.

Using a basic action plan format will enable you to plan for change more quickly. You have already completed some parts: you have engaged your colleagues; appointed your team; begun the process of planning activities; and related activities to other policies and documents. The only short-term steps left to take are to set up timescales, decide what is the best way to monitor progress, and to write a policy for transition (an example policy is enclosed). You also need to consider who else should be involved in the planning process and at what level.

## **So, who else should be included?**

At this stage you have decided whether it is appropriate to include other schools in the process and, if so, to what extent. You also need to consider the views of other interested parties, the children and their parents, who can make transition a well-rounded and completely inclusive process.

When planning these changes, it can sometimes be easy to forget the voices of those who will be experiencing the changes first hand – their issues should focus your activities and drive your thinking.

Often the best way to address your pupils is to actively engage them in a conversation, ask them exactly what they understand about the changes they are facing and what concerns or issues they have. Some of the Year 6 children will probably have older siblings attending their high school of choice and will be in some way familiar with the comings and goings of high school life, but this in no way means that they are totally prepared. On the other hand, some pupils will be the first in their family to move on to high school and their concerns may be more far reaching. It is your job to ease any worry or concern and to respond in a sympathetic but informative way. This discussion should develop your understanding of transition issues and leave pupils less worried.

It is a good idea to seek the views of parents. Find out what fears and concerns they have for their children and ask their opinions about how the school can better prepare pupils for high school. You could ask their opinions through a questionnaire (see below), or you could arrange a meeting at school to discuss any ideas and suggestions for an improved transition programme. Involving parents in the process may expose some additional concerns that need to be addressed; this will ultimately enable you to create a stronger policy. Last year's Year 6 class can also provide a valuable insight on the current transition programme since they have first-hand experience. Asking them to talk about the successes and the failings of the process will allow you to review suggested improvements in the light of real pupil experience. A focus group of ex-pupils is a good way to assess the impact of some of your proposed activities. Are your proposals relevant? Will they help children to understand what is ahead more easily?

Involving children and parents will help you to build a programme for transition that is realistic, relevant and communicative. It will provide a voice to those who will be experiencing it, empower them and ensure that your proposals are meeting real, rather than perceived, needs.

**Example Parental Questionnaire:**

**St Anywhere Primary School**

**Transition questionnaire for parents**

1. In general, do you think that we are helping your child to prepare for high school?

Yes                       No

2. How else could we help to prepare your child?

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3. Do you feel that your child knows how high school life will be different to that of primary school?

Yes                       No

4. How could we introduce your child to some of the changes they will have to make?

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5. Do you have any specific worries or concerns about your child's move to high school?

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6. Would you be interested in attending a meeting for parents to discuss the changes ahead and how you can help your child to adjust?

Yes                       No

## **What's your timescale?**

When you plan to make changes to your transition programme is entirely up to you, but it is important to consider when the appropriate time might be for your Year 6 class to begin thinking about how to adapt to high school life. While some of the changes will be being addressed by your PSHCCE scheme of work throughout the year, it is probably not a good idea to ask children to think about routes to high school and homework diaries at the beginning of the year. Many primary schools set aside a chunk of time after the end-of-year assessments in that wonderful final half term of summer (when Year 6 actually get to wind down) to begin focusing minds on what the next year in school will bring.

From a planning perspective, however, you need to starting the process of planning to change well before this to give adequate time to consult with all parties and to ensure that your planned activities are well supported and meaningful. The first two sections of this CD-ROM need to be delivered in sufficient time to allow the transition team to create their scheme of work and policy. This will also need to be verified and approved before plans can be put into action, so give yourself enough time for your vision to progress into reality.

Consider how your final half term will look and the amount of time that you will need to spend on each activity. For example, if you are helping pupils decide on the best route to their new high school, you will first need to look at maps and remember that multiple field trips may have to be made to visit each high school that different pupils are attending.

You may be considering a transition week or fortnight where all of Year 6 is focused on how to adapt to their future high school. This is, of course, your choice, but in order to get to this point, you need to have enough time to adequately consult, plan and organise.

## **So, what are you waiting for?**

Let's recap. Since starting this INSET CD-ROM you and your staff team have:

- analysed the difference between good and bad transition
- identified how transition and change affect children socially, academically and psychologically
- appointed a transition team to put plans into action

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- created a vision statement for how you would like transition to be managed in your school
- written a scheme of work for transition and a policy that highlights your aims, and had them approved by your Governing Body and staff
- communicated with parents, children and, where appropriate, other schools
- decided the best time to execute your plans with Year 6.

That is pretty good going really. So, all that is left for you to do is to put your plans into action and start your new transition practice. Do not forget that this is a learning curve and your new transition practice will, therefore, evolve and grow as successes are built upon and failures analysed. In time, you may find that it is appropriate to engage other schools in the process more readily and, similarly, you may find that high schools are more willing to get involved. In the meantime, you can be happy and confident that you have helped your Year 6 children and many more to adjust confidently to what lies ahead.

## Evaluation sheet for course leaders

At the end of this section, do you feel that your staff have the following:

1. A sense of ownership of your new transition policy and a confidence that their views have been taken into consideration?

Yes

No

If no, consider why you think this is the case and how it can be remedied.

Do you feel that your key transition team have the following:

2. An understanding of the task ahead of them, how they will achieve it and feel supported in their endeavours?

Yes

No

If no, consider why you think this is the case and how it can be remedied.

3. An enthusiastic attitude toward the changes ahead and a willingness to contribute to them?

Yes

No

If no, consider why you think this is the case and how it can be remedied.

4. Confidence about how to proceed and are prepared/ready to do so?

Yes

No