

Preparing for the transfer of pupils - Case Studies

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Pre-school - Reception Case Study – Hutton Rudby Primary School (HRPS)

<p>General school context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have approximately 200 children on roll. • The vast majority of our school are White British. • We are located in a wealthy area with high parental engagement. • The proportion of our pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is significantly lower than the national average. • We have a fairly even split between boys and girls in school. • The proportion of our pupils who have SEN is marginally lower than the national average. • The proportion of our pupils who have an EHCP is lower than the national average.
<p>Normal Transition Arrangements</p>	<p>At HRPS we are proud of our commitment to and our programme of transition for our new starters in Reception. We put a series of steps in place to ensure children are supported socially, emotionally and academically as they start school.</p> <p>Under normal circumstances, a programme of transition is carried out in the term prior to admission to familiarise the children with school. The children and their families are able to visit school on several occasions prior to the September they start. This gives the children the opportunity to become accustomed to our building, their teachers and some of the school routines. As a result, the children have a safe, fun and exciting start to school.</p> <p>This year we had extended our transition offer to include preschool visits and home visits if parents felt this was appropriate and would further support transition.</p> <p>On National Offer Day and once we realised our normal programme of transition would not be able to happen we quickly put in place steps to try and recreate where possible elements of our normal transition process and thought of how we could use new means to support transition under these challenging circumstances.</p> <p>Our 30 new Reception children are coming to us from a wide range of Early Years settings including nurseries, preschools and childminders. This includes the day nursery that shares our school site. We also have a number of children who have siblings in school and so are familiar already with the school site.</p> <p>From speaking to parents of our new starters there is a real mixed picture regarding whether the children will return to their Early Years settings before the summer and so we are mindful that for some children there will have not accessed their settings since March prior to them starting with us in September</p>
<p>What we're doing this year</p>	<p>Soon after National Offer Day we sent out a welcome letter to all parents and children. We felt it was hugely important for our new families to know that even in the difficult circumstances we were in at the time they were very much in our thoughts. We welcomed, reassured and gave information on as much as we could about what would happen going forward. We sent with the letter a detailed information pack including admissions forms and information about uniform, school milk and school dinners. We also reflected upon the fact that parents are often concerned about whether their child is 'ready' to start school so we sent the children 'What to Expect When' document, which is supported by the DfE, in order to provide parent information about developmental milestones.</p> <p>Alongside this we made it explicitly clear to parents of the importance of the individual child and highlighted how children develop at different stages. We also provided parents a starting school checklist with ideas of things that children may find it helpful to practise before starting school, for example taking turns, washing and drying their hands and tidying away toys. Part of the reason for doing this was to highlight the importance of the prime areas of learning but also to reassure parents that we do not expect them to start school being able to read and write!</p> <p>The final element of the pack was the 'all about me form' which we asked parents to fill in and return to us. It included sections such as, things that make me smile, I feel unhappy when and my favourite toys to play with are. Once returned this gave us invaluable insight into our new children and this information will support us in our transition process but also with planning for interests and needs in September.</p> <p>Our next step was to set up a class page on our website for our 2020/21 Reception cohort. On this page we put a welcome message and a picture of the Reception Teacher in September. We also filmed a video</p>

tour of the school (during initial lockdown period where school looked in its normal state), which included the class teacher talking about the classroom environment. This has been very well received by parents especially those who didn't get chance to visit the school prior to application. It also got the children excited about the different parts of our school and one parent commented that her son cannot wait to see our 'fish tank room'. For the initial webpage launch we also filmed a real life version of 'We're going on a bear hunt', which again was very well received by our new families. We have since added other videos and will continue to add content to the webpage.

After this we then sent another letter to the parents to launch our webpage. Attached to this letter was a small questionnaire offering the opportunity to have a zoom call with the class teacher. We felt it was vital to use a questionnaire and to send this with the letter to allow parents time to think about what they felt was best, but also to give them the choice of what they felt their child was ready for at this time. Throughout this whole process we have been mindful of how difficult and potentially stressful time this is for our parents and we need to fit in with our family's needs and circumstances. The last thing we wanted to do was to ring people at home when they were busy juggling family life and working from home so on the questionnaire they had the option to let me know when was the best time for me to ring them to arrange my zoom calls etc. As replies came in I rang parents to arrange a mutually convenient time for zoom calls to be made and this included offering early evening and weekend time if needed.

We have started to have our zoom calls with our new children and it has been a wonderful experience so far. We have asked parents if they could get their child to choose a favourite toy in advance to share with the class teacher in order to put the children at ease. We also made sure we had some things with the class teacher in her zoom calls such as our class puppet and some story books in case the children were a little nervous and need the teacher to take the lead. We also made some notes from their all about me forms so we could start conversations about things the teacher knew they were interested in. It was amazing watching their little faces light up when they realised their new teacher already knew their dogs name or their favourite games to play. We asked the children if there was anything they wanted to ask their teacher and we also made sure we talked at some point about coming in on a morning, our classroom, school uniform and school dinners. Towards the end of the call we also asked parents if they had any questions. This has been such a worthwhile exercise so much so that the class teacher would now seriously consider building it into our normally transition process in future as additional time to meet families.

From the zoom meetings so far we have recognised that a lot of parents and children are wanting information about similar things so in light of this we are going to write a FAQ page and add it to our webpage. We are also planning to hold a parents only drop in 'coffee morning' zoom with both our Head teacher and Reception Class teacher where parents can come and ask questions. We are also planning on adding some information about some very play based learning activities that parents might like to do with their children again based on feedback from a parent on our zoom calls.

For children who have already a sibling in school, visiting our site has begun again as they are dropping off siblings or being dropped off at the day nursery on our site. We have made sure that the Reception Class teacher in September is at the front of school to allow them to see her and wave and have a small socially distanced conversation for them to get used to her. Taking advantage of any small opportunity for normal interaction is so valuable to the children and also has been received well by parents.

What has been particularly overwhelming so far has been how appreciative parents have been over any small effort we have made during this difficult time. We really believe that the key is being very flexible and adaptable to the needs of your school community. We have openly asked for feedback and comments on what else people would like or anything that we could be doing better. It is so important to remember that transition whilst primarily about the children is also about the family as a whole and reassuring and supporting all involved parties. By triangulating the ideas and needs from the perspective of the school, child and parents we will hopefully be able to provide a smooth and happy transition into school come September.

Pre-school – Reception Case Study – Longman’s Hill Community Primary School, Selby

<p>General school context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longman’s Hill is a smaller than average primary school with one class per year group. • We do not have a nursery. Our children transition from up to 9 different nursery settings or childminders. • The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. • The proportion of children eligible for pupil premium is below average at approximately 9%. • The proportion with SEN is slightly above average whilst the proportion of SEN with an EHCP is below average.
<p>Normal Transition Arrangements</p>	<p>Usually during the summer term, we organise a large program of transition events for the children who will be starting in our EYFS class in September.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EY class teacher doing either a home visit or a visit to the child’s nursery setting to meet the child and spend time with them 1:1. • A couple of Stay and Play sessions; children visit the EY classroom accompanied by parents who remain with them throughout the session. • Children come for a school lunch with their parents. • A full afternoon session in the EY class; this time parents do not stay in the classroom but instead take refreshments elsewhere in school. • A full afternoon session in the EY class; this time parents do not stay on the school premises at all. • New Parents Meeting; one evening after school where all the relevant information is shared and parents have the opportunity to meet staff and ask questions. Each parent is given a comprehensive pack of information to take away from these meetings. • New starters are also invited to the school summer fayre.
<p>What we’re doing this year</p>	<p>Due to the restrictions with Covid-19, we felt that we were unable to run any of the transition events which we normally do in the normal way.</p> <p>We have had to think about how we can share important information with parents in addition to giving the children as much opportunity as possible to get a glimpse of what school will be like. We feel that both of these are incredibly important to reduce stress and anxiety for parents and children alike.</p> <p>This year we have therefore created a new section on the school website, just for the ‘New Starters’. We have populated the page with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A virtual tour of the EY classroom, outdoor area and key areas in school such as the hall. We used a drone to film the footage (the company we used was ‘Squadrone Volante’) • A PowerPoint with key information for parents; we included everything from who the staff are, the school day, the EY curriculum, developing language and limiting screen time, home-school communication, medical matters, uniform and behaviour policy. • A photo tour booklet for the children which shows each provision area in detail with an explanation of what they might do when they start at our school. <p>Additionally, we have still made hard copies of the information packs, which we usually distribute at the face to face meeting, which we will send to parents. We are planning include a lot of the information we’d usually share during our face-to-face sessions. So far, our pack includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo tour booklet • Introduction to Longman's Hill booklet 'Starting school' • Evidence Me letter • 'What to expect when' document • 'Summer Talk' communication skills booklet • I Am Special Booklet • A Guide for Parents-Preparing Your Child for School • Behaviour Policy • Parent’s Guide to the Early Years Framework • Mastery maths booklet • Reading at home booklet

Case Study – Whitley and Eggborough Community Primary School (WECPS)

<p>General school context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. • Approximately 90% of pupils are of White British heritage. The next significant group is Gypsy, Romany, Traveller at 3%, with no other significant ethnic group representation. • The proportion of current pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is just lower than average. • There are similar numbers of boys and girls in the school. • The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than the national average. • The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is just above the national average.
<p>Normal Transition Arrangements</p>	<p>At WECPS we pride ourselves on developing well balanced and well-rounded children who, by the end of Year 6 are ready to move to High School both academically and emotionally. This preparation is a lengthy process and sees the children build their knowledge and skills over the whole time they spend with us. However, the final term of Year 6 is one that brings all the hard work and independence together as we work along the High Schools to ensure that the children are ready to take their next steps on their education journey.</p> <p>However, the "lockdown" of 2020 due to Covid 19 has made our efforts of transition more difficult but certainly not impossible.</p> <p>Our 32 children are transitioning to six different schools. Each school has their own building, their own processes, rules and expectations. Some of the children have siblings attending their future school so have a better idea of what to expect. For others they are facing the unknown, except for what they saw during the open days almost a year ago.</p> <p>We are fully aware that the high schools are also facing a daunting task of preparation without being able to visit the children at their primary schools and answering their questions as well as speaking to their teachers to discover the little but vital pieces of information that will help ease one of the biggest steps that the children can make in their educational journey.</p>
<p>What we're doing this year</p>	<p>As we moved into the Summer term, as a team, we knew that we needed to support both the children, parents and our high school colleagues. As a school we invested in Google Chrome Books and the Google system in January 2020 and we therefore believed we were in a fortunate position to support the children. As we went into lockdown we had introduced the concept of google classroom to the children and they were beginning to understand the process of communication in the form the classroom stream. Google Classroom became the main form of our remote learning for whole school from Reception through to Year 6 and with around 65% of all children being active on it to a greater or lesser degree it seemed the obvious way forward with transition for not only the Year 6's but also the September 2020 starters as their details came through in April.</p> <p>The host of the classrooms is WECPS and all that is required is for all members of that class to have an "@whitley" email account. Our current children had these and so we only needed to set up accounts for the High School Year 7 Leads and our new September 2020 starters. As simple task to enable two-way communication between pupils and teachers.</p> <p>Reception Starter September 2020</p> <p>We launched our September 2020 starter page within a week of receiving details of the children and after a few weeks we began to receive information and messages from the families, again some of whom have siblings at school but also some who are new to us.</p> <p>The page and communication link was warmly welcomed and it has allowed us to gain valuable information from families which will help us settle the children into their new classes. The teachers are able to comment on pictures sent in and answer questions from anxious parents as the messages pop through on a daily basis.</p> <p>Whilst it does not replace the experience of visiting the school to see the environment and meeting the teachers, it does provide a medium through which we can give an insight into how we operate as a school. Unfortunately, we have not been able to create a tour of the school for the children as currently</p>

the school is not how it would normally look, with one way systems, minimal displays highlighting how to keep safe and of course limited numbers of children in what is usually a vibrant and buzzing school.

Over the rest of the Summer term and during the holidays we are hoping that we can provide a visual impression of our classrooms indoor and out that will help the children feel at ease when they start what will be a gradual transition to primary school. We are very aware that many of the children will not have been at any setting for around five months and that the process of joining Primary School needs to be well thought out and if requirements based on the needs of the individual.

Year 6 Leavers

Possibly the hardest part of getting the Year 6 transition pages set up and running was the making the links and getting the high schools on board. Some were keen and whilst other were working on their own systems. However, at WECPS we try to aim for consistency and fairness for all in everything we do and this meant providing the same opportunities. By half-term all classrooms were up and running and ready for questions and answers. The high school teachers introduced themselves and welcomed the Year 6 leavers by encouraging to ask questions. The door is now open for the high schools to take this one step further and meet the children if they wish through Google Meets - so allowing both sides to see who they are speaking to and to find out more, if they feel that they can do this safely.

In addition to this our Year 6 teachers are providing activities to assist and support transition to both those who have returned to school on 1st June and for those Year 6 children who were already in school. These activities are also being shared by remote learning with the children who have remained at home or who are shielding. They include;

- research your new high school project
- resilience challenge which is based on the game show "The Cube"
- developing organisation skills through problem skills
- developing emotional well-being through problem solving
- considering what makes a responsible citizen.

The activities are very much based around the PSHE curriculum for this term covering "me and my future" as well as linking to the knowledge of what each High School will be like.

As part of closure for the children as a school we are wanting to try to create alternative memories for these children as they leave school - the usual residential at the end of the year, crucial crew activities, end of year production and leavers assemblies are all non-starters at this current time. Our ideas for this currently are a video of the children's memories - one from all of them set to music - to also include memories from the staff, a word art presentation to include names and words relevant to the children. We are also planning to award a Year 6 who has shown outstanding qualities throughout their time with us the school shield. We have not yet decided how we should do this but it is work in progress.

Year 6 Case Study – Hutton Rudby Primary School (HRPS)

<p>General school context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have approximately 200 children on roll. • The vast majority of our school are White British. • We are located in a wealthy area with high parental engagement. • The proportion of our pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is significantly lower than the national average. • We have a fairly even split between boys and girls in school. • The proportion of our pupils who have SEN is marginally lower than the national average. • The proportion of our pupils who have an EHCP is lower than the national average.
<p>Normal transition arrangements</p>	<p>At HRPS we are proud that, by the end of Year 6, our pupils are ready and excited to move on to the next steps in their education, socially, emotionally and academically. Teachers have an eye on secondary school from the moment the children enter Year 5, and we are giving the children the life skills that they need to thrive in that environment from a much younger age. It is in the final term of Year 6, however, that preparations for transition shift into a higher gear as we work closely with the children’s next destinations to ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>Our 29 Year Sixes are transitioning to four different schools, ranging from two local secondary schools and two private schools (including one child who will be boarding). Some of the children attending one of the local secondary schools have siblings at the school and have a rough idea of what to expect.</p> <p>All of the schools have had contact with the children and their parents, with the main secondary school setting up email addresses for the children already and giving them a plethora of activities designed to helping them get to know the school. The other local secondary has sent a teacher to meet the child who will be attending.</p>
<p>What we’re doing this year</p>	<p>Our Year 6 leavers have had weekly visits from a trained and qualified therapist. She started by talking to the children about anxiety and the biological reasons for the way their bodies feel when they are anxious. This helped the children identify the way they were feeling about the transition to secondary school. The children then explored the reasons that we may feel anxious, and the different techniques that can be applied to help them feel less anxious about the changes in their lives that are coming up.</p> <p>The following week, the therapist spoke to the children about emotions and how negative emotions can lead to negative actions, which in turn lead to more negative emotions. She discussed how to break out of these negative cycles and encouraged the children to identify their own techniques for removing themselves from this negative cycle. She also spoke about happier emotions and the same kind of cycle involved with these.</p> <p>This week, she spoke to the children about thoughts. She focussed on how negative thoughts can impact their mood and how to avoid these types of thoughts. She also encouraged the children to think positively about themselves, and write letters to their past selves.</p> <p>The therapist will continue to come in until the end of term, and will continue to help the children identify their feelings regarding secondary school. She will continue to help them access their emotions fully and understand why they are feeling the way that they are feeling. Perhaps most importantly, she will continue to let the children know that it is alright to sometimes worry about the unknown, and help them feel relaxed in preparation for secondary school.</p> <p>We have been trying to help the children with the transition to their teenage years by helping them understand the value of money. We have been playing “LIFE: The Game”. This game has been created by the Year 6 team, and aims to help the children understand things like tax and the cost of living. Each child is randomly allocated a job and family situation (e.g. married, 2 teenagers; single, 1 baby etc.) They are then tasked with finding out the average annual salary for somebody in that job, and divide this number by 12 to find out what their gross pay is each month. Next they are taught a little about how tax works, and are shown how to calculate how much tax they will pay over the course of a year, deduct this from their overall salary and, again, divide by 12 to get a slightly better idea of how much they will take home</p>

each month (and suffer the crushing disappointment we all felt on opening our first pay cheque – better to get it out of the way now!)

Once the children know what their ‘take home’ is, they are taught about mortgages and look on Zoopla and Right Move to find a house that they can afford, that will fit all of their new family. Following this they learn about outgoings, which are split into “essential” (gas, electric, water, food etc.) and “desirable” (Netflix, Amazon Prime etc.) Having calculated their essentials, they will probably need to look back on Right Move to find a house that they can *actually* afford!

Once the children know what they will be left with at the end of the month, they experience a variety of different life events over the course of the next few days and weeks. These life events are split into “good” (e.g. date night - £50 + an extra £20 for a babysitter if necessary; children’s birthday party - £100 + £15 for a cake; child takes up football - £75 for boots and an additional £36 per month to go to training) and “bad” (e.g. teenager throws a house party – minus £200; car breaks down – minus £200; child smashes a window - £75 and the dreaded *bank hacked* – minus £2000!). These events are all decided by the spin of a wheel and are completely random. Occasionally the children get the opportunity to win some money, get promoted, or sell household items.

Throughout the game, the children earn and lose smiley faces, representing household happiness. Good events = ☺, bad events = ☹. The goal is to be able to save enough money over the course of 6 months to pay for a holiday, whilst also keeping a household that has more ☺ than ☹. Various life events are thrown in over the course of the game to help the children along if they are having a particularly bad time, or make the game trickier if they happened to be a single, well-paid fireman with no kids, for example!

To give the children closure, we have been trying to replace some of the traditional leaving events such as residential trips, leavers’ ceremonies / plays etc. We are in the process of creating a leavers film in lieu of a play, which will be available to all children upon completion. We have experimented with zoom lessons and quizzes to keep the children at home involved with their peers who have returned to school, and intend to host a leavers’ ceremony online, so all parents, children at home and children at school can celebrate their time at school together. This will include pre-recorded songs by the children in school, live memories and messages and cameos from former teachers, all finishing with a message from the Head teacher and a video to commemorate their time here. In lieu of a residential we are planning on as much outdoor activity as possible when the children would have been away, including picnics and a BBQ.

Year 6 -7 Case Study – Thirsk School and Sixth Form College

<p>General school context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have approximately 900 children on roll. • The vast majority of our school are White British. • We are located in a small rural market town with varying levels of parental engagement • The proportion of our pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is around 22% • We have a slightly higher proportion of girls than boys • The proportion of our pupils who have SEN is marginally lower than the national average at 13% • The proportion of our pupils who have an EHCP is lower than the national average at 1% • We normally draw our new intake from approximately 16-20 local primary schools of which 13 are classed as our main feeders • This year we are expecting a cohort of between 160-170
<p>Normal transition arrangements</p>	<p>At Thirsk we believe that a smooth transition from primary school to secondary is vitally important to students' well-being and progress going forward and as such we need to get it right.</p> <p>Our transition process actually begins in Years 3 & 4 with a varied programme of primary school sport competitions delivered through the vehicle of the School Games. This is organized and managed by our on-site School Games Organiser. As part of this programme, each child is given plenty of opportunities to participate in sporting events at Thirsk School & Sixth Form College, allowing them to become familiar with the school environment to help build confidence and a sense of belonging. Competitions are officiated and managed by a successful team of Young Leaders from the secondary school providing positive role models for your children and fostering a real team ethos.</p> <p>As part of this programme, we organise our annual Primary School Sports day, where every child in Years 3-7 in all of our feeder schools takes part in a range of fun activities designed to promote team building, social interaction and positive association with secondary school. We normally cater for over 600 children at this event.</p> <p>During Year 5 we also provide 2 Enrichment Days for all our feeder primaries where the children are invited to spend the day in school participating in a range of taster activities such as Drama, Food Technology, Music and Team Building. This allows them to meet a range of key staff and experience a 'day in the life' of a Thirsk School & Sixth Form College student.</p> <p>Prior to our full week of Induction, the Head of Lower School will visit every Year 6 pupil in their own school around Easter and provide an introductory session on what to expect from their induction process. This will be followed up with an information gathering session from our SENDCO and a talk from the Head of Year. We will also arrange for bespoke transition activities/additional visits/school tours for children with additional needs and at parent request.</p> <p>In addition, we hold an initial Uniform Sizing and Purchasing Event in early May with an opportunity to socialise with other parents and meet staff.</p> <p>In July the Year 6 pupils join us for a week where they meet their form tutor and participate in a typical secondary school timetable, helping to further prepare them for their new start in September. We find that this week is invaluable in helping to allay any worries or anxiety they might have at this pivotal point in their education.</p> <p>During the week of induction, we hold a Parents Evening which features a talk from our students and key staff and is attended by all personnel who will have pastoral responsibility for the new intake. There is also an additional opportunity to purchase uniform, meet and sign up for the PTA, and pre-arranged meeting slots for any parents with specific anxieties, issues or queries to talk with our staff.</p> <p>During this evening the parents receive a variety of information around managing transition, uniform requirements, extra-curricular information and a typical school meals weekly menu. Our existing Year 7 students attend this evening and they have the responsibility of meeting and greeting parents and answering any questions.</p> <p>The amount of time energy and effort we invest in the children is deliberate. We think it is imperative that they are familiar with the school and its environment and have met the staff, as that can lift barriers and help them to feel settled and at home here as quickly as possible.</p>

<p>What we're doing this year</p>	<p>We communicated with all the primary schools in April this year to organise virtual meetings with every school to discuss key information for each child in order to organise the Year 7 tutor groups and collect teacher assessments, additional needs info and find out about recommended social groupings.</p> <p>We created a detailed FAQ document for children and parents which was shared through the feeder schools, our website and our two Facebook pages.</p> <p>The Head of Lower School and the incoming Head of Year 7 made introductory videos for the parents and children which were also shared as above.</p> <p>We created a discrete email address for parental queries and problems, and asked the children to share what they had been doing during lockdown. These activities and pieces of work continue to be shared by our Head of Year 7 on a regular basis with accompanying videos.</p> <p>A Virtual Tour of the school was filmed and shared in late May and we continue to share any resources we think would be useful in aiding transition with the primary schools including uniform updates from our provider. A uniform sizing event has also been organised at school on the 15th July.</p> <p>A pack containing key information was sent directly to parents at this time and we continue to respond directly to any queries as they arrive.</p> <p>Each school has now been offered a virtual transition Q and A session for the children which are currently being delivered by the Head of Lower School & the Head of Year.</p> <p>We are now in the process of compiling a virtual presentation by the incoming Year 7 Tutor Team, which will be shared along with direct information for parents about the tutor group in which their child has been placed, the language they are due to learn and which population they are in.</p> <p>We will also be asking the children to complete some introductory resources about themselves which will be given to their designated tutor.</p> <p>Over the summer we will once again set a project called Five Alive, for the children to complete and that will be handed in to their tutor upon their return to school. This work will be displayed and prizes will be awarded as normal.</p> <p>Once the government reveal definite plans for the return of all pupils to school, we will then put together a bespoke induction plan for the new intake - including the use of baseline assessments to provide us with extra data.</p>
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