

**Institute of Education
University of London**

**Primary/secondary transfer policy and its
implementation in two Local Authorities:
an analysis of teachers' practices in
relation to cross-phase collaboration and
continuity**

William Martin

June 2009

**Submitted to the Institute of Education, University of London, in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Doctor in Education (EdD)**

ProQuest Number: 10629720

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10629720

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
AUG 2009
FROM THE LIBRARY

DECLARATION AND WORD COUNT

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of references and bibliographies but including diagrams and tables): 44,963 words

**William Martin
June 2009**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research could not have been undertaken without the support and encouragement of several people. My grateful thanks to the staff in the two case study local authorities who participated in the study for both their time and interest in the research. I am also indebted to the headteachers of schools within the Action Zones in Waltham Forest, particularly Pat, for her support and for affording me the time to complete the field work phase of the study.

A special word of appreciation is due to my supervisor, Tony Green, who travelled with me on this six-year learning journey. His academic wisdom and constant motivational support were invaluable and helped to keep me focused and coherent making this personal learning experience both stimulating and rewarding. I am also appreciative of the support and insights of Jennifer Evans and Professor David Scott who read the manuscript and gave constructive comments leading to the final draft.

I was fortunate to be part of an EdD cohort who, especially in the first three years when we met regularly, provided valuable mutual support.

I especially wish to acknowledge the constant encouragement of my daughter Claire who has been motivated by the desire to buy me the boots to go with the title at the successful conclusions of my studies!

REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

Introduction

My learning journey over the past five years has been very challenging but also most enjoyable. In this statement, which builds on reflection for the taught courses and the IFS, I will explain what for me have been the key learning experiences which have been required to undertake my doctoral studies and how these have connected with and impacted upon my professional knowledge and practice.

One line of enquiry

Throughout my professional career as a teacher, local authority adviser and senior manager I have been aware of difficulties in respect of the transfer of pupils between primary and secondary schools. When I was appointed as the Director of two Education Action Zones in January 2001 the transfer of pupils between schools became a central focus of my professional work. I undertook my doctorate studies, beginning in October 2002, primarily to give me the academic background that I felt that I needed in order to develop practice within the Zones. I also believed that it was essential to my role to be informed of current research and thinking in areas relating to transfer such as curriculum continuity and teaching and learning. The focus of my research in the initial stages of the EdD explored aspects of teachers' behaviour in relation to the organisation and administration of transfer at a school level. This is reflected in the assignments completed during the first two years of my studies where I examined issues relating to the attitudes, and later the perceptions, of teachers in respect of their roles within the transfer process. Extensive background reading for these assignments made me aware of and engage more fully with national policy issues relating to the 'raising standards' agenda and how they have impacted at both local authority and school levels which is then reflected in my research undertaken for the IFS and this Thesis. Working on the IFS enabled me to explore a national issue, the dip in pupil performance during the early years of secondary education, at a local level based on one of the schools within the Action Zone. The focus for the thesis emerged from, and is an expansion of, the IFS study. By this time I was also responsible for developing a transfer strategy within my own local authority as well as part of a national pilot to develop resources to facilitate transfer between primary and

secondary schools. I was now interested in exploring the extent to which practice in schools was, or was not, influenced by national educational strategies and local policies.

My learning journey

The four taught courses and the IFS of the EdD programme gave me a rich and varied learning experience. The first of the taught courses, 'Foundations of Professionalism', provided an excellent re-introduction to professional study since completing of my MA in 1988. I found this first module challenging, particularly in terms of critiquing the literature by analysing the findings of previous research in relation, not only to my own experiences within the field of education, but by comparing and contrasting them with other professions. This module gave me an opportunity to review how teachers' professionalism had been affected by recent national initiatives, such as EAZs, and to reflect on my own professional role in developing a partnership with them as their Director, although not as their direct line-manager. The introduction of the National Curriculum and its associated legislation were largely perceived as "a top-down model imposed on teachers whose status was reduced to that of employee required to carry out orders" (Lawton, 1996). The politics of professionalism are partly about how government legislation affects teachers, but it is also about the ways in which teachers choose to respond to national initiatives. Hoyle (1988) referred to "extended" professionalism where teachers accepted wide-ranging responsibilities outside as well as inside the classroom. My own challenge as a Director had been to create a professional partnership between 21 different schools, each with their own plans and priorities. It is interesting to note that these same professional conflicts between national, local and school level policies and practice re-emerge in the thesis stage of my doctoral studies.

The exploration and understanding of the epistemological concerns and the controversies about concepts of positivism and constructivism as a basis for informing and underpinning educational research in MOE1 was a new learning area for me. The taught aspect of this module which incorporated workshops, discussion and debate with tutors and EdD colleagues on different methodologies and also inherent ethical issues were extremely helpful in assisting me in coming to terms with this new

learning for developing knowledge and practices. The exercise of formulating a clear research proposal and the narrowing of the research question, to focus specifically on the role and attitudes of secondary teachers involved in the transfer process, provided an excellent base from which to progress to MOE2. This first piece of research made real many of the theoretical and conceptual issues discussed in MOE1. The use of a different research tool, namely semi-structured interviews rather than the originally proposed questionnaire, involved practical decisions about the use of transcripts which was worthwhile and necessary training for developing both the IFS and the thesis. What was particularly significant about this piece of qualitative research was that it afforded me an opportunity to build professional links with schools outside the Action Zone which again helped when I started recruiting samples for the empirical thesis research. Furthermore, I acquired a greater understanding of planning, time management and reference keeping, which taught me the importance of maintaining a journal to monitor and manage the timeline of my research and the accurate recording of sources of evidence.

For the IFS the focus of the research moved from the attitudes of teachers directly involved in organising the transfer process in secondary schools to the perceptions and practices of a wider cross-section of staff involved in teaching Year 7 students. As the research sample was based in one of the schools within the Action Zone I had to grapple with the reality of being known to and professionally involved with the research respondents and the risks of bias. There were also important ethical issues relating to confidentiality and anonymity in respect of maintaining the mutual professional trust between primary and secondary teachers.

The thesis

As a result of my learning on the taught programme and the IFS I had a much better grasp of the issues, challenges and requirements involved in designing, executing and reporting academic research for the thesis, particularly in respect of formulating a concise proposal based on clear research questions. Although the area of research has remained constant throughout my studies, the focus has evolved over time moving from the role of teachers in the process to their inter-action with local and national policy. The main literature foci in my studies to date had been related to previous

research and, in the case of the assignment for the Contemporary Education Policy Module on government policy in respect of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. I came to recognise that there was, however, a gap in my thinking and understanding with regard to continuity in respect of pedagogy as distinct from curriculum. Therefore, I decided to expand my learning and literature base to include primary as well as secondary school practice. Some of my previous literature reviews had exposed teaching in a different light, differentiating between the ‘what’ in terms of the content of the curriculum and the ‘how’ in respect of teaching methodologies’. This revised focus, supported by a study tour in Melbourne, Australia, enabled me to explore policy contexts and the different techniques employed by primary and secondary practitioners and, more interestingly, the different pre-conceptions that they had of each others’ practice. It challenged me as a provider and influencer of policy to reflect upon my own professional practice and to examine how teachers’ learning needs could best be addressed in the context in which I worked.

Personal development

I received many positive comments from tutors which have given me confidence and reassurance to progress with my studies. My assignments have demonstrated “relevant reading and a good grasp of the literature”. They have been “grounded in argument, focused and well presented”. Two of the assignments were described as “ambitious”, yet both showed “a good grasp of the key issues and findings”.

Interim feedback during the taught courses enabled me to identify my own weaknesses in applying research findings to practice and to improve my technical skills in presenting written assignments. Meeting with individual tutors to discuss the feedback also gave me the opportunity to explore these issues in greater depth and clarify improvements needed for the final submission. Overall analysis of the final feedback across all four assignments highlighted clear areas for development - to improve clarity in my methodology, between the theoretical and practical application, to ensure that it was fit for purpose and to be more systematic in analysis rather than descriptive.

Whilst feedback on the IFS was encouraging in that the relevance of the study was adjudged to be “insightful and comprehensive”, there were issues relating to the lack

of a critical analysis in the literature review. The need to consider wider issues in respect of the political and pedagogical contexts links directly with the focus of the thesis. Comments from, and subsequent discussion with, my supervisor in respect to critical and conceptual/theoretical dimensions of the work have helped me to ensure that findings are more explicit and that assertion and personal opinion are replaced by evidence based critique using more direct quotes from participants.

The interview for my thesis proposal was extremely useful and the feedback helped me to clarify the theoretical framework, better determine the focus of the research and refine the method of data collection, particularly in respect of the number of participants.

Feedback from two 'readers' and my supervisor on the first full draft of the thesis helped to provide a clearer statement of the research questions, to draw out the inter-relationship between previous research and my own focus, to provide more direct quotes which added to the richness of the text and, in particular to clarify the research questions and to link them explicitly to the title.

Professional practice

Overall the course has been an extremely interesting learning journey and studying for the EdD has complemented my professional work as Director of the Action Zones. I have been fortunate to be part of an excellent cohort of students who have a wide range of professional interests and who have been very supportive of each other. I found the sharing of readings with feedback to group members during several of the taught sessions to be a particularly useful strategy for improving my knowledge and understanding not only of my own learning but also of the research projects of colleagues.

I have managed to link all of my assignments directly to the context of my own professional work. The rigor of deadlines and the challenges to time-management was very helpful for me personally, particularly as any deferment would have created greater conflict in respect of competing work-loads at critical times during the school year.

As a direct result of reading about previous and on-going research I made contact with and visited Maurice Galton and case studies from my Action Zones are now on the Homerton University transfer website. Through the network of London EiC Action Zones I have been invited to speak at conferences in Ealing, Enfield and Hammersmith and Fulham as well as in Sandwell, Northampton and for the Association of School and College Leaders. I have also introduced several strategies for improving transfer to schools in the Action Zones and 'good practice' examples have been used to develop a Borough strategy for Waltham Forest which has led to establishment of a calendar with a common transfer day, Network meetings, an audit of provision, regular newsletters and an annual conference. In June 2006 I was asked by the National Strategies to write a position paper to 'underpin' their work and in March 2007 I facilitated a study tour in Melbourne, Australia where I was able to gain first hand experience of their 'Middle Years' schooling.

As a Director of Action Zones, I have been in a privileged position with direct access to and an overview of both primary and secondary schools. When I began my role I was determined to improve the transfer process by developing cross-phase collaboration. My doctoral studies have enabled me to focus on two aspects of a very complex process, namely the development of local policy in relation to the national framework and the implementation of teachers' practice within the transfer process. My research has increased my own professional knowledge and understanding and assisted me in fulfilling my own role both within the Action Zone and in developing a Borough strategy as well as assisting colleagues in other local authorities.

Bill Martin
October 2008

ABSTRACT

Primary/secondary transfer policy and its implementation in two Local Authorities: an analysis of teachers' practices in relation to cross-phase collaboration and continuity

The transfer from primary to secondary school is regarded as one of the more crucial events in children's educational careers. Early research investigated the anxiety of pupils and the organisational features which attempt to promote continuity within the transfer process. More recently there is evidence that some pupils under-achieve at secondary school in comparison to their performance in primary school. This study examines the relationship between the formulation of national, local authority and school policies and their implementation at the level of teachers' practice within the transfer process.

Recent government legislation and other national educational initiatives have recognised the importance of transfer. Teaching and learning is one of several 'bridges' which have been identified by researchers as having a particular impact on promoting continuity between primary and secondary schools. The study investigates the extent to which local authorities and schools have been influenced by national strategies and if, and where they have how, they have developed cross-phase collaboration between teachers to improve continuity.

Two local authorities were selected as case studies, offering contrasting experiences based on their specific focus to improve transfer; one in an inner city borough and the other a provincial town within a shire county. The strategy for developing the data set was as follows. Each local authority nominated two secondary schools, one where they adjudged transfer practice to be good in terms of links between the schools and another where they considered arrangements could be improved. A questionnaire was then sent to the four secondary schools and their responses formed the basis for follow-up interviews with teachers in those schools. Each of the secondary schools identified two partner primary schools where interviews took place to provide further information required to develop a cross-phase analysis.

The findings reveal that primary and secondary teachers recognised the importance of pedagogical continuity, but that cross-phase professional preconceptions, rather than knowledge emergent from first hand evidence of each others practice, tend to undermine the development of collaborative teaching and learning policies. Furthermore, although networks of schools can promote collaboration cross-phase activities, these need facilitation, a role not readily accepted by local authorities or schools. Although there are several references to the importance of transfer within recent government legislation local authorities and schools may need an additional motivation in order to promote these activities.

The conclusions raise specific issues not only for the case study schools but also for the role of local education authorities as well as the formulation and implementation of future national educational initiatives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Reflective Statement	4
Abstract	10
Table of contents	11
List of diagrams and appendices	14
Glossary and acronyms	15
Poem	17
1. Introduction	18
2. Focus of the research	20
3. Theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework	24
3.1. Introduction	
3.2. Theoretical perspectives	
3.2.1. The Policy Cycle	
3.2.2. Pedagogy	
3.3. Conceptual framework	
3.3.1. Continuity	
3.3.2. Success criteria	
3.4. Research hypotheses and questions	
4. Context for the research	40
4.1. Introduction	
4.2. National context	
4.3. Local strategic context	
4.4. School context	
4.5. Previous research	
(i) National research	
(ii) Local and regional research	
(iii) School based research	
(iv) International comparisons	
4.6. Personal professional context	
4.7. Summary	
5. Methodology, research design and methods of enquiry	61
5.1. Introduction	
5.2. Context of the research	
5.3. Design of the study	
(i) Local authorities	
(ii) Secondary schools	
(iii) Primary schools	

- 5.4. Methods of data collection
 - (i) Research tool
 - (ii) Interviews
 - (iii) Documentary evidence
 - (iv) Other sources of information
- 5.5. Data analysis
- 5.6. Feedback
- 5.7. Interpretation of findings
- 5.8. Practical considerations
- 5.9. Political, moral and ethical considerations

6. Findings

81

- 6.1. Introduction
- 6.2. Case Study A – Inner City Borough
 - 6.2.1. Local authority policy context for school level perspectives and practice
 - (i) Policy context
 - (ii) Policy framework
 - (iii) Policy implementation
 - (iv) Success criteria
 - (v) Cross-phase practices
 - 6.2.2. School level practices
 - (i) Case study schools
 - (ii) Schools' responses to national, local and school level policies
 - (iii) School level success criteria
 - (iv) Cross-phase practices
- 6.3. Case Study B – Provincial town local authority
 - 6.3.1. Local authority policy context for school level perspectives and practice
 - (i) Policy context
 - (ii) Policy framework
 - (iii) Policy implementation
 - (iv) Success criteria
 - (v) Cross-phase practices
 - 6.3.2. School level practices
 - (i) Case study schools
 - (ii) Schools' responses to national, local and school level policies
 - (iii) School level success criteria
 - (iv) Cross-phase practices
- 6.4. Comparative analysis of the two case studies
 - 6.4.1. Local authority context
 - 6.4.2. Schools' context
 - 6.4.3. Policy
 - (i) National policy
 - (ii) Local policy

- (iii) School policy
- 6.4.4. Success criteria
- 6.4.5. Cross-phase practices

6.4. Overall findings of the research

7. Interpretation of the findings and conclusions 129

- 7.1. Introduction
- 7.2. Policy
- 7.3. Success criteria
- 7.4. Cross-phase practices
- 7.5. Interpretation of the findings in relation to the research questions
- 7.6. Conclusions

8. Implications of the study 153

- 8.1. Introduction
- 8.2. Implications for the two case studies
- 8.3. Implications for other local authorities and schools
- 8.4. Implications for the development of wider policy
- 8.5. Implications for future research
- 8.6. Professional relevance of the study

9. Bibliography 161

List of diagrams

1. Transfer between different types of school
2. Components of the transfer process
3. Focus of the research
4. Differences between teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools
5. Research sample
6. Links between research tool and the analytical framework
7. Transfer of Year 6 pupils in the inner city borough
8. Transfer of Year 6 pupils within the provincial town local authority
9. Summary of overall findings

Appendices

1. Differences between teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools.
2. Hopes and fears about transfer to secondary school
3. Five Bridges
4. Timeline of the research
5. List of interviewees
6. Interview schedule (Local Authority)
7. Research tool (Schools)
8. Prompts suggesting possible sources of evidence to support participants' judgements (on the research tool)
9. London Key Issues – Y6 pupil movement between Local Authorities.
10. Participants' responses to the SEF-based questionnaire.
11. HARPS Research Project

Glossary and acronyms

Transfer	Movement of pupils between schools
Transition	Movement of pupils within one school
Pupils	Children at primary school
Students	Young people attending secondary school

2 tier schooling	Primary and secondary schools
3 tier schooling	First, middle and high schools
All-through schools	One school for all ages 5-18

The National Strategies

Professional development programmes for early years, primary and secondary school teachers, practitioners and managers. At a national and regional level these strategies are delivered by Capita Strategic Children's Services on behalf of the DCSF.

ACER	Australian Centre for Educational Research
AfL	Assessment for Learning
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders (formerly SHA – Secondary Heads Association)
AST	Advanced Skilled Teacher
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BLP	Building Learning Power
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CATs	Cognitive Assessment Tests
CATS	Consortium of All-Through Schools
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DCFS	Department for Communities, Schools and Families formerly DfES (Department for Education and Skills), DfEE (Department for Education and Employment), and DES (Department of Science and Education)
DHT	Deputy Headteacher
EAZ	Education Action Zone
ECM	Every Child Matters
EIC	Excellence in Cities
EIP	Education Improvement Partnership
ERA	Education reform Act (1988)
G and T	Gifted and Talented
HT	Headteacher
HoY7	Head of Year 7
KS	Key Stage
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
LA	Local Authority (formerly LEA - Local Education Authority)
L2L	Learning to Learn
LIG	Leadership Incentive Grant
LM	Learning Mentor

MYRAD	Middle Years Research and Development (Australia)
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NFER	National Federation for Educational Research
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ORACLE	Observation Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation
PASS	Pupil Attitude to Self and School
PAT	Pupil Achievement Tracker
PESSCL	PE, School Sport and Club Links (Strategy)
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
POLT	Principles of Learning and Teaching (Australia)
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment (Time)
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SATs	Standardised Assessment Tests
SCAA	Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form (Ofsted)
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SIP	School Improvement Partner
T4L	Teaching for Learning
TASC	Teaching in an Active Social Context
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
TLR	Teaching and Learning Responsibility (Payments)
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
VELS	Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Australia)

Poem

Impressions of a New Boy

This school is huge - I hate it!
Please take me home.
Steep stairs cut in stone,
Peeling ceiling far too high,
The Head said 'Wait' so I wait alone,
Alone though Mum stands here, close by
The voice is loud - I hate it!
Please take me home,

'Come. Sit. What is your name?'
Trembling lips. The words won't come.
The Head says 'Speak,' but my cheeks flame,
I hear him give a quiet sigh.
The room is full – I hate it.
Please take me home.

A sea of faces stare at me,
My desk is much too small,
Its wooden ridge rubs my knee,
But the Head said 'Sit' so though I'm tall
I know that I must try.
The yard is full – I hate it,
Please take me home.

Bodies jostle me away,
Pressing me against the wall.
Then one boy says, 'Want to play?'
The boy says, 'Catch' and throws a ball,
And playtime seems to fly
This school is great - I love it.

Marion Collihole
in "Rusty and Friends" (Junius Books, Galliard, London, 1980).

Primary/secondary transfer policy and its implementation in two Local Authorities: an analysis of teachers' practices in relation to cross-phase collaboration and continuity

1. Introduction

“Out of the 600,000 children who received secondary school offers last week, nearly half in some local authorities were not granted their first choice” (The Times, 10th March 2007).

The educational system in England and Wales requires its schoolchildren to pass through an annual process which research suggests at its best causes slight apprehension for pupils, while at its worst provokes deep anxiety for both parents and their children. Historically this activity has taken a considerable amount of organisation and administration on the part of teachers in schools and officials in local authorities. This process, known as 'transfer', concerns the movement of a whole cohort of pupils from one school to another.

Every year at the end of the summer term large numbers of children in Year 6 at primary school continue their education by transferring to a secondary school which is often much larger and where they meet teachers and pupils who are new to them. Many children will spend the summer holiday attempting to come to terms with the impending change, wondering whether rumours about their new teachers and older students are true. In primary schools most children move between classes taught by one teacher. Transfer to secondary school can provide a dramatic change since each pupil can have contact with many more teachers in a totally different organisational environment.

The importance of transfer has long been recognised in research and increasingly in education policy contexts. Much of the early research focussed on the qualitative aspects of pupils' responses to moving schools by investigating their anxiety before and after transfer and the activities which were introduced by schools to reduce these concerns. Later studies explored the organisational features which attempted to promote curriculum continuity

within the transfer process. More recently there has been more quantitative evidence that some pupils under-achieve at the beginning of their secondary education in comparison to their performance in previous years. This dip in attainment has been acknowledged by the government which introduced a national strategy aimed at increasing students' academic performance in the early years of secondary school and promoted additional educational initiatives to improve transfer from primary school. At the same time other educational agencies and organisations have also developed resources to support different strands which have been identified within the transfer process.

However, despite the increased profile of transfer at a national level, most of the recommendations are in the form of guidance as distinct from statutory requirements. Hence its status and priority remain locally determined. Within this broad context this thesis will investigate the formulation and implementation of educational policies in respect of the transfer process and assess the impact of one specific aspect, namely cross-phase teachers' practice, upon improving the overall transfer experience for students.

The study begins by explaining the focus of the research which is further elaborated within a theoretical and conceptual framework from which specific research questions are identified. The focus for the research is then positioned in relation to national, local and school level contexts and previous research as well as my own experience. Various design issues, research methods and analysis techniques are discussed, along with some of the political, moral and ethical issues relating to their implementation. The findings of research using two case studies are reported, compared and contrasted and then interpreted within the wider contexts of policy and practice. Finally the report considers the professional relevance of the overall findings and their implications for both future research and policy making.

2. Focus of the research

Transfer occurs when children move between schools; for example, from primary to secondary school. The term 'transfer' is often used in conjunction with 'transition' and the definition of the two words can be confused. For the purposes of this study 'transfer' is defined as the movement of children from one school to another as distinct from 'transition' which relates to the movement of pupils between years within the same school. Depending on the organisation of educational provision within local authorities children can transfer at several different stages of their schooling (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: Transfer between different types of school

Transfer	
Home	School
Nursery	School
Foundation Stage	Reception
Infant (KS1)	Junior (KS2)
First	Middle
Middle	High
Primary	Secondary
Secondary	Post-16

For most schools transfer is an annual event occurring in September at the beginning of the Autumn Term. For some children, those who may have been excluded from school or whose parents may be moving house, transfer can take place at any time during the year. This study will focus on the transfer of children from primary school at the end of Year 6 to secondary school at the beginning of Year 7.

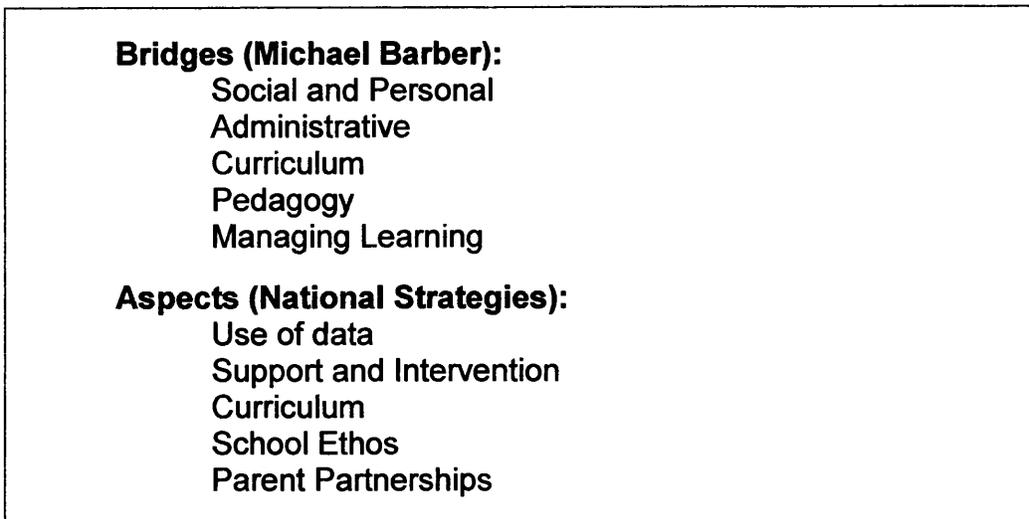
Transfer is administered by local authority officials, but implemented by teachers. National strategies and local initiatives have been promoted which reflect the priority which is now placed upon ensuring that pupils make academic progress, particularly at the point of transfer between primary and

secondary schools. The government has acknowledged that for some children transfer from primary school can be a potential barrier to raising standards in secondary schools and the Key Stage 3 Strategy (2003) was introduced as a direct attempt to improve continuity and progression from Key Stage 2. The responsibility for implementing national strategies and other educational initiatives ultimately lies with schools. However, local authorities, through their education officers, have a statutory role in respect of administering the admission of pupils to secondary school as well as communicating, supporting and monitoring the impact of transfer related policies in their schools. One of the issues identified in my previous research (Martin, 2003) was the level of priority attributed to the transfer process at a whole-school level and the extent to which organisational aspects within schools support or hinder the progress made by students in Year 7. This study will complement and build upon that research, by investigating the motivation and implementation of transfer related policies at a national and local level and their impact on the continuity of teachers' practice between primary and secondary schools.

Transfer is a complex process with several distinct, yet inter-related, component parts. The term 'bridge' was first used by Michael Barber (1999) to identify different ways in which schools can classify transfer issues. This concept of bridges was further developed by Ruth Sutton (2000) and Maurice Galton (2001) and adopted by London Challenge (2005) as the basis for its transfer project. More recently The National Strategies (2006) have used the term 'aspect' to categorise strands within the transfer process as part of its self-evaluation toolkit. Although there may be some overlap between these various constituent parts they demonstrate that, rather than a continuous process, transfer is seen as a gap within the educational system (Diagram 2).

On the other hand, transfer can be seen as a rite of passage when children have to come to terms with a significant change in their lives. Although transfer is an annual event, for each individual child it occurs only once at a time when many of them are also coming to terms with the onset of adolescence. These issues will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Diagram 2: Components of the transfer process



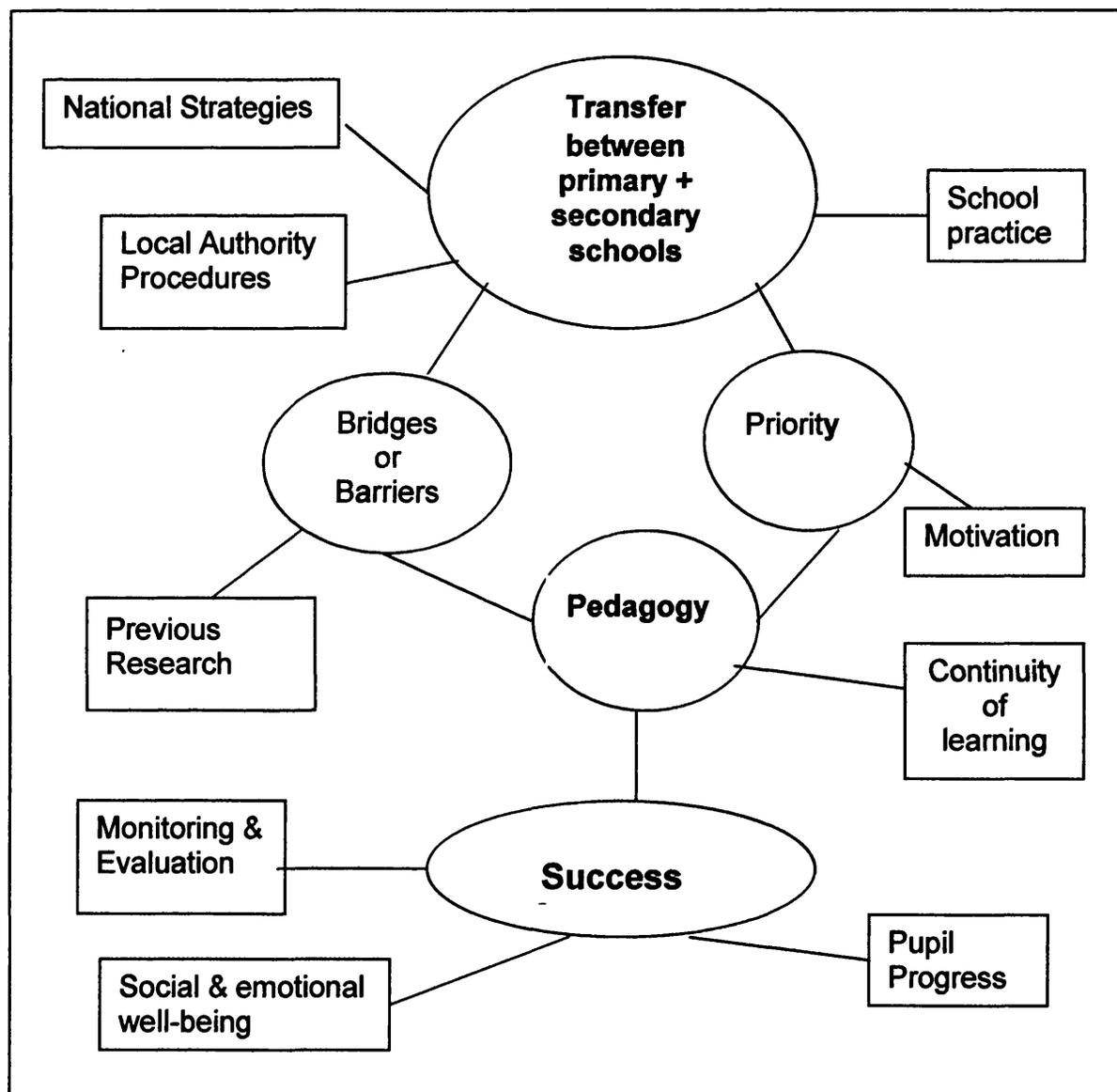
While most schools make sure that pupils are prepared socially and emotionally for transfer to a new school they have been less successful in managing their academic progress. Previous research supports the claim that administrative, social and curriculum issues are relatively easy to address, but seem to have little impact on maintaining or improving pupils' progress. On the other hand, pedagogical continuity, which can be more problematic to support, can make a real difference to maintaining pupils' focus on learning. The message that comes out strongly from previous research is that differences in teaching and learning styles and expectations are as important as mismatches and discontinuities in curriculum content.

'It is not 'what' teachers do but 'how' they do it which is of prime importance' (Galton, 1983, p4).

This 'how' aspect is particularly relevant in terms of transfer when, in the space of a few weeks, pupils move from a primary classroom with one teacher to a different environment where they are taught by several teachers who may employ a range of teaching styles in comparison to their previous experiences. Moreover as research shows, some secondary teachers do not take account of these very evident changes, preferring instead to adopt a 'clean slate' approach in Year 7, when a mistrust of Key Stage 2 assessments can discount much of what and, more importantly, how students have learned in their primary school.

In summary, this thesis will focus on transfer between primary and secondary schools; the motivation, formulation and implementation of transfer-related policies; the emphasis attributed to teaching and learning in these policies; and the bridges and barriers which exist to support or hinder teachers' cross-phase collaboration (Diagram 3).

Diagram 3: Focus of the research



The next chapter will further redefine the focus of the research in terms of its theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework.

3. Theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will position the focus of my research within a theoretical and conceptual framework. It will examine the components of the policy-making cycle based on the formulation and implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. It will also explore aspects of teaching and learning in relation to cross-phase issues for primary and secondary teachers. The concept of continuity is central to the transfer process as is a working definition of success. These issues will be discussed in relation to the different stakeholders involved in the transfer process.

3.2. Theoretical perspectives

3.2.1. The Policy cycle

Transfer has been a re-occurring theme in government White Papers, national strategies and other educational initiatives in recent years. The formulation and implementation of these policies will be explored using Ball's model of a policy cycle with its specific stages, namely text production, context of influence, policy text and the context of practice (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, pp19-21). This model will be applied to the White Paper 'Schools achieving Success' to explain how research has been used to inform policy making and promote a particular part of the policy, the Key Stage 3 Strategy, which aimed to raise standards in secondary schools by improving progression from primary schools.

Policy-making itself may be considered in terms of it being either rational or incremental in nature. The rational model (Etzioni, 1967) assumes that policy makers become aware of a problem, consider alternative ways of solving it and then choose the best solution. The incrementalist model (Lindblom, 1959) by contrast sees policy makers as 'muddling through'. Whether rational or incremental, there is a clear pattern to the way that educational policy has evolved in England in recent years with a strong emphasis on the raising standards agenda as the basis of text production. The imperative of

competing effectively in a global marketplace is to be found in the consultations for the National Curriculum. 'We must raise standards consistently and at least as quickly as they are rising in competitor countries' (DES, 1987: 6). Ever since it was elected in 1997 the Labour Government has sought to make education their main priority. 'The vision is of a world class education service, one which matches the best anywhere on the planet' (Barber, 2001, p17).

In order to move from what the evidence showed to be an underperforming system in the mid-1990s to the world class vision, the Labour Government aimed to build on the reforms of the previous Conservative government and sharpen the challenge. In terms of the context of text production within the overall policy cycle of the raising standards agenda there are two dominant factors – leadership and performativity. To facilitate the transformation of the education service successive governments have placed great emphasis on school leadership or, more specifically what Wright (2001) called 'bastard leadership' with headteachers being seen as 'conduits of government policy'. In a managerialist system, performativity is part of the calculative, quasi-scientific apparatus which makes schools, teachers and pupils accountable. Target-setting is also part of the managerialist control agenda with the prime motivation being the overall performance of the organisation. Targets are set at a local level and schools are held responsible for their achievement.

A continuing raft of central impositions ensured that the drive remained on raising standards. New Labour's first education White Paper 'Excellence in Schools' in 1997 saw the introduction of the National Literacy and the National Numeracy Strategies. This was followed by the development of target-setting (DfEE, 1998) and a restructuring of the teaching profession (DfEE, 1999). The Green Paper 'Schools: Building on Success' celebrated the achievements of the previous four years in raising standards in primary schools. 'Our mission now is to bring about a similar transformation in secondary schools' (DfES, 2001a, p4). The subsequent White Paper 'Schools achieving Success' (DfES, 2001b) outlined plans to bring about this change through the introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy.

Research is one of the tools used to inform education policy-making as a context of influence. It is a common feature of the raising standards agenda and the use of research evidence forms the basis of the White Paper 'Schools achieving Success' in general and the Key Stage 3 Strategy in particular. 'That governments have become seriously interested in the quality of research in the education sector is plain' (Mosteller and Boruch, 2002, p1). The research-policy link can usually be viewed from within one of two paradigms – the engineering approach (quantitative) and the enlightenment approach (qualitative). Enlightenment research, with its tendency towards generalization, appears to be largely ignored by government, while the social engineering approach, with its quantitative methods, has had considerable impact on education policy (Trowler, 1998). This model is aligned to a top-down managerial model of policy implementation. Statistical data is more useful as it enables the government to classify schools hierarchically and manage them. The use of performance league tables, for example, can be used to target intervention and additional resources in failing schools.

Empiricism and positivism have traditionally higher status in England than qualitative approaches. Policy makers are often suspicious of research which is not based on large samples and particularly when researchers claim their findings to be generalisable. Moreover policy makers tend to adopt an unproblematic attitude towards 'facts' and feel that they are more easily able to evaluate the quality of the research in a positivist tradition. On the other hand researchers are themselves suspicious of politicians who base their policies on research findings which have not been formally validated by educationalists and other professionals. 'Laudably, the present government has committed itself to using evidence as a basis for policy' (Goldstein, 2001). However, Goldstein is critical about the lack of a formal validation process of any results which the government presents as evidence and concludes that 'those responsible for formulating policy will need to exercise considerably more respect for soundly based evidence than is so far apparent'.

The White Paper 'Schools achieving Success' (DfES, 2001b) contains a lot of statistical data which is used to illustrate the success of the National Literacy

and Numeracy Strategies. However, it is in the area of secondary education that research-based evidence is used to justify the central thrust of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. 'Standards for pupils aged 11-14 are not high enough. Teaching has generally been of a lesser quality for this age group. Expectations have been too low. Pupils make far too little progress during these years' (DfES, 2001a, 4.27). Apart from statistical data produced by the DfES, QCA and Ofsted, the government also uses evidence from independent research to support its case. The research findings by Galton, Gray and Ruddock (1999) which found that '2 out of every 5 pupils failed to make the expected progress during the year immediately following a change of school' is quoted within the text of the White Paper (DfES, 2001b, 2.24).

From the outset the introduction of 'Schools achieving Success' gives the rationale for the policy text behind the government's overall mission to raise standards. 'To prosper in the 21st century competitive global economy, Britain must transform the knowledge and skills of its population. Every child, whatever their circumstances, requires an education that equips them for work and prepares them to succeed in the wider economy and in society' (DfES, 2001b, 1.2). In other words, it is the economic and sociological perspectives of policy making which underpin the need to raise standards.

Spurred on by the success of its strategies in primary schools, which had become embedded within the Key Stage 2 curriculum and accepted by a more compliant teaching profession, the government turned its attention to secondary schools. However, there was an acknowledgement that there was a risk that 'unless pupil motivation could be improved in the early years of secondary school, the previous gains in primary schools could be dissipated' (DfES, 2001b, 3.2.). Although the Key Stage 3 Strategy brought additional resources for teachers in secondary schools it also reinforced the managerialist and performativity aspects of policy making by introducing target-setting and value added measures as indicators of school accountability within the overall raising standards agenda.

'Schools achieving Success' represents the government's policy text on how it intended to continue to raise standards by transforming secondary education. It is appropriate at this stage to recall that Ball (1994) distinguishes between policy as text and policy as discourse in an attempt to keep in view both the way behaviour and ideas as well as language and values are constrained by factors external to the individual (policy as discourse) and the relative freedom of individuals to change things (policy as text). Within schools this can lead to either a top-down management style or a bottom-up approach, each of which can influence how teachers attempt to put policy into practice.

'Schools achieving Success' identified transfer between schools as a potential barrier to raising standards in secondary schools and promoted the Key Stage 3 Strategy as a direct attempt to improve continuity and progression from primary schools. The government recognised that for 'too many pupils', the first year or two in secondary school can be a time of falling motivation and rising disaffection. 'As a result, the performance of 14 year-olds has shown relatively little improvement'. 'We will improve the transition to secondary schools' (DfES 2001b, 2.24).

The Green Paper 'Schools: Building on Success' (DfES, 2001a) provides a list of measures which the Government had already implemented to improve the transition from primary to secondary schools and the subsequent White Paper planned to introduce additional activities. These measures and activities are explained in the following chapter (ibid, 4.2). However, policy is not simply received and implemented; rather it is subject to interpretation. 'Practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers, they come with histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have vested interests in the meaning of the policy' (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, p22). Parts of the text will be rejected, ignored, deliberately misunderstood and even subverted. Any one policy may be interpreted differently by, for example, primary and secondary teachers. Therefore, Bowe talks about policies as having 'effects' rather than 'outcomes'. 'Education policies are formulated in a variety of locales: in central government, in local authorities or in educational institutions. However, they are always implemented by individuals and groups

within organizations, schools' (Trowler, 1998, pp123-124). It is this 'bottom-up' aspect of human behaviour which Trowler uses to demonstrate 'the unpredictability of policy outcomes as against policy intentions'.

In 2003, when introducing it's third year, the DfES reported that the Key Stage 3 strategy was 'dogged by the logistical problems of finding timetable space and staff' (DfES, 2003, Findings). It was suggested that to make the strategy secure it should 'shift from a subject-specific strategy to a whole-school strategy and from a staff development initiative to a school improvement initiative' (ibid, Recommendations). However it is policy makers, as well as teachers, who need to understand not just what works in education, but also why something works and, equally important, why it works in some contexts and not in others. Fullan (1991) emphasises the importance of teachers' reactions to the implementation of education policies and concludes that that the most successful approach is 'to encourage the development of a shared vision, one that attracts a broad commitment because it reflects the personal view of those involved'.

My research will examine the extent to which policies determined at a national level have impacted at a local and institutional level, how ownership has been achieved and priorities established and how success is defined for the different stakeholders involved in the transfer process.

3.2.2. Pedagogy

This study examines the administrative and organisational aspects of teachers' practice in respect of cross-phase continuity. However, this needs to be set within an overall definition of teaching and learning in terms of developing a common pedagogical language between primary and secondary teachers, particularly as they draw on their own experiences, as well as a range of working theories, in arriving at their views about how children learn and how teaching can support this learning. A dictionary defines pedagogy as 'the principles, practice and profession of teaching' (Collins, 2008). The National Strategies have developed the following working definition: 'pedagogy is the act of teaching and the rationale that supports the actions

teachers take. It is what a teacher needs to know and the range of skills a teacher needs to use in order to make effective teaching decisions' (DfES, National Strategies website, 2007).

The teaching standards, set out by the government, make specific reference to the need to develop pedagogical knowledge and skill as part of developing a career as a teacher (TDA, 2007). Developing a shared understanding to talk about pedagogy are seen by The National Strategies as crucial steps towards transforming teaching and learning to ensure that there is continuity and progression at all stages of the learning journey. Achieving this means increasing the range and quality of dialogue within and across schools about what is effective in order to reduce the variation in the quality of teaching and learning that still exists in many situations. As mentioned previously, Galton (1993) had identified a clear distinction between teaching methodology and curriculum content. Ten years later Ofsted recognised not only the important role of teachers within the transfer process but also 'the significant differences between the quality of teaching in Year 6 in primary schools and Year 7 in secondary schools' (DfES, 2002, p9).

Research undertaken in Suffolk (2001) also identified these differences in both teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools (See Appendix 1). A footnote to these findings pointing out that the research was conducted prior to the introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy implies that the variations may be less marked as a common language is developed. However, the fundamental differences in the ways in which primary and secondary teachers are trained and supported as well as the organisation of their curriculum militate against such a common language.

Although many aspects of the theory of learning are generic, initial teacher training and the subsequent continuing professional development of primary and secondary teachers are phase specific with few, if any, opportunities for them to develop a shared understanding of each others' practice. A study funded by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) found evidence of differing school cultures in the two phases, with 'teachers in each phase regarding

what teachers in the other phase do with a sense of mystery' (Herrington and Doyle, 1997: p1). In some ways this is not surprising because the documents which support the curriculum are also phase specific with separate primary and secondary strategies promoted by national advisers and local consultants, who themselves have phase specific responsibilities. The National Primary Centre (1994) identified that 'a lack of mutual professional esteem between primary and secondary practitioners is a serious threat to ensuring that pupils experience a seamless path of learning opportunity as they move on in their school career' (ibid, p15). Moreover, their report acknowledged that the mismatch between the systems of organisation at primary and secondary levels 'makes it difficult for a teacher to appreciate the complexity of the work involved in each phase and suspicions are often based on ignorance of the others' work' (ibid, p13). This mismatch extends to the differing deployment of teachers with primary teachers having a more generalist role in delivering the full range of National Curriculum subjects while their secondary colleagues see themselves as specialists. This in turn supports the claim made by some primary teachers that they have a more child-centred approach to their teaching while their secondary colleagues are more subject based.

The differing deployment of teachers can also influence the quality of teaching and learning in other ways. For example, most primary pupils are taught entirely by one class teacher whereas in secondary schools students have different teachers for different subjects which may lead to inconsistencies in teaching and learning (Diagram 4). More recently some secondary schools have reviewed their classroom practice and introduced whole school approaches, such as Learning to Learn (L2L), Teaching for Learning (T4L) or Building Learning Power (BLP), to unify the academic and pastoral support given to students by different teachers. However, although some secondary teachers may be more aware of what students have been taught in their primary schools they are less aware of how they learn (Beresford, 2003). This can mean that attempts to promote more consistency in teaching and learning in Year 7 fail to build on pupil's previous experiences. This lack of knowledge and understanding of each others' practice also extends to assessment

where, despite the transfer of Key Stage 2 SATs data, secondary teachers 'often spend too much time testing pupils at the beginning of Year 7' (Ofsted, 2002, p2). Ofsted also reported that although teachers in all schools recognised the importance of continuity in pupils' learning 'too little discussion took place between teachers about the standards of work expected of pupils and about approaches to teaching' (ibid, p2) and 'partner schools generally had little knowledge of their respective practices in assessing and recording progress and setting targets' (ibid, p4).

Diagram 4:

Differences between teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools

Primary	PEDAGOGY	Secondary
Primary ITT		Secondary ITT
Primary CPD		Secondary CPD
KS2 Curriculum		KS3 Curriculum
Primary Strategy		Secondary Strategy
Generalist		Specialist
Child-centred		Subject-based
Whole school		Academic/Pastoral
One teacher		Several teachers
SATs		CATs

By working together primary and secondary teachers can develop professional trust and confidence in, as well as knowledge of, each other's practice and thereby facilitate pupils' progress. The benefits of working together are well-recognised and include:

- professional dialogue, exchanging ideas on curriculum organisation and teaching and learning styles,
 - developing a better understanding of how pupils progress,
 - developing a common understanding of standards,
 - increasing confidence in colleagues' assessments,
 - breaking down barriers and stereotypes
 - reviewing and evaluating expectations
- (Key Stage 3 Strategy, Teaching and Learning website. DfES, 2005).

Although these benefits are to be found on a Key Stage 3 website for secondary teachers they are equally applicable to primary colleagues. However, the question still remains as to where the responsibility for initiating this collaboration lies.

3.3. Conceptual Framework

3.3.1. Continuity

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs continuity is a reoccurring theme for both the policy cycle and pedagogy in terms of linking the different phases of the education system as well as the different personnel within the teaching profession.

The pursuit of continuity in schooling has been the goal of educationalists, policy makers and teachers for many years as demonstrated by terminology such as 'curriculum continuity', 'continuity and progression' and 'transition'. By definition continuity implies an uninterrupted flow or as the Hadow Report (1931) stated 'a coherent whole with no sharp edges'. Yet by its very definition transfer between primary and secondary schools involves movement between buildings on different sites and between different teachers often with varying teaching styles. The identification of different bridges (Barber, 1999), discontinuities (Galton, 2003) or aspects (National Strategies, 2006) may overcomplicate the transfer process, particularly where the components appear to have equal status, as in the case of the London Challenge and National Strategies toolkits. Using these models teachers are required to make an overall 'best fit' judgement which may disguise a particular weakness. Rather than attempting to categorise the process into different parts Gorwood (1986) argues that our inability to deliver continuity from a curriculum designed to be continuous is largely due to 'fundamentally different philosophies of primary and secondary schooling. At the heart of the problem lies the basic issue of communication between teachers in the two phases' (ibid, p.18). The DfES Chief Adviser on School Standards, recognised that 'moving from primary to secondary school is a big thing in a pupil's life. I think

we have to work much harder at making sure there is a sense of progression and the child feels a sense of continuity' (Hackman, 2006).

There have been various attempts to structure continuity into the education system in England. Following the publication of the Plowden Report in 1967 several local authorities reorganised their school systems into three tiers of first, middle and high schools, based on the premise that eleven was not the most appropriate age for transfer to secondary school. This system did, however, require two points of transfer, with children being educated in different institutions from the ages of either 8-12 or 9-13. Several years later, Estelle Morris, as Secretary of State for Education, recognised that 'without progress in the middle years, the risk is that gains at primary level could be dissipated' (DfES, 2002, p2). However, her definition of the middle years 'between the ages of 11 and 14, known in the education system as Key Stage 3' tends to reinforce the on-going division between primary and secondary schools rather than 'build the bridge securely' (ibid, p2). In Victoria, Australia, the term 'middle years' is used conceptually rather than structurally, to describe Years 5-9 which link the final three years of primary and the first two years of secondary education. Furthermore, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and the Principles of Learning and Teaching (POLT) are cross-phase documents which promote continuity and foster collaboration between primary and secondary teachers.

The introduction of all-through schools can be seen as another structure to promote continuity with children remaining in the same school between the ages of 5 and 18. A presentation by the Specialist Schools Trust in 2005 identified a number of potential benefits including 'continuity of knowledge of pupils and the scope for developing a continuum of pedagogies' (DfES, 2005). 'At least 14 new academies are due to open in September 2008 as all-through schools' (The Times, 15th May 2007). However, Lesley Jones, at the DFES Academies Policy Unit, stated that there was 'no real strategic, philosophical or educational rationale for this development, with decisions being made at a local level' (June 2007).

The issue of continuity is also identified in The Every Child Matters agenda which recognises the importance for children to 'develop self-confidence to successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges' (DfES, 2004). Clearly primary schools have a role in supporting this development in respect of transfer to secondary school. However, this change also needs to be considered within the wider context of pupils' encounters with various status passages that are part of their transition to adulthood. The middle years are also the years of adolescence and transfer to secondary school can be viewed as a rite of passage. 'It's the classic big fish, little fish syndrome. One minute you're at the head of the school, confident of your surroundings, the next you are a minnow in an unfamiliar adult world where rooms and teachers change several times a day' (ASCL, 2005). A number of rituals or ceremonies can accompany the transfer process with concerns about 'head down the toilet', bullying by older students and, albeit several years ago, the change into long trousers for boys. In their report for the Special Schools Trust, Bob Burden and Sue Chedzoy (Exeter University, 2002) stress the role of primary teachers in helping to perpetuate these myths and building up pupils' apprehensions. 'The large majority of primary children expect discipline to be stricter, but this is not an expectation that was borne out. It emerged that this expectation had been set by their Year 6 teachers as a kind of sword of Damocles, a means of curbing any inclinations of demob fever' (The Guardian, 29th August, 2006). Viewing transfer as a rite of passage would support those secondary teachers who see transfer as an opportunity for students to have a 'fresh start'. A view which is supported by earlier research that shows that although 'children may be anxious about certain aspects of the transfer, once they arrive at their new schools they quickly discover that most of their fears were groundless' (Brown and Armstrong, 1986, pp29-46).

Although there is a need to build bridges to promote continuity between primary and secondary schools, there are also a number of barriers or as Galton (DfES, 2003) refers to them, 'discontinuities' associated with the transfer process. ILEA research (1986) found that the 'autonomy of individual schools and the diversity of their approaches were likely to impede efforts to achieve curriculum continuity' (ibid, 2). The National Curriculum and the

Literacy and Numeracy Strategies aimed to promote continuity, but the schemes of work for the different subject areas and subsequent support documentation have been key-stage specific and as such do not encourage cross-phase continuity. 'Developments such as Local Management of Schools and specialist schools as well as the increased emphasis in government policy on parental choice can also create barriers for local authorities seeking to manage collaboration between schools which have themselves become increasingly independent of such local control' (Beacon Council Research, 2001, Section 6). The provision of ring-fenced funding, such as that for Action Zones, has enabled cross-phase work, but there are often concerns about sustaining these activities, particularly where there are uncertainties about future finance. Furthermore, the vocabulary in the titles of research articles and education journals often portray transfer between schools as a potentially negative activity rather than a positive event, something to be overcome rather than an enjoyable experience: 'Changing Schools: the problems of transition (Maurice Galton, 1983), 'Changing Places' (ILEA, 1986); 'The Trouble with Transition' (Sebba, 2000); 'Lost in Transit' (Lenga, 2000); 'Bridging the Gap' (Waldon, 2001); 'Negotiating the transition from primary to secondary school' (Zeedyk, 2003); 'Minding the Gap' (Beresford, 2003); 'Moving up to big school' (Teachers, 2004), 'Playtime's over' (SHA, July 2005) and 'Surviving the Leap Year' (TES, 2007).

Transfer from primary to secondary school inevitably involves children having to adapt to a number of changes in terms of buildings, teachers and friends and as such this can represent a rite of passage. For some children this is a time when their attitudes to schooling also change for the worse and their academic progress may be adversely affected. This has prompted government agencies, local authorities and schools to promote various activities to foster continuity between primary and secondary schools. However, the many differences in terms of organisation and curriculum at a local level can in themselves become barriers to promoting continuity. It is here that the concept of 'middle years' could be better developed to link policy and practice to bridge the transfer gap.

3.3.2. Success Criteria

Success criteria are essential components of policies, being used to evaluate the extent to which proposed actions have been effective. However, in the context of transfer, success may have different interpretations depending on the role and status of the various stakeholders; the government, local authorities, schools and teachers as well as the clients within the process, namely parents and pupils.

SATs results at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 are used by the government as a quantifiable measure of the effectiveness of transfer in terms of the progress made by pupils, with both local authorities and schools being required to set targets for improvement.

For most parents initial success means obtaining the secondary school of their choice for their children. Local authorities also use parental satisfaction as an indicator of the success of their admissions policies in terms of the number of appeals they receive against the preferred allocation of school, a statistic now publicised in the national press at the beginning of March in each year.

Primary schools tend to evaluate the success of their transfer arrangements in terms of the social and emotional adjustment of their pupils to their new school environment using the evidence of parents or siblings of former pupils. Similarly the well-being of their students is often used by secondary schools as an indicator of the effectiveness of their induction procedures.

Success criteria are more often used by schools and local authorities as performance indicators when monitoring plans or policies. Attitudinal surveys are sometimes completed by pupils before and after transfer to ascertain their hopes and concerns. In terms of my own research, however, it is important to investigate not only whether policies are monitored, but also to examine the extent to which outcomes are evaluated and then interpreted by teachers and other stakeholders to inform future action.

3.4. Research hypotheses and questions

The underlying principles of policy making and the resultant teachers' practices, discussed in this theoretical and conceptual chapter, are central to the focus of my research and the issues of continuity and success are integral to the whole transfer process. These aspects of the study as well as my on-going involvement in the transfer process have led me to identify a number of hypotheses which I perceive as barriers to the successful implementation of transfer policies:

- Despite repeated references to its importance at a national level transfer appears to be given a low priority at a local level.
- Government strategies and initiatives will not automatically bring about improvement within the transfer process.
- Primary and secondary education are separate educational phases rather than a continuum, with separate initial training as well as different teaching methods, curriculum and support networks.
- Where transfer policies do exist they tend to focus on admissions arrangements and procedures for transfer rather than the academic progress of pupils. For transfer policies to be successful they need to give a higher priority to cross-phase teachers' practices by promoting dialogue between primary and secondary colleagues.

These hypotheses lead to the following specific research questions:

- (i) What is the priority given to transfer by local authorities?
- (ii) Do local authorities and/or schools need an additional motivation for the implementation of their policies to be successful?

- (iii) How do local authorities and schools encourage cross-phase collaboration?

- (iv) What is the focus of local transfer policies and to what extent do they actively promote cross-phase teachers' practices?

These questions will be examined by researching networks of primary and secondary schools with variations in the identification of transfer as a priority for their own development. More broadly, addressing these questions will assist the discussion of potential problems with the traditional pattern of educational provision in England based on separate key stages and the possibility that a paradigm shift in thinking and practice may be needed.

4. Context for the research

4.1. Introduction

This chapter positions the research within the context of national, local and school level policies and practices, previous research and my own personal professional experiences. I will evaluate the impact of legislation, government strategies and other educational initiatives on the transfer process in order to identify those factors which either determine or impede successful policy formulation and implementation. I will review previous research to compare and contrast the different foci in relation to my own intended outcomes. The whole of my research draws upon extensive personal professional experience at local, regional, national and international levels.

4.2. National context

The Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988 heralded the introduction of the National Curriculum, which was expected to have a positive impact on curriculum continuity and progression by promoting the same curriculum and administering the same national tests in all schools. It was anticipated that secondary teachers would know what their pupils had covered in the primary phase and would have a consistent measure of their attainment, even if they came from different schools. Since that time other legislation and educational initiatives have made repeated references to the importance of transfer between primary and secondary school.

The planning for the National Curriculum was unambiguous in its pursuit of continuity. 'A National Curriculum will also help children's progression between primary and secondary school and will help to secure the continuity and coherence which is too often lacking in what they are taught' (DES, 1987, p.4). However, eight years later a review of the National Curriculum (DfEE, 1995) reported 'a loss of momentum in pupils' progress between the end of Key Stage 2 and the beginning of Key Stage 3' and concluded that 'improvements in continuity will not flow from these arrangements as a matter of course'. Primary schools often felt that their achievements were not recognised and that secondary schools did not take sufficient account of the

progress that pupils had made. Secondary schools, on the other hand, have to plan for pupils coming from a range of different primary schools and ensure that the curriculum in Year 7 builds on what may be a wide range of experiences. Sir Ron Dearing, Chair of the National Curriculum Group, hoped that the document 'Promoting Continuity between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3' (SCAA, 1996) would 'prove useful in planning a smooth transition between schools and promote continuity in pupils' learning as they move from primary to secondary school' (ibid, p3). However, he also recognised that 'this is not a new problem and we need to make progress towards its solution' (ibid, p3).

In 2001 the government published 'Schools: Building on Success' (DfES, 2001). In a discrete section on 'Transition to Secondary School' the inadequacies of the transfer process were clearly acknowledged:

'Far too many 11 year olds have lost momentum in the last few weeks of primary school and over the summer holidays before they start secondary school. The result has been that by the end of the first year in secondary school many pupils have made little progress and as many as 30% actually achieve lower standards than in their last year at primary school (DfES, 2001, p40).

The Green Paper provided a list of measures which the government had already introduced to 'address what, for the last generation or more, has been neglected or swept aside as an intractable problem' (ibid, p40). These included the introduction of a common transfer form, the provision of summer schools, the development of transition modules in English and mathematics and the provision of opportunities for secondary teachers to observe the skills of their primary colleagues (ibid, p41). There were also plans to develop further improvements by ensuring better use of the second half of the summer term in primary schools, providing joint training for primary and secondary teachers, improving the tracking of individual pupils' progress when they change schools and raising the expectations of both students and teachers at Key Stage 3.

Later the same year 'Schools achieving Success' proposed to raise standards in secondary schools through the introduction of a Key Stage 3 Strategy.

Quoting the research of Galton, Gray and Ruddock (1999), the claims of the earlier Green Paper were re-iterated: 'schools increasingly make sure that pupils are prepared socially for the move but they have been less successful in managing the academic progression' (DfES, 2001, Para 2.24). The Key Stage 3 Strategy, which aimed to build on the success of the Primary Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, was introduced nationally in the summer of 2001. From the outset one of its four key principles was progression – 'strengthening the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 by ensuring progression in teaching and learning' (Ofsted, 2003, p1). Evaluation of the first year of the pilot highlighted the use of information from primary schools and assessment as 'common weaknesses' in secondary schools (Ofsted, 2002, p4). The evaluations of the second and third years of the Strategy reported that 'secondary teachers generally know little about the skills and knowledge pupils bring with them' (Ofsted, 2003, p3); 'curriculum continuity remains a weakness' and 'there is still much to do to enable more pupils to make appropriate progress from the start of their secondary school' (Ofsted, 2004, p5).

In 2002 Ofsted produced a report 'Changing Schools - an evaluation of the effectiveness of transfer arrangements at age 11' which concluded that:

'Overall, schools were making limited progress in tackling the need for improvements in curriculum continuity by ensuring pupils made better progress in Year 7 and in preparing them for the changes they would encounter in their new school' (Ofsted 2002, Summary).

This report recognised that the government had set 'ambitious targets' for Key Stage 3 in 2004 and beyond, but stressed that the progress of schools towards these targets was 'likely to be restricted while weaknesses in continuity and progression between Key Stages 2 and 3 remained' (ibid, p11). Schools were reminded of the specific resources that were available: the frameworks for teaching, training for teachers, funding for summer schools, the new transition units and materials for catch-up programmes. Although these steps 'offer grounds for optimism, much needs to be done if the weaknesses in this report are to be remedied' (ibid, p11).

'Every Child Matters – Change for Children' (2004) set out the national framework for local programmes to support the well-being of children. All five outcomes have clear implications in respect of transfer:

- 'Be Healthy' - mental and emotional health,
- 'Be Safe' – bullying and discrimination,
- 'Enjoy and Achieve' – attend school, achieve stretching national educational standards at primary and secondary school,
- Economic well-being – ready for employment.
- 'Making a Positive Contribution' – develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges.

This fifth link is further strengthened by its inspection criteria which include support for children and young people at 'key transition points in their lives' (DfES, 2004, Outcomes Framework).

Two other government White Papers make specific reference to the importance of the transfer process. The 'Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners' (DfES, 2004) acknowledged that 'the failure to make a good transition from primary school is one of the biggest causes of poor achievement in secondary school' (ibid, p58). It set as one of its long-term aims to provide a 'seamless transition from primary to secondary school' (ibid, p60) by introducing a more co-ordinated admission procedure, making sure better information was passed between primary and secondary schools and promoting new approaches to managing pupils' learning. 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All – More Choice for Parents and Pupils' (DfES, 2005). contained a sub-section on Transfer and Transition which recognised that moving 'from one to school to another can be particularly challenging' (ibid, 4.47). It emphasised the importance of teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 and the role of Learning Mentors in 'de-mystifying' secondary school. The White Paper stresses the need to focus on the progress of every child through 'personalised learning' and better use of 'assessment for learning' (ibid, 4.50). The government wanted all schools to learn the lessons from those that had made excellent progress in improving transfer and urged The National

Strategies to 'assess the impact of their efforts to date, to identify priorities for improvement and to disseminate the best sources for further support' (ibid, 4.51).

The task of implementing these policies lay with The National Strategies consultants, employed by Capita working on behalf of the DfES. In 2002 Transition Units were introduced using teaching objectives drawn from the primary and Key Stage 3 Frameworks for teaching English and mathematics as well as information provided by the Statutory Transfer Form. In 2004 The National Strategies distributed copies of 'Curriculum Continuity' to all secondary schools. This document aimed to ensure that pupils new to secondary school 'get off to a flying start' (DfES, 2004, p5) and re-emphasised the role of transition units. The National Strategies Annual Plan for 2006/07 contained a discrete priority 'Strengthening Transfers and Transition' (Priority D). During that year two Regional Advisers were appointed with specific responsibility for transfer and a self-evaluation toolkit was developed. The guidance notes to accompany the toolkit acknowledge that 'Ofsted identifies discontinuity of learning in 50% of schools as pupils transfer to secondary education' (DfES, 2006). In 2007 two pilot studies were introduced, led by the Regional Advisers, one with a national focus using the toolkit and the other in London to develop a Quality Mark award based on Pupil and Parent Pledges, which would recognise good practice in transfer and transition.

In addition to specific references in government legislation and particular strands of work undertaken by The National Strategies, there have also been a number of other national initiatives which have provided opportunities for improved cross-phase collaboration. Since 1994 Specialist Secondary Schools have encouraged partner primary schools to support their applications with offers of facilities and staff. In 2000 The Excellence in Cities (EiC) Initiative promoted Action Zones and Learning Mentors as two of its strands, both with a direct focus on transfer. All secondary schools now have a school sport co-ordinator who works with a family of partner primary schools

as part of the PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSCL), launched in 2002. The Extended Schools programme started in 2005, as part of the Every Child Matters agenda, offers further opportunities for clusters of primary and secondary schools to share resources and work together. In September 2007 the government announced that fourteen of the new academies and a number of the sixty-nine trust schools that plan to open were expected to provide an 'all-through' approach (The Times, 15th May 2007). Lord Adonis, the Schools Minister, reported that the all-through approach to education had proved extremely successful in the private sector where secondary schools have their own 'junior prep schools'. The article also reported that 'a number of sponsors wanted their academies to have a primary dimension so that they can produce more radical change by educating children from the ages of 3 to 18'.

In terms of a national context not only was transfer between primary and secondary schools identified as one of four principles in the Key Stage Strategy 3, but repeated references to its important role in improving pupils' progress have been made in other legislation and educational initiatives throughout the last twenty years. The next section will review how this national profile has been reflected at a local level.

4.3. Local and regional context

'Education in Schools' (DES, 1977) acknowledged that there were substantial problems at the points of transfer and argued that the whole problem needed 'the urgent attention of LEAs'.

All local authorities are statutorily required to publish information about transfer procedures to parents, co-ordinate admission arrangements to their schools and manage any subsequent appeals. When the National Curriculum was introduced in 1988 the responsibility for passing on information to secondary schools lay with primary headteachers. In 2002, when an electronic version of the transfer form was introduced, local authorities assumed this role.

The 2005 White Paper required all local authorities to produce a 'Parent's Guide' with information about their local secondary schools and the arrangements for managing transfer. It proposed that 'the role of the local authority will change from being a provider of education to being its local commissioner and champion of parent choice' (DfES, 2005, p5). The local authority would now be responsible for providing 'better information for all parents when their child enters secondary school and dedicated choice advisers would help the least well-off parents' (ibid, 5.7). Sheffield, for example, appointed choice advisers, while Hampshire used the funding to provide a more co-ordinated service using existing agencies such as Educational Welfare Officers, social workers and home-school liaison officers. The London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Enfield and Redbridge are currently trialling the appointment of Primary Support Advisers, funded directly by the DfES, to work with the parents of those children who have been identified to be at risk at the point of transfer. In September 2007 all local authorities made provision for an on-line admissions system with supporting documentation also available via the internet.

All local authorities employ consultants who support the implementation of The Primary and Secondary National Strategies, with oversight of the transfer process often being within the remit of a secondary strategy manager. 'Changing Schools' reported that local authorities 'welcomed the introduction of the KS3 Strategy as a means of improving progression between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3', but they were doing 'little to monitor or evaluate the impact of transfer arrangements or curriculum continuity projects' (Ofsted 2002, p10). As a consequence of these findings an 'example implementation programme' was made available through the National Strategies for local authorities to structure support for those schools which needed to strengthen transfer. 'It will most effective when both primary and secondary consultants work together to provide support' (DfES, National Strategies website, 2007).

The role of the local authority in supporting the transfer process received national coverage in March 2007 when Brighton Council decided to re-organise its admissions procedures and introduce a lottery system for

oversubscribed schools (Times Educational Supplement, 2nd March, 2007). Similar proposals have been considered by Norfolk and North Somerset in an attempt to create specific catchment areas for their secondary schools (The Guardian, 3rd March, 2007).

However, the priority and status afforded to transfer at a local level varies widely, often dependent on an additional pressure over and above the requirements of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. In recent years, several local authorities, including Bromley, Newcastle, Norfolk, Northampton and West Sussex, have re-organised from a three-tier system to a two-tier primary and secondary school arrangement, often following Ofsted's criticism of their Key Stage 3 results. In Haverhill, Suffolk, where progress for pupils (in three-tier schools) is 'significantly below the national average', the County Council are considering the alternative provision of an all-through school. Local authorities which have changed to the two-tier system 'appear to be making improvements more quickly' (Extracts from a letter to parents of Castle Manor School, Haverhill, in January 2007).

In the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames councillors raised concerns about the low level of Key Stage 3 results which led to a review of both transfer arrangements and the Year 7 curriculum. In Caerphilly, Wales, the abolishment of SATs prompted the local authority to promote cross-phase networks to exchange information about pupils, while in Sandwell and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham the high number of Year 6 pupils transferring to secondary schools in neighbouring authorities provided the additional motivation to review their respective transfer procedures.

In 2003 Stephen Twigg, the Minister for London Schools, in a letter to local authorities, identified transition from primary to secondary as a 'very specific challenge'. Each London Borough received 'a modest investment' to help transition which in the case of Waltham Forest amounted to £329,000. This funding continued for four years until 2006. The guidance which accompanied the funding stated that it 'must' be allocated to school budgets, 'should' be targeted on those schools with the greatest need and 'may' be used to

support specific innovations. Most boroughs made an allocation direct to secondary schools, others such as Ealing used the funding to appoint transition co-ordinators in all their schools and in Hammersmith and Fulham to appoint Transition Learning Mentors. In 2004 additional funding was provided by London Challenge for Transition Booklets (Literacy and Numeracy) which were distributed to all primary schools for Year 6 pupils to complete after SATs, then take to their secondary schools and continue at the beginning of Year 7. Similar Transition Units were developed in Bristol and in Sheffield where they are also available to improve transfer between Foundation Stage and Year 1 as well as infant to junior school. The London Challenge also worked with four Boroughs, Barking and Dagenham, Hillingdon, Merton and Wandsworth to 'develop innovative solutions to ensure effective pupil transfer' and Mouchel Parkman was engaged to 'investigate good practice at LEA and school level'. The findings of their 'Transition Project' were distributed to every school in London in October 2005. The report contained examples of transfer activities across London and an evaluation tool for schools to benchmark their own transition practices. In 2007 six London Boroughs, Barnet, Brent, Islington, Southwark, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth, were selected to develop the Pupil and Parent Pledges and Quality Mark award being developed by The National Strategies. At the same time seven other local authorities, Coventry, Gateshead, Hampshire, Leeds, Salford, Suffolk and Swindon, were identified to work on a national pilot to promote good practice by developing the use of The National Strategies toolkit.

4.4. Schools' context

Despite the apparent satisfaction of their students, secondary schools themselves are 'not building well enough on what their new pupils had achieved in Year 6 and they had not set targets for improving attainment during Year 7' (Ofsted, 2002, p2). In its evaluation of the third year of The Secondary National Strategy Ofsted reported that 'transfer and the use of data remain unsatisfactory in nearly a quarter of the schools, particularly those which admit pupils from large numbers of primary schools' and 'curriculum continuity still remains a key weakness in half of the schools visited' (Ofsted, 2005). The report did, however, acknowledge that some

successful projects had been established by 'clusters' of schools. Most of the 134 Education Action Zones (EAZ), established in 2000 were hosted by a secondary school working in partnership with its partner primary schools and as such they provided the opportunity, and funding, to promote cross-phase collaboration. Evaluations of the outcomes of these Zones contain lots of examples of successful transfer related projects, including joint professional development opportunities. However, as noted in 'Changing Schools' few, if any, of these initiatives had had an impact beyond the schools that developed them and some had been discontinued in schools in which they were originally established (Ofsted, 2002).

Outside of Action Zones and other formal networks the pre-transfer arrangements in primary schools are usually managed by the class teacher and comprise awareness-raising to prepare Year 6 pupils to the changes that will take place, accompanying pupils on visits to secondary schools and, where they are used, administering the transition units. 'Changing Schools' reported that primary teachers had 'limited knowledge of the Key Stage 3 curriculum' (Ofsted, 2002, p6) which primary headteachers attributed to the demands of implementing their own national initiatives.

In secondary schools the organisation of the transfer process is traditionally managed by the member of staff who has oversight of Year 7, often a different person each year as the head of year remains with the same cohort of students throughout the school. Secondary schools usually host a pre-transfer visit in the summer term and organise induction on arrival in September. Reference to transfer as a priority in School Improvement Plans usually requires an additional motivation such as falling role or lower than average attainment. In some such schools links are often made with Year 5 pupils in primary schools as a recruitment strategy.

4.5. Previous research

Transfer is a much researched topic with studies varying in extent and design. Some major national projects provide evidence ahead of government legislation. Local studies carried out by or for local authorities as well as

school based research and international comparisons aim to inform future practice. The following review will enable the focus of my study to be more clearly positioned within the historical context of previous research.

(i) National research

The earliest research focussed on the anxiety of pupils caused by the transfer process and possible solutions. Murdoch (1966) analysed post-transfer pupil essays in a qualitative study about pupils' experiences of transfer. Nisbet and Entwistle (1969) attempted to establish the best age at which to transfer to secondary school in order to minimise problems. Changing not simply from one school to another, but from a primary school environment to the totally different culture of the secondary school is often thought to present many children with social and emotional problems. However, research by Youngman and Lunzer (1977) suggested that most children cope successfully and settle in without too much difficulty.

The ORACLE transfer study (1975-80) is the major research project in this field. Pupils were observed for two years at their primary schools and then followed into their new secondary school. The main focus of the study was on the curriculum; the way teachers delivered it and the manner in which pupils responded to their teaching. These observations confirmed previous claims that, in general, there was very little attempt to maintain continuity between the two phases in respect of either curriculum content or teaching methods.

Analysis of the research by Galton and Willcocks (1983), Brown and Armstrong (1986) and later by Sutton (2000) and Zeedyk (2003) identified lists of common factors relating to what children were looking forward to and/or were worried about when they moved to secondary school. Some of these factors have subsequently been adapted to provide resources for teachers as part of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Transition Project (See Appendix 2).

Much of the early research focussed on what is now referred to as 'the social bridge' and confirmed the early outcomes of Brown and Armstrong (1986)

who found that although children were anxious about certain aspects of the transfer, once they arrive at their new schools they quickly discover that most of their fears were groundless. However, although these studies suggest that the negative effects of transfer wear off reasonably quickly for the majority of pupils, they also identified that the impact on their academic progress was more long lasting, although Youngman (1978) was unable to put forward detailed explanations of why this might be so.

Schools have tried to resolve the concerns relating to pupils' anxiety by reviewing their arrangements for the induction of students in Year 7 which may, or may not, include procedures for curriculum continuity. Solutions in relation to improving pupils' attainment are more complex when, as previously identified, there are considerably more teachers involved in Year 7. It is this single factor of students encountering more teachers in secondary school compared to the one-class teacher in primary school that prompts the need for consistency in cross-phase teachers' practice.

Since this early research was undertaken, major developments have taken place in the education system in England. Although Weston (1992) found evidence of a range of cross-phase initiatives, curriculum continuity appeared to be a low priority in the schools that were visited and concluded that 'it cannot be assumed that the National Curriculum will by itself ensure continuity across the 5-16 age range' (ibid, 170). Hargreaves and Galton (2002) in 'Transfer from the Primary Classroom - 20 Years On' also reported little or no improvement in the transfer process despite the introduction of the National Curriculum.

Furthermore, one of the conclusions in 'Changing Schools' was that 'schools were making limited progress' in terms of curriculum continuity (Ofsted, 2002, p11). The report also found that there was generally little, if any, discussion taking place between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers about preparing pupils for the changes and little knowledge about each others' curriculum or teaching styles. There would appear to be little improvement since Parkyn (1962), suggested that 'the essence of continuity problems lie in the nineteenth

century origins of primary and secondary schools' which were 'conceived of as giving qualitatively different kinds of education, with different aims, different curricula, different teaching methods, and a different spirit'. Forty years later my own research is seeking to investigate the role of cross-phase collaboration as a means of improving the transfer process.

As discussed previously it was the research evidence of Galton, Gray and Ruddock (1999) demonstrating a decline in academic progress at the time of transfer which prompted the introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Lenga and Ogden also found there still remains 'an ever increasing concern that transfer from the end of KS2 to KS3 generates a disruption that can hinder progression or even promote regression in pupils' learning during these important transition years' (Lenga and Ogden, 2000, p1).

The actual transfer of pupil data from primary schools and its subsequent use in secondary schools, part of the bureaucratic bridge, can also be a barrier to successful transfer. Gorwood (1986) reported that one primary headteacher discovered that many secondary school teachers never looked at the transfer documents that were passed on from primary schools. Research by Schagen (NFER, 1999, p55) also identified that 'transfer information was predominantly only seen by heads of year (in secondary schools) and not by subject teachers'.

Schagen and Kerr (1999) concluded that the introduction of the National Curriculum had 'significantly' promoted curriculum continuity at the Key Stage 2 and 3 interface, but a number of negative factors also emerged. The flexibility of approach within the National Curriculum meant that there were differences between primary schools in terms of emphasis, mode of delivery and, in some cases, choice of topic. Furthermore, due to varying expertise in different subjects, some primary schools might cover topics in more or less depth in relation to their secondary colleagues. The evidence from Schagen and Kerr's case-study schools suggested that initiatives such as cross-phase projects, teaching and observation are becoming less common due to pressures of time and money. Lenga and Ogden (2000, p3) also found that

'the lack of mutual professional esteem between primary and secondary practitioners is a serious threat to ensuring that pupils experience a seamless path of learning opportunity as they move on in their school career'.

In 1999 the Department of Education and Employment commissioned a 'literature and effective practice review' into the effects of transfer and transition on pupils' progress (DfEE Research Brief, 131). The need for a better balance between social and academic concerns at transfer is highlighted in the review. It also recommended that attention should be given to the development of 'extended induction sessions' (ibid, p26) to help pupils cope with discontinuities in teaching approaches'.

As mentioned previously, various commentators refer to the five 'bridges' in relation to the transfer process, a term first used by Michael Barber when adviser to the government in 1999 (See Appendix 3). Ruth Sutton (2000) explains these bridges as a means of classifying the wide range of issues associated with transfer. Three of the bridges, the 'bureaucratic', the 'personal' and the 'curriculum' bridges appear to be relatively easy to overcome, but seem to have little positive impact on their own. However, Sutton found that the 'pedagogical' and 'management of learning' bridges could make a real difference, but were more problematic to implement. The 'pedagogical' bridge refers to the development of a shared understanding between primary and secondary teachers of how children are taught and how learning occurs, not just what they are taught, the distinction first made by Maurice Galton in 1983. Almost twenty years later, the issues surrounding transfer were considered to be as much about differences in approach and expectations as they were about mismatches in the curriculum. 'Key Stage 3 teachers hold the keys to solving the problems of transition' (Waldon, 2001, p159).

In January 2000 the DfES commissioned a second research project which aimed to build on the previous review (Brief No 131, 1999) by investigating further the 'dips in attitude, engagement and progress at key transition points' (Brief No 443, 2003, p1). The evidence of both of these reviews was used to

inform the White Paper 'Schools achieving Success', the forerunner of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. A copy of the former DfES Research Brief (No 443) was also included as an appendix to the DfES National Strategies document 'Curriculum Continuity' which was circulated to all secondary schools in 2004.

Research at a national level has highlighted the negative impact which transfer can have on pupil progress. Various differences between the provision and support for primary and secondary teachers have been identified which support one of my earlier hypotheses that the different phases are viewed separately rather than as a continuum. My research will investigate the extent to which transfer activities undertaken at a local or school level have, if at all, been influenced by national policies as well as the opportunities and barriers which exist to promote or hinder cross-phase dialogue.

(ii) Local research

A study undertaken by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) in 1986 investigated ways in which transfer could be improved for pupils, parents and teachers. The major changes identified were the number of teachers, the size of the school, self-organisation and moving rooms, timetable organisation and subjects, changes in relationships and friendships, change of status, different teaching methods, school ethos, rules and homework. Teachers in both phases identified the same major factors. 'Thus, teachers' perceptions of the problems faced by children during secondary transfer were similar, irrespective of the sector in which they taught' (ILEA 1986: 1). It is interesting to note at this stage that although the original question was open-ended in respect of changes, the outcomes have been interpreted as problems.

The Birmingham Education Department (1975) explored the organisational features of the transfer process and found little evidence of liaison between primary and secondary schools. The popularity of certain subjects was strongly associated with the liking for an individual teacher and where there was a hiatus in progress, it seemed to be heavily influenced by the relationship with the new teacher.

Research by Suffolk Education Department (1996 and 2001) supported the earlier findings of Galton and Willcocks (1983) by showing that pupils' performance dips after transfer and that their rate of progress also slows. This has subsequently been corroborated by inspection evidence from Ofsted (2002).

Local authorities can apply to the DCSF for 'Beacon' status in recognition of good practice. Suffolk and North Lincolnshire have had such status in respect of transfer and transition and the Beacon Council Scheme has published two research papers on the subject. The first report, produced by the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 2001, aimed to identify effective practice in enabling transition and the value that could be added by local authorities. Within the context of effective liaison at the Key Stage 2/3 interface three main foci were identified; pastoral, administrative and curriculum. The latter focus had two distinct dimensions - the first relates to the avoidance of repeating topics and the second addresses the potential change in teaching and learning styles. The second report 'Gleams from the Beacon' (EMIE, 2002) looked at the transfer practices in the seven local authorities which had applied for the award of Beacon status in 2001, namely Suffolk, North Lincolnshire, Dorset, Leicester City, Oxfordshire, Redbridge and St. Helens. A section of this report (6.3) gives examples of activities which foster continuity, such as summer schools, classroom observation, inter-school visiting, tracking individual pupils and the exchange of teachers.

Several local authorities have documented their own transfer experiences including Hampshire (1999), Sunderland (2000), Portsmouth (2002), Gateshead (2003), London (2005) and Newham (2006). Hampshire described their work on improving transition with two pyramids of schools, while the Sunderland report described a number of 'bridging projects'. In Portsmouth a 'Progress in Learning Project' was established in 2000 with the intention of 'all schools working in partnerships to build on existing good practice and develop new practice in transfer and transition'. Gateshead conducted a 'themed visit' to a sample of schools to highlight key features, identify examples of good

practice and provide schools with a self-evaluation framework against which they could review their own practice. The London Challenge report shared good practice examples in London Boroughs and produced a self-evaluation tool which could be used by schools and local authorities to assess their own practices.

The research undertaken in various local areas demonstrate that local authorities are well-placed to co-ordinate and support transfer, particularly in facilitating cross-phase links. My own research will investigate the underlying motivations to promote transfer as a priority within the case-study local authorities and the ways in which they encourage, or otherwise, cross-phase collaboration.

(iii) School-based research

In the 1970s, as the comprehensive education system expanded, schools tended to deal with the issue of transfer in one of two ways. A few innovative schools adopted a continuity model, believing that pupils would adjust more easily if the ethos in the post-transfer year remained similar to that of the previous primary school. In 2001 at Oakwood Technology School in Rotherham a Foundation Studies course was taught to Year 7 students by the same teacher for about a third of the week. Other schools argued that transfer was a rite of passage marking the emergence of adolescence and thereby needing a distinct shift in the pattern of schooling. One study focusing on transition in Design and Technology between Key Stages 2 and 3 used contrasting metaphors to draw comparisons between what it termed 'building bridges and bungee jumping' (Spendlove, 2001). On the one hand, there were 'planned links between two stable, well planned phases of education with students transferring with effective and useful information across the divide', whereas the bungee jumping approach is one where 'all parties jump from one phase to the next, assuming that everything will be alright and hope for the best' (ibid, p155).

As described earlier, Action Zones provided an infrastructure for secondary schools to collaborate with partner primary schools and the DfES publication

'In-Zone' contained examples of successful transfer projects between 2001 and 2005. Some Zones, for example, the Norwood Achievement Partnership in the London Borough of Lambeth, published the outcomes of their own transfer experiences. Here one secondary and six primary schools established a professional learning community and the report outlined the transfer arrangements and the experiences of a group of students throughout Year 7 ('Little Fish and Small Fry', 2003). Examples of other school-based research are to be found on Maurice Galton's 'Transfer and Transitions Project' website at Homerton University which was set up in 1999.

School-based transfer activities are usually initiated by secondary schools based on a particular subject area, more recently linked to the school's specialist status. My own research aims to investigate the extent to which these activities are successful in achieving cross-phase collaboration and how, if at all, they have been influenced by local and/or national policies.

(iv) International comparisons

International comparisons with the English system of education are complicated because transfer takes place at different stages of a child's schooling dependent on local authority arrangements. Research in the USA by Anderson (2000) demonstrates the shift in understanding from an assumption that problems associated with transfer were a symptom of developmental difficulties to an acknowledgement of the contribution that institutional discontinuities can make on different groups of pupils. In Norway, a study of pupils' attitudes and perceptions of transfer reveals similar social concerns and anxieties about how pupils settle into the new environment. What is interesting, however, is that although changes in teaching are noted there is not the same level of repetition of work previously covered in the primary phase that appears to be so often reported in English secondary schools. In the state of Victoria in Australia, although children transfer from primary to secondary schools, the concept of 'middle years' education is cross-phase covering Years 5 to 9 with the Victoria Essential Learning Standards (VELS) providing the curriculum content and assessment criteria

from Early Years (Reception - Year 4), through Middle Years to Later Years (Years 10-11).

By contrast in England the National Curriculum is aligned to key stages with separate support documents for primary and secondary schools. My research aims to investigate the extent to which teachers in primary and secondary schools are aware of each others' documentation, particularly in terms of cross-phase pedagogical continuity.

4.6. Personal professional experience

The context for my research begins with my own professional experience of working directly with schools as Director of two Education Action Zones (EAZ), where improving transfer was a specific priority. Later I applied my expertise at a local level within the London Borough of Waltham Forest, at a national level as a consultant with The National Strategies and finally internationally on a study tour in Australia.

Action Zones were one of several strands within the government's Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative, introduced in 2000, which along with Learning Mentors and Gifted and Talented (G and T) provided explicit opportunities for cross-phase collaboration between primary and secondary schools. Since January 2001, I have organised a range of activities aimed at promoting cross-phase collaboration between twenty-two primary and secondary schools within the Zones: training days; curriculum, management and learning groups, an annual art exhibition and science challenge for pupils, opportunities for primary and secondary teachers to observe each others' practice and visits by Year 6 teachers to track their former pupils into Year 7. From the outset these activities had clearly stated objectives aimed at promoting transfer by enhancing teachers' subject development, improving learning and sharing resources.

As the Action Zones comprised secondary, infant, junior, primary schools, nursery and special schools there were opportunities for cross-phase involvement between Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key

Stage 3. I have also had experience of a wide range of educational initiatives including amalgamations (infant and junior schools), networks of schools (Federations, Primary Strategy Learning Networks, Secondary LIGs (Leadership Incentive Grant), School Sport families, specialist schools, extended schools and Advanced Skilled Teachers.

Directors of Action Zones across London met regularly to discuss common interests, the main focus being transfer. This led to my involvement with the West London Network (Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham) and invitations to speak at annual conferences in Enfield and Ealing.

In 2005 I joined the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Transition Project which brought me into contact with nine different local authorities across England, which in turn led to further research links in West Sussex and Gateshead as well as invitations to present my research at conferences in Sandwell and Northampton.

The success of the Zones and the development of my own knowledge through my on-going research led me to take on a lead role in developing a Borough Strategy for Transfer and Transition in 2004. This enabled me to extend the range of activities to involve seventeen secondary and sixty primary schools. I have undertaken an audit of provision within Waltham Forest, devised a questionnaire for Learning Mentors to use with pupils as they move between Years 6 and 7, facilitated a regular Transfer Network and organised Annual Conferences.

The research for this thesis builds on my earlier doctoral research. For the Methods of Enquiry Modules I explored the role of secondary teachers who were directly involved in the induction and transfer arrangements (Martin, 2003). For the Institutional Focussed Study I investigated the extent to which secondary teachers knew about, and subsequently valued and used, information relating to the prior attainment of their Year 7 students (Martin, 2005). This current research extends the range of these previous foci and increases the number of participant groups.

4.7. Summary

Transfer has been a permanent feature of the English educational system since the introduction of separate primary and secondary schools. Prior to the 1944 Education Act, the vast majority of children completed their formal education in a single elementary school from the age of five until they left. The raising of the school-leaving age to age 14, in 1918, led to calls for a different type of education to be offered to older pupils. This view found expression in R.H. Tawney's report for the Labour Party, *Secondary Education for All*, and also in the 1926 Hadow Report, *The Education of the Adolescent*, which called for distinct phases of primary schooling (to age 11), followed by transfer to a secondary school. The economic crisis of the 1930s, followed by the outbreak of the Second World War, meant that all-age schools continued into the 1940s and, in a few instances, they did not altogether disappear until the comprehensive reorganisations of the 1960s.

It is also clear that, despite the introduction of the National Curriculum, the implementation of a Key Stage 3 Strategy, improvements in data transfer and increased cross-phase collaboration, the more recent issue concerning the lack of progress made by some children still persists. Various initiatives, promoted at both national and local levels, have led to some improvements in curriculum continuity. My research will investigate whether there have been any developments in policy and practice relating to pedagogical continuity, first identified as an issue by the ORACLE Project in 1983, and the extent to which activities, such as transition units, have facilitated collaboration between primary and secondary schools. Previous research has shown that transfer projects are becoming less common because of pressures of time and money. My research will investigate the priority afforded to transfer at a local level and discuss how this could be better supported nationally. Previous research has also demonstrated that local authorities are well placed to co-ordinate and support transfer, particularly in facilitating cross-phase links. My research will investigate the extent to which these transfer activities undertaken at a school level have, if at all, been influenced by local and/or national policies.

5. Methodology, research design and methods of enquiry

5.1. Introduction

This chapter of the study sets out the rationale for the research design, the methodologies employed to investigate the research questions, the methods of data collection and the analysis used to interpret the findings. The practical and ethical issues in undertaking the research are also explored.

The study is a qualitative investigation of the processes and outcomes of pupil transfer between primary and secondary schools as they emerge in relation to policy and teachers' practice in Years 6 and 7. The research element of the thesis uses case studies to gather information on the views, perceptions and practices of a number of educationalists and teachers working in two different localities. The findings from the case studies are supplemented by evidence contextualised by a review of relevant documentation at national, local and school levels. The findings are further discussed in the light of additional evidence gathered from interviews with personnel in national and regional organisations as well as through my own on-going professional experiences.

Underlying the subjectivist aspects of the epistemology is the understanding that research into people cannot follow the patterns of hard positivist science. As Crotty (1998) found teachers are not objects to be studied externally and mechanically by the researcher, but participants in a social process who can reflect and act upon their experiences, as well as interact with the researcher. To understand a situation researchers need to understand the context because situations affect behaviour and perspectives and vice versa as La Compte and Preissle (1993) stated 'behaviour and, thereby, data are socially situated, context-related, context-dependent and context-rich' (in Cohen et al, 2000). This is particularly relevant to my own study where by focussing on a specific aspect of their experiences the research could influence teachers' practice by promoting a greater awareness of the transfer process. The study will, therefore, adopt a constructionist, interpretivist approach to human enquiry having a combination of qualitative, naturalistic and ethnographic features, plus some strategic quantitative aspects.

My study has several characteristics of naturalist enquiry:

- **working within the teachers' natural setting, as 'context is heavily implicated in meaning',**
 - **human beings are the research instrument,**
 - **qualitative analysis will be the main methodology, although some quantitative methods will also be used,**
 - **purposeful sampling, based on teachers directly involved with students in the transfer process,**
 - **the study draws on knowledge, intuition and feelings based on my own previous experience,**
 - **theories will emerge based on perceived hypotheses or hunches; for example, that most secondary teachers do not have much, if any, knowledge of their students' prior learning,**
 - **no boundaries on the study, other than the timeframe,**
 - **trustworthiness and its components replace more conventional views of reliability and validity, though these have their appropriate places.**
- (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, in Cohen et al, 2000, p138).**

One difference, however, is that the basic framework of the design was planned in advance and did not emerge as the study progressed, as in most naturalistic enquiry, although some changes to the framework did occur in response to the pilot research tool. I had clearly defined timescales for this research and specific lines of enquiry which I intended to pursue. However, I believe that the methodology which I have adopted is valid as well as internally consistent and reliable.

Le Compte and Preissle (1993) suggest that ethnographic research is a process involving methods of enquiry, an outcome and as 'vivid a reconstruction as possible of the group being studied' (ibid; p235). My own study had some of the key elements that they suggest constitute an ethnographic approach, namely:

- **the world view of the participants is investigated and represented using their definition of the situation,**

- meanings are accorded to phenomena by both the researcher and the participant; the process of research is hermeneutic, uncovering meanings,
- empirical data is gathered in its naturalistic setting, unlike laboratories or in controlled settings, although some additional evidence will be gathered outside the naturalistic setting, for example, through interviews,
- there is a move from description and data to inference, explanation, suggestions of causation and theory generation as hunches and hypotheses were investigated.

This type of research tends, therefore, to be 'more concerned with description rather than prediction, induction rather than deduction, generation rather than verification of theory, construction rather than enumeration and subjectivities rather than objective knowledge' (Cohen et al, 2000, p139). Furthermore, it is ideographic and concerned with a particular time and place, with emphasis upon specificity of its findings. The outcomes of the first year of secondary educational experience are, however, measurable in terms of the attainment of students and the progress that they have made since primary school. This evidence is available in the form of national test data at the end of Years 6 and 9. My investigation, therefore, has a quantitative element in respect of teachers' knowledge and use of data in relation to students' attainment.

Observational techniques are used extensively as a feature of ethnographic research to acquire data on real-life settings. The decision to have a small number of participants in my previous research (Martin, 2003 and 2005) was influenced by the time constraints of teachers at a particularly busy time of the school year. Extension of this area of study into the thesis involved a larger number of participants in a range of different educational settings. However, as the sample is representative of different stakeholders within the transfer process at national, local and school level, some triangulation of the evidence was also possible.

5.2. Context of the empirical study

The setting for the research was predominantly school-based, working with four secondary schools and eight primary schools in two different local authorities in England. The evidence gathered from these institutions was compared and contrasted in relation to other information gathered from both national and local sources.

As discussed in the previous chapter (4.2), various government legislation and national education initiatives make reference to the importance of transfer between primary and secondary schools, particularly in relation to the progress of pupils. These references have been discussed with representatives from government agencies (DCSF and National Strategies), regional organisations (London Challenge and ASCL) and a number of different local authorities in relation to policy formulation and implementation.

In this context, two case study local authorities were selected on the basis of their differing motivations to implement a local policy in relation to transfer. One was a London borough where half of its Year 6 pupils transfer to schools in neighbouring boroughs and where the development of a strategy aims to encourage more of its pupils and their parents to choose local secondary schools. The other is a provincial town within a shire county which has recently reinstated primary and secondary schools having previously operated a three-tier system. The local authority representative nominated two secondary schools, each of which nominated two partner primary schools. Subsequent interviews provided the opportunity to collect information in relation to continuity and cross-phase collaboration.

Access to these two local authorities was acquired through my personal professional contacts. The London borough had an Action Zone and the director was, like myself, a member of a pan-London support group. I met representatives of the provincial town at the ASCL transfer project in October 2005. Whilst these professional links were extremely helpful in establishing the initial contact, they also had the potential to raise ethical issues, which will be discussed later.

5.3. Design of the study

Research design is governed by the notion of fitness for purpose. Hence the involvement not only of policy makers but also those at whom the policies are directed within schools. The organisation of research is a balancing act between either what can be achieved in the time or what will actually work, but 'at the end of the day the research has to work' (Cohen et al, 2000, p73).

The issues that constitute a framework for planning research will be interpreted differently for different styles of research. Nevertheless there are common elements which can be separated into four main elements:

- Orienting decisions,
- Research design and methodology,
- Data analysis,
- Presenting and reporting the results.

(Morrison, 1993, in Cohen et al, 2000, p74).

Orienting decisions set the parameters of constraints on the research. For example, the transfer of a cohort of Year 6 pupils occurs only once each year and at a particular time. Conducting the research within these same timescales ensures that the issues are high profile with participants. On the one hand this will focus the mind, requiring priorities to be set and data to be provided in a relatively short time. On the other hand this may increase the workload of a few individuals at a particularly busy time of the year. Decisions in this field are strategic; they set the nature of the research in terms of its general aims and purposes, its main priorities and constraints, its likely audiences, the ethical issues to be faced in undertaking the research and the resources that will be required.

If the preceding orienting decisions are strategic then decisions in the field of research design and methodology are tactical. They establish the practicalities of the research assuming that it is feasible in the light of the orienting decisions having already been made. The methodology employed can be a quantitative survey, an ethnographic study, an experiment, a case

study, a piece of action research or, in my case, a combination of several of these methods. Decisions also need to be made about the specific research questions as well as the validity and reliability of the data. The process of operationalisation is critical to effective research. This requires the translation of a general research aim or purpose into questions to which specific, concrete answers can be given.

Morrison gives a pertinent example related to my own area of research, namely continuity between primary and secondary education. This phrase is very general and needs to be translated into more specific terms by deconstructing the term 'continuity' into several component parts such as 'experiences, syllabus content, teaching and learning styles, skills, concepts, organisational arrangements, aims and objectives, ethos and assessment' (Morrison, 1993, 31-33). My own study focuses on policy and teaching as two specific aspects of transfer. It also involves a range of participants, namely primary and secondary teachers, headteachers, local authority officers and government officials, whose levels of understanding and involvement, actual and perceived, vary with differing aspects of the transfer process. Ultimately all research requires a judgement on the level of success of the process, which in the case of transfer can be quantified by the progress made by students in terms of their attainment measured by results in national tests.

It can be seen that these issues have moved the research from simply an expression of interest, or a general aim, into a coherent series of hypotheses and questions that lend themselves to investigation in concrete terms. The process of operationalisation requires not only that specific questions be formulated, but also the selection of appropriate instruments to gather the data to answer them, which in my research are the use of rating scales on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

My research combines a number of different models. Using a case study approach based in two local authorities, it is primarily a qualitative study based on the views and perceptions of teachers' awareness and involvement in a particular aspect of their school life. The study has a longitudinal aspect in

that it takes place over a defined period of time as a cohort of children move through various stages of the transfer process. It also has a quantitative outcome in that success of the process can be measured in terms of the actual progress made by students at the end of their first year in secondary school.

I already have a good baseline of knowledge of the transfer process based on my professional experiences and background reading for my previous doctoral research. For this study I have increased the number and range of participant groups to include policy makers at government and local levels and both primary and secondary teachers. I aimed to explore the extent to which teachers' practice in relation to transfer is influenced by national and/or local policy making and how teaching and learning are promoted as distinct parts of the overall transfer process. The study also aimed to investigate some of the pedagogical issues which have been identified in earlier research, namely teachers knowledge and understanding of cross-phase curriculum content, teaching and learning styles and the use of Key Stage 2 national test results in assessment and target-setting. In addition I was interested in the impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy in relation to these issues and the extent to which examples of good practice modelled by The National Strategies have been developed in schools. My research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of these recommended practices through the participation of teachers who are directly involved in the transfer process, namely teachers in Years 6 and 7. The views of students and their parents were ascertained in the form of feedback gathered by the schools themselves. The extent to which schools used this feedback to inform future practice was an important aspect of the research.

The proposal for the thesis was accepted in July 2006. Initial contact with the local authorities was made in November 2006, with interviews taking place in January 2007. School questionnaires and follow-up interviews were completed in the summer term of 2007 (Timeline for research in Appendix 4).

(i) Local Authorities

Two local authorities were identified for case study on the basis of their motivation to support the transfer process. The actual context of the local authorities will be described at a later stage (Chapter 6). A named person with responsibility for transfer was identified in each of the local authorities and initial contact was made by telephone to explain the aims of the research and enlist their co-operation. Once the representatives had confirmed their willingness to participate a meeting was arranged to clarify the aims and methodologies of the research and agree protocols for working with schools. An interview schedule was then devised to gather background information on policy formulation and implementation. This aimed to identify:

- (1) the reasons for the high profile of transfer within their local authority and which motivated their policy formulation,
- (2) the impact of government legislation and/or national initiatives,
- (3) the support offered to schools,
- (4) the effectiveness of that support
- (5) the extent to which cross-phase teachers' practice is promoted.

(See Appendix 5).

An outline of these prompts and a copy of the schools' questionnaire were then sent to each local authority representative ahead of the interview.

(ii) Secondary schools

Each local authority representative nominated two secondary schools to take part in the research, one where they adjudged transfer practice to be good and another where they felt it could be improved. Initial contact with the schools was made by the local authority representative. When confirmation of their participation had been received I made contact first by email and then by telephone to confirm dates for the questionnaire return and follow-up interview. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires the responses were analysed and interview questions were formulated on the basis of the evidence given by the participants (Diagram 5).

Diagram 5: Research sample

Participant Group	Method	Number	Interviewee	Respondent
Local Authority	Interview	2	LA Officer (2)	
Secondary schools	Questionnaire	4		DHT (2) HoY7 (2)
	Interview*	4	HT (1) DHT (3) HoY7 (2) LM (1)	
Primary schools	Interview*	8	HT(6) DHT (2) Year 6 (2)	

- Further information about interviewees is given in Appendix 6

(iii) Primary schools

Eight primary schools were involved. Each of the four secondary schools nominated two primary schools, one where links were considered to be good and another where they could be better developed. Contact was then made with these schools, first my email and then by telephone to explain the rationale for the research and their involvement. A date was agreed for an interview and a copy of the questionnaire was sent as a prompt for discussion. There was no expectation that it should be completed by primary colleagues, although six of the schools did use it to prepare notes ahead of the interview.

The main purpose of the interview with primary schools was to discuss their links with the secondary school which had nominated them. However, as all primary schools transferred pupils to other secondary schools within their respective local authorities the interview provided the opportunity to compare and contrast links with other secondary schools.

5.4. Methods of data collection

Evidence was collected from the different participant groups using questionnaires and interviews. Key documents in the form of government legislation, DfES guidance and local authority information as well as school plans and policies were also examined for explicit references to transfer. A questionnaire was used initially as a manageable and non-threatening tool to introduce schools to the research process. Semi-structured interviews, based on the responses to the questionnaire, were the primary method of data collection with documentary evidence being used for triangulation.

(i) Research tool

A questionnaire, based on the Ofsted SEF (self-evaluation form), was used as the initial research tool to gather information from all school-based participants about their knowledge, understanding and experience of the transfer process (See Appendix 7). Analysis of the responses then framed the questions for the subsequent interviews based on a common research framework of policy, success criteria and cross-phase practices.

The questionnaire was devised following examination of a number of existing formats that were readily available. The London Challenge Transition Project report contains a self-evaluation tool, The National Strategies have transition toolkits for both secondary and primary schools and at least four local authorities have devised their own audit tools - Barnet, Camden, Gateshead and West Sussex.

The self-evaluation tools devised by both London Challenge and The National Strategies require participants to highlight or tick pre-determined statements written against a four point scale using criteria developed by the National College of School Leadership – focusing, developing, establishing and enhancing. The London Challenge model, based on the five bridges, contains seventy-six statements and is relatively easy to use as it is available on one-side of (A4) paper. The National Strategies model, which is only available via the internet and, when downloaded, has one hundred and forty statements spread over eighteen (A4) pages. Both models require participants to

summarise their responses using a 'best-fit' principle which means that analysis of the outcomes could be less objective. Camden and Gateshead local authorities use audits based on the five bridges with each sub-section posing a series of questions which in the case of Camden, requires sixty-one yes/no answers, while the Gateshead model required schools to grade their effectiveness in fulfilling forty-two criteria using a 1-5 scale. Two other local authorities developed an audit linked to the Ofsted Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). The London Borough of Barnet toolkit comprises seventy-seven statements based on the five bridges using the Ofsted evaluation criteria of outstanding, good, satisfactory or poor. The West Sussex model uses not only the Ofsted evaluation criteria, but also the same headings from the evidence form which schools complete prior to an inspection and requires participants to respond to thirty-two separate statements. All these models are very detailed and could be time-consuming for respondents to complete.

I decided to adopt the Ofsted SEF model as it was one with which all schools are familiar both in terms of format and language. Initially I wrote a number of prompts for each of the sections of the SEF, incorporating all the issues highlighted by the London Challenge and National Strategies. This made the initial questionnaire very comprehensive, but also lengthy with fifty-four prompts. Feedback from two pilot schools indicated that it was likely to be unmanageable as a research tool both in terms of maintaining participants' involvement as well as the subsequent analysis of the outcomes. Therefore the format was streamlined to one which contained four pre-determined statements, written by myself, for each of the six Ofsted SEF criteria, namely:

1. Characteristics of the school
2. Views of pupils and parents
3. Achievement and standards
4. Personal development and well-being
5. Quality of provision
 - (a) Teaching and learning
 - (b) Curriculum
 - (c) Guidance and support
6. Leadership and management

Participants were required to make qualitative judgements as to the effectiveness of their schools and/or teachers in meeting one of these statements which aimed to reflect the Ofsted inspection outcomes of outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate (See Appendix 7). The analytical framework was further elaborated by seeking additional information from the schools to support their judgements, with prompts provided on the questionnaire suggesting possible sources of evidence (See Appendix 8).

(ii) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were considered the most appropriate method of data collection to explore my research questions as I needed to gain participants' perceptions, to interact with each of them and be flexible enough to respond to their individual responses. My reasons for choosing semi-structured interviews are summed up by Mason 'because your ontological position suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions are meaningful properties which your research questions are designed to explore. Perhaps, most importantly, you will be interested in their perceptions' (Mason, 2002, p39-40).

References, or lack of them, to the sources of evidence used by participants in their responses to the initial questionnaire provided important prompts for the follow-up interview questions.

Interviews are reliant on communication and are social interactions. No matter how much one may try to remain uninvolved when interviewing, it is very difficult and an 'active approach might therefore become more appropriate when the researcher is interested in subjective interpretations' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, p73). Interviews were conducted with a range of participants representative of the different levels of involvement within both case studies - the local authority, secondary and primary schools. They sought to gain more detailed information in respect of a common framework based on the main components of the research focus namely policy, success criteria and cross-phase practices.

A digital audio-recorder was used to record the interviews with the permission of all the participants in both local authorities. Interviews were later transcribed which ensured that both the richness of the text and accuracy of the quotes were captured.

(iii) Documentary evidence

Documentation in the form of government legislation and national initiatives as well as National Strategies guidance was examined to understand the context within which local authorities and schools currently work. Examples of good practice mentioned in government legislation such 'Schools Building on Success' (DfES, February 2001) and 'Schools Achieving Success' (DfES, September 2001) were used to evaluate the impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy at a local level. Local authority and school websites as well as Ofsted inspection reports of the secondary schools were examined to find evidence of transfer related information. Following the meetings with local authority representatives a range of other documentation was made available - Children and Young People's Plans, terms of reference and minutes of Transition Group meetings, transition units and other transfer related resources. Similarly additional documentation was made available at meetings with schools, such as prospectus, development plan, minutes of meetings and photographic evidence of induction arrangements.

(iv) Other sources of information

Additional research information was gathered from other sources, including interviews with personnel who have roles at a national level. Three interviews were held at the Department for Children, Schools and Families with members of the Policy Team within the Schools Directorate, the School's Adviser at the Academies Division and the Project Manager at the City Challenge Delivery Unit. Another interview took place with the Senior Director of the Secondary National Strategies who line-manages the two regional advisers for transfer and transition. The questions for this series of interviews were framed around existing national documents and the individual's role in formulating and implementing transfer-related activities.

Reference has already been made to the background research and on-going development of 'Middle Years' schooling in Victoria, Australia. In 2007 I visited schools in Melbourne and interviewed teachers as well as staff at both the regional educational office and at the Australian Centre for Educational Research (ACER) to gain first hand experience of the impact of their Middle Years education programme.

5.5. Data analysis

The third element of the planning framework identified by Morrison (1993) is data analysis. The layout and structure of my questionnaire were planned to facilitate the collation of data and subsequent analysis. Analysis began following the return of each questionnaire and the completion of every interview using what has been described as the cycles of analysis – 'data can be divided into three linked processes, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and investigation' (Huberman and Miles, 1994). The use of a common framework based on the foci of the research, namely policy, success criteria and cross-phase practices, helped to structure not only the interviews but also the collation of the findings. As it was intended to use the outcomes of my research to identify implications in terms of improving collaboration between primary and secondary schools at national, local and school level, consideration was also given to reporting the findings in respect of these different audiences.

Use of the rating scale on the questionnaires (outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate) provided a simple way of comparing primary and secondary schools' perceptions of each other's practice. The evidence, or lack of it, used by the schools to arrive at their judgements in the questionnaire could also be analysed in relation to the identified areas of foci, namely policy, success criteria and cross-phase practices.

Responses to the different sections of the questionnaire gave some indication, or not, of policy formulation at a school level and whether, or what, success criteria were used to evaluate the effectiveness of their practices. References to teaching and learning within responses to the questionnaires

gave an indication as to the extent to which teaching was, or was not, identified as an integral part of the transfer process (Diagram 6).

Diagram 6:

Links between research tool and the analytical framework

Questionnaire		Research framework		
SEF criteria		Policy	Success criteria	Cross-phase
1.	Characteristics of the school	√	√	√
2.	Views of parents and pupils		√	
3.	Achievement and standards	√	√	
4.	Pre-transfer support	√	√	
5.	Quality of provision			
	5a. Teaching and Learning			√
	5b. Curriculum	√		√
	5c. Post-transfer support	√	√	
6	Leadership	√	√	√

The findings of each case study are first reported separately and then compared. This leads to a summary of overall findings being identified in relation to the common research framework.

5.6. Feedback

All email correspondence with schools was copied to the respective local authority representative to keep them informed of the progress of the research. All secondary schools accepted the offer of feedback following the interviews with their partner primary schools. These meetings also provided an opportunity to clarify any outstanding issues. Following the final meeting with secondary schools a further meeting was held with the local authority representative to give preliminary feedback and to discuss the implications of the initial findings.

5.7. Interpretation of the research findings

A summary of the overall research findings was compiled following the comparative analysis of the empirical evidence from the two case studies. Each of the specific findings is then discussed within the wider contextual

framework of national and local policy and interpreted in relation to previous research findings and my own research questions.

This in turn leads to some general conclusions being formulated and a discussion of their implications not only for the case study schools, but also for the formulation and implementation of wider policy at a national and local level.

5.8. Practical considerations

The actual timing of the research is an important factor. Although children transfer from primary to secondary school at the beginning of September the actual process begins in the previous autumn term when Year 6 pupils and their parents visit prospective secondary schools and make their choices prior to the local authority decision being announced at the beginning of March in the following year. The involvement of teachers, however, is over a much shorter period of time. After the Key Stage 2 national tests have been completed at the beginning of May primary teachers prepare their Year 6 pupils for transfer by raising their awareness to the changes which will take place. Most secondary teachers have little involvement in the process until the actual names of their Year 7 intake are known. Some secondary teachers will then visit partner primary schools, after the national tests have taken place, to discuss the transfer of individual pupils, particularly in respect of those with special educational needs. Later in the summer term secondary teachers organise pre-transfer visits for Year 6 pupils and in September various activities are arranged to welcome and induct the new Year 7 cohort. It can be seen, therefore, that June and July are particularly busy months. This is, nevertheless, the best time to conduct research with teachers as their direct involvement in the process promotes more active discussion.

Inevitably involvement in a research project entails additional work for the participants, at what has already been identified as a busy period in the school year. The overall framework for the research in respect of the number of participants and the focus of the interview questions was determined in advance. However, the revised format of the questionnaire simplified the initial

collection of data and reduced the workload of teachers. Furthermore, the role of both local authority representatives in supporting the research, by promoting it to their schools, explaining my credentials and showing a keen interest in the outcomes, was a key factor to the success of the research.

5.9. Political, moral and ethical considerations.

I am aware of the attendant political, moral and ethical issues implicit in my work as a researcher and of the need to meet my obligations with respect to those involved, or affected by, my investigations. Ethical concerns encountered in educational research can be extremely complex and frequently place researchers in moral predicaments which may appear difficult to resolve.

There could also be 'political' issues in relation to my study in the context of government legislation and national initiatives. In my own role as Director of two Action Zones I have experienced resistance from some teachers who are reluctant to undertake the optional transitional activities associated with The National Strategies, from primary teachers who feel their teaching should be less prescriptive after the national tests and from secondary teachers who are often unaware of the existence of the Transition Units and their potential to promote links with primary schools. Although transfer is a specific theme within the Action Zone plans, activities have rarely been recorded in individual school improvement plans, departmental plans or as objectives within individual teachers' performance management. I have also found that there have been conflicting loyalties for some teachers in respect of the priorities of the Action Zones and those of their own schools. Similar scenarios existed in the two case studies in respect of the Education Improvement Partnership and various other cluster arrangements of schools. Although these factors could be seen as constraints, equally they can be associated issues to investigate.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2000) publish a set of ethical guidelines which my own study endeavoured to follow, particularly in terms of the responsibilities to participants.

(i) Privacy

Individuals have a right to privacy in respect of the dissemination of information. As transfer has been identified as a particular priority within the two case studies privacy is less likely to be an issue. However, it is important that schools nominated by their respective local authorities are aware of the specific aims of the research, the uses of the outcomes and that they had the right to refuse to take part. In fact one of the first schools approached did decline the invitation to participate, citing the potential increased workload for the Head of Year 7.

(ii) Anonymity

As I needed to monitor the responses to questionnaires, it was not possible to ensure total anonymity during the research process. Similarly, a participant agreeing to a face-to-face interview does not have anonymity. When reporting the findings it was necessary to distinguish between primary and secondary teachers, but the actual identity of individual participants is protected. Similarly the identity of the two local authorities has not been revealed and the schools have been given fictitious names. However, it may be possible to recognise the locality from the contextual description of each case study.

(iii) Confidentiality

Confidentiality, along with anonymity, is a way of protecting a participant's 'right to privacy'. Although I know who provided particular information, only the role of the individual is given to identify the sources of evidence within the findings. All participants were notified of this from the outset.

(iv) Betrayal

Data disclosed in confidence, but revealed publicly in such a way as to cause embarrassment, anxiety or suffering to the participant can constitute betrayal. I was particularly careful to avoid such issues when giving feedback to the case study secondary schools following visits to their partner primary schools.

(v) Deception

Deception lies in not telling the whole truth; where the researcher knowingly conceals the true purpose and conditions of the research or else positively misinforms the participants. As there are several well-documented examples of good practice in respect of the transfer process, there is also the potential for deception on the part of participants who could over co-operate and give responses which they think they ought to give. Being aware of this I asked for sources of evidence on the questionnaire and, where appropriate, specific examples to exemplify responses during interviews.

It may not always be possible to predict which ethical dilemmas may occur within any specific research area. However, I am aware that my own research could encounter ethical issues in relation to confidentiality, betrayal and deception. Cross-phase collaboration is a crucial factor in improving the transfer process and I took the following measures to minimise the effects of some of these ethical issues:

- All the schools and their teachers agreed to take part in the research.
- From the outset I gave explicit information to the participants on the nature of my research and who would have access to the data and the final report.
- I tried to reduce what Mason (2002) saw as the researcher 'setting the agenda and controlling the data' by making participants aware of the nature of the interview questions in advance, based on their responses to the earlier questionnaire.
- At the beginning of each interview I re-explained the purpose of the research and gave reassurances about the use of the information.
- At the end of the interview I asked if there was anything the participant would like to add and repeated that I would share the overall findings and conclusions with them.
- I also intended to investigate with the participants whether, and if so in what ways, they felt that taking part in the research may have influenced their own practice (Hawthorne effect).

'The whole point of situated ethics is precisely that it is situated, and this implies that it is immune to universalization' (Simons and Usher, 2000, p2). I aimed to minimise the potential adverse effects of ethical issues by adopting a participative approach with respondent involvement and my own commitment to giving feedback. The focus of this particular part of my research is concerned with the extent to which the participating secondary teachers acquire better knowledge and understanding of the prior educational experiences of their new students during the transfer process and how, if at all, they use this in their practice to help improve their students' progress. Equally, the outcomes of my research could reveal some teachers' concerns about their colleagues which could potentially promote tension between primary and secondary teachers as well as amongst secondary colleagues in the same school. This required sensitivity and tact on my part in the way that the findings were disseminated.

The following chapter discusses the findings of the research through analysis of the evidence gathered from questionnaires and interviews in the two case study local authorities.

6. Findings

6.1. Introduction to the case studies

This chapter presents the findings which arose from analysis of information generated by questionnaires and interviews during the research phase of the study. A brief description of each local authority gives the context for the two case studies using both the outcomes of interviews with local authority representatives and documentary evidence. The local authorities' rationale for their focus on transfer is explained in terms of why the policy was formulated, their accounts of how it is implemented in practice, the criteria they used to evaluate its effectiveness and, in particular, the meaning, role and status attributed to teaching and learning within the policy. A brief summary of the methodology used for the research now follows by way of an introduction to the analysis of the findings.

Participants in secondary schools were requested to complete a questionnaire based on an Ofsted Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). The analytical framework was further elaborated by seeking additional information from schools to support their judgements. Responses to the questionnaire gave clues as to the extent that schools had been influenced by national and regional policies as well as the success criteria used by the schools to evaluate the effectiveness of their practices. References to teaching and learning within responses gave an indication as to the extent to which and the ways in which, pedagogy was, or was not, an integral part of the transfer process.

In the following report the findings of the questionnaire analysis are combined with the interview analysis to produce a synthesis for each local authority case study (two secondary schools, each with two partner primary schools) and reported using the common framework employed throughout the study, namely policy, success criteria and cross-phase practices. The findings from the two case studies are then compared and contrasted. An overall summary of the main findings in relation to the research questions is produced ahead of a detailed interpretation in relation to national policy issues and previous research in the next chapter of the study.

6.2. Case Study A – Inner City Borough

6.2.1. Local authority policy context for school level perspectives and practices

(i) Policy context

The first case study is a London borough which has a total of 8 secondary and 35 primary schools. It is bordered by 5 other local authorities and this feature in itself provides the overriding policy concern for the local authority – namely the number of Year 6 pupils who transfer to secondary schools outside the borough.

(ii) Policy framework

The following analysis is based on an interview which took place in January 2007 with the local authority's Senior Secondary Strategy Manager, who has overall responsibility for transfer, and an analysis of policy statements and other local documents.

When the London Challenge initiative was first introduced in 2001 the local authority nominated a senior manager to lead on policy formulation in respect of transfer. The funding which accompanied the London Challenge initiative was used to employ 'transitional teachers' in secondary schools. This policy decision was based on what was perceived to be the good practice which already existed in the Action Zone. However, in practice no other secondary schools employed a full-time person and the advisory teacher who was appointed to manage the scheme went on long-term absence shortly after the policy was introduced.

“So a fairly disastrous start, but I held a series of meetings with people who were directly involved in the transfer process. The strategy paper, which is basically good practice, came out of those meetings and later it was web-based” (Local Authority Representative, January 2007).

These meetings started the policy-making process by identifying a particular issue at the time of transfer in relation to the poor behaviour of some students

in Year 7. The aim had been to reduce the number of exclusions by using the advisory teacher to gather information about vulnerable pupils in Year 6 who were likely to present problems when they moved to secondary school.

“So we were beginning to make progress with it but not as much as I would have liked and then about a year ago we looked at the funding, changed the focus and went for this completely new model and what we have got now is absolutely what we need” (LA representative).

The ‘new’ element refers to the employment of non-teaching staff as Transitional Learning Mentors as distinct from the previous deployment of qualified teachers with a transitional role. Although the Transitional Learning Mentors are based in secondary schools they have a cross-phase role which involves them visiting primary schools and directly supporting Year 6 pupils, their teachers and parents. Their work is overseen by a co-ordinating Learning Mentor, employed by the local authority and managed by a steering group.

The issues of student behaviour and exclusions are closely linked to another local motivation for reviewing the transfer arrangements, namely parental perceptions and their subsequent choice of secondary schools. At the time of this research (January 2007) 50% of Year 6 pupils transferred to secondary schools outside the borough.

“It is not that our secondary schools aren’t good, their outcomes are low, although their value added is at least satisfactory and sometimes high, but parents don’t understand that message, it is word of mouth that makes the difference” (LA representative).

The local authority’s policy is to improve the reputation of its secondary schools by promoting the transfer experience. Hence the policy statement is written as an entitlement for pupils to have a ‘good’ transition experience and gives a commitment on behalf of the local authority, senior leaders and teachers in schools to ensuring that this will happen.

However the statement does not provide a definition of ‘good’ and the local authority’s representative’s own interpretation is that of a positive experience

in respect of pupils' social and emotional adjustment to their new environment, measured in terms of a reduction in negative behaviour and exclusion from secondary school. It may be that this latter issue, reducing exclusions, becomes the key indicator and determines the success of the overall good transfer experience.

(iii) Policy implementation

The Transitional Learning Mentors are seen as central to the policy both in terms of fulfilling the local authority's entitlement to pupils and parents and improving the transfer process for schools. They are based in secondary schools where they work directly with those Year 7 students who have been identified as 'vulnerable' in their primary schools. A role similar to that expected of the previous transitional teachers with the main difference being that they are now expected to spend 50% of their time with a group of primary schools to provide a link with secondary schools. To strengthen this expectation each primary school has an entitlement to host three workshops for Year 6 pupils and/or parents, led by the mentor, focussing on their expectations and concerns about transfer. During their time in primary schools the mentors collate information about individual pupils which is then shared by all the mentors at monthly meetings. Where pupils are identified as being particularly vulnerable, for example, having a higher risk of exclusion or isolation, the mentor for the receiving secondary school, rather than the cluster, will offer additional individual or group work.

“So the idea is that every child in primary school is well prepared for transition and if they are vulnerable they will receive additional support at secondary school from someone they have met before. Hence joined-up transition” (LA representative).

Developing links with its partner primary schools has enabled one secondary school to increase the number of pupils transferring to the school at the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 5, as well as Year 6, visit the school to use specialist language and sports facilities and, along with their parents, they are also invited to school performances and other events. As a further development of the workshops hosted by the mentors, students from secondary schools visit

primary schools and share their experiences of the transfer process. In addition the mentors meet with parents of Year 6 pupils to offer additional support, for example, with completing the common transfer form:

“So I started by looking at the support for vulnerable kids, but actually it is much more complex and parental perception is key to getting more children into our secondary schools” (LA representative).

The local authority’s strategy statement, published as a high quality glossy brochure in November 2004 and backed up by a comprehensive website, promotes the importance of a good transfer experience as an entitlement for all children, making a commitment on behalf of the local authority:

‘If pupils are to achieve their full potential, progress must be continuous from year to year, regardless of any change in the school they attend’.

‘The LEA, senior leaders and individual teachers all have a responsibility for ensuring effective transfer ’.

‘Pupils and parents/carers should expect a system of secondary education that they can understand, a process that supports ongoing motivation to learn and a smooth continuum to learning and which does not disadvantage the less able/vulnerable groups’
(Policy Statement, November 2004).

Policy implementation, from a local authority perspective, comprises the deployment of the Transitional Learning Mentors in secondary schools, organisation by a Lead Learning Mentor and management by the local authority.

(iv) Success criteria

The published local authority strategy document aims to ensure that:

- ‘schools have a clear strategy to support pupils at transfer’,
- ‘pupils understand what will happen at transfer points and feel confident about the changes’,
- ‘parents have a clear understanding of their options at transfer and understand the admissions policy’ (Policy Statement, November 2004).

It details specific expectations for pupils and parents by defining the roles and responsibilities of the local authority, senior leaders in schools and individual teachers:

- ‘The LEA should provide an overarching strategy and enable schools to make links into various transfer initiatives and develop local capacity to improve transfer’.
- ‘Senior leaders should ensure that SENCOs’ and heads of departments’ job descriptions make clear reference to transfer and that these duties are fulfilled’.
- ‘Individual teachers should pass on pupil information to the next teacher and seek out information from colleagues who have previously taught the pupils’ (Policy Statement, November 2004).

“I don’t think there is anything contentious, it just states what we consider is good practice. If you look at the things we say, teachers ought to be doing them anyway. So to me the strategy document ticks lots of the Every Child Matters boxes and there is evidence that it is beginning to work” (LA representative).

This reference to ‘evidence’ relates to the information which is shared by the mentors at their monthly meetings. For example, in September 2006, the first month after transfer from primary school, data obtained from the local authority showed that no Year 7 student who had received support from a mentor had been excluded from school compared with 30 days of exclusion for those students without a mentor. From the local authority’s point of view this type of data not only demonstrates the success of its policy but also supports the case for its future sustainability.

“This kind of data is seen as crucial to the longer term success of the project, particularly if schools have to find the funding themselves in future” (LA representative).

In addition to the monthly meetings for the mentors a Transfer and Transition Steering Group, comprising representatives from both primary and secondary schools as well as the local authority, meets each half-term and minutes of these meetings are sent to all schools in the borough. A conference, held in

December 2006, provided the local authority with the opportunity to update schools on developments at a national and local level.

Successful transfer from the point of view of the local authority is ultimately determined by improving the proportion of Year 7 pupils who transfer to secondary schools within the borough rather than attend schools in neighbouring boroughs. In the short term an indicator of the success of the mentors is a reduction in the number of exclusions of Year 7 students.

(v) Cross-phase practices

The published strategy states that 'every pupil has an entitlement to effective teaching and learning'.

'Individual teachers should use assessment for learning (AfL) to ensure that pupils are not covering work which is already secure from previous years in school, make cross-phase visits to develop an understanding of the levels at which pupils are working and participate in cross-phase collaborative teaching and learning opportunities' (Policy Statement, November 2004).

It also states that senior leaders in schools should 'manage systems to allow colleagues to access these cross-phase visits', while the local authority should 'offer/broker opportunities for colleagues to work together across phases and across LEAs as well as provide CPD activities which develop an understanding of progression and use of data'.

"We have done a number of training sessions where we have looked at pedagogy, but not enough. We do try to encourage cross-phase visiting and that is successful to a degree but again not enough. My own view is that the quality of teaching in our primary schools tends to be good to outstanding, whereas in our secondary schools it is actually satisfactory to good and I'm a bit concerned about that. It's about funding and schools won't release teachers, which again comes back to priority" (LA representative).

The local authority's literacy and numeracy consultants lead by example in having cross-phase responsibilities. They do not, however, actively promote their 'brokerage' role, relying instead on schools requesting their support. The annual conference, now a regular feature on the calendar, provides opportunities for primary and secondary schools to share practice. At the

2006 conference separate presentations were given by a group of Year 7 students and two Transition Learning Mentors explaining specific transfer projects.

The local authority statement makes clear references to the importance of teaching within the transfer process. However, this may not translate directly into action at a school level. The local authority's own professional development calendar does not contain explicit opportunities for primary and secondary liaison, for example, to discuss the development of transition units or the implications of the revised national frameworks for literacy and numeracy.

6.2.2. School level practices

The findings of school level practices are reported in two parts: (i) their contextual relationship in terms of the numbers of pupils transferring between primary and secondary schools and (ii) their responses to the questionnaire and interview questions. The names of the schools are fictitious.

(i) Case study schools

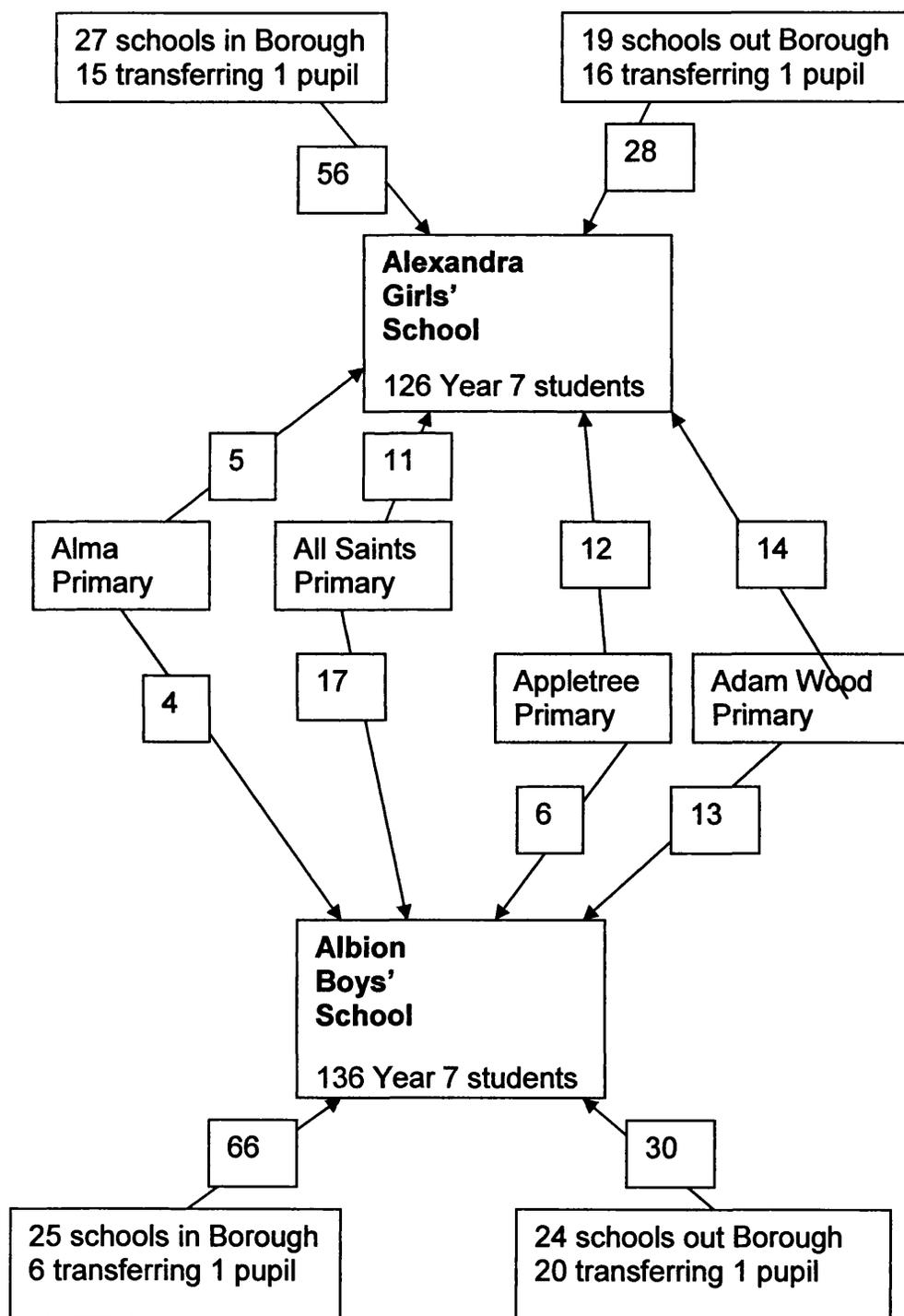
Both of the secondary schools, nominated by the local authority, are single sex institutions – Alexandra Girls' School and Albion Boys' School. This is significant in that boys and girls in primary schools transfer to different schools, which results in relatively small numbers of pupils transferring to either of the two secondary schools involved in the research. Both secondary schools have a large number of partner primary schools, a significant number of which transfer only one pupil (Diagram 7).

According to 'London's Key Issues' (DfES, 2007), 'ensuring effective transition in London is a more complex task than across the rest of the country' because 'the average London secondary school draws students from around 40 primary schools, compared to a national average of 25' (ibid, p21). Both the case study secondary schools exceed the London average with Alexandra Girls' School drawing students from 50 primary schools while the figure for

Albion Boys' School is 53 (See Appendix 9). The four case study primary schools, Alma, All Saints, Appletree and Adam Wood, transfer pupils to both of the two case study secondary schools as well as to other secondary schools both within and outside the Borough.

Diagram 7:

Transfer of Year 6 pupils in the inner city borough (July 2007)



(ii) Schools' responses to national, local and school level policies

The findings of the questionnaire analysis are combined with the interview data to produce a synthesis for each case study. The overall judgements made by schools in response to the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 10.

(a) National policy

The earlier contextual chapter (4) identified government legislation and national initiatives which emphasised the importance of transfer. Analysis of the outcomes of the questionnaires and interviews revealed the extent to which the case study schools are aware of and/or how their practices have been influenced by these national policies.

Alexandra Girls' School has Specialist Languages status and is a member of an Education Improvement Partnership (EIP). It has a history of links with primary schools having formerly been the host school of an Education Action Zone. Albion Boys' School had recently acquired Specialist Mathematics status (September 2006) and is a member of the EiP. Three of the four case study primary schools are also part of the EIP, having been members of the former Action Zone, unlike Appletree Primary school which has no formal links with any particular secondary school. It does, however, transfer pupils to both of the case study secondary schools.

No schools, either secondary or primary, made any reference to their membership of a School Sport Partnership as part of the national PESSCL Strategy. When prompted they were unaware of the cross-phase benefits of this national initiative, such as the employment of a co-ordinator by secondary schools to work with partner primary schools to promote continuity of sporting opportunities.

The Deputy Headteacher at Alexandra Girls' School confirmed their use of the National Strategy Transition Units and Extended School links with partner primary schools through a homework club, basketball and holiday programmes. However, teachers at the school had not seen the DfES booklet

'Curriculum Continuity', had not used The National Strategies self-evaluation toolkit, and were unaware of any changes to the primary frameworks for literacy and numeracy. When asked about the Key Stage 3 Strategy the Deputy Headteacher at Albion Boys' School claimed "to be doing it already" in respect of transforming teaching and learning, pointing to the introduction of TASC (Teaching in an Active Social Context) with two Year 7 classes to develop their preferred learning styles based on peer and self-assessment.

Headteachers at both Alma and All Saints Primary schools stated that their teachers were aware of the Transition Units, but were unclear as to their real purpose, largely because of their lack of consistent usage by other schools across the local authority. The units were viewed as something to "fill the time after SATs rather than promoting continuity between Years 6 and 7" (HT, Alma). "Curriculum links with secondary schools, including those through the personalised learning agenda, should be more explicit rather than left to schools to develop for themselves" (HT, All Saints). "The National Strategy's Early Years Foundation Framework is aspirational in demonstrating continuity from pre-school to 5 years of age, but I see nothing similar in terms of primary and secondary links" (Headteacher, Appletree). The Every Child Matters agenda was, however, viewed with optimism because of its potential links to the transfer process by 'developing pupil's self-confidence in relation to dealing successfully with significant life changes and challenges' as part of the 'Making a Positive Contribution' strand. Learning Mentors were seen as a successful national initiative because "the government had targeted support where it was needed and provided funding not only for the personnel but for training as well" (DHT, Adam Wood). Headteachers in all four primary schools welcomed the potential for cross-phase links within the revised Primary Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks. However, they were sceptical as to whether these opportunities would be developed in practice as there was a lack of funding at a national level to release teachers to work together. "It appears that the onus is on schools to develop these links and not all schools prioritise these activities' (DHT, Adam Wood).

In summary schools are actively participating in national initiatives such as specialist schools, Education Improvement Partnerships, Extended Schools, and Learning Mentors. They are able to demonstrate an awareness of the other national strategies, such as the Key Stage 3 Strategy, Transition Units, and the revised Primary Framework as well as the Every Child Matters and Personalised Learning agendas. However, by their own admission, their knowledge of some of the support documentation such as the 'Curriculum Continuity' booklet and the Transition Toolkit developed by The National Strategies is sporadic. Participants attributed their lack of knowledge about these support materials to a lack of communication with the teachers directly involved in implementing the policies. The wider issue of the lack of status afforded to transfer within some schools was attributed to a shortfall in teachers' workload capacity to manage differing priorities at a school, local and government level.

(b) Local policy

interviewees at all schools, secondary and primary, confirmed that the Local Authority was pro-active in promoting transfer and co-ordinating the work of the Transitional Learning Mentors. The headteacher at Alma Primary School acknowledged the local authority's commitment to improving the image of secondary schools by enhancing the transfer process, but recognised that this was complicated in terms of parents' preconceptions of local schools as well as their perceptions of "better" schools in neighbouring local authorities. "It is a wake up call that so many pupils are going out of borough" (HT, Alma). "The local authority has improved drastically in promoting the importance of transfer with, for example, the deployment of the Transitional Learning Mentors and the organisation of an annual conference, but a common transfer day is still needed as the present arrangements disrupt the summer term timetable" (HT, All Saints'). "The role of the local authority is stronger more recently, better resourced with staff, greater involvement of Educational Welfare Officers, but there is still a need for a common transfer day" (HT, Appletree). This headteacher also made an interesting distinction between being aware of the local authority's transfer strategy document, but "not its content". She was concerned that it was just one of many priorities and that "it

is difficult to promote a common offer across the borough as schools have different status in terms of community, single sex or denominational provision”.

Alexandra Girls’ School used the London Challenge funding to support the appointment of Transitional Learning Mentors and promote the Transition Units. The deputy headteacher was also aware of recent developments involving The National Strategies’ pledges for pupils and parents but she had not seen a copy of the London Challenge Transfer and Transition Report. The headteacher at All Saints Primary School, on the other hand, had seen a copy of the report, but had “not opened it” because of the “plethora of paperwork we receive from the DfES”. These examples highlight the issues raised in the previous section on implementation of national policies in terms of lack of communication, workload capacity and local versus school level priorities.

The deputy headteacher at Albion Boys’ School recognised the potential of the Transition Units in promoting curriculum continuity but, because of the “poor response from primary schools”, had now produced its own version of a Year 6 activity booklet for use by its partner primary schools. The Transition Units were considered to be “boring, arduous and not relevant” (Year 6 Teacher, Alma) at a time when the curriculum ought to be “more topic based after SATs” (HT, All Saints’). “I am not aware of the units. Pupils start afresh at secondary school with little attention being paid to their previous six years work” (HT, Appletree). Teachers at Adam Wood Primary School, however, continued to use the London Challenge version of the Transition Units, but complained about a lack of feedback on their use at secondary schools. “The units provide an impetus after SATs rather than slacking off or just filling in time but there is a lack of consistency in their use across the borough” (DHT, Adam Wood).

In summary, all interviewees acknowledged the lead taken by the local authority in promoting the importance of transfer, albeit one of many priorities. They are also aware of the different roles that the local authority has balancing parental choice with that of retaining Year 6 children in local

secondary schools, while at the same time promoting a policy that offers an entitlement for all pupils. Secondary teachers value the work of the Transitional Learning Mentors, but have reservations about the continuation of funding to maintain their employment, particularly in the light of cuts in other funding streams such as Excellence in Cities and London Challenge. Primary school headteachers also reported that the local authority should take more of a lead role to ensure the more consistent use of transition units across the borough.

(c) School level policy

The motivation to champion transfer as a priority at Alexandra Girls' School dates back to the former Action Zone and was prompted by its "large number of partner primary schools". There was also a very strong personal commitment by the deputy headteacher who was also the Director of the Action Zone. Year 7 students are managed by a Learning and Progression Co-ordinator who has direct responsibility for developing students' learning styles as part of their induction to the school. The school produces a Summer Workbook, comprising activities to familiarise and support pupils' induction to Year 7, with sessions for pupils and parents to attend during the holiday prior to transfer. Formal evaluations, undertaken by a private company on behalf of the school, revealed that parents would welcome more "family games" in the workbook which pupils and parents could do together. The Transitional Learning Mentors target particular schools for additional support based on their numbers of vulnerable children. "We have a strong Year 7 team of tutors and teachers who promote consistent practice through the school's Code of Conduct, which outlines expectations in terms of student behaviour and attitudes to learning" (DHT, Alexandra Girls'). Both the Deputy Headteacher and the Year 7 Learning and Progression Co-ordinator have specific transfer related objectives within their Performance Management linked to both the School Improvement Plan and the EIP Plan. The deputy headteacher also reported that "there has been a greater emphasis on teaching and learning linked to the Key Stage 3 Strategy since the appointment of the new headteacher", which demonstrates the role which senior leaders can have in determining priorities within schools and in promoting change.

Albion Boys' School has its own Transfer Group and has produced a policy which outlines the roles of key members of staff and lists transfer-related resources within the school. These include a Code of Conduct which aims to achieve consistency by "promoting a common approach to expectations in terms of both student behaviour as well as attitudes to learning in the classroom" (DHT, Albion Boys'). The school also has a directory of good practice and used part of The National Strategies toolkit on a staff training day. Copies of the DfES publication 'A Parent's Guide to the Secondary School Curriculum – Learning Journey' are distributed to parents of Year 6 pupils in the summer term to help them understand and support the transfer process. Although the school receives Key Stage 2 SATs results and CATs scores from the local authority at the end of the summer term it also conducts a written assessment activity during transfer day and uses the results of its own NFER tests to regroup students after the first half-term in Year 7. These activities support the perceived lack of trust generally attributed to secondary teachers in respect of the validity of primary school data. Albion Boys' School do, however, make specific organisational arrangements to promote the induction of Year 7 with tutor rooms suited together, Learning Mentors based nearby and dedicated playground space. However, the deployment of Year 7 tutors to teaching groups and PSHE had proved "more problematic" as commitment to teaching examination groups in the upper part of the school assumes a higher priority.

Interviewees at all four primary schools valued the role of Learning Mentors in respect of supporting vulnerable pupils and the links they were able to develop with their families. "The Learning Mentors work with Year 6 pupils to develop their self-esteem to help them cope better with transfer" (HT, All Saints'). The need for more direct links with secondary schools was also acknowledged as "secondary schools can learn from primary schools rather than what can primary schools do for secondary" (HT, Alma). This headteacher also felt that it was important that primary schools "did not make transfer into a big deal, it is a change which is going to happen, what can we do to help and it is about being positive about it".

In summary, both secondary schools have identified the need to establish consistent practice in Year 7, prompted by the large number of partner primary schools. Both schools also have senior members of staff with overall responsibility for transfer and a range of activities to induct and support pupils new to the school. Partner primary schools recognise the important role which the Transitional Learning Mentors have in supporting vulnerable children. Both Alma and All Saints Primary Schools also see the mentors as a vehicle for improving communication with the secondary schools.

(iii) Success criteria

Alexandra Girls' School measures the success of its transfer arrangements in terms of pupils' self-esteem, confidence and attendance which are evaluated as part of an annual parent and pupil survey conducted by an external provider. The school reports that feedback has led to a number of improvements such as amendments to their anti-bullying policy and staff deployment in Year 7 as well as redecoration of part of the front entrance to improve the school's image. Albion Boys' School reported that it had "good pastoral support systems in place to foster academic progress". This judgement was based on anecdotal evidence rather than any formal monitoring, although meetings were arranged with parents and pupils in Year 7 which provided opportunities for informal feedback on the effectiveness of the transfer process. Feedback was reported as 'generally positive', but when prompted no examples were cited of changes or improvements made as a result of these meetings. Attendance at its pre-transfer parents' evenings was "poor" (HT, Appletree), although visits to secondary schools were "generally positive" (DHT, Adam Wood). Both of these staff reported that Albion Boys' School needed to "catch up" with Alexandra Girls' School in respect of links; a comment based on the fact that these schools had a previous history of involvement with the EAZ led by Alexandra Girls' School.

"We aim to build pupils' confidence prior to transfer by reducing their fears and concerns through role play and drama" (Year 6 Teacher, Alma).

"Ultimately success is measured in terms of the academic progress made by

the pupils, but secondary schools do not value where the children have come from and are not building on what their students have learnt in primary schools” (HT, Alma). “We focus on the social and emotional aspects of transfer hoping that pupils will be happy and not anxious about moving to secondary school” (HT, All Saints’). This headteacher also used the positive comments by pupils returning from visits to secondary schools as indicators that their preparation had been successful, but recognised that for the local authority the success criteria were “about more Year 6 pupils going to local schools which is more of an “issue for the secondary schools themselves”. The headteacher at Appletree Primary School relied on anecdotal evidence, based on the generally supportive remarks made by siblings at the school, to evaluate the effectiveness of transfer arrangements as it received no feedback from secondary schools. “We concentrate on preparing children for transfer so that they are well informed and well equipped and have few problems on arrival the following September. I am confident that the school has good strategies in place such as the use of drama and role play” (DHT, Adam Wood). He also commented that “apart from the use of the mentors, there was no common approach to the way that all primary schools were preparing children for transfer”, an assessment which was based on conversations with colleagues at meetings.

Several schools identified issues relating to the lack of appropriate data as a barrier to successful transfer. “The transfer of data from Key Stage 2 is still a nightmare arriving too late to be useful in helping us the to group pupils for the beginning of Year 7” (DHT, Alexandra Girls’). The headteachers at both Alma and All Saints Primary Schools didn’t know what use was made of SATs data or the pupil files which the local authority collected and redistributed to secondary schools. Interviewees at All Saints, Appletree and Adam Wood Primary Schools acknowledged that the length of time between SATs in May and the start of secondary school in September could contribute to a dip in attainment, although they had no evidence to support this at a local level.

“We all know that a Level 5 in primary school is not a Level 5 in secondary school” (HT, Appletree).

“Although we try not to let it (the dip) happen and lessons are still planned and organised, the priority is on the end of year production” (DHT, Adam Wood).

The lack of feedback from secondary schools about their former pupils was perceived by primary schools as a barrier to promoting effective transfer. This is also a policy and practice concern at all levels of the process, schools feedback to local authorities as well as the government’s lack of monitoring at local authority level.

“Although pupils are positive about their experiences when they return from the Girls’ School there is no evidence from the secondary school itself” (HT, All Saints’). “The perception of boys is that the secondary school is big and complex, they miss the girls and seem to have a greater sense of belonging in primary school (HT, Appletree). Teachers at Adam Wood Primary School were not aware of the specific measures taken to promote induction by the secondary school, which again suggests a lack of communication.

To summarise, both secondary schools tend to judge successful transfer in terms of the well-being of the students in their new environment and their adjustments to the different organisational arrangements, particularly in respect of vulnerable pupils. Only Alexandra Girls’ School undertakes a formal evaluation of its transfer practices, whereas other schools, particularly primary schools, rely on the anecdotal evidence of former pupils or siblings.

Headteachers at most primary schools commented that the lack of feedback from secondary schools was a barrier to successful cross-phase liaison.

(iv) Cross-phase practices

Analysis of the questionnaires revealed little direct evidence of cross-phase pedagogical collaboration which in itself prompted the need for further investigation during the interview phase of the research. “We recognise the role which pedagogy can play in bridging the gap between primary and secondary schools in terms of developing continuity in students’ learning” (DHT, Alexandra Girls’). The schools’ Code of Conduct promotes ‘Learning to

Learning' (L2L) starting in Year 7 with a team of specialist teachers who ensure that students begin with a consistent style of teaching and learning. A previous cross-phase training day on thinking skills had received a mixed reception, particularly from secondary colleagues, many of whom viewed it as "not relevant" as a priority for themselves or the school. The fact that the previous secondary headteacher did not attend was perceived as giving the wrong message (by the staff at Alma Primary School). This training day had taken place two years previously and there were no plans to repeat this type of activity. Similarly other good intentions from the training day, in terms of developing a 'single language' and identifying a lead person to develop the cross-phase work have not been put into action. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) from Alexandra Girls' School have visited primary schools and some primary teachers have observed secondary practice when escorting pupils to use specialist secondary school facilities. Overall the deputy headteacher reported that cross-phase collaboration was "not happening", despite the availability of funding through the EIP.

"Prioritising release time for teachers is the biggest barrier to developing pedagogical links" (DHT, Albion Boys). The school is piloting TASC with two Year 7 classes which develops learning styles based on peer and self-assessment. A programme of thirteen NQT visits to primary schools had taken place in the summer term of 2006. The purpose was to "look at the methodology of teaching and learning to help with transfer for our Year 7 students". Written feedback rated the day as 'of considerable value' and staff identified a number of areas of good practice which they were going to introduce into their own teaching, for example, brain gym and differentiated group work. It was the intention that all staff would be given the opportunity to visit a primary school. However, no further visits have taken place, largely because of "in-school priorities" nor has the impact of the original visits been evaluated.

"Cross-phase pedagogy is very important because secondary teachers need to acknowledge that Year 7 pupils are not empty vessels. They need to trust the SATs levels and this would best be achieved by KS2/3 teachers meeting to validate standards. At this school pupil

learning is high on the agenda with an emphasis on high order thinking skills and self-assessment which is not continued in Year 7. Primary schools teach children and secondary schools teach subjects” (HT, Alma).

These comments demonstrate the differing preconceptions which teachers have of each others’ practices. The bridging days provide a pedagogical link, when primary teachers have opportunities to observe secondary practice. The visits by NQTs were confirmed by primary schools as was the use of the language facilities at the secondary school, but there was disappointment that these links were not developed further. “In the absence of cross-phase training it is part of my role to train children to change teachers in secondary schools by, for example, knowing their own preferred learning styles” (HT, Alma).

At All Saints Primary School teachers accompany pupils on visits to the secondary school. There were, however, far fewer occasions when secondary teachers visited primary schools despite the availability of funding being set aside in the EIP for team teaching. “This reflects a lack of commitment to cross-phase collaboration on the part of secondary colleagues. When secondary teachers do visit primary schools they are surprised at what the children can do” (HT, All Saints’). Preconceptions of cross-phase differences were again cited as barriers to collaboration. “Primary pedagogy is more focussed on teaching and learning whereas the emphasis in secondary schools is on behaviour management” (HT, Appletree). The Deputy Headteacher at Adam Wood Primary School felt that “the focus on moderation within the EIP demonstrates schools commitment to developing pedagogical links”. “Although there is some scepticism in Year 7 about the validity of SATs data, increasingly there is an awareness amongst secondary teachers that they can learn from primary colleagues” (DHT, Alexandra Girls’).

“Although NQT visits take place and students from the secondary school support primary pupils with reading and PE cross-phase links need to be more widely developed”. There is a need for teachers to scrutinise work through dialogue rather than transfer paperwork” (DHT, Adam Wood). He also

reported that Albion Boys' School had had an issue in the past in respect of releasing teachers to visit primary schools and, although this had improved with funding through the EIP, concerns were still expressed about the future financial sustainability of the group's activities.

To summarise, all schools recognised the importance of cross-phase pedagogical collaboration and most of the primary schools were able to cite what they perceived to be the differences in practice between the two phases. Although several schools reported evidence of cross-phase visits, these tended to be primary teachers visiting secondary schools with their pupils as part of the transfer induction process rather than secondary teachers visiting primary schools to foster continuity of teaching and learning. Where there was evidence of cross-phase activity, schools were unable to provide first hand evidence of its impact. Furthermore, even where a focus was established in the EIP to support cross-phase moderation, this had yet to be prioritised at a school level.

6.3. Case Study B

6.3.1. Local Authority policy context for school level perspectives and practices

(i) Policy context

The second case study is a provincial town in a shire county with a total of 9 secondary and 50 primary schools. Prior to 2003 the local authority's schools were organised on a three-tier system, whereas schools in the surrounding local authority were based on the primary and secondary model. This had created problems for some parents regarding their choice of school, particularly those living on the margins of the town. This, in itself, provided a policy concern which led to the reorganisation of the provincial town's schooling to a two-tier system in common with the rest of the county.

(ii) Policy framework

Following extensive consultation, the County Council unanimously agreed to the re-organisation in February 2002. The proposals included plans for the existing 75 schools (47 lower, 19 middle and 9 upper) to become 59 schools (50 primary and 9 secondary). Hence the number of times which children would be required to transfer between schools had been reduced, albeit at a different age, and the schools could now focus on supporting one common point of transfer across the local authority.

In addition to the issue of parental preference favouring the two-tier system the local authority representative identified several other reasons for the re-organisation:

- “the KS3 results, and at GCSE, were not commensurate with the results at KS1 and KS2. So we decided to look at what was happening at the points of transfer and it was particularly marked at KS3 where children were only in their high schools for two terms before taking national tests,
- there was some pressure from Ofsted and locally from the MP who became interested as to why the results were not so good in the town compared with the rest of the county,
- the demographics were changing as the town expanded additional schools were required in different locations,
- it was also becoming increasingly difficult to recruit staff for middle schools, particularly headteachers as there were less opportunities for promotion nationally” (LA representative, December, 2006).

(iii) Policy implementation

As a result of the re-organisation there was a substantial building programme involving forty-one PFI (Private Finance Initiative) schools. The transition towards the new pattern of education began in September 2003 when the lower schools were re-designated as primary schools, retaining their Year 4 pupils. Four of the middle schools also became primary schools and the rest closed. The upper schools became secondary schools with an intake of Year 7 and 8 students in addition to their usual Year 9 intake.

However, problems were encountered when some of the former middle school pupils who transferred to the secondary school became, as the local authority representative reported, “part of the faceless horde” and some schools are “still finding it difficult to manage the social and behavioural aspects of the students’ experiences”. These emerging issues prompted the need to co-ordinate support which began with the nomination of a local authority representative with overall responsibility for transfer.

The local authority representative reported that the main challenge in implementing the re-organisation has been “managing expectations”, particularly those of the parents of former middle school pupils who had had access to specialist facilities and smaller teaching groups which were no longer available to pupils in Years 5 and 6 in primary schools. Other issues included the rebuilding programme and staffing, where the redeployment of middle school teachers in secondary schools meant a shortage of specialists in some subjects. A Review Group was established to manage the re-organisation with transfer as one of its main priorities and schools agreed to adopt a number of common activities, such as CATs and a cross-phase PSHE programme. However, the local authority representative also reported that early feedback from the primary schools implied that secondary schools were “not fully engaging in the process”.

“Heads and senior management were very much in agreement with what was being proposed. But, through talking to people within the schools, we found that as the information was communicated it didn’t get to the learning support assistants who were the people showing the children round on the transition day. It wasn’t a case of them not wanting to engage, it was just they didn’t quite know what to do” (LA representative).

A transfer sub-group was then formed in 2005, representative of primary and secondary schools and facilitated by the local authority representative. It continues to meet twice a term to monitor the transfer process and its related support activities.

“A good example of how it works is the effectiveness of the transfer we have in place at the moment. For example, we developed the PSHE unit with a group of schools which was very successful, schools liked it,

children liked it, we had the glossy book. We then rolled it out to other schools and for the first time we had 50 primary and secondary schools all working together, all prepared to do the same thing” (LA representative).

This group also identified transfer as an issue for a particular group of vulnerable pupils, who were defined as “those who might find transfer to secondary school more challenging in terms of adjusting to the changes”. Initially each primary school was asked to identify 20 pupils whom they considered to be vulnerable and, with the local authority administering the arrangements and providing funding for transport, these pupils visited their new secondary schools ahead of their formal induction visit.

Building on the success of the PSHE Unit and the vulnerable pupils’ visits, a range of other activities were developed to “promote continuity between primary and secondary schools”. A common transfer day was introduced when all Year 6 pupils visit their new secondary school. However, this is not yet county wide which means that schools on the edge of the town have pupils visiting different schools on several different days “which disrupts their routine”. Transition Units have been developed for English, mathematics and science. Year 6 pupils are also encouraged to produce ‘My Special Piece of Work’ which they take with them to secondary schools on transfer day and which some schools then display in September to make the new students “feel at home”.

The local authority also provides funding for two formal assessments of Year 6 pupils. PASS (Pupil Attitude to Self and School), an IT based questionnaire, and NFER CATs tests. The results, along with the Key Stage 2 SATs data, are then made available to secondary schools to assist teachers’ planning.

Policy implementation, as far as the local authority is concerned, comprises the take-up by schools of the various transfer related activities which it promotes and organises, monitored by the transition sub-group.

(iv) Success criteria

The main aim of the re-organisation was to raise attainment, particularly at the end of Year 9.

“Once you get that right parents are not so intent on sending their children to schools other than their first choice” and “we have been able to attract other headteachers into the area” (LA representative).

The common transfer day has been adjudged to be successful “in minimising disruption” in primary schools which had previously been caused by different groups of Year 6 pupils visiting secondary schools at different times throughout the summer term. In 2008 the common transfer day will also include those schools in the neighbouring parts of the shire county.

Feedback to the Steering Group shows that the ‘vulnerable pupils day’ is valued by the schools and by changing its name, first to ‘Pathfinders’ and more recently to ‘Factfinders’, primary schools are now able to develop the activity by using the identified pupils to bring back information which can be shared with all Year 6 pupils about their new schools. This, in turn, promotes the role of those pupils identified as vulnerable, by enhancing their confidence and self-esteem.

A Transfer and Transition Conference, held for the last two years, has been well attended by teachers from both primary and secondary schools. A draft protocol was discussed at the conference in 2007, aimed at establishing an ‘entitlement’ for both pupils and parents, based on the pledges being developed by The National Strategies.

The different transfer-related activities, namely the units of work, My Special Piece of Work, the Pathfinders Project and the common transfer day are monitored at a local level by the provincial town’s Transfer Group. This group meets regularly and although an “extensive” monitoring exercise undertaken at the end of the first year was “very positive”, the local authority representative admitted that “not much” evaluation in terms of impact has taken place.

“All we can do is get verbal feedback at the moment. We are the stage of getting it embedded and then we can ask whether they find it useful. The danger of doing it now is that we are going to open up a can of worms because it might be perceived by the primary schools that the secondary schools are not using the resources” (LA representative).

This latter remark demonstrates that the local authority representative is aware that while most primary schools have adopted the different transfer related activities, their continuation into Year 7 at secondary school is more sporadic. He is concerned that if primary schools knew this, their own commitment would diminish. Furthermore, a formal evaluation of the Factfinders Project planned to take place in July 2007 to see whether the secondary schools agree with those pupils identified as ‘vulnerable’ by the primary schools did not take place.

“We must avoid the danger of evaluation being a happy sheet and everyone agreeing that it was great” (LA representative).

The local authority adjudges the effectiveness of its transfer arrangements in terms of the take-up of its activities by partner schools. Little or no attempt has been made, as yet, to determine the actual success of the implementation of these activities in terms of the original motivations which brought about the need to reorganise the school system, namely low attainment at Key Stage 3 which in turn was affecting parental choice of schools.

(v) Cross-phase practices

The transfer-related activities promoted by the local authority provide opportunities for cross-phase collaboration by “building bridges” and developing “a better social network between primary and secondary schools”.

“What we haven’t addressed at the moment is pedagogy. Although there are pedagogical implications in the work it’s only scratching the surface. It is one of the things we want to address at next year’s conference. My perception is that teachers will focus on curriculum rather than pedagogy, it won’t be about delivery, teaching styles, it will be about what they are teaching, content, it’s an enormous task” (LA representative).

These remarks demonstrate that the local authority representative is aware of the potential confusion between curriculum and pedagogical continuity, but

they also suggest that solutions will be teacher-led rather than directly promoted by the local authority. However, the entitlement currently being developed, in the form of a commonly agreed protocol, contains expectations of secondary teachers in respect of their prior knowledge of students' progress which, in turn, have cross-phase pedagogical implications. It is intended that these aspirations will be promoted at the next annual conference which provides a forum to share practice and promote collaboration.

6.3.2. School level practices

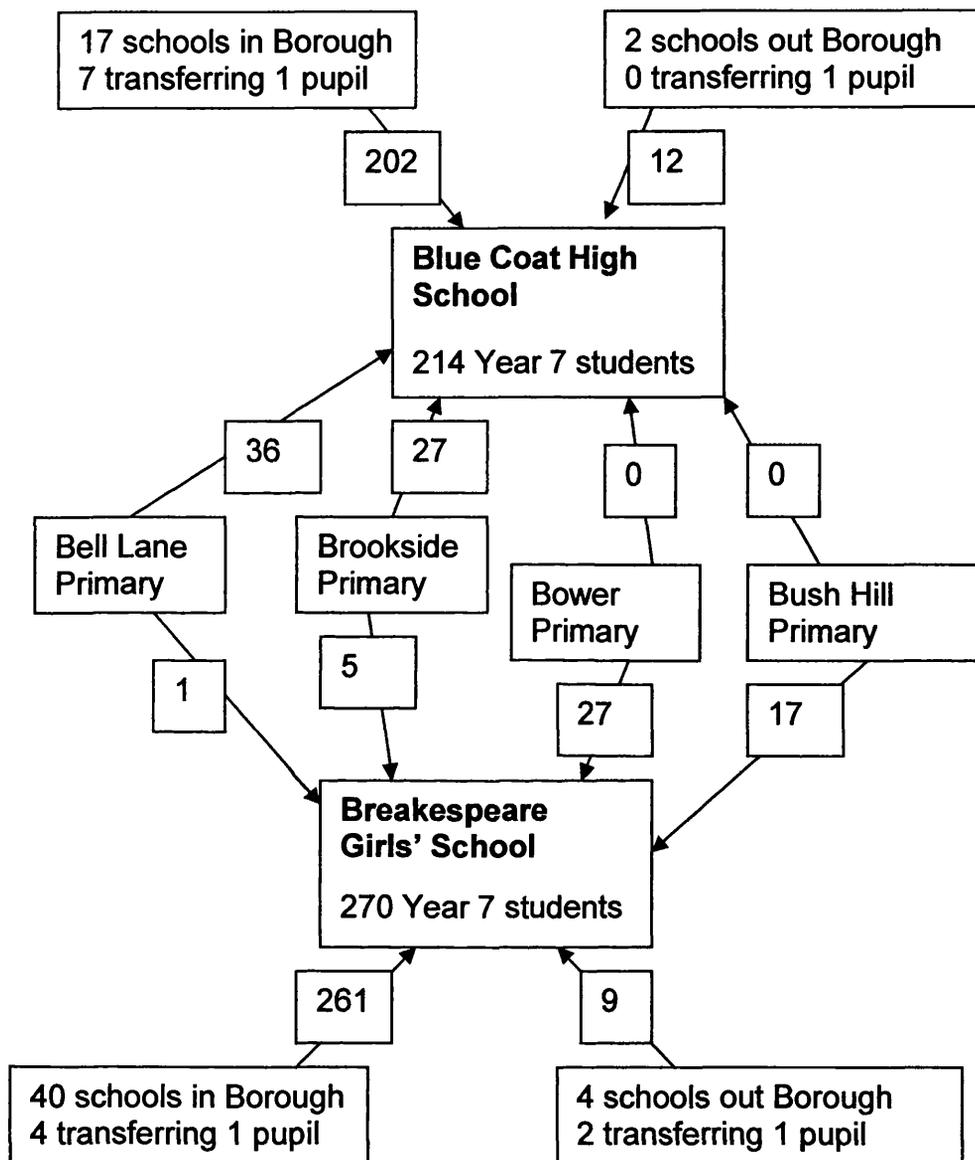
(i) Case Study schools

Blue Coat High School, a mixed-sex school, had previously had links with two middle schools, but now has to adapt to liaising with seventeen primary partner schools, seven of which transfer only one pupil. In 2007 214 students transferred into Year 7, 12 of these were from schools outside the local authority. This overall figure was 56 short of the standard entry number of 270, which implies that the school needs to enhance its reputation with parents and improve its relationship with primary schools in order to attract more Year 7 students. The two case study partner primary schools, Bell Lane and Brookside, transfer high numbers of Year 6 pupils to Blue Coat High School, 36 and 27 respectively.

Breakspeare Girls' School, being a single-sex institution, has traditionally attracted pupils from a wide range of middle schools and as such has a history of wider partnership working. The school receives its full quota of 270 Year 7 students, only 9 of whom transfer from schools outside the local authority. Bower Primary and Bush Hill Primary Schools transfer 27 and 17 pupils respectively, high numbers given the single-sex intake of the secondary school. All four case study primary schools transfer pupils to Breakspeare Girls' School. None of the primary schools transfer pupils to secondary schools outside the local authority (Diagram 8).

Diagram 8:

Transfer of Year 6 pupils within the provincial town local authority (July 2007)



(ii) Schools' responses to national, local and school level policies

(a) National policy

Analysis of the questionnaires and interviews revealed whether the case study schools are aware of and/or how their practices have been influenced by national policies and other educational initiatives.

Blue Coat High School is a specialist performing arts college and a member of an Excellence Cluster. Breakespeare Girls' School has Specialist Music status.

Both secondary schools have a School Sport Co-ordinator and have Extended Schools provision with activities being shared with partner primary

schools. "We have Key Stage 3 Co-ordinators in most curriculum areas, but the Key Stage 3 Strategy has had little effect as we were already developing our own teaching and learning policy" (DHT, Blue Coat High). The headteacher of Breakspeare Girls' also reported that "the school had been developing learning across the school before the introduction of the KS3 Strategy". Despite these claims neither school had any knowledge of The National Strategies' support materials for transfer, the 'Curriculum Continuity' booklet or the self-evaluation toolkit. In terms of the impact of national policies neither secondary school was aware of the transition units linked to the national literacy and numeracy strategies.

Although the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) for drama at Blue Coat High School organises a cross-phase project with partner primary schools, links to other curriculum areas, reported by the schools themselves, are less well developed. In terms of sharing its specialism, Breakspeare Girls' School's liaison is limited to advertising their music related activities to other schools rather than directly fostering cross-phase links.

"The Every Child Matters agenda, with its references to 'successfully managing change', makes explicit links to transition, while both Personalised Learning and Assessment for Learning with their emphasis on prior learning have direct implications for promoting cross-phase collaboration" (HT, Bell Lane). Interviewees at the other three partner primary schools identified the potential for developing links in the Revised Primary Framework which, as a primary school document, makes explicit references to work in Year 7. However, in practice no school has taken the lead in developing this potential.

In summary, the secondary schools are participating in national initiatives such as specialist schools, Advanced Skills Teachers, Extended Schools and the PESSCL Strategy. However, their knowledge and understanding of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and its associated support documents were often non-existent. "Never seen it" (Deputy headteacher, Blue Coat High) was the comment when shown a copy of 'Curriculum Continuity'. Participants attributed their lack of awareness to both a lack of communication between

the various levels of the education system, but also to the higher priority being given to the physical aspects of re-organisation within the local authority.

(b) Local policy

Both secondary schools reported that they made use of the NFER, SATs and CATs data supplied by the local authority to allocate Year 7 students to both pastoral and teaching groups, although the Head of Year 7 at Breakspeare Girls' School "doesn't always believe them". Blue Coat High School used the information to identify gifted and talented students.

Both secondary schools reported limited knowledge and use of the local authority's transition units which were difficult to follow up when "so many students don't bring the booklets to the school" (LM, Blue Coat High). Breakspeare Girls' School was, however, developing its own version for music in liaison with Bower Primary School. All four primary schools use the units. However, "there were too many and they are overkill" (HT, Bower). "Primary teachers tell their pupils that they will be using them at secondary school on transfer day and when they don't it is more difficult to maintain children's interest in completing the rest of the work" (Year 6 teacher, Bell Lane). "If we did them all there wouldn't be time for anything else and there is so much more for pupils to enjoy after SATs" (HT, Brookside). Bower and Bush Hill Primary reported no feedback on the usefulness of the transition units which made them question their value as a resource to improve transfer. "We have reservations about promoting them to pupils if they are not used or valued by secondary schools" (HT, Bower). "The units enable some pupils to remain focussed after SATs, but as several of them transfer to a secondary school in the neighbouring county it is more difficult to motivate these children to complete the work (DHT, Bush Hill).

The Factfinders Project was reported to be successful by all schools. Breakspeare Girls' School uses information from pupil folders and 'My Special Piece of Work' to inform an 'All about Me' Project at the beginning of the Autumn term. Primary teachers reported that both 'My Special Piece of Work' and the Factfinders project worked well on the basis that Year 6 pupils spoke

about them when they returned from visits. “The pupils really benefit from the additional support with 25 pupils attending the Factfinder Day and there are good follow-up opportunities to explore secondary school websites. ‘My Special Piece of Work’ is a great way of giving the new pupils a sense of belonging in their new school” (Year 6 teacher, Bell Lane).

“The pupil survey (PASS) is also well received, although I am not sure whether we would participate in this scheme if it was not paid for by the local authority” (HT, Bower). The headteacher of Bush Hill Primary School reported that this was a view expressed by a minority of primary headteachers who felt that the funding provided by the local authority to support transfer related activities should have been delegated direct to schools. Both Bower and Bush Hill Primary Schools commented on the effectiveness with which the local authority collected data and other information to transfer to secondary schools, but again reported no feedback on its usefulness.

In summary, the local authority representative’s perceptions, reported earlier, about the sporadic use and differing value placed on the transition units were confirmed by the schools themselves. Other activities, the Factfinders Project, My Special Piece of Work, the Pupil Attitude Survey and the common transfer day are well supported. However, the sustainability of these activities is a concern as several schools fear that others would not take part in transfer activities if asked to make a financial contribution which in turn would undermine the concept of a local policy. As members of the local authority’s transfer group, the headteachers of Breakspeare Girls’ and Bower Primary Schools are in a position not only to promote transfer between their respective schools, but also influence practice across the local authority as a whole.

(c) School policy

Blue Coat High School publishes rules in the school planner; for example: write in blue or black ink, underline the title, ‘c’ in the margin for classwork, ‘h’ for homework, students to line up outside classrooms, coats off, etc (DHT). These expectations aim to promote a consistent approach to teaching and

learning, but the school has not been able to standardise these procedures sufficiently amongst its teachers, particularly in Year 7. "The school has decreased the number of teachers in Year 7 in an attempt to reduce the movement of students around the school and there are plans to have their tutor rooms in the same area as well as a separate playground" (Head of Year 7). Transfer has been identified as a priority within the school development plan and the designation of a senior teacher to lead on this aspect "reflects the importance attached to transfer as a means of improving the reputation of the school" (DHT). Welcome letters are sent to Year 6 pupils and a meeting is held for parents on the evening before transfer day. An induction booklet is also given to parents of Year 7 students. A Learning Mentor visits partner primary schools, focusing on those pupils identified as vulnerable. The various transfer related activities are recorded in a single document and the School Improvement Plan identifies the need for heads of faculty to build links with primary schools. However, apart from the PSHE Booklets which are used on Transfer Day, none of the other local authority transition units have been developed. Once at the school, Year 7 students are allocated to groups for maths on the basis of an in-school test held during the first half of the Autumn term. Key Stage 2 SATs results are not used because teachers "generally don't believe the pupils' scores are a true reflection of the children's attainment because they are coached ahead of the national tests" (Head of Year 7).

The high profile of Blue Coat High School's headteacher in visiting primary school assemblies to promote the school was confirmed by the headteachers at Bell Lane and Brookside Primary Schools. "Based on the success of the cross-phase drama work the cluster arrangements work well with the potential for more joint training" (HT, Bell Lane).

Breakspeare Girls' School also aims to achieve greater consistency in terms of the quality of teaching and learning by deploying Year 7 staff to teach more than one subject area where possible. A buddy system is also in operation with Year 9 students acting as mentors for Year 7 students. Although transfer

is not a stated priority within the schools' improvement plan, it is one of the performance management objectives for the Head of Year 7.

“We discuss hopes and anxieties with Year 6 pupils prior to transfer and encourage them to bring their own pencil case and other resources in preparation for secondary school” (Headteacher, Bell Lane). Pupils complete the PSHE Booklet, but teachers do not build on its contents nor on the feedback from Factfinders Day to develop an integrated approach to supporting transfer, preferring instead to “develop those creative and aesthetic areas of curriculum which teachers feel have been marginalised in the run-up to SATs” (HT, Brookside).

Both Bower and Bush Hill Primary Schools structure follow-up work around the Factfinders Day. “We adopt specific practices which aim to prepare pupils for transfer, by encouraging them to bring their own equipment in Year 5, using a pupil planner based on the secondary school model and addressing pupils' needs and expectations through role play activities” (HT, Bower). “We make good use of the local authority's resources, but they are not well received by some secondary schools, which in turn makes them more difficult to promote amongst primary colleagues (HT, Bush Hill). Brookside Primary School, a former middle school, use Year 6 teachers as specialists to deliver specific curriculum subjects in preparation for similar experiences in secondary schools.

To summarise, both secondary schools have their own specific transfer arrangements in place in addition to the local authority's activities. Both schools have assigned a senior member of staff with responsibility for overseeing the transfer process. The higher profile afforded to transfer by Blue House High School, with references in a written policy and the school development plan and visits by the headteacher to partner primary schools, reflects the priority to increase the number of Year 6 pupils transferring to the school. Most primary schools integrate the local authority transfer activities into their curricular provision within the summer term, but bemoan the lack of feedback they receive from secondary colleagues which they perceive as

devaluing the activities themselves which in turn makes them more difficult to promote at a school level.

(iii) Success criteria

Evidence of successful transfer at both secondary schools was largely anecdotal in terms of how students adjusted socially and emotionally to their new environment. "You get a feel for how well the children have settled in, how happy they are at the end of the day" (DHT, Blue Coat High). Year 7 parents' evenings in October provide an opportunity for feedback on the transfer process, although no formal evaluation takes place at either secondary school.

Both Bell Lane and Brookside Primary Schools are in the same cluster with Blue Coat High School which promotes good links through drama, sport and its Learning Mentor. Students from the secondary school also undertake work experience in the partner primary schools. Year 5 taster sessions are now taking place with Brookside Primary and some secondary teachers are involved in their delivery of 'Super Learning Days'.

Blue Coat High School reported that monitoring the effectiveness of its current procedures was an area of weakness. Parents complete a questionnaire about the transfer process in the autumn term and feedback has resulted in improvements to the organisation of pre-transfer meetings and the introduction of buddies for Year 7 students. Feedback from parents also supports the integrated studies approach which has reduced the number of staff who teach Year 7 students. "Improvements in terms of the buildings as well as teachers' attitudes to transfer since re-organisation meant that far fewer parents were disappointed when they were allocated a place at the secondary school. Most pupils are excited at the prospect of moving to the high school and former pupils make positive comments about their new school" (HT, Bell Lane). "Our pupils are better prepared, know what to expect after the move and they also get support from siblings who have already made the move" (HT, Brookside). Staff at both Bell Lane and Brookside Primary Schools reported that they received no feedback on the progress of

former pupils or on the usefulness information which is sent to the high school.

Breakspeare Girls' School has forty partner primary schools, the most of all secondary schools in the local authority. The school has conducted no formal review of its transfer arrangements, although informal feedback from some parents has led to changes in transport arrangements which have improved the organisation of the Factfinders' Day. Bower Primary School reports good links with a range of music professions visiting the school, invitations to school performances, use of their swimming pool and support from the School Sport Co-ordinator. Historically Bush Hill Primary School was in a cluster with a different secondary school, but is in the same school sport partnership and has also developed good links through music "largely through being pro-active ourselves" (DHT, Bush Hill).

Both Bower and Bush Hill Primary Schools reported that pre-transfer events at the girls' school were well organised and children returned enthused by their experiences. Bower Primary School also had anecdotal evidence from parents in the playground, positive in that communications with the school were good and it was easy to access support when there was a problem, but negative in respect of too much homework and that work was often not marked.

In summary, both secondary schools judge successful transfer in terms of the well-being of the students in their new surroundings. Blue Coat High School has an additional motivation to increase the number of Year 6 pupils transferring to the school as it is currently undersubscribed in terms of its Year 7 intake. Although both secondary schools arrange meetings for parents of Year 7 students no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of transfer arrangements is conducted. Partner primary schools tend to rely on the anecdotal evidence of parents or former pupils' remarks, often in the playground when picking up siblings at the end of the school day. The lack of feedback from secondary schools to partner primary schools is a re-occurring theme of this analysis.

(iv) Cross-phase practices

Blue Coat High School acknowledges that “cross-phase teaching is an area of weakness”, but has identified the need for teachers to visit primary schools. “We know we are not doing enough, heads of faculty are not primary trained and have very little experience of primary practice” (DHT, Blue Coat High). A comment referring to teachers “going down” to visit primary schools reflects a common perspective amongst some secondary colleagues in terms of a top-down relationship between the two phases. Apart from an invitation to a cluster training day (on Emotional Intelligence) no primary teachers have visited the school. The school has reduced the number of teachers for Year 7 students with English, history, geography and RE being taught by the same member of staff. Bell Lane and Brookside Primary Schools praised the on-going drama project led the secondary school’s Advanced Skills Teacher (AST). At Brookside Primary School where secondary teachers have supported ‘Super Learning Days’ and where some cross-phase work involving art teachers has taken place, the headteacher commented that secondary teachers are “now more caring”. However, “the joint training day held the previous year was “poorly organised by the secondary school” (HT, Bell Lane) and “a missed opportunity to develop cross-phase collaboration” (HT, Brookside).

Breakspeare Girls’ School deploy Year 7 tutors to teach PSHE and, where possible, one other subject in an attempt, as at the high school, to improve the consistency of teaching and learning. A joint media/ICT project is being developed between the girls’ school and Bower Primary School. The headteacher of the girls’ school, as chair of the local Transfer Group, is attempting to establish a common training day across the local authority in order to facilitate cross-phase teaching and learning opportunities. A cross-phase training day had taken place “about two years ago”, but it had been “a negative experience as the secondary school teachers were entrenched in their subjects and reluctant to change timetable structures” (DHT, Bush Hill). Other preconceptions of cross-phase differences were again cited as barriers to collaboration. “The basic difference between primary and secondary schools is they don’t have ownership of the children, it’s not their class, their

children as it is in primary” (HT, Bell Lane). However, she did believe that the cluster grouping of schools provide opportunities for joint training which could address this issue by starting to break down the “totally different” teaching environments. “Why was a secondary art teacher shocked at the lack of formal assessment in art and secondary trainee teachers surprised at the ability of our pupils?” (HT, Brookside). “There is a curriculum chasm because secondary teachers are not aware of previous learning and go back to basics” (HT, Bower). “I am horrified by how they (secondary teachers) teach in the middle, children aren’t stretched at one end or supported at the other” (DHT, Bush Hill). Although she had no first hand evidence she believed “things have improved”, but still perceived that “they can’t trust the test results and need to do it again. It is almost as if nothing has happened before and they start again”. Some primary teachers visit secondary schools with their pupils as part of the preparation for transfer. These sessions are taught by a specialist secondary teacher with primary teachers in a supporting role, but they are “in a learning capacity and bring it back for the rest of us” (HT, Bower).

To summarise all schools recognised the importance of cross-phase collaboration. Primary schools were able to cite what they perceived to be differences in practice between the two phases which tended to support previous claims that secondary teachers have a poor understanding of prior teaching and learning and, as a consequence, adopt a ‘fresh start’ approach to teaching in Year 7. Cross-phase opportunities tended to be limited to primary teachers visiting secondary schools with their pupils as part of the induction process rather than secondary teachers visiting primary schools to foster continuity. Primary schools recognised the potential to develop collaboration through networks of schools within the local authority, but complained about potential conflict when they were involved in networks with different schools such as Extended Schools and sport.

6.4. Comparative analysis of the two case studies

The findings from the two case studies, the inner city borough and the provincial town local authority, are now compared and contrasted as a basis for determining the overall outcomes of the research.

6.4.1. Local authority context

The two local authorities were originally selected as case studies because they had identified transfer as a specific focus for their development, albeit for differing reasons. The inner city London borough was concerned about the number of Year 6 pupils who transferred to secondary schools in neighbouring boroughs and aims to improve the previously poor perception of parents of its own secondary schools. The provincial town local authority had recently disbanded its three-tier system in favour of primary and secondary schools and aimed to support this re-organisation with specific activities targeted at the point of transfer.

The two local authorities have a similar number of secondary schools, 8 and 9 respectively and, despite their different motivations, they share a number of common factors which they cite in support of their pro-active roles in promoting transfer, namely:

1. a named lead officer with a professional commitment to promoting transfer,
2. a Steering Group,
3. targeted funding to promote specific activities,
4. additional support for vulnerable children,
5. the use of transition units,
6. Year 6 pupils transferring to and from secondary schools outside the local authority

Although the two case studies share these common factors their methods of policy implementation are quite different. The inner city borough has invested in additional staffing, in the form of Transitional Learning Mentors, while the provincial town facilitates a range of transfer related activities.

6.4.2. Schools' context

All four secondary schools have used their specialist school's status to develop links with their partner primary schools. Three of the four secondary schools are single sex institutions, which is significant in that boys and girls in

partner primary schools transfer to different secondary schools. As a consequence these schools have a higher number of partner primary schools, (36, 49 and 44 respectively), compared with the mixed sex school, Blue Coat High (19). There are also differences in the number of partner primary schools from outside the local authority, with secondary schools in the inner city borough having a much larger number (19 and 24 compared with 2 and 4) as well as a higher number which transfer only one or two pupils (31 and 25 compared with 7 and 6). These factors further complicate the organisation and administration of the transfer process in terms of transferring information between local authorities and schools as well as establishing links with a larger number of named personnel, as mentioned previously in 'London' s Key Issues' (DfES, 2007).

6.4.3. Policy

(a) National policy

All four secondary schools participate in national initiatives - specialist schools status, Education Improvement Partnerships, extended schools, Advanced Skills Teachers, Learning Mentors and the School Sport Co-ordinator Programme. However, the extent to which these opportunities are being used to develop cross-phase collaboration within the two case studies varies. Alexandra Girls' (Languages) has good links with partner primary schools based on its previous experience as host school for an Education Action Zone. At Blue Coat High (Performing Arts) the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) has developed a cross-phase curriculum project. Links involving Albion Boys' (Science) and Breakspeare Girls' (Music) are at an earlier planning stage. All the schools are members of an Extended Schools network and a school sport family. Schools in the inner city borough are in the same Education Improvement Partnership (EIP) and Blue Coat High is a member of an Excellence Cluster. The deployment of Learning Mentors is the central thrust of the inner city borough's strategy and at Blue Coat High the Learning Mentor also has a defined role with transfer. Two primary schools, Alma and All Saints, also saw the mentors as a vehicle for improving communication with the secondary schools. Although the Learning Mentor at Breakspeare Girls' supports students in Year 7 she does not have a cross-phase role.

Despite a lack of references to specific national policies as supporting evidence on the initial questionnaire (SEF), all secondary schools are able to demonstrate an awareness of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and Transition Units as well as the Every Child Matters and Personalised Learning agendas, although they were unable to give clear examples of their direct impact. The inner city local authority promotes the transition units developed through The National Strategies, whereas the provincial town has devised its own versions. Most secondary teachers have no knowledge of the more recent developments in respect of the advice and recommendations to be found in DfES support documents, 'Curriculum Continuity', The National Strategies Toolkit and the Pupil and Parent Pledges. Participants attributed this lack of engagement to poor communication between government, senior leaders in schools and practitioners in the classroom which resulted in a low priority being afforded to transfer as a whole school issue.

(b) Local policy

Both local authorities have documented their commitment to raising the status of the transfer experience by producing a strategy (inner city borough) and a protocol (provincial town) which identify an entitlement for pupils and parents to the transfer experience. Annual conferences are held in both local authorities to maintain this profile and to provide opportunities for schools to share good practice.

In terms of translating their policies into practice both local authorities have identified specific funding to support the transfer process. Another common feature is the support for vulnerable children. However, the effectiveness of the two strategies, the use of Learning Mentors and the Factfinder Day, attracted differing responses from schools. Alma and All Saints Primary Schools reported that Learning Mentors provided a good communication link with secondary schools, whereas Bell Lane and Bonner Primary complained about the difficulties in maintaining Year 6 pupils' motivation after they had returned from induction visits at secondary schools when the resources were not used.

Schools in both case studies acknowledged the lead taken by the local authority and in particular the role of the named representative in promoting the status of transfer activities. Both local authorities reported difficulties in maintaining consistency of practice, not only across schools within their own authorities but also in respect of pupils transferring to and from neighbouring local authorities. Whilst the schools themselves acknowledged these difficulties they also expected their respective local authorities to take more of a lead role in promoting activities, such as the use of transition units. In the light of cuts in funding streams at a national level, all schools expressed concerns about future funding to continue their transitional activities.

Most primary schools adopt the transfer activities promoted by their respective local authorities, integrating them into their curriculum provision after the completion of SATs in May. However, the absence of feedback from secondary schools implied that secondary colleagues did not value the contribution made by primary schools and their pupils, which in turn made it more difficult to promote them with Year 6 pupils.

(c) School policy

All secondary schools have their own specific transfer arrangements in place in addition to the local authority's activities and they have nominated personnel to manage the process. Although the permanence of these posts varies, there are clear procedures in place to manage the induction of students. Secondary schools also identified the importance of ensuring consistent practice in Year 7. This is prompted by the large number of partner primary schools and the larger number of teachers in Year 7 compared to the one class teacher in primary school. However, the conflicting priorities at school level often make it difficult to establish a high profile for transfer related activities. Maintaining continuity is more problematic in the inner city borough where a large proportion of primary schools send only one or two pupils and where several of these schools are out of the borough. Two secondary schools, Albion Boys' and Blue Coat High, have specific policy documents outlining the roles and responsibilities of staff and an annual calendar of events which aim to promote transfer as a whole-school issue. Consistency of

practice in terms of school organisation and class management is maintained through whole school 'Codes of Conduct' and two secondary schools, Alexandra Girls' and Blue Coat High, reduce the number of teachers deployed in Year 7 in order to promote greater consistency in the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Although partner primary schools recognised the important role which the Transitional Learning Mentors and the Factfinder's Project have in supporting vulnerable children through the transfer process, most have their own strategies for reducing pupils' anxiety and raising their awareness to the changes based on drama and role play. However, these strategies have been introduced at an individual school level and are not necessarily complementary with secondary school practice.

6.4.4. Success criteria

Given the differing foci of their transfer related activities the success criteria also vary between the two local authorities. For the inner city borough successful transfer is ultimately determined by the number of Year 7 pupils who transfer to their own secondary schools rather than to schools in neighbouring boroughs. In the short term an indicator of the success of the Learning Mentor programme is a reduction in the number of exclusions of Year 7 students. On the other hand, the provincial town adjudges the effectiveness of its transfer arrangements in terms of the take-up of its transfer related activities by schools. However, no attempt has been made to evaluate the impact of these activities in terms of the original reasons for the re-organisation of the school system, namely low attainment at Key Stage 3 which in turn had influenced parental choice of secondary schools.

On the basis of responses to the questionnaire (SEF) all four secondary schools adjudged their overall involvement in the transfer process to be good, rather than outstanding, satisfactory or inadequate (See Appendix 10), a judgement confirmed by most partner primary schools. Two of the four secondary schools, Albion Boys' and Blue Coat High, have an additional

motivation to improve the transfer process in terms of increasing their overall number of Year 7 students.

Only one school, Alexandra Girls', conducts a formal evaluation of its transfer procedures. Others rely on informal feedback, for example, at parents' evenings or, as in the case of primary schools, anecdotal evidence from parents and siblings of former pupils. Although primary schools expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of pre-transfer activities and induction arrangements, they also viewed the lack of any feedback from secondary schools as a barrier to cross-phase collaboration.

Secondary schools were asked to nominate two partner primary schools, one where they considered links to be good and another where they could be improved. In practice the rationale used by the secondary schools to nominate partner schools was based on pupil numbers – namely the primary school which transferred the most pupils was deemed to have good links whereas the ones from which they would like to attract more pupils were identified as those where links needed to be improved.

6.4.5. Cross-phase practices

Responses to the initial questionnaire (SEF) revealed that all schools, primary and secondary adjudge provision for cross-phase teaching and learning to be either unsatisfactory or poor (See Appendix 10). Although the inner city borough's strategy document makes clear references to the importance of teaching within the transfer process this does not translate directly into action at a school level. Similarly the provincial town is developing a protocol which contains explicit references to the role of teachers within the transfer process but no attempt has yet been made to facilitate this cross-phase collaboration. Schools reported that the inner city borough's own professional development calendar does not contain opportunities for primary and secondary teacher liaison, for example, to discuss the development of transition units or the implications of the revised frameworks for literacy and numeracy.

Visits by primary teachers to secondary schools are usually to accompany pupils to use specialist facilities and although some secondary teachers have more direct contact with primary teachers these are mainly in respect of non-core subjects linked to the school's specialist status through languages (Alexandra Girls') and drama (Blue Coat High). Despite explicit references in the EIP plan, schools in the inner city borough have failed to prioritise the proposed cross-phase links. Where plans exist for structured pedagogical collaboration in the provincial town, they are futuristic rather than on-going.

Despite their lack of acknowledgement of the impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy all four case-study secondary schools have adopted whole-school teaching and learning policies. Three of the four secondary schools have deployed specific teachers in Year 7 to ensure that students adopt a more consistent approach to their learning. Transition Units are available for use by schools in both local authorities, albeit in different formats. These are used by primary school teachers, who build them into their curriculum planning as part of the preparation for transfer. Secondary schools, on the other hand, cite a range of logistical reasons for not continuing them in Year 7, including the non-arrival of the units in school at the beginning of the year and their sporadic use by some primary schools. This has a knock on effect in primary schools where pupils and teachers feel that their work is undervalued.

Both primary and secondary teachers lack first hand evidence of each others' practice and base their knowledge on preconceptions and anecdotal evidence. Primary schools were able to cite what they perceived to be the differences in practice between the two phases. These tended to support previous claims that secondary teachers have a poor understanding of prior teaching and learning experienced by pupils before transfer and, as a consequence, adopt a 'fresh start' approach to teaching in Year 7. Primary teachers feel that they are more child-centred in their teaching while their secondary colleagues are more subject based. On the other hand, some secondary teachers see themselves as specialist subject teachers rather than generalist primary teachers, while others base their mistrust of primary school

attainment data on their perception that primary teachers coach their pupils immediately prior to Key Stage 2 SATs.

All schools identified cross-phase pedagogy as an area of weakness and acknowledged the need to create more opportunities to develop continuity within their teaching and learning.

6.5. Overall findings from the research

Following the analysis of the each of the two case studies and their subsequent comparison, it is now possible to identify a number of key overall findings using the common framework headings of policy, success and cross-phase practices.

These findings can be further categorised as either positive or negative in terms of providing opportunities (bridges) to support continuity between primary and secondary schools or where they cause discontinuities (barriers) to cross-phase collaboration (Diagram 9).

Diagram 9:

Summary of overall findings

Framework	Opportunities/Bridges	Barriers/Discontinuities
National Policy	Cross-phase opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist schools • Extended services • PESSCL • Excellence in Cities • Advanced Skills Teachers • Learning Mentors • Every Child Matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of support documents • Key stage specific guidance
Local Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional motivation • Networks (Potential for collaboration) • Co-ordination of support for vulnerable children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks (conflicting groups)
School Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual event • Additional motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consistent application of whole school policies • Lack of feedback to primary schools.
Success criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil progress • Leadership (LA and school level) • Targeted funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal evaluation • Sustainability of funding
Cross-phase practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the importance of cross-phase dialogue • Whole-school policies for teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cross-phase opportunities • Preconceptions of each others' practice • Lack of cross-phase policies

6.5.1. National policy

In terms of national policy a number of educational initiatives, such as specialist schools, extended schools, Excellence in Cities, Every Child Matters and Learning Mentors, have raised the profile of transfer by highlighting its importance, particularly in terms of improving pupils' progress between primary and secondary schools. However, secondary teachers did not recognise the role of the Key Stage 3 Strategy in promoting transfer and

their lack of knowledge of other policy documents, such as 'Curriculum Continuity', means they are unaware of attempts to support their work. Furthermore, the production of other resources, such as those to support Assessment for Learning (AfL), Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and the Revised Frameworks for Literacy and Numeracy, as key-stage specific literature does not foster cross-phase collaboration.

6.5.2. Local policy

At a local authority level both case studies have an additional motivation to promote the transfer process. Both local authorities facilitate networks of schools which have the potential to encourage cross-phase collaboration. Schools would like this facilitation role, which works well in co-ordinating support for vulnerable pupils, to be extended, particularly where schools are involved in different networks.

6.5.3. School level policy

Most schools organise activities in respect of the induction of new pupils. To extend this focus beyond that of events on an annual cycle, schools may need an additional internal motivation such as the need to recruit more pupils into Year 7 or to raise attainment of students from particular primary schools. Although most secondary schools have whole-school policies relating to classroom organisation and behaviour, several of them report difficulties in ensuring that these practices are adopted consistently by all teachers.

6.5.4. Success criteria

At a national level the progress made by pupils, as measured by SATs results at the end of Key Stage 2 and 3, is the success criteria used by the government. At a school level the social and emotional well-being of pupils is seen as an alternative indicator of successful transfer. The availability of specific funding to support transfer-related activities is seen by both local authorities and schools as key to the longer term improvement of the transfer process. However, uncertainties about the continuation of such funding threaten the sustainability of activities. Secondary schools are not very effective at evaluating the impact of their transfer-related activities and

primary schools report little or no feedback, which leads to them feeling that their contribution to the process is not sufficiently valued.

6.5.5. Cross-phase practices

Both primary and secondary teachers acknowledge the importance of cross-phase collaboration in promoting pedagogical continuity. However, there are limited opportunities to promote dialogue between primary and secondary teachers, such as joint teaching or training sessions, and these activities are not prioritised by the schools themselves. Knowledge and understanding of the primary and secondary curriculum and of teaching and learning styles is based on preconceptions of each others' practice rather than first hand evidence. Although most secondary schools have adopted whole-school teaching and learning policies, these tend to be developed in isolation and do not build on the prior learning experiences of their pupils in primary school.

In the next chapter, these overall findings will be elaborated, interpreted and discussed in relation to the wider contextual framework of national policy and previous research.

7. Interpretation of the findings and conclusions

7.1. Introduction

The overall research findings, summarised at the end of the last chapter, were compiled following the comparative analysis of the empirical evidence gathered from the twelve schools in the two case study local authorities. These findings, and the original research questions, will now be interpreted within the wider contextual framework of national policy and previous research which was discussed earlier (in Chapter 4) as well as other information about practice which I have gathered during my studies.

The findings are presented using the common framework of policy, success criteria and cross-phase practices. Each finding is described separately (in italics), followed by its interpretation and discussion.

7.2. Policy

(a) National policy

Both local authorities have benefited from national initiatives which in turn have provided opportunities for schools to work collaboratively.

The community dimension of both specialist schools and extended services provide secondary schools with the potential to share facilities and additional resources with partner primary schools. From September 2006 every secondary school in England has a School Sport Co-ordinator (PESSCL) employed for a least two days a week to work with a family of primary schools. The Excellence in Cities Initiative, present in both case study local authorities, established Action Zones and provided Learning Mentors.

The Every Child Matters agenda has led most local authorities to re-structure their overall provision of services with education becoming an integral part of a Children and Young People's Plan which can have implications for other points of transfer such as Sure Start (Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1) and Adult Education (Key Stage 4 to Post-16).

The more recent national initiative of 'all-through' schools, identified previously in Chapter 4, prompted an interview with the Schools' Adviser in the Academies Division of the DfES (July 2007) to ascertain the impact of this development in terms of transfer. The interview revealed that there is "no policy as such regarding the establishment of all-through schools, no educational or philosophical reason", rather the purpose of academies is "to help regenerate disadvantaged communities". However, "there are thirty all-through schools in England with plans to develop more as academies or Trust schools and through Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programmes" (TES, 15th June 2007). My research has shown that some of these schools, for example, Haverhill in Suffolk and the West London Academy, are in fact campus schools where primary and secondary schools share the same site, with different headteachers. In others, such as Caroline Chisholm in Northampton, the primary phase of the school is one form of entry and when pupils transfer to Year 7 they are joined by pupils from other primary schools.

The local authorities and schools in the case studies gave little formal recognition to the role of national policies in improving transfer.

Chapter 4 of this study examined the high profile given to the importance of transfer between primary and secondary schools in recent government legislation, National Strategies documentation and Ofsted publications. Most of these references are, however, in the form of recommendations and advice. The only statutory requirement is the implementation of the National Curriculum and its associated assessment structures introduced in 1988, in part to 'promote continuity in the curriculum and in pupils' progress'. However, 'the framework itself did not guarantee these crucial features' (SCAA, 1996, p3).

Interviews with representatives of the Policy Team within the Schools Directorate at the DfES identified three factors in determining priorities within the DfES:

- Attainment data and in respect of transfer "any noticeable drop-off" between key stages,

- Ofsted evidence which “is good in terms of pastoral support, but is less good on cross-phase links”,
- The ECM agenda, “particularly in respect of particular groups of pupils – SEN, ethnic minorities, gifted and talented and the vulnerable”.

(Lesley Jones, DfES, June 2007)

An Implementation Review Unit, a stakeholder group comprising headteachers and local authority representatives, determine how information is communicated to schools and what becomes optional guidance or forms part of the school’s census data. “In order to increase priority we (the DfES) need to know how to get it onto the school leadership agenda”. Transfer is now “a common theme running through other initiatives” such as Assessment for Learning, Gifted and Talented and ethnicity. The DfES has also produced guidance relating to transfer for use by School Improvement Partners (SIPs) when meeting with headteachers.

Another interview with the Senior Director of the Secondary National Strategies in May 2007 revealed that ‘Strengthening Transfers and Transitions’ was no longer a discreet priority within The National Strategies Annual Plan rather it was common theme within all the Programme Plans. “Last year we had forty-one priorities which were unmanageable”. Scrutiny of these plans, however, reveals that only three of the eight, English, mathematics and Early Years, make any explicit reference to transition. The National Strategies representative explained that a number of other developments were taking place to raise the profile of transfer in schools:

- A module on ‘Strengthening Transfers and Transition’ (Programme 9) is now available on the internet as one of the consultancy packages for local authorities.
- The self-evaluation toolkit has been updated to include a primary version and an electronic professional development package is being developed for schools.
- The first Transfer and Transition Newsletter was published by the DfES in March 2007. The previous July I was employed as a consultant to Capita (National Strategies):

“To underpin the work of the National Strategies in 2006-07 in relation to transfers and transitions, we invited Bill Martin, Waltham Forest LA, to write a position paper for us drawing on his own research in this area as part of a doctoral thesis” (Transfer and Transitions Newsletter, Issue 1, Spring 2007, DfES).

Two subsequent issues were published in the Summer and Autumn of 2007.

These interviews demonstrate that the government, through The National Strategies, continue to recognise the important role of transfer by promoting new activities which enhance its status. However, despite Galton (1999) calling for ‘more radical approaches’ and the Beacon Report (2002) requesting ‘a national steer’, it appears that many of the current national activities are not widely disseminated and ultimately the priority afforded to transfer is determined at a local level.

Primary schools demonstrated an awareness of the potential for cross-phase links through national initiatives, but they also reported that these opportunities for collaboration with secondary schools had not been developed.

Resources to support national initiatives are invariably produced as phase-specific documentation. The National Curriculum programmes of study outlining curriculum content are available as separate primary (Key Stage 1 and 2) and secondary (Key Stage 3 and 4) documents with neither making reference to the other’s content to support continuity. In the case of Personalised Learning, for example, the DCFS website advises colleagues that ‘more detailed information can be found at the separate Primary Strategy and Secondary Strategy websites’.

Similarly materials to introduce and support SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) are also key stage specific. Although they share the same common aspects of self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills the primary and secondary resources are separate documents with the secondary document making no reference to prior teaching and learning. Furthermore, Theme 7 of the primary resource entitled

'Changes' (DfES, 2005) makes no reference to transition as a significant life change or challenge as mentioned in Every Child Matters.

Hence, as reported previously, primary teachers plan and prepare for transfer with Year 6 pupils without knowledge of the complementary work which may be undertaken in Year 7. Similarly secondary teachers delivering the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programmes (SEAL) may be unaware of prior learning of their Year 7 students.

The responsibility for overseeing the implementation of national initiatives lies with local authorities through their national strategy consultants. These individuals often have phase-specific responsibilities which can militate against collaboration as primary and secondary teachers meet separately to discuss the implementation of national strategies, invariably using the key stage specific guidance.

(b) Local policies

All local authorities have a statutory responsibility for administering the admissions procedures in respect of transfer. Both case studies have an additional motivation to facilitate additional transfer related activities.

Hill and Russell (1999) discuss the impact of 'internal' and 'external' pressure on educational change. In the inner city borough the 'internal' pressure to review transfer procedures was provided by the high number of Year 6 pupils transferring to schools outside the borough as well as concerns about the high number of exclusions of Year 7 pupils. Whereas the 'external' pressure of Ofsted's criticism of Key Stage 3 results prompted the re-organisation of the provincial town's school system.

Similar Ofsted judgements led to re-organisations involving middle school provision in other local authorities such as Bromley, Newcastle, Northampton and West Sussex. At the present time (September 2008), although there are several middle schools operating in parts of different local authorities, such as Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Hertfordshire only Bedfordshire, of the one

hundred and forty-nine local authorities in England and Wales, retains a solely three-tier system with lower (5-9), middle (9-13) and upper (13-19) schools. Different motivations have prompted reviews in some other local authorities. In the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames it was local councillors, rather than Ofsted, who expressed concerns about poor Key Stage 3 results, which instigated a review of the Year 7 curriculum and transfer arrangements. Concerns about the high number of cross-borough transfers led to the establishment of a West London Network, involving five boroughs. Similar concerns have been expressed in Sandwell and the London Borough of Islington. In Wales the abolition of SATs led some local authorities, such as Caerphilly, to review their support for the transfer of cross-phase information and from 'September 2007 every Welsh secondary school and its feeder primaries are required to produce a joint transition plan for pupils' (Times Education Supplement, 2004).

A number of national initiatives provide opportunities for cross-phase collaboration. Some of the case study schools were in several networks which they found could complicate the development of partnership.

Malcolm and Byrne (1996) confirmed that cluster groups 'promote continuity, helping staff appreciate each others' skills and reducing isolation' (ibid, pp65-68). Action Zones, for example, were to find ways of 'sharing good practice and developing innovative strategies for promoting greater continuity between the primary and secondary schools' curriculum' (DfEE, 1998). In Victoria, Australia, the MYRAD Project involved sixty-one clusters of schools, which were required to meet and plan together and to 'see the task of reforming schooling in the middle years as a joint activity' (University of Melbourne, 2002, p4). However, despite efforts to encourage collaboration between schools, pressure to meet performance targets and competition for pupils between secondary schools within local education markets can hamper inter-school co-operation. As Janet Newman (2002) argues ' although the discourse of partnership signifies equality of power, shared values and the establishment of common agendas and goals, the organisational reality tends to be very different' (ibid, p81). 'It is a difficult one for heads because at the end of the day you are responsible for your school, not the one over the road'

(Halpin, 2002, p24). The Beacon Report (2001) saw a clear facilitation role for local authorities to act as 'honest brokers' between schools and off-set any perceptions that secondary schools were attempting to dictate to partner primary schools.

Both case studies identified 'vulnerable' children as a particular group in need of specific targeted support, co-ordinated at a local level.

Most secondary schools are informed by the local authority of those pupils who have Special Educational Needs and are transferring to their schools and arrangements are usually made to discuss support with their primary teachers. However, the two case studies also identify another group of pupils as vulnerable, namely those who may be more likely, for various reasons, to be at risk of isolation during the early part of Year 7. 'The less prepared the student the greater the support that is needed. The greater the discontinuity between sending and receiving schools, the greater the need for extra support' (Anderson, 2000, p333). According to an article in the Times (10th March, 2007) 'nearly half the children in some local authorities were not granted their first choice of school'. This results in some pupils having to accept places in less popular secondary schools which prompts the need for all schools to promote transfer as a positive experience for all pupils.

(c) School Policies

All case study secondary schools have a large number of partner primary schools. The inner city borough has a large proportion of primary schools which transfer only one or two pupils and several of these schools are out of the borough. These factors can provide an additional motivation for the secondary schools to ensure consistent practice within Year 7.

'Effective liaison is impossible given the number of feeder schools' (ILEA, 1986: 2). Twenty years later and 'ensuring effective transfer in London is a more complex task than across the rest of the country' (London Challenge, 2007, p21). Reasons for highlighting transition as one of 'London's Key Issues' include the relatively higher number of partner primary schools, forty compared with twenty-five nationally with some as many as ninety, and the 'considerable movement' between boroughs, with students in Camden primary schools in 2004 transferring to secondary schools in twenty-three

different London boroughs. However, the interview with the DfES official (June, 2007) revealed that the number of partner primary schools was 'not a significant issue'.

Over recent years, most change in education has happened as a result of what Hill and Russell refer to as external pressures. 'Pressures to reform the middle years are somewhat unusual in that they are emanating largely from internal pressures within the education sector itself' (Hill and Russell, 1999, p192). One of the motivations for Blue Coat High School was the increased number of partner primary schools and the potential lack of consistency in respect of delivery of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2. Other schools build on their involvement in community based projects, such as extended services or the school sport co-ordinator programme, to further enhance relationships with partner primary schools. On the other hand, for a minority of schools whose reputation has declined as a result, for example, of a poor Ofsted inspection report, improving links with primary schools is seen as a way of communicating with prospective parents and thereby improving recruitment to Year 7.

All schools had induction programmes for students new to Year 7, but they experienced difficulties in ensuring that the principles were consistently adopted by all teachers.

This finding confirms those of my earlier research which revealed that on arrival at secondary school Year 7 students were subject to on-going whole school organisational routines rather than any specific arrangements for Year 7. The need for experienced form tutors and teachers to ensure a good start in Year 7 was widely acknowledged by most of the participants in this study. School management, however, afford a higher priority to examination success and maintenance of good behaviour in the upper part of the school and tend to deploy newly qualified teachers or teachers new to the school as Year 7 form tutors (Martin, 2003). 'For most of the time Year 7 is taught by inexperienced members of staff and even non-specialists in some cases' (Martin, 2005). Pupils in primary schools usually have the same teacher and everyday classroom procedures remain similar throughout the year. On arrival

at the secondary school Year 7 students may come into contact with fifteen different teachers and encounter a number of organisational changes: equipment, a variety of classrooms and seating arrangements as well as differing expectations about behaviour, homework, ways of learning and independent study. My findings support those of Ofsted, namely 'few schools have thought carefully about these changes' (2002, Para. 42). However, some schools, such as Blue Coat High School, have considered them and adapted their organisational arrangements by reducing the overall number of teachers in Year 7. Other examples are available on a website established by Maurice Galton which provides schools with an opportunity to share their experiences and improve practice (Homerton College Cambridge, 1999). The DfES are currently developing a similar web-based resource 'What Works Well' (DCSF, 2008).

7.3. Success Criteria

At a national level the academic progress made by pupils is the main success criteria used by the DfES.

My interview at the DfES (March 2007) confirmed that 'there is now a much higher profile on progress, particularly in respect of different groups of pupils, for example, gender and ethnicity'. To exemplify this point, a DfES funded project, Hampshire Research with Primary Schools (HARPS), poses six research questions, five of which make explicit reference to progress (Institute of Education, 2007, Appendix 11). Furthermore, the re-organisation of the school system in the provincial town, and other local authorities which formerly operated middle schools, was a direct result of unsatisfactory progress between Key Stages 2 and 3. However, re-organisation in itself does not guarantee improvement, as in the provincial town, where after an initial increase Key Stage 3 results have dropped more recently, due in part, according to the local authority representative, to logistical issues relating to a 'massive rebuilding programme and the redeployment of staff'. The rationale for re-organisation, however, seems compelling as a letter to parents at Castle Manor School in Haverhill, Suffolk states 'the authorities which have recently changed from three to two tiers all appear to be making improvements more quickly whereas in 85% of three tier schools in Suffolk

progress between the ages 7 and 11 is significantly below the national average' (Suffolk, 2007).

The dip in attainment at the start of secondary schooling, which is well documented in research by NFER (1999), Galton (1999) , Suffolk (2002) and Ofsted (2002), is not an issue identified by schools themselves as none of the case study secondary schools was able to produce evidence of progress or lack of it by the end of Year 7. Similarly in my previous research although one secondary school had an objective in the school development plan to 'reduce the dip in Year 7' it had no first hand evidence as to whether such a dip existed (Martin, 2005). Although all secondary schools now receive 'KS2 to KS3 value-added measures' as part of their annual Achievement and Attainment Tables from the DfES these do not include Year 7 specific data. The expectation is that schools use Pupil Achievement Tracker (PAT) to monitor the progress of students and set targets based on their prior attainment.

In Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2007) where transition relates to pupils moving from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 there are references to 'ensure effective transition for all pupils', 'hold events with local authority staff on effective practice including transition', 'local authorities will ensure schools have effective policies and practices in place to support secure transition' and 'local authorities will give adequate priority to transition issues in their training, development and challenge to schools' (DfES, 2007). Furthermore, this Programme Plan also has a target of 50% of schools inspected by Ofsted having 'effective transition between EYFS and KS1' (DfES, 2007). However, there are no such expectations in terms of support or targets for transfer between primary and secondary schools in any of the other National Strategies Programme Plans.

In both case studies a successful transfer experience is measured in terms of the social and emotional well-being of pupils. There is no formal evaluation of the different transfer related activities or of the expectations stated in either of the local authority's policy statements.

This finding confirms other research undertaken by the Oracle Project (1983), NFER (1999) and Ofsted (2002) which indicate that in recent years schools have taken various actions to alleviate pupils' anxieties about bullying, schoolwork and new routines. 'The practical and pastoral aspects of induction programmes were effective in encouraging pupils to feel comfortable and confident in Year 7' (Ofsted, 2002, Summary). In the two case studies specific activities in the final term at primary school, including visits to the secondary schools, prepare Year 6 pupils for the changes and induction programmes on arrival at the new school in September help students to settle in, make new friends and adjust to new teachers.

However, with the exception of Alexandra Girls' School, which conducted a formal survey of parents and pupils, most of the evidence to support the claims of a successful transfer experience was anecdotal. Rather than formally evaluate the effectiveness of their procedures the other three secondary schools based their judgements on a lack of complaints which they interpreted as signifying general satisfaction with the process.

Primary schools saw their role as preparing Year 6 pupils for transfer by raising their awareness to the changes that were about to take place. However, most primary schools reported that they received little or no feedback once their former pupils arrived at secondary school and this left them feeling that their work was undervalued. As a result 'most primary schools saw the transfer of pupils from Year 6 as the end of their influence and interest' (Ofsted, 2002, p6). Yet one of the recommendations made in 'Changing Schools' was to 'organise feedback to primary schools about the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 3' (Ofsted, 2002, p2). In a report by The National Strategies on the use of the Transition Units in London there is an expectation there would be joint meetings for Year 6/7 teachers to launch the units. Although, with the exception of three local authorities, there is no

evidence to demonstrate how the overall outcomes were to be disseminated to schools (The London Challenge, 2004). Furthermore, when evidence was requested for the London Challenge Transition Project only six of the thirty-three boroughs responded to the initial questionnaire seeking information about good practice (Mouchel Parkman, 2005, p9).

In the two case studies the appointment of senior staff with specific responsibility and a strong personal commitment to transfer has been a key factor to the successful implementation of policy.

In many local authorities the management of transfer lies with the officer with oversight of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and the extent of that responsibility is locally determined. Similarly in secondary schools oversight of the transfer process generally forms part of the job description of the Head of Year 7 or pastoral equivalent. As the DfES officer acknowledged 'in order to increase it's priority we (the DfES) need to know how to get transfer onto the school leadership agenda'. When 'Curriculum Continuity' (DfES, 2004) was published members of the senior leadership team were invited to read through the introduction. Whereas, when the Assessment for Learning initiative was launched in 2006 specific guidance was published for 'Senior Leaders' and when the revised Frameworks for Literacy and Numeracy were distributed in 2007 the documents were targeted at Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies. The role of particular individuals within organisations can also be crucial to ensuring success as Anne Waldon (2001, p159) noted transfer related activities 'tend to lose impetus when key personnel move on or school priorities change'.

The provision of funding to support the various transfer related activities has been crucial to the successful implementation of policy.

In recent years some schools have received additional funding from the DfES to promote particular national initiatives, such as Excellence in Cities. This funding has been allocated via the local authority which can 'top-slice' an allocation to support the management of the initiative at a local level, for example, to employ Action Zone Directors or Learning Mentor Co-ordinators. In the inner city borough DfES funding for Choice Advisers was re-directed to appoint Transition Learning Mentors in secondary schools, whereas in the

provincial town funding to support the various transfer activities was part of the central costs of re-organising the school system. Both local authorities and their respective schools expressed concerns about the sustainability of this level of funding. Furthermore, several primary schools in the provincial town expressed reservations about continuing transfer activities if future funding was to be devolved direct to schools.

Funding alone is not a guarantee of success. At a regional level The London Challenge made a financial allocation to each borough for four years between 2002 and 2006 in 'recognition both of the challenges London schools face and the increasing focus on transition' (London Challenge, Letter to London Boroughs, March 2006). However, the allocation of this funding was determined at a local level and, although it 'could be used to support specific innovations such as projects across primary and secondary schools' (ibid, Annex A), it was often, as in the case of Waltham Forest, allocated only to secondary schools. It was also disappointing to hear that although this funding had resulted in 'some good work it had not become sufficiently embedded in schools and did not represent value for money' (London Challenge Interview, 2007). Furthermore, these allocations had been granted on a year-by-year basis with no guarantee of funding each following year which made it very difficult to plan longer term projects.

In the inner city borough funding was made available to schools to cover the costs of supply staff so that teachers could work together during the school day, but conflicting priorities within individual schools meant that these activities had not taken place as planned. Time is also a resource often identified by schools as an important factor in supporting and developing the transfer process. However, this is closely linked to funding which is needed to provide the supply staff so that teachers can be released from timetabled lessons to undertake transfer related activities. At St. Aidan's School in Sunderland the use of school staff to drive minibuses to transport primary school pupils to visit the school was considered 'an incredible waste of teacher time' and 'it's only thanks to additional funding from the Gatsby Foundation' that another transfer project at the school has managed to

continue (ASCL, 2005). This is not a new issue as 'lack of time for liaison work' had been a recurrent theme of the ILEA report in 1986 (ibid, 2). However, in a report considering the 'Future of Education in Haverhill' a number of key ingredients were identified including 'an acceptance that the new models provide a way of reorganising core funding, rather than cutting back or attracting additional funding' (Howard Ley, June 2006).

7.4. Cross-phase practices

Issues of continuity tend to focus on a continuum of curriculum rather than pedagogy.

It may be overly simplistic to suggest that teachers have been encouraged to focus on curriculum continuity by the promotion of national initiatives. Improving teaching and learning are basic principles underpinning the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in primary schools and the Key Stage 3 Strategy for secondary schools. However, none of these initiatives explicitly promote cross-phase pedagogical continuity. By promoting common subjects the implementation of the National Curriculum was expected to 'help children's progression between primary and secondary school' (DES, 1987). However, several years later Ofsted (2002, p2) reported that 'continuity in the curriculum and progression in learning as pupils move from primary to secondary schools are longstanding weaknesses of the education system'. The Association of Science Education (1994) also commented that 'continuity in curriculum planning does not guarantee progression in learning'. Yet the lack of consistency in delivering the National Curriculum and more recently the sporadic implementation of transition units in partner primary schools is often given as a reason by secondary teachers for the 'fresh start' approach to their teaching in Year 7 (NFER, 1999, p37).

Progression in learning means secondary teachers having knowledge of their students' prior attainment and experiences and then building on this in Year 7. The introduction of The National Strategies Transition Units were a 'means of providing secondary teachers with common information about pupils from different primary schools' (DfES, 2002, p3). Although they were intended to ensure that 'there is a greater continuity and progression and less repetition of

work' they were also to ensure that secondary teachers are better informed about pupils' strengths and weaknesses so that they can plan programmes that meet the needs of their students. Transition Units are available in all the case study primary schools, where teachers build them into their curriculum planning as part of their pupils' preparation for transfer. Secondary schools, on the other hand, blame a range of logistical reasons, including the problems associated with the actual transfer of the booklets, for not continuing the units in Year 7 rather than seeing some of the other difficulties in respect of content and lack of differentiation as opportunities to promote cross-phase pedagogical discussion. This is a view supported by Ofsted (2004) which noted that difficulties remain with the use of transition units, because there was limited time for collaboration between primary and secondary schools, particularly where secondary schools have many feeder primary schools. On the other hand, an evaluation of the use of transition units by The National Strategies for The London Challenge was 'extremely positive' and reported that 'there had been huge benefits for both pupils and teachers'. It should be noted, however, most of the local authorities involved in this project held joint meetings for Year 6 and Year 7 teachers which were 'effective in enabling teachers to discuss issues around curriculum and pedagogy'. In fact the role of the local authority was seen as crucial to the continued success of the transition units, particularly in 'setting clear expectations' and 'providing joint training for teachers' (London Challenge, 2004).

The ORACLE study (1975-80) reported that there was very little attempt to maintain continuity between the two phases in respect of either curriculum content or teaching methods. For the most part, secondary teachers adopted the 'clean slate' approach because it was assumed that what went on in primary school was not serious or disciplined work. More recently Schagen and Kerr (1999) also found some secondary teachers were unwilling to trust that their primary colleagues had taught topics adequately' and saw a positive value in repetition, or 'reinforcement' as they preferred to call it, even though there was evidence that it may result in some pupils 'switching off' (ibid, p38). The resultant dip in students' progress has been partly attributed to the failure of some secondary teachers to build on the prior attainment of their pupils,

'obliging them instead to go over ground they have already covered in primary school' (Weston, 1992, p169). A view supported by Galton, Gray and Rudduck (1999) also reported that the dip in attainment was 'exacerbated' by teachers' low expectations of pupils in their first year at secondary school. Again the emphasis seems to focus on the delivery of curriculum content rather than a continuity of teaching and learning. The problems of transition are 'as much about differences in approach and expectation as they are about mismatches in content' (Waldon, 2001, p169). My own research found that 45% of Year 7 students reported that they often repeated work which they had done previously in primary school, while 36% stated that their teachers had never asked them about their previous work (Martin, 2005). However, as Robin Bevan stated, when he discovered that 35% of mathematics taught in Year 7 had already been covered in primary school, 'the value of research depends on the actions which follow from it' (TES, 2003).

Knowledge and understanding of primary and secondary teachers' practice is based on preconceptions of each others' practice rather than first evidence.

It is widely acknowledged that there are differences in primary and secondary teaching practices, but some of them may have become exaggerated by teachers' preconceptions of each others' practice. The differences have now been officially recognised by Ofsted's inspection findings which revealed that 'the proportion of teaching in Year 7 that was good or very good was lower than in Year 6 lessons'. 'Year 7 teachers did not know enough about what the pupils already knew or could do which resulted in a lack of challenge' (Ofsted, 2000, Para 75). As discussed previously primary teachers see themselves as teaching children and focusing on learning whereas their secondary colleagues are perceived to teach subjects and manage student behaviour. 'In primary schools they may have to teach ten different subjects, but they only have 30 pupils, we have 200 students every week. We need to see each other in a different light, in primary school teachers have the same children for five hours a day, we only have students for one hour sessions' (DHT, Blue Coat High School). Nevertheless, the need for better cross-phase collaboration is widely recognised; 'the value of what we can learn from

primary teachers should never be underestimated, they are with their pupils all day, every day' (Carroll, DfES, 2003).

These differences between primary and secondary pedagogies are hardly surprising as Lenga and Ogden (2000, p4) reported 'teachers are trained to operate within quite distinctive phases, professionals in primary and secondary schools rarely come into contact with each other and so it is likely that most classroom practitioners teach with only a general awareness of practice within the opposite sector'. In 'Schools achieving Success' the government reported that 'standards for pupils aged 11-14 are not high enough. Expectations have been too low' (DfES, 2001, 4.27). The lack of challenge at Key Stage 3 that is described by Wintersgill (2000) is 'largely due to uniformed misapprehension on the part of secondary educators'. Schagen and Kerr (1999) also reported that it was 'no wonder' that students found Year 7 unchallenging given the 'concerted push' during Year 6 in preparation for SATs.

The evidence of my own study supports the findings of other research, namely a lack of knowledge of each other's teaching methodologies and curriculum, as Lenga and Ogden (2000, p4) stated that 'it would be of great benefit for subject specialists and co-ordinators to meet in cluster groups for planning and liaison'. Although Galton (DfES, 2003) was able to report that 'secondary schools now have a more constructive view of the teaching taking place in primary schools, there is too little focus on exploring specific pedagogic strategies to improve pupil attainment' (ibid, p72).

Although the case study secondary schools recognised the need to improve cross-phase dialogue, the number of occasions when this has taken place are sporadic, even at Alexandra Girls' School where funding, often quoted as a barrier, was made available. Bell Lane Primary School reported that links between newly qualified secondary teachers and partner primary schools had been 'very positive' in 2006, but that visits planned for 2007 had not taken place. In my own experience with the Action Zones between 2001 and 2006 there were 88 opportunities for secondary teachers to meet with partner

primary colleagues on a range of curricular and cross-phase issues yet the attendance of the two secondary schools was 44% and 20% respectively compared to over 75% by primary schools representatives. As stated earlier in the 1986 ILEA study 'liaison quite clearly appears to be one-way process', particularly when coupled with the finding from the case study primary schools about the lack of feedback they receive and how teachers feel that their work is not valued.

The introduction of a protocol in the provincial town is based on the pledges which have been developed by The National Strategies as an entitlement for pupils and parents within the transfer process. However, closer examination of the actual wording of some of these pledges shows that they make commitments on behalf of teachers, for example:

- 'My primary teacher will inform my secondary teachers about me (eg: what I am good at and what I need to improve)',
- 'My secondary teachers will know what I have been taught in primary school and help me to make links to the new work',
- 'My secondary teachers will have high expectations of what I can do. (eg: based on information discussed with primary teachers)' (National Strategies Pledges, December 2007).

The pledges, therefore, raise expectations both in terms of secondary teachers' knowledge of the prior learning of their students and of cross-phase collaboration.

The recent increase in the establishment of all-through schools may provide opportunities to remove some of the barriers to cross-phase collaboration as primary and secondary teachers will be employed in the same institution. On its website The Consortium of All-Through Schools (CATs) claims that 'collaboration inevitably challenges current pedagogical assumptions'. It is also the view of the DfES Innovations Unit that the collaboration that results from working within an 'all-age' institution may lead to 'improved teaching and learning by sharing the expertise across phases and by offering increased

opportunities for personalised learning'. It is interesting to note that the pedagogical advantages of all-through schools are expressed as little more than aspirational in terms of 'the scope for', 'may lead to' and 'potential benefits' (DfES, Innovation Unit website, 2005).

With the exception of one primary school, all case study schools adjudged cross-phase teaching and learning as a weakness when completing the initial research questionnaire (SEF) and during the follow-up interview, schools confirmed that this was an area of work which needed to be improved. This is not new or unusual; 'on the whole, primary and secondary teachers are ignorant of one another's work. This must be overcome first. There is a need for a bit more contact and a lot less suspicion of each other' (ILEA 1986: 2). 'Serious efforts to cross the pedagogical bridge were found in only one school in twenty in the ORACLE project' (Sutton, 2000, p39). Ofsted (2002, Summary) also found that there was 'generally little, if any, discussion taking place between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers about preparing pupils for the changes and little knowledge about each others' curriculum or teaching styles'. Other research, however, suggests that even more important may be the variations in teaching approaches of secondary teachers (Galton and Pell, 2000). This latter issue may, in part, account for the implementation of whole-school policies which aim to promote greater consistency of practice.

The four secondary schools have developed whole-school teaching and learning policies. However, these strategies do not necessarily build on pupils' prior learning experiences in Year 6. Similarly preparation for transfer in primary schools may not complement secondary provision.

Despite their lack of acknowledgement of the impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy all four case study secondary schools have adopted whole-school teaching and learning policies, often following training from an accredited provider. Furthermore, three of the four case study secondary schools have deployed specific teachers to ensure that a more consistent of teaching and learning is adopted by Year 7 students. Although this may go some way to providing a common application of teaching and learning, it does not guarantee that their practice will build on pupils' prior experiences with many

secondary teachers adopting the 'fresh start' or 'clean slate' approach. As discussed previously, many of them prefer to wait until students arrive in September in Year 7 before introducing 'catch-up', 'springboard' or mentoring programmes. In fact government documentation is not helpful in this regard as many cross-phase initiatives such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Assessment for Learning (AfL) have separate publications for primary and secondary schools with little or no cross-referencing. Unlike in Victoria, Australia, where VELs (Victoria Essential Learning Standards) and POLT (Principles of learning and Teaching) were introduced as cross-phase initiatives with the same documentation for all schools.

Pedagogical reform was an aim of the KS3 Strategy. However, many teachers responded negatively to the implication that their current teaching and learning practices needed to change. As a secondary teacher commented during my previous research: 'The Key Stage3 Strategy has less impact because we are specialists' (Martin, 2005). Stobart and Stoll (2005) also found it difficult to substantiate a claim that the Key Stage 3 represented 'a radical reform of teaching and learning' (ibid, p232). Although they found that it extended many teachers' repertoires in the classroom and encouraged more attention as to how 11-14 year old students learn, the emphasis has been on 'teacher-centred, rather than on learner-centred, strategy' (ibid, p232). There would, therefore, appear to be little or no change since the ORACLE project found 'evidence of a focus on the management of learning in only one school in fifty' (Sutton, 2000, p39). It will be interesting to see whether the on-going review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum develops a clearer sense of pedagogical continuity, thereby supporting Waldon's (2001) view that 'Key Stage 3 teachers hold the keys to solving the problems of transition' (ibid, p159).

7.5. Interpretation of the findings in relation to the research questions

The research has identified specific findings which can now be reviewed in the light of the four research questions, (outlined in Chapter 3.4.) which underpin the original focus of the research, namely:

(i) What is the priority given to transfer by local authorities?

Evidence from the Local Government Association demonstrates the low status attributed to transfer generally:

‘Although a strengthened transition between Key Stages 2 and 3 was acknowledged by schools and local authorities as a key aim of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, it was not perceived as a high priority for the present or for the future’ (LGA, 2004, p32).

The findings of my research support my earlier hypothesis that despite repeated references to its importance at a national level transfer appears to be given a low priority at a local level. Most of the references to transfer within government strategies and other national educational initiatives are implicit and aspirational rather than explicit or in the process of realisation. Such references are made in the form of recommendations rather than statutory obligations and the priority afforded to their implementation is determined at a local rather than national level. The findings also revealed that some of The National Strategies support documents were not known by the local authority representatives and, in schools, not communicated to those teachers directly involved with the transfer process.

(ii) Do local authorities and/or schools need an additional motivation for the implementation of their policies to be successful?

My research findings demonstrate that the priority afforded to transfer is enhanced in the case study local authorities, both of which have a specific motivation to enhance support for the transfer process. Furthermore, three of the four case study secondary schools also have an additional motivation in terms of improving links with partner primary schools in order to increase the number of students choosing to transfer to their schools at the end of Year 6.

(iii) How do local authorities and schools encourage cross-phase collaboration?

The national strategies relating to literacy, numeracy and Key Stage 3 are key stage specific and do not explicitly promote cross-phase collaboration. The

research findings reveal that although both primary and secondary teachers acknowledge the importance of cross-phase links there are limited opportunities for these to take place. Both local authorities organise separate professional development for both primary and secondary teachers and the only direct cross-phase development opportunity is an annual transfer conference. Although two of the case study secondary schools have held training sessions with partner primary schools unhelpful preconceptions of each others' practice still persist. The development of transfer related activities, such as transition units, are actively promoted by both case study local authorities. Yet their implementation is determined at a school level, where priorities may vary and where a lack of consistent application results in some primary teachers feeling that their contributions are not sufficiently valued by their secondary colleagues.

- (iv) What is the focus of local transfer policies and to what extent do they actively promote cross-phase teachers' practices?

Both the case study local authorities promote activities which aim to reduce Year 6 pupils' anxieties about the transfer experience. The four case study secondary schools evaluate the effectiveness of their own transfer arrangements in terms of the well-being of their students in adapting to the physical changes in school environment and organisation. However, despite the availability of Key Stage 2 SATs data and the adoption of specific teaching and learning strategies, all four secondary schools report a lack of consistent implementation by teachers of whole-school policies, particularly in respect of Year 7 students. Similarly primary schools report that their strategies for preparing pupils for transfer are implemented in isolation rather than complementing work in Year 7.

7.6. Conclusions

Analysis and interpretation of the evidence from questionnaires and interviews undertaken in twelve schools within two local authorities revealed a number of findings in respect of policy and success criteria as well as the main focus, cross-phase practice, which are summarised in Diagram 9 (Page 126). Their

subsequent interpretation and discussion leads to the following overall conclusions, the implications of which will be explained in the next chapter.

(i) National Policy

Several government strategies and other national educational initiatives emphasise the importance of transfer. However, these references tend to be in the form of guidance rather than on the ground professional initiatives. Despite the introduction of a National Curriculum, which aimed to promote progression between the phases, primary and secondary schools continue to operate as separate organisations in respect of curriculum delivery. Repeated reference to the need to implement different bridges acknowledges that there is a gap between primary and secondary schools and that the transfer process is far from a continuous process.

(ii) Local policy

Although the two case study local authorities have a specific motivation to promote and improve the transfer process, other local authorities may have differing priorities and needs. Nevertheless all schools are increasingly being encouraged to develop partnerships through various national initiatives which have the potential to develop cross-phase collaboration.

(iii) School policy

The priority afforded to transfer varies from school to school. Based on the evidence of the four case study secondary schools the appointment of a senior member of staff to oversee the transfer process raises the profile and status of transfer related activities. Similarly, the implementation of whole-school teaching and learning policies can enhance the induction of Year 7 students and foster progression, particularly where they are applied consistently by all teachers.

(iv) Success criteria

Arrangements, procedures and activities associated with the transfer process are undertaken by both local authorities and schools as annual events, but they are not subject to routine monitoring.

(v) Cross-phase practices

Although teachers in the case study schools acknowledged the importance of cross-phase collaboration, opportunities to share practice and promote dialogue continue to assume a low priority. Knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools, essential in terms of building on children's prior learning experiences, are based on teachers' preconceptions of each others' practice rather than first hand evidence. Previous research findings demonstrate the importance of the 'how' factor within teaching. This study builds on that finding by identifying the need for consistent practice by teachers, particularly in Year 7 and the value of cross-phase continuity to develop knowledge of pupils' prior learning experiences.

8. Implications of the study

8.1. Introduction

The conclusions identified at the end of the previous chapter are now discussed in terms of their implications for the two case studies, for other local authorities and schools and for the development of wider educational policy. The potential for improving and extending research into transfer are also discussed. Finally the overall professional relevance of the study is explained.

8.2. Implications for the two cases

Each case study local authority has a particular motivation to improve the transfer process and has devised a specific strategy to support its schools, parents and pupils. However, despite the appointment of a named officer to lead the strategy and the provision of additional financial resources there is wide variation in the participation of the various transfer related activities by schools. Both local authorities need to evaluate the effectiveness of their current strategies and communicate the outcomes to schools. Feedback to schools based on the existing network arrangements could promote cross-phase collaboration and assist them to identify their own priorities for future development. Future funding implications, a concern raised by most schools, need to be resolved as part of this feedback.

The development of the transfer strategy in the inner city borough and the protocol in the provincial town would be greatly enhanced if the policies were included as an integral part of their respective local authority Children and Young People's Plans as an entitlement to all parents and pupils.

At an individual school level the lack of consistent practice in Year 7 and the importance of cross-phase collaboration need to extend beyond the rhetorical stage of policy formulation and build on the opportunities offered by existing specialist school, extended school and school sport partnerships. For example, the exchange of existing newsletters, websites and emails between partner primary and secondary schools could facilitate communication and improve teachers' awareness of each others' practice. However, in reality

schools have to balance their desire to develop a professional culture with the external pressure to meet targets as part of the performativity agenda.

8.3. Implications for other local authorities and schools

Other local authorities and schools may not share the same motivations as the two case studies in promoting the transfer process. However, as all local authorities have a statutory responsibility to administer the admissions process this role could include promoting an entitlement to a common transfer experience for pupils and parents based on the pledges being developed by The National Strategies. In recent years local authorities have also been responsible for organising schools into various groups, such as Action Zones, Education Improvement Partnerships and Extended Schools' networks. These groupings have the potential to promote cross-phase collaboration. However, based on the evidence of my research greater consideration needs to be given to these groupings, particularly where schools may be members of more than one network. Networks themselves present problems in that it is more difficult to develop policy and practice across a group of schools as distinct from within individual schools. Therefore the rationale for network formation and the development of a professional culture are crucial factors, as is leadership and facilitation, roles traditionally undertaken by the local authority. Common transfer days, annual conferences and support for specific groups of pupils, for example, those identified as vulnerable at points of transfer, are best organised at a local authority level. Such overall facilitation could also promote equity and equality in terms of individual schools' capacities to be involved in different initiatives.

Where the local authority does not take a pro-active role in supporting transfer the onus lies on individual schools. Concerns, identified in my research, about a lack of consistent practice in Year 7, prompted by secondary schools with large numbers of partner primary schools, should in itself provide them with the motivation to develop cross-phase collaboration. However, priorities for development are self-determined by schools themselves and secondary schools may need an additional motivation such as low pupil numbers or unsatisfactory attainment in order to raise the status and profile of transfer as

a focus for improvement. Where such a focus has been prioritised the identification of a lead person, the development of whole-school policies and practice and the facilitation of collaborative activities are key components to successful implementation.

This research has demonstrated that schools rarely monitor their transfer arrangements. Effective communication of the outcomes of evaluation would raise the profile of the transfer, help to ensure that policies are more consistently implemented, foster cross-phase collaboration by providing primary schools with the feedback they request and provide evidence of its cost effectiveness in terms of the future financial sustainability of transfer related activities.

8.4. Implications for the development of wider policy

As illustrated throughout this study, there have been numerous references to the importance of transfer in several high profile government policies and other national educational initiatives. However, such references have invariably been implicit rather than explicit. Documentation produced by the National Strategies to support the transfer process is usually key stage specific and does not overtly encourage cross-phase collaboration.

It may be that there are communication and organisational problems with the traditional patterns of educational provision in England. In terms of the context of influence within the policy making cycle (Bowe et al, 1992) the development of school networks, federations and all-through schools may provide better opportunities for some teachers to share different teaching strategies and learning styles. Progression, with secondary teachers building on the prior learning experiences of their Year 7 students, may be more effective if a different concept of 'middle years' schooling was promoted. A paradigm shift in thinking may be required to promote greater coherence in pedagogical continuity across Years 5 to 9 rather than the present system which only serves to reinforce phase specific identity.

Each year on the same day at the beginning of March all Year 6 pupils and their parents receive notification of their secondary school. During the following days and weeks the transfer process receives a high national profile in the media as parents, dissatisfied with their allocation of school, contest the decision of their local authority. This annual publicity usually targeted at particular local authorities should receive national support. For example, the pledges currently being piloted by The National Strategies could be promoted as policy text, as an entitlement for all children and their parents, along with the current statutory requirements of the existing Admissions Policy. Although the pledges would not improve the allocation process their adoption, particularly by secondary schools, could promote better cross-phase collaboration as explicit in their content is an expectation of a better understanding by teachers of pupils' prior learning. This could foster a professional trust between primary and secondary teachers which in turn could restore confidence amongst some parents who are concerned about the quality of cross-phase teaching practice. Continuity within education has proved difficult to develop and it may be that, with the existing provision of different phases and institutions, transfer will remain a rite of passage. However, more could and should be done to prepare pupils and, more importantly, teachers for the changes which will take place.

8.5. Implications for future research

This study had a number of limitations, which could be borne in mind if similar research were to be undertaken. It also identified a number of other potential research opportunities.

The small sample size contained three single-sex secondary schools which had low numbers of pupils transferring from each partner primary school. This is not representative of educational provision as a whole, since mixed secondary schools have larger numbers of boys and girls transferring from the same primary schools. The secondary schools identified partner primary schools in terms of the numbers of pupils being transferred rather than their potential to develop continuity. Future research may need to review the rationale for the sample of schools.

There may also be problems in viewing transfer as a collection of different component parts, as in the case of Barber's bridges, particularly when schools are asked to make an overall 'best-fit' judgement, such as with London Challenge or National Strategies toolkits, which may disguise the impact of one specific aspect, as in my research that of pedagogy.

The research involved interviews with a number of different participants often as individuals. Several of these interviewees, particularly those in secondary schools, were more knowledgeable about the pastoral aspects of transfer rather than the learning of the students. It was difficult, therefore, to ascertain the full impact of the transfer experience without extending the research to other staff in the schools, which would be more time consuming and demanding of the schools themselves. Any future study should be aware of both the pastoral and academic dynamics within secondary schools.

Furthermore, the implementation of recent educational reforms such as Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) and Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA) are already impacting on the traditional aspects of teachers' roles. Learning Mentors also play a key role in supporting vulnerable children through the transfer process. Research into their experiences could provide a valuable insight into the organisational changes which are occurring as part of the overall workforce reforms.

The study used questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence as the main sources of data collection. However, it was the type of investigation in which classroom observation could have provided evidence of the effectiveness of teaching and learning, especially for gaining a deeper awareness and understanding of the pedagogical dimension. Several other researchers have used pupil surveys to study the effects of the pre-and post transfer experience. However, greater emphasis could be given to the 'pupil voice' in terms of the underlying causes of disengagement of some students during the early years of secondary schools. This type of research could examine the extent to which the experience of transfer itself and the different school organisational and pedagogical practices contribute to pupils' motivation, identity and attitudes towards secondary school.

Education Action Zones are now being replaced by other government initiatives aimed at promoting partnership between schools, namely Specialist Schools, Extended Schools, Primary Learning Networks and Education Improvement Partnerships. Research could be carried out to investigate the foci and extent to which these networks develop links between primary and secondary schools and thereby improve the transfer process. Similarly analysis of a sample of the transition plans now required to be produced by all Welsh schools would identify the common factors which could then inform future policies and practice.

The demise of the three-tier system of schooling in England and the advent of different forms of provision with all-through schools, academies, trusts and federations also provide new sources of evidence to review the impact of the transfer experience.

8.6. Profession relevance of the study

The central theme of the study, transfer from primary to secondary school, is highly relevant in the context of current government policy relating to pupil progress in the early years of secondary school, the on-going review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum and the increasing development of all-through schools and federations. Whilst retaining its focus on attainment at the end of key stages the government has more recently placed a greater emphasis on the need for schools to demonstrate that pupils are making academic progress. The potential for discontinuities to occur at the point of transfer means that cross-phase collaboration will remain a key issue.

As a Director of Action Zones, I have been in a privileged position with direct access to two secondary schools and their 20 partner primary schools. When I began my role I was determined to improve the transfer process by developing collaboration between primary and secondary teachers. Subsequently my doctoral studies have enabled me to focus on two aspects of a very complex process, namely the development of policy and practice within the transfer process. My research has increased my own professional

knowledge and understanding and assisted me in fulfilling my own role both within the Action Zone and, more recently, in developing a transfer strategy for a local authority. When the Action Zone initiative ended in April 2008 my leadership role in promoting transfer was transferred to the schools. Time will tell whether the focus on transfer and its associated activities remain a priority without my direct facilitation.

The publicity in the media which accompanies the announcement of Year 6 pupils' choice of secondary school in March each year will ensure that transfer from primary to secondary school will retain a high national profile. In the absence of government intervention in terms of ensuring better continuity of educational provision the priority afforded to improving the cross-phase pedagogical collaboration between primary and secondary teachers will continue to be locally determined. This in itself is an issue and emphasises the importance of strong leadership to balance local priorities and the external pressure of the national performativity success criteria of SATs and GCSE results with the academic progress of students in Year 7. For Year 6 pupils transfer to secondary school will remain a rite of passage. However, as this study has demonstrated, there is much that schools and teachers can do to improve this experience, to reduce the barriers and prevent the discontinuities which can have a lasting impact on some pupils' attitudes and academic progress.

I am proposing that such progress could be better achieved not through the development of a range of different bridges or activities, but through the active promotion of a single aspect of the process - pedagogy in the form of a professional dialogue between primary and secondary teachers, particularly those who teach in Years 6 and 7. The question would still remain, however, as to where the responsibility for initiating such partnership would lie in respect of external pressure and internal motivation. The current national policy direction which favours schools' specialisation and diversity is likely to continue pressures towards school level individualisation. However, a paradigm change in national policy, which redefined Years 5-9 as the middle years of schooling, could explicitly promote cross-phase links. Such a

conceptual change, referred to previously and which inspired me in Australia, would provide more structured opportunities for primary and secondary teachers to develop a mutual trust and professional respect for each others' practice, which in turn could improve the transfer experience of all children.

9. Bibliography

- Anderson, L. W., Jacobs, J., Schramm, S., and Splittgerber, F. (2000). 'School Transition: Beginning of the end or a new beginning?' *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 325-339.
- Arnott, C. (2006). 'Moving on up'. Article in *The Guardian*, 29th August, 2006, quoting research undertaken by Burden, B. and Chedzoy, S. (2002) at Exeter University.
- Association of School and College Leaders (2005). 'Playtime's Over' in *Leader Magazine*. July 2005.
- Association of Science Education (1994). 'I've done this before'. ASE Working Party reported in *Primary Science Review*, Nov/Dec 2003.
- Ball, S.J. (1990). *'Politics and Policy Making in Education'*. London: Routledge
- Ball, S.J. (1994). *'Education Reform : A critical and post-structural approach'*. Buckingham: OUP.
- Barber, M. (1999). 'Bridges to assist a difficult crossing' *Times Educational Supplement*, 12th March 1999.
- Barber, M. (2000). 'High Expectations and standards for all, no matter what' in Fielding, M. (2001). *'Taking Education Really Seriously ; Four Years Hard Labour'*. London: Routledge.
- Beacon Council Research (June 2001). *'Transition between key stages in schools'*. University of Newcastle upon Tyne: Department of Education,
- BEDC (1975). *'Continuity in Education: Junior to Secondary.'* Birmingham Education Development Centre, Project No 5, City of Birmingham: Education Department.
- Bentley T. (1998). *'Learning beyond the classroom: education for a changing world'* London: Routledge,
- BERA (2000). *'Ethical Guidelines'* [Online] British Educational Research Association. Available at www.bera.ac.uk. Last accessed March 2007.
- Beresford, J. (2003). 'Minding the Gap' in *'Managing Schools Today'*. June/July Edition, 2003. Quest Publications.
- Blair, A. and Frean, A. (2007). 'First-choice failure for one in five' in *The Times*, 10th March 2007.
- Bowe, R. Ball, S.J. with Gold, A. (1992). 'The Policy Process and the Processes of Policy' in *'Reforming Education and Changing Schools : Case studies in policy sociology'*. London: Routledge.

Brown, J. M. and Armstrong, P. (1986). 'Transfer from junior to secondary: the child's perspective' in Youngman, M. B. *Mid-schooling Transfer: problems and proposals*. Windsor: NFER-Nelson.

Carroll, L. (2003). 'Shifting Gears' in Teachers Magazine. DfES, May, 2003.

Cohen, L. Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. Oxon: Routledge Falmer.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research*. London: Sage.

Dainton, D. (2003). 'Key Stage 3: strategy or strait-jacket?' in *Forum*, Vol 45, No. 2, 44-46.

Delamont, S. and Galton, M. (1986). *Inside the Secondary Classroom*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

DCSF (2008). *What works well* [On-line] Available at www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk. Last accessed February 2008.

DES (1977). *Education in Schools*. HMSO.

DES (1987). *The National Curriculum 5-16 : A Consultation Document*. Welsh Office: HMSO.

DfEE (1995). *Review of The National Curriculum*. London: DfEE.

DfEE (1998). *Circular 11/98: Target Setting*. London: DfEE.

DfEE (1998). *Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change*. London: DfEE.

DfES (February 2001a). *Schools: Building on Success*. London: DfES.

DfES (September 2001b). *Schools Achieving Success*. London: DfES.

DfES (February 2002). *Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Managing the second year*. DfES 0143/2002.

DfES (2002). *Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 – English – Units of Work*. National Strategies, DfES 0113/2002.

DfES (2002). *Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 – Mathematics – Units of Work*. National Strategies, DfES 0118/2002.

DfES (September 2002). *Myths and Legends about the Key Stage 3 Strategy*. DfES.

DfES (2002). *'Transforming Secondary Education: the Middle Years'*. A speech by the Rt. Hon. Estelle Morris, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, 21st March 2002. DEMOS.

DfES (February 2003). *'Evaluation of the Key Stage 3 Pilot'*. DfES 0159/2003.

DfES (April 2003). *'Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Introducing the Third Year'*. DfES 0110/2003.

DfES (October 2003). *'Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Sustaining Improvement'*. DfES.

DfES (2003). *'Key Stage 3 Strategy: Introducing the Third Year'*. London: DfES.

DfES (2004). *'Every Child Matters – Outcomes Framework'*. DfES-1088.

DfES (2004). *'Transition and progression within Key Stage 3'*. National Strategies, Key Stage 3, 11/2004.

DfES (July 2004). *'Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners'*. HMSO.

DfES (2004). *'Curriculum Continuity: Effective transfer between primary and secondary schools.'* February, 2004. DfES 0116-2004 G.

DfES (2005). 'Teaching and Learning' in *'The Key Stage 3 Strategy'* [On-line] Available at www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk. Last accessed November 2007.

DfES (2005). *'Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Transition Project.'* Report prepared by Mouchel Parkman on behalf of The London Challenge.

DfES (2005). *'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All - More choice for parents and pupils.'* Cm 6272. HMSO.

DfES (2005). *'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning'*. DfES: 1369-2005 G

DfES (2005). *'A Journey to All-through Education'* by David Harris, Serlby Park School [On-line] Available on the Innovation Unit website. www.innovation-unit.co.uk. Last accessed January 2008.

DfES (2006). *'Assessment for Learning – Guidance for Senior Leaders.'* Secondary National Strategy. DfES Publications.

DfES (2006). *'Supporting School Self-Evaluation: Transfer and Transition.'* [On-line] Available at www.supportingselfevaluation.org.uk. Last accessed September 2007.

- DfES (2006). *'National Strategies Annual Plan 2006-07.'* [On-line] Website password protected. Hard copy made available from Carole MacIntyre, Senior Director, Secondary National Strategy, National Strategies, April 2007.
- DfES (2007). *'National Strategies Programme Plans'*. [On-line] Capita / DfES. Website password protected. Hard copy made available from Waltham Forest LA, September 2007.
- DfES (2007). *'Implementation Plans'* [On-line]. Capita/ DfES. Website password protected. Hard copy made available from Waltham Forest LA, September 2007.
- DfES (2007). *'Transfer and Transitions Newsletter.'* Spring, 2007. No 1. DfES.
- DfES (2007). *'London Key Issues.'* The London Challenge, DfES. 00118.2007.
- DfES (2007). *'Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage'* DfES Ref: 00012-2007BKT-EN
- DfES (2007). *'Whole school: Supporting Pedagogy'* [On-line] Available at <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/97673>. Last accessed October 2007.
- EMIE. (2002). *'Gleams from the Beacon'*. Good Practice in Transition in Education: The Beacon Council Scheme 2002-03. Ronald Arnold. nfer EMIE Report No. 69.
- Etzioni, A. (1967). *'Mixed Scanning - A 'third' approach to decision making'* in *Public Administration Review*, No 27.
- Frankel, H. (2007). *'Surviving the leap year'*. Times Educational Supplement. March, 2007
- Frean, A. (2007). *'State academies to cater for children from age 3 to 18'* in The Times, 15th May 2007, p. 2.
- Fullan, M. (1991). *'The New Meaning of Educational Change'*. London. Cassell.
- Galton, M. (1983). *'Managing Schools: the problems of transition'*. Report of the proceedings of the March Education Conference, University of London, Goldsmiths' College, edited by Smith L.A.
- Galton, M. and Willcocks, J. (1983). *'Moving from the Primary Classroom'*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Galton M, Gray J, and Ruddock J. (1999). *'The Impact of School Transitions and Transfers on Pupil's Attitudes to Learning and their Progress'*. DfEE Research Report 131.

Galton, M and Pell T. (2000). 'Transfer and Transition in English Schools: reviewing the evidence' in *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol 33, Issue 4.

Galton, M, Edwards, J, Hargreaves, L, Pell, T. (2003). *Transfer and Transitions in the Middle Years of Schooling (7-14): Continuities and Discontinuities in Learning*. DfES Research Report 443.

Goldstein, H. (2001). *The 2001 Education White Paper and evidence based policy: a commentary*. [On-line] Institute of Education. Available at www.ioe.ac.uk/hgpersonal/educationwhitepaper2001.pdf Last accessed February 2008.

Gorwood, B. T. (1986). *School Transfer and Curriculum Continuity*. London : Croom Helm.

Hackman, S. (2006). Lead article in *Teachers Magazine*. DfES, Summer, 2006.

Hadow, W. H. (1931). *The Primary School*. London: HM Stationery Office.

Halpin, D. (2002). 'Education Action Zones: Model Partnerships' in Glendinning, C. et al. *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Hargreaves, L. and Galton, M. (2002). *Transfer from the Primary Classroom: 20 Years On*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Herrington, N. and Doyle, L. (1997). *Curriculum continuity between primary and secondary school*. Paper commissioned by the Teacher Training Agency.

Hill, P. W. and Russell, V. J. (1999). 'Systematic whole-school reform of the middle years of schooling' in Bosker, R. J. Creemers, B. P. M. and Stringfield, S. *Balancing educational excellence, equity and efficiency: evidence from evaluating systems and schools in change*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Holmes, E. (2004). *Moving up to big school* in *Teachers Magazine*. DfES, September 2004.

Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The Active Interview*. London: Sage.

Homerton College Cambridge (1999). *Transfer and Transitions* [On-line] Available at www.creict.homerton.cam.ac.uk/transfer. Last accessed November, 2007.

Huberman, A. M. and Miles B.M. (1994). *Qualitative data Analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. London: Sage.

- ILEA (1986). '*Changing Places*' Research and Statistics Branch, Bulletin 7, 1025 / 86.
- Le Compte, M. and Preissle, J. (1993). '*Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*'. London: Academic Press Ltd.
- Lenga, R. A. and Ogden, V. (2000). '*Lost on transit : Attainment deficit in pupil transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3*'. Viewpoint No 13. Institute of Education: University of London.
- Ley, H. (2006). '*Future of Education in Haverhill*' A research study supported by the LSC and Suffolk County Council.
- Lindblom, C.E. (1959). 'The science of muddling through' in *Public Administration*, 19.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985). '*Naturalistic Inquiry*' London: Sage.
- Local Government Association (2004). '*The key stage 3 national strategy: LEA and school perceptions*'. LGA Research Report 11/04.
- London Challenge (2004). '2004 Transition Project Evaluation'. Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies.
- London Challenge (2007). 'London's Key Issues'. DfES. 00118.2007
- McCallum, B. (2003). '*Little Fish and Small Fry: Research into the effects of Primary to Secondary transition*'. The Norwood Achievement Partnership: Lambeth Education.
- McLaughlin, T.H. (2000). 'Philosophy and Educational Policy; possibilities, tensions and tasks.' *Journal of Education Policy*, Volume 15, No 4.
- Malcolm, H. and Byrne, M. (1996). '*5-14 in Primary School: The first 4 years*'. Edinburgh: The Scottish Council for Research in Education.
- Mansell, W. (2007). '*School Places Lottery*' in Times Educational Supplement, 9th March 2007.
- Martin, W. G. (June 2003). '*Changing Schools – Changing Teachers : the role and attitudes of teachers to the transfer process*'. Unpublished Ed.D Assignment for Methods of Enquiry 2.
- Martin, W. G. (October 2005). '*Changing Schools – Changing Teachers: The role of secondary school teachers in relation to the transfer process and attainment in Year 7*.' Unpublished 'Institutional Focused Study' for Ed.D.
- Martin, W. G. (September 2006). '*Strengthening Transfers and Transitions*'. Position Statement written for The National Strategies / Capita.

- Mason, J. (2002). *'Qualitative Researching'*. London: Sage.
- Morrison, K.R.B. (1993). *'Planning and Accomplishing School-Centred Evaluation'*. Peter Francis Publishers.
- Mosteller, F. and Boruch, R. (2002). *'Evidence Matters'*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
- Murdoch, W. (1966). *'The effects of transfer on the level of children's adjustments to school'*. MEd thesis: University of Aberdeen.
- National Curriculum Council (1989). *'An Introduction to the National Curriculum'*. DfEE.
- National Primary Centre (1994). *'Continuity and Progression: Critical issues affecting teaching and learning with a particular emphasis on the transition between primary and secondary schools'*. Oxford: National Primary Centre.
- Newman, J. (2002). 'The New Public Management, modernization and institutional change: disruptions, disjunctures and dilemmas' in K. McLaughlin, S.P. Osbourne and E Ferlie (eds) *'New Public Management: current trends and future prospects'*, p. 77-91. London: Routledge.
- Nicholls, G. and Gardner, J. (1999). *'Pupils in Transition: Moving between Key Stages'*. London: Routledge.
- Nisbet, J. D. and Entwistle, N. J. (1969). *'The Transition to Secondary School'*. London: University of London Press.
- Ofsted (2002). *'The Key Stage 3 Strategy: Evaluation of the First Year of the Pilot'*. Ofsted: HMI 349.
- Ofsted (2002). *'Changing Schools – An evaluation of the effectiveness of transfer arrangements at age 11'*. Ofsted: HMI 507.
- Ofsted (2003). *'Key Stage 3 Strategy: Evaluation of the Second Year'*. London: HMI 518.
- Ofsted (2004). *'Evaluation The Key Stage 3 Strategy: evaluation of the third year'*. Ofsted Publications Centre: HMI 2090
- Parkyn, G. W. (1962). 'The Transition from Primary to Secondary School' in Gorwood, B. T. (1986). *'School Transfer and Curriculum Continuity'*. London: Croom Helm.
- Paton, G. (2007). Education Correspondent in The Daily Telegraph, 1st March 2007.
- Robson, C. (1993). *'Real World Research'*. Oxford: Blackwell.

SCAA. (1996). *'Promoting continuity between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3'*. London: SCAA.

Schagen, S. and Kerr, D. (1999). *'Bridging the Gap ? The national curriculum and progression from primary to secondary school'*. Slough: NFER.

Sebba, J. (2000). *'The Trouble with Transition'* [On-line] Available at www.dfes.gov.uk/teachers. Last accessed March, 2004.

Shepherd, J., Taylor, M. and Topping, A. (2007). *'Lottery spreads as way of deciding which pupils get top places'* in *The Guardian*, 3rd March 2007, p. 6.

Simons, H. and Usher, R. (2000). *'Situated Ethics in Educational Research.'* London: Routledge Falmer.

Spendlove, D. (2001). "Building Bridges or Bungie Jumping?" in *The Journal of Design and Technology Education*, Vol 6, No 2.

Stobart, G. and Stoll, L. (2005). *'The KS3 Strategy: what kind of reform is this?'* in *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol 35, No 2, June 2005, p. 225-238.

Suffolk Education Department (1996). *'A Report on an Investigation into what happens when pupils transfer to their next schools at the ages of 9, 11 and 13'*. Suffolk Education Department, Inspection and Advice Division. [On-line] Available at www.slamnet.org. Last accessed October, 2007.

Suffolk Education Department Inspection and Advice Division (2002). *Transfer Review 2001*. [On-line] Available at www.slamnet.org. Last accessed October, 2007.

Sutton, R. (2000). *'Primary to Secondary: Overcoming the Muddle in the Middle'*. Salford. Ruth Sutton Publications: Trinity Press.

Stewart, W. (2007). *'New rules lead to scramble on admissions'* in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 2nd March 2007.

Times Education Supplement (2003). *'Please Sir, we've done this before'*. Robin Bevan, March 2003.

Times Educational Supplement (2004). *'Moving-on pilots raise confidence.'* TES Cymru, September, 2004.

The Times (2007). *'Pupils miss out on secondary school places'*. Education Editor, 10th March, 2007.

The Times (2008). *'School academies to cater for children from age 3 to 18'*. Education Editor, 15th May, 2007.

Training and Development Agency for Schools (2007). *Professional Standards for Teachers* [On-line] Available at: www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/professionalstandards.aspx. Last accessed November, 2007.

Trowler, P. (1998). *Education Policy: A policy sociology approach*. Eastbourne: Gildredge.

University of Melbourne (2002). *Middle Years Research and Development (MYRAD) Project*. A report to the Learning and Teaching Innovation Division, Victoria State Government, by the Centre for Applied Educational Research, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne. Department of Education, Employment and Training, Victoria State Government, Australia.

Waldon, A. (2001). 'Bridging the Gap' in *Journal of Design and Technology*, Vol 6, No 2.

Weston, P. (1992). *The Quest for Coherence: Managing the Curriculum 5-16*. A Research Briefing Paper. Slough: NFER.

Wintersgill, B. (2000). *Religious Education in the Secondary School: Prospects for religious literacy*. London: Roehampton Institute.

Wright, N. (2001). 'Leadership, 'Bastard Leadership' and Managerialism' in *Educational Management and Administration*. Vol 29 (3). London: Sage.

Youngman, M. B. and Lunzer, E. A. (1977). *Adjustment to Secondary Schooling*. Nottingham County Council and University of Nottingham School of Education.

Zeedyk, M.S. et al. (2003). 'Negotiating the Transition from Primary to Secondary School – Perceptions of Pupils, Parents and Teachers' in *School Psychology International*, 2003, Vol. 24 (1).

Appendix 1 (1/2)

Transfer from Primary to Secondary Schools (Suffolk)

Significant Changes in Teaching?

2001	Feeder Primary School (Y6)	Receiving High School (Y7)
English	<p>Objectives clearly explained to pupils Follow literacy hour format for lessons Greater variety of teaching styles Greater use of group work Shared writing and reading expected Guided reading and writing expected Mixed ability groups More time on English Level of reading well matched to pupils Choice of individual reading books guided More opportunities for speaking and listening activities</p>	<p>Objectives not always clear Three part lesson not observed – literacy strategy yet to make an impact* Greater independence expected Greater emphasis on individual work Less time spent on English Often taught in sets Less time on English Book choice more with pupils More library and research work Speaking and listening activities more limited</p>
Maths	<p>Three part lesson common More differentiated work More time on mathematics Rarely taught in sets Standards of mathematical literacy good Seating in groups More group work More pupil focussed Little use of specialised maths resources and equipment Low teacher interaction compared to other subjects</p>	<p>Numeracy strategy yet to make an impact* Work less differentiated Less time spent on mathematics Often taught in sets Presentation and mathematical literacy expectations are lower Seating in rows More whole class teaching More homework More teacher focused with more questioning Extended use of calculators Staffing shortages sometimes led to shared classes / non-specialist teaching Teacher interaction lower than in Year 6</p>
Science	<p>High degree of independent working More collaborative work with seating in groups Some confusion over language of Sc1 Individual questioning common</p>	<p>More whole class teaching Some repetition of content Still confusion over language of Sc1 More emphasis on tests “Writing up” of experiments is new Differentiation clear by the amount of scaffolding provided</p>
Overall in the new school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation in groups becomes less common – seating usually in pairs or rows • Resources used in year 6 and 7 are broadly similar • Teacher interaction is constant except in mathematics where it falls significantly • Pupils more likely to be organised in ability groups • A wide range of types of feedback to learners is provided – pupils may find this inconsistency difficult to understand • Pupils are less clear about the learning objectives / intentions and success criteria 	

* It should be noted that the literacy and numeracy strategies had not been introduced to Key Stage 3 at the time of the investigation.

Appendix 1 (2/2)

Transfer from Primary to Secondary Schools (Suffolk)

Significant Changes in Learning?

2001	Feeder Primary School (Y6)	Receiving High School (Y7)
English	<p>Greater variety of learning styles expected</p> <p>Pupils are keen readers and talk confidently about books</p> <p>More time for writing</p>	<p>Pupils read less for pleasure</p> <p>Less time for reading</p> <p>Writing against deadlines more common</p> <p>Writing related mainly to fiction</p> <p>More independence given to pupils</p> <p>Increased work as whole class</p> <p>Less practical activity</p>
Maths	<p>More opportunity to suggest ideas</p> <p>More "doing" activities</p> <p>Enjoy mental maths activities</p> <p>All work deemed "new" and "interesting"</p> <p>Little use of manipulative equipment</p>	<p>More on task</p> <p>More mathematical discussion with teacher</p> <p>Experience fewer mental maths activities</p> <p>Some work deemed "repeated" and "less fun"</p> <p>Some use of manipulative resources</p>
Science	<p>Groups with extensive practical work</p> <p>Reviewing and refocusing work</p> <p>Mind mapping used</p> <p>Predicting from data presented</p> <p>Use of own ideas to solve a problem</p> <p>More creativity</p> <p>More discussion</p>	<p>Thinking skills more highly regarded</p> <p>Looking for relationships in information collected</p> <p>More constrained approach with parameters set by teacher</p> <p>More individual work</p> <p>More listening</p> <p>More copying and following instructions</p>
Overall in the new school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is less group / team work – more emphasis on the individual or whole class • Time on task remains constant at about 80% engagement – there is little difference between boys and girls • There is an increase in reading and writing at the expense of observing and doing • There is a change of balance from speaking as the dominant activity to increased listening 	

* It should be noted that the literacy and numeracy strategies had not been introduced to Key Stage 3 at the time of the investigation.

www.slamnet.org.uk/transfer/2001review

Appendix 2

Hopes and fears about transfer to primary school

What I am Most Looking Forward to	What I am Most Anxious About
Meeting lots of new friends from different schools.	Being bullied.
Travelling to school without my parents.	Not having any friends
Being responsible for getting myself ready for school.	Not being able to do the work.
Doing good homework in all of my subjects.	Forgetting to do my homework
Being able to choose what I want to eat from the school canteen.	Losing my lunch money or bus money.
Having lots of different teachers.	Getting lost in school.
Learning practical subjects in proper rooms.	Getting lost on the way to school.
Feeling more grown up	Having a detention.
Not being in primary school anymore.	A teacher shouting at me.

**Transition Project Workshop,
Association of School and College Leaders.
26th September 2006.**

The Five Bridges

1. **The bureaucratic bridge** - involving formal liaison between schools, usually at the senior management level.
2. **The social bridge** - to develop social links between students and their caregivers with the new school prior to and immediately after transfer, and student 'induction' into the new school.
3. **The curriculum bridge** - sharing plans for the content to be taught on either side of the 'divide'. Teachers rather than senior managers would be involved here.
4. **The pedagogy bridge** - to develop a shared understanding of how students are taught, not just what they are taught. This is a major hurdle as teachers are trained so differently, and perceive learning from quite different perspectives.
5. **The management-of-learning bridge** - which emphasises how each student can be encouraged to manage the transition into high school. This would entail empowering the student and the family with information about achievement and needs and the confidence to articulate these needs in the new environment.

Michael Barber, 'Bridges to assist a difficult crossing'.
(Times Educational Supplement, 12th March 1999)

Appendix 4 (1/2)

Timeline of the Research:

Date	Research	Other sources	IOE
2006			
March 27			Proposal submission
April 28			Proposal review
May 8		National Strategies	
May 19			Supervisor
June 5		W. London Group	
June 21			Supervisor
July 11			Proposal confirmation
July 14		Hammersmith and Fulham Conference	
Sept 8		W. London Group	
Sept 25		ASCL Project	
Sept 27		TSA Conference	
October 2	Provincial Town LA		Supervisor
October 6	Inner City LA		
October 21			Thesis workshop
October 31		W. Sussex meeting	
November 2	Provincial Town LA		
November 6			Supervisor
November 8			
November 9		W. London Group	
November 18			Thesis workshop
November 20		National Strategies	
November 21		Ealing Conference	
November 28			Supervisor
December 7	Inner City LA	Caroline Chisholm visit All-through School	
December 8		SMT Meeting	
December 13	Alexandra Girls		
December 18		National Strategies	
2007			
January 10		Brent LA	
January 22		W. London Group	Supervisor
January 27			Thesis workshop
January 29	Provincial Town LA		
February 24			Thesis workshop
February 26	Alexandra Girls' Albion Boys'	SMT Meeting	
March 5		Northampton Conference	
March 6	Breakspeare Girls' confirmation		
March 7		DfES (Jules Smith)	
March 8			
March 9	Blue Coat High confirmation		
March 10			Thesis workshop
March 16		National Strategies	
March 20		Waltham Forest Conference	
March 27 – April 18		Melbourne, Australia	

Appendix 4 (2/2)

April 23	Inner City LA (Admissions)		
April 24	Alexandra Girls		
April 30		W. London Group	
May 1	Alma Primary and Albion Boys		
May 3	Blue Coat High and Breakspeare Girls		
May 9			Supervisor
May 10		National Strategies	
May 17	Adam Wood		
May 23	Appletree and All Saints		
June 5			Supervisor
June 8	Bower and Brookside		
June 11		DfES (Lesley Jones)	
June 12	Bell Lane and Bush Hill		
June 19		W. London Group	
June 20	Inner City LA - Feedback		
June 27			
July 2		National Strategies	
July 3	Alexandra Girls and Blue Coat Boys - Feedback		
July 4			Supervisor
	Breakspeare Girls - Feedback		
July 10		DfES (Paul Hann)	
July 12	Blue Coat High and Provincial Town LA Feedback		
September 12		London Challenge	
October 11			Supervisor
October 20			Thesis workshop
October 25			Supervisor
October 30		National Strategies	
November 17			Thesis workshop
November 22			Supervisor
December 5		National Strategies	
December 17			Supervisor
2008			
January 16			Supervisor
February 14			Supervisor
February 27		ASCL Conference	
March 5			Supervisor
March 17			Supervisor
March 18		Waltham Forest Conference	
April 23			Supervisor
April 25			Examination Application
May 22			Draft to supervisor
June 5			Supervisor

Interview schedule (Local Authority Representative)

1. Why does your LA have a policy ?

Prompts: What was the rationale / motivation?

2. Who formulated it?

Prompts: Who wrote it, what was the consultation process, who was involved?

Was it 'influenced' by other policies – local or national?

White Paper, KS3 Strategy, ECM, London Challenge?

3. What does it aim to achieve?

Prompts: Who are the stakeholders?

Pupils
Parents/carers
Individual teachers
Senior leaders
LEA

4. What are the resource implications?

How is the policy supported at LA level ?

Prompts: Documentation
Personnel (Consultants, officers, advisers)
KS2/3 Co-ordinators
Steering Group (Terms of Reference?)
Network meetings

5. How is the policy monitored?

6. How is the policy evaluated?

Prompt: Impact of the outcomes (Q3)

on Pupils
Parents/carers
Individual teachers
Senior leaders
LEA

What are the strengths/successes to date?

What are the areas for development ?

What do you see as the barriers to success?

Appendix 5 (2/2)

7. What response would you expect me to get from schools regarding their knowledge and implementation of the strategy?

+ If not covered within the interview?

8. Where does teaching sit within your policy?

Prompts: How important is cross-phase dialogue?
 How do you promote it?

List of Interviewees

Case Study A (Inner City Borough)

Local Authority representative
Secondary Strategy Manager

Secondary Schools

Alexandra Girls' School
Deputy Headteacher (Ex-Director of Action Zone)
Albion Boys' School
Deputy Headteacher

Primary Schools

Alma Primary – Headteacher and Year 6 Teacher
All Saints Primary – Headteacher
Appletree Primary – Headteacher
Adam Wood Primary – Deputy Headteacher

Case Study B (Provincial Town)

Local Authority representative
Officer with responsibility for transition/re-organisation.

Secondary schools

Blue Coat High School
Deputy Headteacher, Head of Year 7 and Learning Mentor
Breakspeare Girls School
Headteacher and Head of Year 7.

Primary Schools

Bell Lane Primary – Headteacher and Year 6 teacher
Brookside Primary – Headteacher
Bower Primary - Headteacher
Bush Hill Primary – Deputy Headteacher

Institute of Education/London University

**Self-Review
of
Transfer and Transition (Secondary)
(Ofsted SEF format)**

Which statement best matches your school's practice + supporting evidence

1.Characteristics of your school in relation to transfer and transition			
Sources of evidence: Number of partner primary schools and changes over time. Networks –Specialist schools, Sports Partnership. SDP priority			
Limited communication takes place to support transfer and transition.	Partnerships have been formed which focus on discussions about pupil progress and wellbeing.	Good partnerships have been formed that encourage purposeful communication about pupil progress and wellbeing between individuals and groups of staff from partner schools.	Very well developed partnerships across the locality/family group involve all stakeholders in a whole community commitment to raising pupil achievement and wellbeing.
School's evidence to support judgement:			
2.. Views of parents/carers and other stakeholders			
Sources of evidence: Information for parents and pupils from LA and school. Pre-transfer events. Feedback from parents and pupils on effectiveness of arrangements			
Few opportunities are sought to involve learners, parents, carers and other stakeholders in planning, monitoring and evaluating transfer and transition between schools, classes and settings.	Learners, parents, carers and other stakeholders' views are sought when planning transfer and transition between schools, classes and settings.	Learners, parents, carers and other stakeholders' views are sought and taken into account when planning, monitoring and evaluating transfer and transition between schools, classes and settings.	The school actively engages learners, parents, carers and other stakeholders in planning evaluating and proactively developing the transfer and transition process.
School's evidence to support judgement:			
3 Achievement and Standards			
Sources of evidence: Standards on entry, use of KS2 data, impact of transfer on attainment, , intervention, G and T, shared expectations in Year 7			
Some sharing of data and information exists but is used inconsistently in planning.	Data and information about attainment are used effectively to enable individual learners and groups to move on in their learning. Most students make progress in Year 7.	A broad range of data and information are used to enable individual learners and groups to make progress in Year 7.	There is full knowledge and mutual understanding and trust of data, information and contexts that are used to plan effectively for all individuals and groups and ensures that there is significant value added progress in Year 7.
School's evidence to support judgement:			

4. Personal development and wellbeing.

Sources of evidence:
 Induction arrangements (July and September), role of Learning Mentors and Student Mentors, common policy in Year 7.

Statutory procedures are in place but the information is rarely used to inform practice.	Transfer arrangements and procedures between schools, settings or classes are in place to ensure that the physical, academic, social, emotional personal needs of learners are identified.	Transfer arrangements and procedures are in place and are reviewed regularly to ensure that the physical, academic, social, emotional and personal needs of learners are addressed. Teachers liaise regularly within and across schools and settings.	The impact of transfer and transition arrangements and procedures is evaluated to ensure that the physical, academic, social, emotional and personal needs of all learners are met. All staff and relevant agencies are involved in sharing pupil information and planning for transfer.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

School's evidence to support judgement:

5a) Quality of provision-teaching and learning

Sources of evidence:
 Cross-phase opportunities, evidence of prior learning, common language/vocabulary in Year 7, feedback to primary schools

Few arrangements are in place to share teaching and learning policy and practice across settings.	Opportunities have been created to facilitate discussions about teaching and learning. Bridging/transition units are used to support transfer.	Teachers and learners work together to moderate judgements about learning through observation and work scrutiny. Targets are set and monitored in Year 7.	Teachers and learners know about practice in one another's schools and settings and use this to develop policies for consistency and continuity of teaching and learning. Bridging units have been developed collaboratively. Targets are set , progress monitored and impact evaluated.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

School's evidence to support judgement:

5b Quality of provision-curriculum

Sources of evidence:
 Curriculum continuity between KS2/3, Transition Units, summer school activities, Extended Schools links between Year 6/7.

Liaison is limited to the statutory procedures for information transfer. Little opportunity exists for discussion about the curriculum.	Some discussion takes place within schools and with partner schools and settings which focuses on continuity of curriculum, teaching and learning. The curriculum is planned to bridge points of transfer.	Schools have planned together a curriculum that provides continuity and progression. Teacher assessments are shared and trusted by colleagues, informing their practice.	The curriculum is planned to ensure continuity and progression between schools. It ensures that there is challenge and continuity that takes account of pupils' needs and perceptions. They are explicitly supported in making connections with previous learning. Impact is evaluated and informs practice.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

School's evidence to support judgement:

5c Quality of provision - guidance and support			
Sources of evidence: Consistent practice in Year 7, deployment of Year 7 teachers, building on prior levels of independence and responsibility.			
Few opportunities exist for learners to be prepared to engage with their new learning environment.	Programmes are in place to support learners in being acquainted with their new learning situation. Some provision is made to support individual needs.	The school provides a range of programmes to meet individual needs to familiarise learners with their new learning environment. Parents, carers, governors and other community members are engaged in supporting transfer and transition.	Through a process of constant evaluation programmes are refined and developed to meet the changing needs of individuals and groups of learners. Learners' existing skills are taken into account and developed. They are provided with skills that enable them to deal confidently with new learning situations.
School's evidence to support judgement:			
6. Leadership and management			
Sources of evidence: Oversight of transfer process, performance management objectives, SDP, cross-phase training, resource implications, monitoring and evaluation			
Transfer and transition has not been established as a priority for the school. Awareness at senior leadership level is not yet shared with the whole school or partner schools.	Senior leadership have allocated time and resources to allow for the development of relationships with partner schools in order to reach agreement about teaching and learning, curriculum and individual needs. Governors are aware of the priorities for transfer and transition.	All stakeholders, agencies and partners are aware of the planned priorities for transfer and transition. Good relationships exist between the various partners allowing for common agreements about key priorities. Leaders ensure that there is effective transfer of data to support planning for good progress by learners.	All stakeholders, agencies and partners are committed to evaluating transfer and transition so as to improve all aspects of provision impacting on pupil progress and wellbeing. Schools and settings across the locality work together to identify, develop and evaluate priorities for action. Monitoring and evaluation includes a focus on the views of learners' parents and other stakeholders.
School's evidence to support judgement:			
Overall Judgement			
Inadequate	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Overall strengths			
Areas for Development			

Name of person completing the audit:

Date:

Further clarification and/or additional information from Bill Martin (07931 363573)
Completed forms to Bill at Bill.Martin@sch.lbwf.gov.uk or
c/o Rush Croft School, Rushcroft Road, Chingford, London E4 8SG.

Prompts suggesting possible sources of evidence to support participants' judgements (on the SEF based research tool)

1. Characteristics of the school
 - The number of partner primary schools
 - Existing Networks eg: Specialist School links, Sports Partnership, Extended school
2. Views of pupils and parents
 - Information communicated to parents and pupils about transfer
 - Feedback from pupils and parents on the effectiveness of transfer arrangements
3. Achievement and standards
 - Standards on entry to the school
 - Use of KS2 data
 - Impact of transfer on attainment
 - Shared expectations in Year 7
4. Personal development and well being of pupils (Pre-transfer)
 - Induction arrangements (Summer Term)
 - Role of Learning Mentors and Student Mentors
 - Pre-transfer parents/pupils meeting.
5. Quality of provision
 - (a) Teaching and Learning
 - Cross-phase collaboration
 - Evidence of prior learning
 - Common language/vocabulary in Year 7
 - Feedback to primary schools
 - (b) Curriculum
 - Curriculum continuity between KS2/3
 - Use of Transition Units
 - Summer school activities
 - Extended Schools links with partner primary schools
 - (c) Guidance and support (Post-transfer)
 - Consistency of practice in Year 7
 - Deployment of Year 7 tutors and teachers
 - Building on prior levels of independence and responsibility
6. Leadership and management
 - References in school development plan
 - Oversight of transfer process
 - Performance Management objectives
 - Monitoring and evaluation

Participants' responses to SEF-based questionnaire:

School	SEF Categories and Judgements								Overall
	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	6	
Alexandra Girls'	1	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
Alma	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3+	2
All Saints	2	3/2	3	2	3	3	2/1	2	2
Adam Wood	2	2	4	2	2	3	3	2	2
Albion Boys'	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
Appletree	4	3	4	3/2	4	4	4	4	4
Adam Wood	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	3
Blue Coat High School	3	2	2	2	4	4	2	2	3/2
Bell Lane	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3/2
Brookside	1	2	3	1	3	4	2	1	2
Breakspear	2	3	1/2	1	4	3	2	2	2
Bonner	3/2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
Bush Hill	3	3	4	2	4	3	3	3	3

Adam Wood Primary School transfers pupils to both Alexandra Girls' and Albion Boys' schools.

SEF Categories

1. Characteristics of your school in relation to transfer and transition
2. Views of parents/carers and other stakeholders
3. Achievement and Standards
4. Personal development and wellbeing.
- 5a Quality of provision – teaching and learning
- 5b Quality of provision – curriculum
- 5c Quality of provision – guidance and support
6. Leadership and management

SEF Judgements

- 1 - Outstanding
- 2 - Satisfactory
- 3 - Unsatisfactory
- 4 - Inadequate

Hampshire Research with Primary Schools (HARPS)

(Ed,D Thesis Workshop - 10th March 2007)

Research Questions

- What effects do SES, gender, ethnicity, SEN and age composition variables have on student **progress** and are all students in the school subject to these effects?
- Which particular compositional variables are significant in influencing student **progress**?
- Bu what mechanisms do compositional effects 'work'.
- Is there a relationship between falling rolls and student **progress**? If so, how can it best be explained?
- How reliable is the FSM measure in assessing the impact of student composition on student **progress**?
- Are there school policies and practices that can especially help improve **progress** in schools with particular kinds of intake characteristics?