

Learning
Improvement
Service
Early Years
Team

Transition from Reception to Year 1



These questions will be considered in this guidance...

Is transition a whole school approach?

How might transition affect a child's wellbeing?

Are parents fully aware of transition arrangements and are they involved in the process?

When do we need to start to think about transition to Year 1?

Obituary For A Sandpit

Goodbye to Reception,
Goodbye to the sand,
the stones and the water
the world in our hands.
Goodbye to the buckets,
the sieves with the holes,
digging for treasure,
silver and gold.
Goodbye to the sandpit,
the squabbles for spades,
the flags and the mountains,
the stories we made...
Goodbye to the castles,
the spells and the screams,
the tunnels and laughter,
my kingdom and dreams.
Goodbye to the sandpit,
Reception adieu
I'm going to year one now,
I wonder what I'll do??
(Poet unknown)

How will children with SEND be supported?

Are the specific needs of individual children considered e.g. PP, EAL?

Is the environment in Year 1 similar to that in reception, which the children are used to?

How well do the reception children already know the Year 1 teacher?

Do all Year 1 staff have a good knowledge of the EY curriculum?

How are assessments used to ensure the child's learning journey continues?

Is transition seen as a long term process rather than an event?

Has the importance of play and independent learning in Year 1 been discussed?

“We know that well-planned and interesting play experiences in the Early Years lead to engaged and motivated learners in Year One. So why do we often see a drop in well-being and involvement during transition from Reception? When children are just five or six weeks older after the summer holidays, we suddenly expect them to be able to handle heavily-timetabled days and a dramatic shift in teaching approach – it is little wonder that some children find it difficult to settle in!”

Alistair Bryce-Clegg: Effective Transition into Year One

The importance of a smooth transition

Transitions are landmark events for children and have a definite impact on their emotional and academic development. They are times of exciting change, new opportunities and growth for every child. However, they can also be times of uncertainty where surroundings, expectations and procedures are different and key people unfamiliar. Getting transition right is vital for every child and should be seen not as an event but a process that involves children, practitioners and parents together.

Continuing the learning journey...where do we start...

- Teachers in EY and KS1 will consider what they can do to prepare children for the move into Year 1.
- Year 1 teachers need to ensure their practice and provision is developmentally appropriate for the children coming into their classes and is aware this may change from year to year.
- Schools should decide how they are going to include parents in the transition process.
- Focusing on the needs of the child should help to shape and develop appropriate learning experiences.
- Pedagogical approaches should be consistent in the early years and primary phase with appropriate expectations, challenge and support for all learners.
- A curriculum which excites the imagination of every child: therefore continuing the EY approach will work for children in Year 1 (and beyond).
- All Year 1 staff need to have a secure knowledge of the EY curriculum and the Characteristics of Learning so they can support all children in a developmentally appropriate way.

“Child development tells us that children’s learning needs in Year 1 are broadly similar to those for children in the Reception year and that children should not go from being seen as a ‘unique child’ to a ‘Year 1 child’ in one small step down the corridor”.

Julie Fisher: Moving on to Key Stage 1



Differences between Reception and Year 1 provision which can be a concern for children and parents:

Reception	Year 1
A focus on learning	A focus on teaching
An active, play based curriculum	A passive, taught curriculum
Integrated, whole curriculum learning	Subject based activities
Small group activities	Whole class teaching
Responds to individual learning styles	Single style of teaching
Child initiated activities	Adult directed activities
Larger number of adults	Smaller number of adults
Ongoing access to an outdoor learning environment	Timetabled playtime

Key issues to consider:

- Year 1 classrooms often don't have a dedicated outdoor area
- Often classrooms are smaller with a table and chair for each child
- Classrooms historically have tended to have a lot of subject based resources but few for play
- The teacher is often the only adult, unless support is needed for children with additional needs
- Year 1 often follow a compartmentalised timetable where children frequently change what they are doing
- Learning is more adult directed with more use of worksheets
- Play is often offered to children to fill in moments before break or after assembly or when the teacher's work is finished
- Children work frequently as a whole class or carrying out small group tasks
- Children are often in fixed groups for all learning particularly literacy and maths. Children are generally expected to come to work with the teacher, rather than the teacher going to them
- Children become more dependent on the teacher to tell them what to do
- Parents are usually informed about their child's progress on formal occasions such as parents evenings rather than regularly through use of electronic or paper Learning Journeys. Parents also tend to have less input into assessment
- Teachers often produce more detailed plans for literacy and numeracy, rather than holistically considering the whole child
- Assessment evidence is more frequently gathered from children's books, rather than through observation
- Parents often expect to see more formal ways of learning and more work in books



Why is it so important to consider children's well-being during transition?

Children are far more likely to succeed if they are comfortable in their learning environment. It can take many children a long time to adjust to new situations which can have a negative impact on their emotional well-being and ability to learn.

An unsupported transition can also result in an achievement plateau or dip. The child may 'make up' this ground later but this cannot be guaranteed.

The child for whom change is stressful, despite appearing to 'cope' is possibly having to function in a high stress level. This can manifest itself through:

- Lack of attention
- Poor concentration
- Poor attitude or motivation
- Lack of self-control
- Behaviour difficulties
- Poor social skills
- Poor self-help
- Unwillingness to be taught
- Anxiety
- Needing lots of reassurance
- Poor initiative

However, if children are supported through change by a smooth transition process they are enabled to:

- Feel a sense of belonging
- Feel held in mind
- Feel like a fish in water
- Be ready, willing and able to make the most of the new situation

Anne O'Connor: Understanding Transition

"Happy children make successful learners and happy adults make successful teachers. So we need to make sure that we are all as happy and relaxed as we can be in school!"

Alistair Bryce-Clegg: Effective Transition into Year One



The Leuven Scales

The Leuven Scales were developed by Ferre Laevers as a way of identifying and measuring levels of Wellbeing. Use of these promotes a consistent approach between practitioners. The scale for Well-being in children.

Level 1: extremely low level of Well-being

These children look 'low' and unhappy. They often look tense and are not very lively. There are no, or only a few, moments of real enjoyment. These children display a great deal of symptomatic behaviour, such as crying, looking dejected, destroying things, shouting, being listless, showing fear of failure, sucking their thumbs, wetting their trousers or bed. They possess little openness or flexibility. They find it difficult to be assertive or to cultivate a fighting spirit: they tend to react aggressively or let themselves be walked over. Relations with their environment are predominantly negative. This often seems to indicate that these children are threatened in one or more of their basic needs. Their overall development is in danger of coming to a standstill.

Level 2: low level of Well-being

These children do not have a feeling of Well-being. About half the time they display signs of emotional discomfort. These moments alternate with neutral & positive signals of Well-being. These children are often tense. They rarely radiate vitality. Sometimes they take pleasure in the 'wrong' things, or they enjoy themselves in a distorted way, e.g. by hurting or annoying other people, by needing excessive mothering. Sometimes the feeling of discomfort is concentrated in one area (e.g. the relationship with the teacher), but then this problem carries too much weight, that it casts a dark shadow over other areas of their life. Variation: this can be seen in children who generally have a (relatively) high level of WB, but who show extreme moments of discomfort e.g. when saying goodbye to parents or when an unknown person enters the room. If these occurrences are frequent the child is placed on level 2, if they are rare the child is placed on level 3.

Level 3: a fluctuating or neutral state of Well-being

These children seem 'quite' happy. They occasionally show signs of emotional discomfort, but these do not (excessively) colour their functioning. There are also times when they look relaxed and relatively vigorous. They display a fair amount of self confidence & at times seem to fully enjoy themselves. Variation: Level 3 is also attributed to children who rarely or never or thoroughly enjoy themselves. Their relationships with the world are not ideal. They regularly shut themselves off & show only moments of openness. Their relations are lacking in intensity.

Level 4: high level of Well-being

These children look generally happy. The moments of Well-being clearly outnumber the moments of discomfort. For the greater part of the observation period these children feel fine. They only show occasional signs of emotional discomfort. The relations with the immediate surrounding are good. Occasionally, however, friction shows (quite openly), e.g. they may be upset when an unknown person enters the room. They are able to satisfy their basic needs.

Level 5: extremely high level of Well-being

These children are like 'fish in water' & obviously feel very comfortable. They radiate vitality, relaxation & inner peace, and show self-confidence & self-esteem. They are in close contact with their inner selves, needs, wishes & thoughts. They will not push a disagreeable experience aside, but will admit it and readily deal with it. They take pleasure in their activities & experiences, & thoroughly enjoy themselves. They adopt an open & receptive attitude towards their environment. They display flexibility, e.g. by readily adapting to new or strange situations or people. These children dare to be assertive, showing they wish to be both respected & taken into account. This great amount of positive interactions with their surroundings allows them to satisfy their basic needs. They manage temporary frustrations independently.

(Ref: Well-being and Involvement in Care Settings. A Process-oriented Self-evaluation Instrument, Ferre Laevers (Ed.) Research Centre for Experiential Education, Leuven University. ISBN: 978-90-77343-76-8)

When considering the Y1 ethos teachers could think about

- The balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated learning.
- The place of play in the Key Stage 1 classroom.
- Environments that support different ways of learning
- Continuing to use observations as evidence of children's learning
- Access to the outdoors
- Continuing to build on independent learning and opportunities to problem solve
- Acknowledging children's interests
- A range of learning styles

Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

Whilst this is not included in the National Curriculum, it is applicable to all learners. In year one do we still promote:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Is information passed on by Reception teachers in relation to the characteristics of effective learning fully considered to help ensure children have a smooth transition?

Transition for Children with SEND

Positive transition arrangements are vital for all children and good practice is basically good practice, however for children with SEND it is worth considering whether:

- Any adaptations need to be made to the classroom or outdoor area to ensure pupils can be as independent as possible.
- Any specialist equipment is needed and whether this is still the correct size if it is moving up with the child from reception.
- Children (and parents) need more time to get to know their teacher and any new support staff. Additional classroom visits may be appropriate.
- Time has been put aside to share support plans, assessment information and those vital bits of information about learning style and uniqueness which may not be written down.
- Time is allowed to explicitly teach children new routines and expectations.
- Activities are developmentally appropriate.

Assessment in Reception...and beyond

Assessment should inform an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to key stage 1." (2.3. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage). Please see the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage for information about the EYFS profile.

As a year 1 teacher, do you:

- Have a good understanding of the EY curriculum, as children not yet at 'expected' will need continued access to this?
- Understand the EYFS Profile and 'best fit' approach, as children will continue to need to be assessed against this until they reach 'expected'?
- Have access to exemplification materials?
- Have opportunities to be involved in moderations activities with the reception teacher and if possible other schools?
- Have time with the reception teacher to discuss assessments for the children moving up to you?

To sum up...

- Transition is a process and not an event
- Transition is a whole-school issue
- Transition should be viewed as smooth and seamless journey for all children
- Transition relies on close respectful relationships between families and schools
- Transition relies on joint working between staff involved in the process
- Effective transition will only be achieved after genuine consultation with children and parents.

"May they all move forward with their enthusiasm maintained, their wonder increased and their self-esteem intact."

Ros Bayley and Sally Featherstone: Smooth Transitions – Ensuring continuity from the Foundation Stage

