

## News release

June 12<sup>th</sup> 2008

### **Bridging the gap – The impact of transition plans**

**Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, has today published recommendations and guidance for schools and their partners on how to support pupils in their move between primary and secondary education.**

When moving between primary and secondary schools, children can often fall behind if they do not receive teaching and support appropriate to their needs and abilities.

This move from primary to secondary schooling is a key transition for young people. If it is not managed successfully, it can have serious adverse consequences for their subsequent learning and development. In 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government introduced a requirement that maintained secondary schools and their maintained feeder primary schools draw up transition plans jointly to support the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school.

Dr Bill Maxwell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, said: "Transition plans are a key mechanism for primary and secondary schools to work together to ensure that children's needs are catered for when moving between primary and secondary education. We recognise that the best practice is based on good co-operation between schools and this is reflected in the positive nature of this report.

"I would like to see schools build upon the aspects of good practice presented here and improve further the quality of their transition plans to help bridge this important gap."

Secondary schools and their feeder primary schools are required to create detailed transition plans formalising their arrangements to work together on curriculum, learning and assessment issues.

Good practice happens when primary and secondary schools work together to develop schemes of work that span key stages 2 and 3 to make the work for Year 7 pupils more challenging and to avoid repetition of work that pupils have already done in the primary school.

Other aspects of positive practice include primary and secondary teachers observing lessons in each others' schools and sharing in-service training to agree methods of teaching that enable pupils to make the best progress possible.

Estyn inspectors found that, while the first generation of transition plans meet Welsh Assembly Government requirements overall, they can vary significantly in quality between schools and local authorities.

The report focuses on some key areas of improvement for schools when creating transition plans.

For example, Estyn found shortcomings in the provision of arrangements to ensure continuity in Welsh as a second language when pupils move to English-medium secondary schools. This can result in the work being pitched incorrectly, and the pupils receiving repetitive and low-level work that they find boring.

Estyn's report also explains that some schools failed to consult enough with parents and pupils enough to let them influence the plans. Schools should formalise their arrangements to take full account of the views of pupils, parents and governors. However, when asked, most Year 7 pupils think that teachers and transition activities have prepared them well for their new school.

Estyn recommends that primary and secondary schools should build on the good work they are doing by making sure that transition plans have clear objectives for improvement and reflect both national and local priorities.

Estyn also recommends transition plans focus on those with specific needs, including high achievers and those needing a greater level of support, as these are the groups most likely to be affected when moving between primary and secondary schools.

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

- Estyn, the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, provides a high quality inspection and advice service.
- Full copies of inspection reports are available on Estyn's web site at [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

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