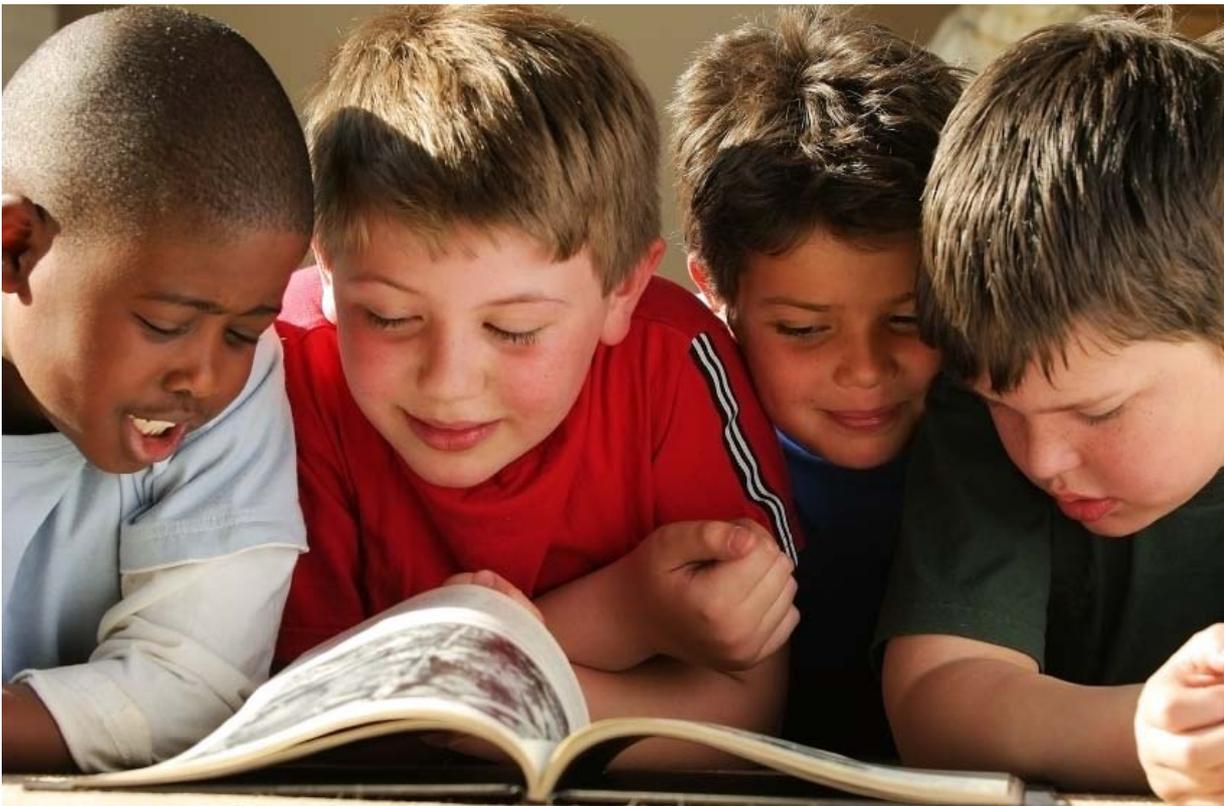


**SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES**  
KNOWLEDGE REVIEW 2

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Ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages

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# Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) identifies and coordinates local, regional and national evidence of 'what works', to create a single and comprehensive picture of effective practice in delivering children's services. Using this information, C4EO offers support to local authorities and their partners, working with them to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

It is focusing its work on nine themes:

- Early Years
- Disability
- Vulnerable (looked after) Children
- Child Poverty
- Safeguarding
- Schools and Communities
- Youth
- Families, Parents and Carers
- Early Intervention, Prevention and Integrated Services

C4EO works with a consortium of leading national organisations: National Children's Bureau, National Foundation for Educational Research, Research in Practice and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

The Centre is also supported by a number of strategic partners, including the Improvement and Development Agency, the Family and Parenting Institute, the National Youth Agency and the Institute of Education.

There is close and ongoing cooperation with the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Local Government Association, the NHS Confederation, the Children's Services Network, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Ofsted.

C4EO is funded by the Department for Education.

# Ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages

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**This report is available online**  
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## Foreword

It is a great privilege for me to introduce to you the Knowledge Reviews produced for the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO), as part of the theme 'Schools and Communities'. Each one of the three reviews is central to this theme and gives the reader access to the most up to date research, practice and informed opinion on what works in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. They provide a rigorous record of relevant information and explores a number of outcomes, offering the reader an account focused on solutions, as well as opportunities for further evaluation.

Work on the reviews commenced prior to the current Coalition Government, and there is a fast-moving pace of change in government policy, but I am confident that the three Knowledge Reviews will help all staff associated with schools and their leadership to develop bespoke responses to their own context and challenges. They will inform the standards agenda and help senior leaders, in particular, to focus their responses. Schools do not work in isolation and are seen by many as the centre of the community. Each Knowledge Review takes one viewpoint but allows leaders to make connections with the others.

The standards agenda for young people is not simply about attainment, progress, attendance and punctuality. Resilience, transition and family wellbeing are all intertwined as young people make their passage through the phases. These reviews will aid policy makers in their decision making processes to ensure progression. They will support the standards agenda, helping schools deliver improved outcomes for all of their children and young people and, in particular, closing the gap for the most vulnerable.

I would like to thank everyone who has participated in the regional workshops and in the advisory group linked to the theme, and to pay tribute to the work of the review teams. I believe that collectively we have produced a very stimulating set of reviews that will act as a catalyst for further debate.

*'We're all influenced by each other. I can't be human in isolation.  
I am because you are. If there were no You, there couldn't be Me.'*

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

**Neil Wilson**

**Executive Headteacher South Manchester 3–19 Federation**

## Acknowledgements

The review authors would like to thank the Department for Education for funding the Centre's activities and the Theme Advisory Group for its guidance. We are grateful to the following people for conducting and documenting the literature searches: Pauline Benefield, Alison Jones, Chris Taylor and Amanda Harper at National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER); Janet Clapton at Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

Thanks are due to the people who provided such helpful comments on the draft report, to the young people, parents and carers, local authority staff, school staff and others who contributed their views, to the NFER library staff who checked all the references and to NFER administrators for their work in formatting the text.

## Summary

This knowledge review tells us what works in ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between school key stages. It is based on a rapid review of the research literature involving systematic searching and the views from children and young people, parents and service providers. It summarises the best available evidence that will help providers to improve services and, ultimately, outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) carried out this review and compiled the data on behalf of the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO).

## Key messages

While the majority of children and young people make successful transitions between key stages, those from vulnerable groups are more likely to experience difficulties, especially children from economically deprived backgrounds and children with special educational needs. Vulnerable groups may be particularly worried about making friends and being bullied in a new setting.

- How children and young people fare during transition is connected to a range of socio-emotional, behavioural and organisational factors. Their ability to cope with change reflects the level of support received from families and schools in adjusting to their new environment. Poorer transitions between educational stages may have negative consequences for young people's future attainment and mental health.
- Both universal and targeted transition practices – such as providing information for families through booklets and talks, visits to new settings, summer programmes, curriculum bridging initiatives, school linking schemes, induction programmes and buddy/mentoring schemes – are helpful in improving outcomes, especially for vulnerable groups.
- The use of transition practices and initiatives improves social and academic outcomes for all children and young people, and is particularly beneficial for those most at risk of experiencing difficulties during transition.
- Features of good practice include: a focus on the whole child; implementing a number of transition practices; helping young children to develop the skills needed to help them cope with transition in the future; and open communication with parents.
- Effective transitions promote good communication between all stakeholders, encourage induction (such as visits to the new environment in advance of the transition) and balance continuity (in curriculum, environment, friendship groups and routines) with positive opportunities for change.

## Who are the key stakeholders?

- children and young people
- parents and carers
- school leaders and governors
- staff in early years settings, schools and services for children and young people, including teachers and tutors in different kinds of schools and colleges, and pastoral support staff
- local authorities.

### **Their contributions are valuable in the process of improvement:**

- **Children and young people** should be involved in the development of transition practices and policies. Preparation is an important aspect of a successful transition and therefore children and young people need to be consulted about their needs and concerns before, during and after transition.
- **Parents and carers** should participate in transition practices. This may include attending transition information sessions or open days. Parents and carers can help their child by discussing what will happen and providing reassurance and support. They can also help their child to be prepared for new experiences and monitor their responses during the transition phase.
- **School leaders and governors** should work within and across schools to develop cohesive strategies to manage transition. This should include exchange of information, providing continuity of curriculum and pedagogy, introducing children and young people to their new teachers prior to transition and ensuring that transition offers positive opportunities.
- **Education staff** play a key role in supporting children and young people directly when transferring from one establishment to another. Staff should recognise that transition can be a stressful time, be sensitive to the needs of individuals and willing to communicate with children, parents and staff in partner organisations. They should examine their transition processes and consult with children, young people and families.
- **Local authorities** need to work across the early years, schools and the post-16 education sectors to encourage good communication and partnership working. They can help to develop joined-up transition strategies across different establishments so that children and young people experience a smooth transfer in terms of curriculum continuity and induction. They can plan more targeted approaches to support parents and children from more vulnerable groups. They should encourage early years settings, schools and the post-16 education sector to support parents at each stage.

## What data is available to inform the way forward?

Relevant data was identified from national datasets and national cohort studies. Comprehensive data on educational outcomes (attendance and attainment) is currently available from the EYFS to key stage 5. However, only a very limited number of longitudinal analyses have been undertaken using this data. There is no published analysis of existing national datasets to examine children's trajectories over time and assess at which point difficulties may occur, or to identify which transitions may be particularly problematic for specific vulnerable groups.

## The evidence base

There is adequate evidence relating to what works in improving transitions for children and young people. The quality of this evidence is generally good and continues to grow. However, there are weaknesses and we identified the following gaps:

- There were few examples of studies using an experimental design to assess the impact of transition practices and initiatives on children and young people's outcomes.
- Most of the studies of 'what works' only carried out a short-term follow-up. We know little about their impact on outcomes later in a child's school career.
- There was very little available evidence comparing the 'typical' English system of schooling (separate pre-school, primary and secondary schools) with systems that avoid the need for children and young people to make a transition to a separate school (for example, early childhood units or all-age schools).
- We were unable to locate sufficient data to examine children's trajectories over time and assess at which point difficulties may occur, or to identify which transitions may be particularly problematic for vulnerable groups.

## Knowledge review methods

This knowledge review is the culmination of an extensive knowledge-gathering process. It builds on a scoping study and research review.

Research literature was identified through systematic searches of relevant databases and websites, recommendations from our C4EO Theme Advisory Group and by considering studies cited in identified literature ('reference harvesting'). The review team used a 'best evidence' approach to systematically select literature of the greatest relevance and quality to include in the review. This approach attempts to eliminate bias in the selection of literature, to ensure that the review's findings are as objective as possible. Most of the literature is from England.

Data contained within the data annexe was obtained by a combination of search methods, but primarily by obtaining online access to known government publications and access to data published by the Office for National Statistics.

The review also contains examples of practice from the research literature. C4EO is collecting other examples which will be assessed and validated by specialists in the schools and communities field using agreed criteria. The full versions of all of the practice examples are available on the [C4EO website](#).

Evidence was gathered from service providers during discussion groups at C4EO knowledge workshops. Evidence from parents and carers was collected from C4EO's Parents and Carers' Panel and children and young people's views have also been included. These came from C4EO's children and young people's networks. C4EO also carried out a survey of children and young people. Service users and providers are also contributors to published studies included within the review.

C4EO reviews, *Closing the gap in educational achievement and improving emotional resilience for children and young people with additional needs* and *Strengthening family wellbeing and community cohesion through the role of schools and extended services* are also available on the [C4EO website](#).

# 1 Introduction

This review aims to draw out the key messages about ‘what works’ in ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages and services. The study aimed to address five questions, which were set by the C4EO Theme Advisory Group (TAG), a group of experts in schools and communities policy, research and practice. These questions were:

1. To what extent is transition an issue for children and young people in relation to:
  - home to pre-school
  - pre-school to school
  - EYFS to key stage 1
  - key stage 1 to key stage 2
  - key stage 2 to 3
  - key stage 3 to 4
  - post 16 to further/higher education/skills-based training?
2. What are the causes and factors associated with the difficulties children and young people face during transition?
3. What are the issues and needs of these children and young people and what challenges do they present?
4. What evidence exists regarding what works in addressing specifically the engagement challenges for each stage of transition (and in relation to specific groups of vulnerable young people)?
5. What are the implications of questions 1 to 4 for local systems change?

The remit of this review is very wide ranging and this presented a considerable challenge to the review team in working within the constraints of a rapid review. Following the scoping study, the TAG agreed that the team should focus on educational transition between key stages, as this was the subject of the majority of the studies identified.

The review focuses primarily on the **process of transition** and how it can affect progress and engagement, rather than attempting to encompass the much larger body of evidence on the progress and engagement of children and young people throughout their educational careers.

The knowledge review is based on:

- the best research evidence from the UK – and where relevant from abroad – on what works in improving services and outcomes for children and young people
- the best quantitative data with which to establish baselines and assess progress in improving outcomes.
- stakeholder and client views on ‘what works?’ in improving services.

C4EO will use this knowledge review to underpin the support it provides to children’s services to help them improve service delivery and, ultimately, outcomes for children and young people.

## Definitions of key terms

The following definitions were agreed by the TAG.

To focus the study, we used the following definition of transition: ‘The process of making a change from one environment or set of relationships to another’ (Sanders *et al* 2005 p iv). Educational transition can include moving between key stages, between years as well as between organisations. A similar definition can be found in Evangelou *et al* (2008 p 1).

The definition used for **disengaged** and those not fully engaged included:

- young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- young people excluded from school
- poor or non-attenders
- those with behavioural difficulties
- those not able to participate fully because of family or other circumstances such as poverty, mobility or ill-health
- those who need additional learning support for whatever reason.

This definition was recommended by members of the Theme Advisory Group.

## Types of evidence used

The research included in this review was identified through systematic searching of key databases, reference harvesting or recommendations from the TAG. All research included has been appraised to ensure that the evidence presented is the most robust available.

Evidence has also been gathered from service providers during discussion groups at C4EO knowledge workshops. Meanwhile, evidence from parents and carers has been collected via the C4EO Parents and Carers Panel and from children and young people through a panel run by the National Children’s Bureau and Brent Youth Parliament. C4EO also carried out an online survey of children and young people.

The review also contains some case studies of practice drawn from the research literature. We are unable to present examples of practice that have gone through the C4EO validation process because we did not receive any such examples focusing specifically on educational transition. This may be because, while local authorities

and schools are adopting strategies to help children and young people make successful transitions, it is challenging to evaluate the impact of such strategies on children, young people and their families. C4EO will continue to gather practice examples and publish them on the [website](#).

Data contained within the data annexe was obtained by a combination of search methods but primarily by obtaining online access to known government publications and access to data published by the Office for National Statistics.

## Strengths and limitations of the review

The **strengths** of this review include:

- identifying the best available evidence from research and national datasets to inform specific questions
- comprehensive and documented searching for relevant information
- an analysis of the quality and strength of evidence
- guidance from an advisory group on the issues of greatest importance in early childhood research, policy and practice.

The **limitations** of this review include:

- the very tight deadlines that the review had to meet, which limited the ability of the team to extend and develop the evidence base through reference harvesting and hand searching
- the wide-ranging nature of the review coupled with the short time available, which meant that this review provides a limited depth of information about any key stage in particular
- its research being limited to English-speaking countries and to evidence published from 2003.

## 2 Context

### Policy context

It should be noted that this review was commissioned under the previous Labour government and went to press in July 2010. The current coalition government is embarking on an active reform programme and it is not yet clear how this will affect schools and wider communities. Nevertheless, there is a commitment to addressing the disparity in outcomes between those from less and more economically advantaged backgrounds and the announcement of a 'pupil premium' is designed to help schools in less economically advantaged areas to provide additional support for the children and young people they serve (Gove 2010; DfE 2010).

Many of the recent policies that aim to improve educational transitions come from the Every Child Matters agenda (HM Treasury 2003), which highlighted the need to improve outcomes for children and young people through services working together. It also outlined the then government's aim of ensuring that all young people stay in some form of education and training until the age of 18. Subsequent policy documents outlined a need to improve key transitions within a wider context of enhancing children and young people's wellbeing. Therefore, transition can be identified as a theme that cuts across several policy areas.

### Transition policy in the early years and primary phase

A number of policy developments over recent years have impacted on transitions through children's early years foundation stage and primary school education. For example, the previous government, required early years settings to work more in partnership across services to ensure that transitions were managed smoothly. A move towards greater personalisation of learning aimed to improve the transition of learners to secondary school. Similarly, the introduction of the personal tutor role focused on improving transition to secondary schools by strengthening the individual support available to pupils and their parents, as pupils reach year 7.

The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (2009) also made a number of recommendations to improve transitions for children, including that all children should be able to start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five and that parents should be able to choose whether their children start in reception class full- or part-time in the September, January or April after their fourth birthday.

The Coalition Government has announced that funding for nursery education will be focused on supporting children from disadvantaged families by ensuring that local funding formulas include a deprivation supplement (DfE 2010).

## Transition policy in 14–19 education

Recent 14–19 policy reform has also introduced changes to the education system that have impact, either directly or indirectly, on learners' transitions across these phases. These changes were to raise the minimum age at which young people leave education or training from 16 to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015 (DfES 2007) and changing the learning routes open to young people by creating new pathways for learners.

Strengthening information, advice and guidance is a key strategy for helping to improve transitions for children and young people, and is particularly important in ensuring the availability of impartial and accessible advice throughout secondary education and beyond, so that young people make the right choices and are well supported during transitions.

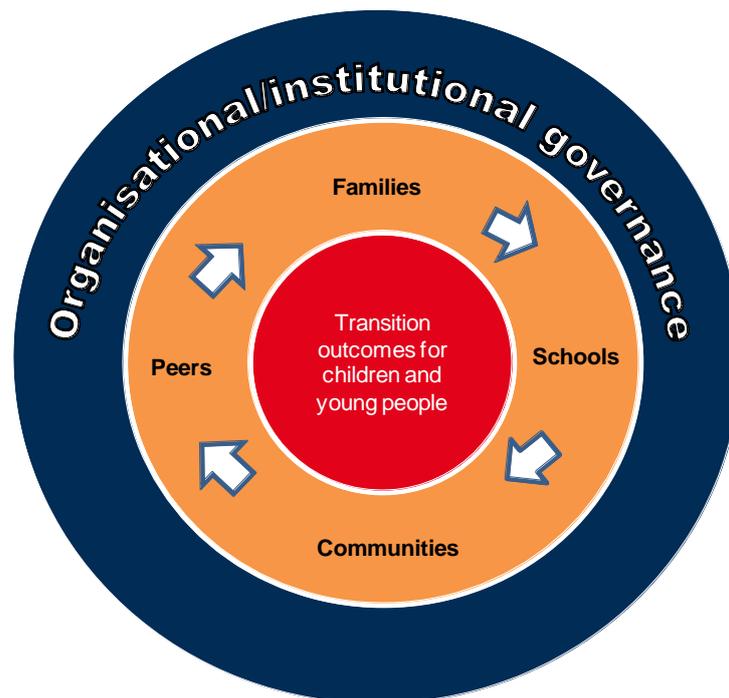
## Research context

The empirical research on transitions that forms the evidence base for this review is set in the context of our broader understanding of various theoretical perspectives on child development. A framework with particular relevance to transition is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development. This perspective identifies the key environmental systems that contribute to, and impact on, children and young people's experiences and outcomes, helping to form their responses to the transition process.

We have adapted Bronfenbrenner's model (Figure 1), which shows the various connections between children and young people and the following social groups and processes that impact on the transition process:

- families
- peer groups
- communities
- school experiences
- organisational systems.

Figure 1. An ecological model of transition



The contribution of these social groups to the transition process is explored in relation to the evidence for each review question. The review also considers how these groups can work together to ensure positive transition experiences for all children and young people.

### 3 The evidence base

This section provides an overview of the extent of the evidence base which, for this knowledge review, consists of the following sources:

- A literature review updating the research review (Evans *et al* 2010) with new references suggested by the Theme Advisory Group (TAG).
- Stakeholder views gained through the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) which organised group discussions about key issues affecting children and young people's transitions – including the views of parents, carers, children and young people, and local service providers.
- Data from national datasets, including data from government publications and data published by the Office for National Statistics.

Initially, 233 items were identified as relevant for this review through the scoping study (George *et al* 2009), of which 50 were identified as key items. For the research review stage (Evans *et al* 2010), we accessed the full text of 55 items. Most of these were drawn from the key items (31) and a smaller number (five) were from the other items identified in the scoping stage. A further 19 items were identified through Theme Advisory Group recommendations (14) and reference harvesting (five).

For the knowledge review, the TAG nominated references for inclusion in the literature review that either helped to fill gaps identified in the previous research review or had been published after the research review was completed. These references were assessed by the review team for relevance and quality, and the resulting new references were incorporated into the review. In total, 13 new references relating to the research questions were included in the knowledge review, most of which focused on good practice in improving transition experiences.

Many of the studies reviewed used a mixed-methods design (21): for example, a randomised controlled trial to assess the impact of an initiative on outcomes for children combined with interviews with stakeholders. Most of these were robust studies that offered useful insights into both the effects of the intervention and the processes that contributed to its success. A smaller number of studies used exclusively experimental designs (three) or other quantitative methods, such as surveys (six). A number of the studies (17) gathered information from more qualitative interviews or case studies. The case studies of individual local authorities or schools provided detailed accounts of particular initiatives, but usually did not provide a robust evaluation of these, so we did not extensively incorporate their findings into the review. Overall, there was a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence that provided good, holistic information to inform the review, although the small number of randomised controlled trials and experimental studies limits the extent to which causal inferences can be made between the use of particular transition initiatives and any benefits to children.

In discussion with the Theme Advisory Group, we decided to focus the review on school transitions, rather than transitions between support services (this decision was influenced by the fact that the scoping study identified very few studies about the latter). Given the broad remit of the review, we were also limited in the amount of material we could include about any specific group or transition.

The majority of the items reviewed were from the United Kingdom (47 items) although nine were from the USA, one was from Australia, one was from New Zealand and three were international studies. We prioritised UK studies, because these are the most relevant to English local authorities, but also used evidence from other countries when this was robust and transferable to the UK.

In selecting items to review, the team focused attention on key transition points identified by the Theme Advisory Group: home to school, key stage 2 to key stage 3 (primary to secondary school), and post-16. A large number of the items reviewed (27) were about the transition between key stage 2 and key stage 3. This has been identified as a time when some children become disengaged from school (a phenomenon known as ‘the key stage 3 dip’ (see Section 7 for more details about the challenges that young people can experience during this transition). Eighteen items on transition in the early years were reviewed. Nineteen items related to post-16 transitions. While the focus of these items is predominately re-engagement of young people, the inclusion of two studies on transition to higher education enabled us to address an evidence gap identified at the previous stage of this review.

In terms of relevance to the review questions, over three-quarters (49) of the items reviewed provided information on what works in improving children and young people’s transitions. Twenty-three items looked at the causes and factors associated with transition difficulties. There were fewer items that addressed the extent to which transition was an issue for children and young people (14) and the issues and needs of children and young people when they were making transitions (ten).

## Gaps in the evidence base

This subsection sets out the nature of the evidence available in relation to each section of the review and the gaps we found in the evidence base about transitions.

### **To what extent is transition an issue for children and young people when moving between stages?**

The evidence for this question was mainly drawn from empirical studies. Literature reviews were used to provide contextual information where little or no empirical evidence was found. The studies were mainly quantitative, based on surveys. A large number of the studies were also based on interviews with children, young people, teachers and parents. Overall, the evidence base for this question was small but the evidence reviewed was generally robust.

## **What are the causes and factors associated with the difficulties children and young people face at transition?**

The evidence presented in answer to this question was based on 16 items. Most of it was drawn from empirical studies, although we have drawn on one literature review to provide contextual information. There was a mix of qualitative and quantitative studies, based on observations and interviews with children and young people, parents and teachers, as well as pre- and post-transition analysis of quantitative data. Overall, the evidence base for this question was limited, although generally reliable.

## **What are the consequences for these children and young people and what challenges do they present to services?**

We found very few studies that addressed this question. However, we were able to draw on statistical data to look at the attainment patterns for children and young people in receipt of free school meals. Where no empirical evidence was found, we used literature reviews to provide contextual information. Most of the evidence for this question came from English data and studies.

## **What works in improving transitions?**

There was a wide range of good, robust evidence in relation to this question, although only a few studies used experimental designs. Further, some of the items described interventions, but did not provide sound evidence to evaluate their impact. We gave precedence to the higher-quality studies when presenting the findings. Much of the evidence we reviewed in relation to the transition between the early years, pre-school and starting school came from the USA. These studies tended to be of a high quality, and we judged that their key messages were transferable to the UK context.

## **Overall**

As a result of this review, we were able to identify the following gaps in the evidence base on transitions:

- There were few examples of studies using an experimental design to assess the impact of transition practices and initiatives on children and young people's outcomes.
- Most of the studies in relation to 'what works' only carried out a short-term follow-up. We know little about their impact on outcomes later in a child's school career.
- One study (West *et al* 2010) looked at the longer-term impact of transition on young people's mental health and found an association between those who experienced a poorer transition and those experiencing feelings of depression that persisted over time. This is an interesting finding and it would be useful for future research to establish whether more negative transition experiences can *cause* poorer mental health or whether this relationship is the result of other characteristics of young people who find transition difficult.

- There was very little evidence available comparing the 'typical' English system of schooling (separate pre-school, primary and secondary schools) with systems that avoid the need for children and young people to make a transition to a separate school (for example early childhood units or all-age schools). We were unable to locate sufficient data to examine children's trajectories over time and assess at which point difficulties may occur, or to identify which transitions may be particularly problematic for vulnerable groups.

## 4 What do service users and providers tell us about what works?

The experiences of parents and carers, children and young people and those providing services to learners have much to add to our knowledge of 'what works' in ensuring all young people make successful transitions between key stages. This section therefore focuses on the perspectives of members of these groups. It is based on a survey of children and young people, and focus group discussions with members of all three groups, rather than the research literature on which the rest of the review is based. Neither the sample group for the survey nor the focus groups were designed to be representative of the wider populations from which they are drawn. Therefore, the experiences reported and the views expressed should not be treated as necessarily reflecting those of people in England generally. Nevertheless, they draw attention to some of the issues affecting children and young people, some of the ways in which schools and their partners seem to be working in promising ways to address their needs, and some of the ways in which developments might be taken forward.

### Views of children and young people

Children and young people's experiences of transition were explored through an online survey carried out by C4EO. It was completed by 226 young people, ranging in age from 11 to 18 years. Discussion groups were also held with 45 young people from the Brent Youth Parliament and six young people from the National Children's Bureau (NCB) Young NCB group.

The majority of children and young people viewed their last transition as a positive experience. They enjoyed the increased '*freedom*', '*getting to know new people*' and being in a '*new place*'. However, 12 per cent of young people surveyed said they were nervous when they started their current school and 15 per cent said that they did not settle in well, indicating that a minority of young people did experience difficulties.

The young people from discussion groups identified a number of transition issues. They were concerned that they could get lost in the new school building, might not be able to make new friends and might be bullied. Some were also concerned about work demands (such as new subjects and the increase in the volume of work they would be required to do).

Young people responding to the survey were generally satisfied with the support they had received from their current school. Over three quarters (79 per cent) felt that their school had prepared them to at least some extent for moving on to the next stage of life. The support they received prior to the transition included induction days and starting school before other students, so they could get used to the new environment. Those in the discussion groups also mentioned receiving written information such as a prospectus and information about the uniform. One young person said that the school had taken the entire year group on a weekend trip to help

the students get to know each other. Another young person reported: *'They sent us on a school trip to do teambuilding exercises.'*

Once they had arrived at their new school, support included pastoral care from staff, 'buddying' or mentoring systems, extra-curricular activities and school trips to help the new intake build relationships. Young people were particularly positive about the personal support they had received:

*'In my first year of high school I suffered from anxiety and panic attacks. The pastoral care was very good... Now I really enjoy school.'*

*'They set up buddies that we could talk to if we were down.'*

However, not all young people were satisfied with their transition experiences. Indeed, 46 per cent said they would have liked more support at this time. A small number of learners in the discussion groups stated that they had not received any support from their new school, while others felt the support they received had not been helpful.

*'They told us to come for a trial day, but to be honest that made it worse. No one really helped and it made me dread going to school in the summer.'*

A small number of young people in the discussion group reported transferring to their current school mid-way through the school year. These young people had experienced difficulties and said they had received little support from their new school. One young person commented:

*'They didn't help me at all... most of the teachers didn't realise I was new. I had to take a note around with me explaining who I was.'*

In order to improve the support given to learners at transition points, young people felt that schools should have effective policies to address bullying and racism and make sure young people feel well prepared for the next transition.

## Views of parents and carers

The C4EO panel of parents and carers gave their feedback on their children's experience of transitions through the education system.

Parents and carers reported mixed experiences. They said they had received the most information and support during their child's early years. They experienced less support at the transition between key stage 2 and 3, and felt they lacked information on post-16 transitions in particular. This was of particular concern to parents with children with additional needs who may experience complex transitions at the age of 16, involving a number of different services.

Parents valued support that helped prepare them and their child for the new education setting. This included home visits from teachers and invitations to visit their child's new setting during open evenings and social events. One parent said:

*'We were invited to a teddy bears' picnic at school with the key stage 1 and Foundation children [...] In the July there was an opportunity for the children to visit their classrooms [...] It was really good to get to know the staff, the school, and to feel at home with the new surroundings.'*

Parents also appreciated early contact with a member of staff in the new setting. This included being given a named contact, having regular access to teaching staff and being encouraged to bring any problems to the school's attention. Parents wanted clear, honest and timely information on their child's progress. They felt that this type of open and regular communication was common practice in primary schools but less typical of secondary schools and post-16 destinations.

Some parents felt there was a need for better sharing of information between educational settings (such as early years settings and primary schools) because information did not always follow their child after transition. Some commented that the information they received when their children started in a new school did not encourage the parents to become involved. One parent gave the following example of feeling discouraged by a school:

*'The inductions that I went to for my children, there wasn't a mention of partnership with parents. It was all "Don't park on the school driveway" and "make sure their homework's in on time".'*

A small number reported a lack of trust between parents and teachers and said they did not feel comfortable approaching teachers about problems or concerns. For this reason, parents supported the idea of independent advocates who could bridge the gap between parents and teachers. Some parents reported that their schools already had these types of systems in place which worked well. For example, one parent mentioned that her child's primary school had a link governor attached to each class whom parents were encouraged to contact.

## Views of service providers

C4EO held five regional workshops to discuss the findings from an earlier version of this review. Those who attended (including local authority and school staff and other service providers) were asked to identify existing arrangements in their area that facilitated smooth transitions for children and young people. They were also asked to discuss the main challenges and barriers to ensuring effective transitions and how these are overcome.

### **Existing arrangements for facilitating smooth transitions for children and young people**

Many of the current arrangements were designed to help **prepare** children for the transition to a new educational setting, with a particular focus on the transition from key stage 2 to 3. Examples included mentoring systems whereby year 7 students work with year 6 pupils, secondary school teachers teaching primary school learners, and college tutors working in secondary schools. The most successful groups took place in the new setting and encouraged parents to attend.

Support for learners **once they had transferred** to secondary school included 'buddying' and mentoring programmes, which were viewed as being very effective. One participant described how a secondary school had attempted to help year 7 settle in. Students stayed in the same room for lessons and teachers came to them. Year 7 also had separate playground and dining areas.

Local authority staff said they were encouraging greater joined-up working between different educational settings. For example, in one area the local authority had joined children's centres and schools together to create 50 community learning partnerships. These partnerships had their own budgets and responsibilities, with transition being a key focus.

Many of those attending the workshops said they were targeting transition support towards vulnerable groups. Strategies included: early identification of vulnerable young people, creating programmes to help young people with special educational needs develop their social skills, mentoring schemes for looked after children and greater communication between services working with vulnerable groups. For example, one local authority representative explained that in her area the special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) meet with foundation stage teachers to discuss children with complex needs, prior to transition. Teaching assistants also meet with parents to help reassure them and take note of any specific issues and concerns.

Local authority representatives said they find managing transitions challenging, particularly when there are large numbers of schools involved. Schools tend to manage the transition differently, which makes it more difficult to provide a consistent transition for all. They identified the need for professional development for school staff. For example, one local authority representative felt that teachers were not equipped to deal effectively with young people's social and emotional needs during transition. Another thought that the information, advice and guidance provided by schools was not always as effective as it should be. A third identified a need to improve year 1 teachers' understanding of the early years foundation stage assessment, thereby improving continuity for young children.

Service providers also identified barriers to involving children, young people and their families in transition activities. In particular they found it difficult to engage with certain vulnerable groups (such as parents with negative experiences of school themselves or newly arrived families) who tended to have greater support needs. As one participant explained, if parents are not aware of how the school system operates, they find it hard to understand and support their child's transition process. In order to overcome this, it was suggested that literature for parents needs to be written in a very accessible style. One local authority had designed a bookmark which provided ten tips for parents on preparing their child for school.

While not directly related to the focus of this review, it is important to note that a number of participants highlighted barriers relating to mid-year transitions, particularly for looked after children. One local authority was trying to improve this through more joint planning between the authority and schools.

## 5 To what extent is transition an issue for children and young people when moving between stages?

The majority of children make a successful transition at key points throughout their education (Sanders *et al* 2005; Evangelou *et al* 2008). For example, Evangelou *et al* (2008) found that 84 per cent of the 550 children they surveyed said that they felt well prepared on entry to secondary school, and only three per cent said that they were worried or nervous a term later.

However, there are certain groups of children and young people who are more likely to find transitions challenging, compared with their peers. This section focuses on profiling these groups generally and in relation to particular transition points. We also identify those factors that may help to protect children and young people from common transition difficulties.

### Key messages

- The majority of children and young people make successful educational transitions. Individuals who experience difficulties are more likely to be from vulnerable groups, including those from deprived backgrounds and those with special educational needs.
- At the transition from early years foundation stage to key stage 1, children who are the youngest in their year have been found to experience more difficulties.
- At the transition from primary to secondary education, children from poorer families and those with special educational needs may experience greater difficulties.
- At post-16, young people exhibiting under-achievement, a history of absences and poor behaviour are at risk of particular difficulty in making the transition to further education or training.
- Protective factors include familial support and friendship groups. There is also a key role for support and information provided by schools and services.

## Who is at risk across all transitions?

This subsection aims to identify who is most at risk at times of transition. Overall, the evidence suggests that those from more vulnerable backgrounds, especially those from economically deprived backgrounds, are most likely to be at risk at key transitions.

### Socio-economic background

Evidence suggests that children and young people from deprived backgrounds are more likely to face difficulties at key transition points. For example, research undertaken in England found that those from deprived backgrounds were more likely to have difficulties when transferring from key stage 2 to key stage 3 (Evangelou *et al* 2008). Furthermore, evidence from the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF 2009a) found that children and young people from more deprived backgrounds make less relative progress at each key stage compared to their peers from non-deprived backgrounds (for more detail, see Section 7). Two empirical studies conducted in the USA found a relationship between poor transition and deprivation during the transition from pre-school settings to school (LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008; Carlson *et al* 2009). A study by Cowen and Burgess (2009) found that at the transition to post-16 education, learners from deprived backgrounds were more likely to disengage than those from non-deprived backgrounds. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are also less likely to go to university (The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions 2009).

The weight of evidence suggests that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience difficulties during transition compared to their peers. However, West *et al* (2010) found that taking other characteristics into account, pupils from lower socio-economic status backgrounds reported fewer 'peer concerns' (such as being with different young people, older teenagers and bullying) at transition to secondary school than pupils from more advantaged backgrounds.

### Special educational needs

There is some evidence to suggest a relationship between special educational needs (SEN) and difficulties in making educational transition. For example, Aston *et al* (2005) found that young people with self-reported disabilities were more likely to be NEET post-16 than those with no self-reported disabilities.

Evangelou *et al* (2008) found that children with special educational needs did not necessarily experience a less successful transition than other children from key stages 2 to 3, but they were more likely to be bullied (which is a key inhibitor of successful transitions).

A US-based study found that children with more severe learning difficulties had more difficulties making the transition from pre-school settings to school than those with less severe learning difficulties (Carlson *et al* 2009). The evidence also suggests that children and young people with special educational needs who experience the most difficulties with transition are those with other characteristics that may lead to

vulnerability, such as being from a black or minority ethnic background (Aston *et al* 2005; Carlson *et al* 2009) or from families eligible for government financial support (Carlson *et al* 2009).

## Ethnicity

A number of researchers have suggested that there may be a relationship between being from a black and minority ethnic group and being at risk of difficulties during transition (Sanders *et al* 2005; Greenhough *et al* 2007). This link was also reported in the C4EO review on narrowing (now referred to as 'closing') the gap in outcomes for young children in the early years (Coghlan *et al* 2009). However, we found mixed evidence of this from the empirical studies we reviewed. Research undertaken in England (Greenhough *et al* 2007) reported no relationship between ethnicity and difficult transitions. Sanders *et al* (2005) found no direct evidence of a relationship between difficult transitions and ethnicity, but school staff reported that children with English as an additional language were more likely to experience difficult transitions, both on entry to primary school and from the early years foundation stage to key stage 1. In addition, two US-based studies identified children from minority ethnic groups as 'at risk' when making the transition to school (LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008; Carlson *et al* 2009).

## Psychological characteristics

Children with poor socio-emotional skills, low self-esteem or low self-confidence may be particularly vulnerable during transition, due to a lack of skills that would otherwise provide them with stronger emotional resilience to help cope with new expectations and social relationships (Working with Men 2004; West *et al* 2010). This is supported by Evangelou *et al* (2008), who identified an important indicator of successful transition to secondary school as the extent to which children have high self-esteem and greater confidence. In their study of transition from primary to secondary school in Scotland, West *et al* (2010) found that young people's personal characteristics, such as having lower self-esteem and lower academic ability, were more strongly associated with having a poor transition than the type of primary school or its policies (including the extent to which the school encouraged parental involvement at school).

## Who is at risk at particular transitions?

As well as the groups identified earlier, who have difficulties across a number of transitions, children and young people with certain characteristics are more likely to have difficulties at particular transition points.

In the **early years**, children who are youngest in the year group (often referred to as 'summer-born' children) appear to have more difficulties with the transition to school than their older peers (Sanders *et al* 2005; Crawford *et al* 2007). Indeed, August-born children have been shown to be behind September-born children in terms of cognitive outcomes in their first year of school. Although this difference is noted throughout compulsory education, the extent of the difference in attainment decreases across subsequent transitions (Crawford *et al* 2007; Sharp *et al* 2009).

The move from **primary to secondary school** (key stage 2 to key stage 3) represents a great deal of change for children. Indeed, a small-scale research project found that both children and their parents viewed this transition as the most significant in the school career (Sherbert Research 2009). Evangelou *et al* (2008) found that 16 per cent of children did not feel prepared for secondary school when making this transfer.

The review identified no evidence that looked directly at **post-16 transitions**. Other evidence related to disengagement from learning post-16. A large-scale study undertaken by Cowen and Burgess (2009) found that young people who disengaged from education were more likely to have under-achieved at school, have a record of poor attendance and have behavioural problems

### What helps to prevent difficulties at transition?

The evidence suggests that friendship and support during transition are helpful in protecting children and young people from experiencing difficulties. A key protective factor appears to be the social aspects of school such as friendship groups and support from peers. For example, a study of the transition to key stage 1 (Sanders *et al* 2005) found that remaining with the same friendship groups helped children adjust to the new curriculum and pedagogy. Similarly, Evangelou *et al* (2008) identified friendship as a protective factor for children during the transition to secondary school. Moving to the same school as friends and the friendliness of children in the same class and of older children in the school were all identified as important in helping children make a good transition.

Not surprisingly, familial support has also been identified as important in protecting children and young people from experiencing difficulty during transitions (Aston *et al* 2005; Sanders *et al* 2005; Evangelou *et al* 2008). (Further information on parental support during transition is given in Section 8).

Support from other agencies such as the school or the local authority has been associated with successful transitions in education (Evangelou *et al* 2008; Sherbert Research 2009). (Section 8 provides more information on successful approaches.)

## 6 What are the causes and factors associated with the difficulties children and young people face at transition?

As discussed in the previous section, there are certain of groups of children and young people who are at risk of difficulties during transition. In this section we examine why some children and young people experience difficulties. We draw out the key challenges faced by those identified as at risk, in terms of family background and personal characteristics, as well as the organisational/system factors involved.

### Key messages

- How children and young people fare during transition is connected to a range of socio-emotional, behavioural and organisational factors, such as their anxieties regarding all aspects of transition, responses to change in the curriculum and different expectations from teachers and schools.
- Children and young people from vulnerable groups face particular difficulties at transition due to their personal and family background characteristics, which can present barriers to their successful adjustment during transition.
- Whether children and young people are equipped to cope with these changes is related to the level of support received from families, peer groups and schools in adjusting to their new social, academic and physical environments.

### Why do children find transition challenging?

The difficulties associated with transition fall into two broad areas: socio-emotional factors and organisational factors.

#### Socio-emotional factors

Research has found that some children and young people are apprehensive about the transition process. Studies have identified a range of common anxieties and challenges faced by children and young people in adjusting to new social and physical environments (Galton *et al* 2003; Sanders *et al* 2005; Merry 2007; Evangelou *et al* 2008; Shields 2009 Zeedyk *et al* 2003).

These changes include:

- understanding the rules
- new teachers and schools
- adjusting to new curriculum content and delivery
- adapting to new peer groups and social status
- increased workload and academic expectations.

Children have a number of anxieties about these changes and frequently worry about unknown or higher expectations at school and about bullying, which can cause emotional difficulties.

The evidence examining children and young people's anxieties before and during transition suggests an association between their socio-emotional attitudes and behaviours and their transition outcomes. For example, Sanders *et al* (2005) found that while, on the whole, children were positive about the transition to key stage 1, they worried about their ability to cope with the volume and difficulty of the work. There was also some anxiety about their new teacher. Children were less concerned about the rules or making friends, because they were making a transition within the same organisation and so did not expect major changes to take place in social relations.

Evangelou *et al* (2008) identified children who experienced difficulties after the transition from primary to secondary school. Common difficulties included a lack of familiarity with new teachers, difficulty in making new friends and some instances of bullying. In particular, where children found it difficult to form relationships with their peers and teachers, this affected their ability to work collaboratively with others and to develop social support systems.

## Organisational factors

Studies have identified a range of organisational issues that relate to practice within and across institutions, which are associated with easing or compounding the difficulties faced by children and young people during transition (Chapman 2003; Galton *et al* 2003; Sanders *et al* 2005; McIntyre *et al* 2007; Merry 2007; Evangelou *et al* 2008; Carlson *et al* 2009). The organisational issues relate to three broad categories:

- curriculum continuity
- collaborative working and sharing practice
- transition support and advice.

## Curriculum discontinuity

A change in curriculum content and pedagogy increases the likelihood of children and young people experiencing difficulties in adjusting to new methods and styles of teaching and learning. The extent of transition difficulties depends on the degree of discontinuity experienced between the old and the new environments (Centre for Community Child Health 2008). Particular differences in curriculum and pedagogy have been identified in the transition to key stage 1 (or its equivalent) (Sanders *et al* 2005; McIntyre *et al* 2007; Shields 2009) and from key stage 2 to key stage 3 (Chapman 2003; Galton *et al* 2003).

In relation to early years transition, insufficient collaborative working between teachers and schools can exacerbate transition difficulties for children. Stormont *et al*'s review (2005), which looked at how to support a successful transition to kindergarten, drew attention to the fact that some kindergarten teachers expected new entrants to have already mastered core social skills. Where children had not developed the desirable skills for the next transition stage or curriculum, this could create difficulties for children and among peers and teachers.

Merry (2007) found that practice differences between teachers in the 'under-twos' group and teachers in the 'over-twos' class within the same pre-school, coupled with a clear division in the curricula, had contributed to a stressful transition for some children.

In respect to transition to key stage 1, some of the main challenges associated with a lack of curriculum continuity were highlighted in a study by Sanders *et al* (2005). These included the sudden change to more formal teaching and learning styles, greater emphasis on 'hard work', less time for play and fewer opportunities for child-initiated activities. Similarly, Shields (2009) noted that the lack of continuity and transition to more formal learning at this stage was difficult for both children and parents. Shields (2009 p 241) quotes one parent who felt that her son had been happy in nursery, '*whereas in school now ... it's not whether he's happy or not, or whether he's got friends. It's all education, it's all learning*'.

In relation to transition to secondary school, Galton *et al* (2003) identified a number of curriculum issues, including primary schools 'squeezing' the curriculum in year 6, or narrowing the curriculum to focus on raising children's attainment in national tests, in a bid to improve the school's league table position. As a result, Galton *et al* suggested that the practice of squeezing the rest of the curriculum content into the summer prior to secondary school transition had become prevalent in many schools. Due to variations in practice in primary schools, this increased the likelihood of secondary school teachers struggling to find a 'common starting point' from which to move pupils forward. Children and young people may therefore have gaps in their knowledge, causing inconsistencies in teaching and learning.

## **Lack of collaborative working and practice sharing**

A number of studies found evidence that teachers have strategies in place to share practice and teaching methods and visit each other's classes and schools (Galton *et al* 2003; Sanders *et al* 2005). However, the extent of such collaboration appears to be limited (see Section 8 for further details).

Merry (2007) argued that a lack of integrated working and curriculum planning among teachers in a pre-school made transition more challenging for children. Chapman (2003) found that a lack of understanding about the curriculum and teaching methods between teachers in primary and secondary schools created difficulties for the successful transition of gifted and talented pupils. In addition, two studies highlighted the disadvantage to children who had been admitted late, because they had missed out on transition practices, as had their parents (Evangelou *et al* 2008; Shields 2009).

In their study of transition from key stage 2 to 3, Surtherland *et al* (2010) found that there was a lack of understanding and practice sharing between teachers. They argued that this, along with the divide in the curriculum and other differences between primary and secondary schools, has resulted in a 'two tribe' mentality in primary and secondary school teachers which: *'works against the development of a coherent educational experience for pupils across the transition from primary to secondary schools'* (page 74).

## **Lack of transition support and advice**

A lack of support and advice available to children, young people and families during the transition process has been identified as contributing to the level of transition difficulties they may experience. For example, differing admissions and transition practices across schools, as well as parents not understanding admissions processes, were identified as hindering successful transition, because parents were ill-prepared to support their children through the process (Shields 2009). Children and young people's families play an important role in providing them with support and advice. The results of the Tellus4 survey (Chamberlain *et al* 2010) indicate that children and young people in Years 6, 8 and 10 were more likely to receive help in planning their futures from their families compared with other sources such as teachers or Connexions personal advisors. Many young people in Years 8 and 10 were positive about the amount of information and support they received to help plan their future, with around two fifths (43 per cent) reporting that they had received enough information, but almost a quarter (23 per cent) said they had not. One of the top three worries for young people in Years 8 and 10 was 'what to do after Year 11', suggesting a need for further guidance to help young people make informed choices post-16.

## **What makes transition particularly challenging for some children?**

This subsection discusses the key issues identified in the studies for those children and young people identified as at risk in Section 5. It explores factors that contribute to the difficulties faced by some children and young people within these groups

during transition, in respect to personal and family characteristics and organisational factors. However, this should be placed in a broader context of positive transition experiences. As noted previously, the majority of children fare well during transition (Sanders *et al* 2005; Evangelou *et al* 2008). Even among vulnerable groups, emotional resilience and a range of other factors affecting children and young people will influence their transition outcomes (Gulati and King 2009).

Research evidence suggests that children and young people with the following characteristics may be at increased risk of experiencing difficulties during educational transitions:

- low socio-economic status
- special educational needs
- black or minority ethnic background (mixed evidence)
- poor record of attendance
- low attainment
- gifted and talented
- looked-after.

It is important to note that the list presented above is not an exhaustive list of characteristics of children and young people who may experience difficulties during educational transitions, but it reflects the characteristics investigated in the research literature included in this review.

### Socio-economic background

Several studies have explored the reasons why children from poor backgrounds may find educational transition more challenging. Two main suggestions have been put forward to explain this: a lack of socialisation of children and fewer transition practices adopted by schools.

Miller *et al* (2003) and McIntyre *et al* (2007) suggested that transition can be more challenging for children from poor socio-economic groups because of the additional risk factors present. Both studies looked at children in the early years and highlighted the fact that the competencies needed to ensure a successful transition at this age, such as turn-taking and the ability to respond appropriately to different situations, may be more difficult if children have had limited opportunities to socialise and regulate their emotions.

Research conducted in the USA suggests that poor families can miss out on transition support. For example, a survey sent to US families of pre-school children before transition to kindergarten found that parents who received government financial aid were involved in fewer transition activities compared with parents who received no aid. These parents were also less likely to participate in transition activities, with the main implication that children from low-income families did not benefit from activities aimed at easing transition (McIntyre *et al* 2007). (Section 8 contains some further information on the use and effects of multiple transition strategies for at-risk groups.)

Carlson *et al*'s (2009) US study looking at the transition of children with disabilities identified that more transition practices were being used by teachers in schools in high-income areas, and fewer transition practices were being used in low-income areas. This suggests that children living in low-income areas may not be as well supported by schools as their counterparts in wealthier areas and could suffer as a result. However, we are unable to comment on the relevance of these findings to schools in the UK, as we were unable to find evidence on this issue that originated in the UK.

## Special educational needs

As mentioned in Section 5, children and young people with special educational needs may experience difficulties during transition. The study by Evangelou *et al* (2008) found that children with special educational needs were more likely to be bullied at secondary school. This may affect their enjoyment of school and motivation to learn, as well as resulting in poor self-esteem and confidence, both of which are risk factors for poor transition. In addition, children and young people's additional needs mean that they may lack the appropriate socio-emotional skills needed to negotiate a successful transition (Carlson *et al* 2009). There is a lack of direct evidence from the UK focused on children with special educational needs encountering difficulties at transition.

## Ethnicity

A small number of studies indicated an association between difficulties during transition and ethnic background. Two studies from the USA found an association between children's ethnic background and their transition outcomes. LoCasale-Crouch *et al* (2008) found that, when involved in a number of transition activities, children from African-American ethnic backgrounds were more likely to show improved social competence and fewer behaviour problems than children from other ethnic backgrounds. Research by Carlson *et al* (2009) found that Hispanic children were rated as having more difficulty making the transition than black or white children, although this finding related exclusively to children with disabilities. It should be noted that reasons for transition difficulties among children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds may be due to a range of factors, including cultural and language differences (see Coghlan *et al* 2009). This is further supported by Sanders *et al* (2005), who suggested that young children with English as an additional language may encounter transition difficulties as a result of language barriers.

## Attendance

The main challenge for children and young people with poor attendance or punctuality is the increased risk of poor transition because of a lack of schooling (TDA 2009). This is especially problematic for the transition to secondary school, because children may be unprepared to 'move up'. Where children are poor attendees, there is also a greater likelihood that their pupil record and information may be incomplete, thus creating greater challenges for new teachers and schools post-transition.

While there was some evidence about young people who are not in education employment or training, the broader cross-cutting themes affecting this group, such as re-engagement in education, were generally the main focus of these studies. However, the evidence generally supports the view that young people who are NEET are particularly vulnerable during transition, due to lack of engagement in schooling (Cowen and Burgess 2009; Tanner *et al* 2009).

## Relative age

Sanders *et al* (2005) suggested that children who were the youngest in their year group relative to their peers, 'summer borns', were at risk of transition difficulties due to their relative immaturity. Summer-born children may struggle during early years transitions, due to developmentally inappropriate expectations and/or an unsuitable environment (for example, lack of opportunities for free play).

## Academic attainment

Most studies of transition did not focus specifically on difficulties for pupils with different levels of achievement. However, Chapman (2003) studied gifted and talented children moving from key stage 2 to key stage 3. The study found evidence that secondary school staff did not always identify their needs and ensure that the curriculum was sufficiently challenging. A lack of collaboration, inadequate assessments and poor record sharing between schools can exacerbate difficulties for high-achieving pupils. If children are placed in inappropriate or high-ability groups that do not meet their specific needs, this can inhibit successful transition (Chapman 2003).

## Looked-after children

A review by Brodie (2009) described how looked-after children moving into further and higher education reported a need for better social and emotional support to help them manage this transition.

## 7 What are the consequences for these children and young people and what challenges do they present to services?

Previous literature reviews have shown a link between poor transition and less successful outcomes. For example, a review of the literature by the Centre for Community Child Health (2008) in Australia made a link between less successful transitions to school and poor attendance and disengagement, while the Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (2009) found that dips in motivation or attainment were observed in those learners making the transition to secondary school.

This section looks at the empirical evidence in terms of identifying the impact of difficult transitions. It is important to note that we are not suggesting that difficult transitions alone are responsible for the outcomes discussed, rather that a culmination of factors, including transition, can contribute to less successful outcomes for at-risk groups.

### Key messages

- There is an association between those who have difficulties making the transition between educational stages and:
  - lower levels of attainment
  - less positive attitudes to education and learning
  - disengagement from education.
- Although organisations may recognise the need for greater collaborative working, it requires planning and resource allocation. It takes time to develop effective working relationships. This is particularly important in light of raising the participation age.

### What are the consequences of poor transition experiences for children and young people?

This subsection draws on a limited evidence base to identify the impact of difficult transitions on attainment, attitudes to learning, behaviour and disengagement.

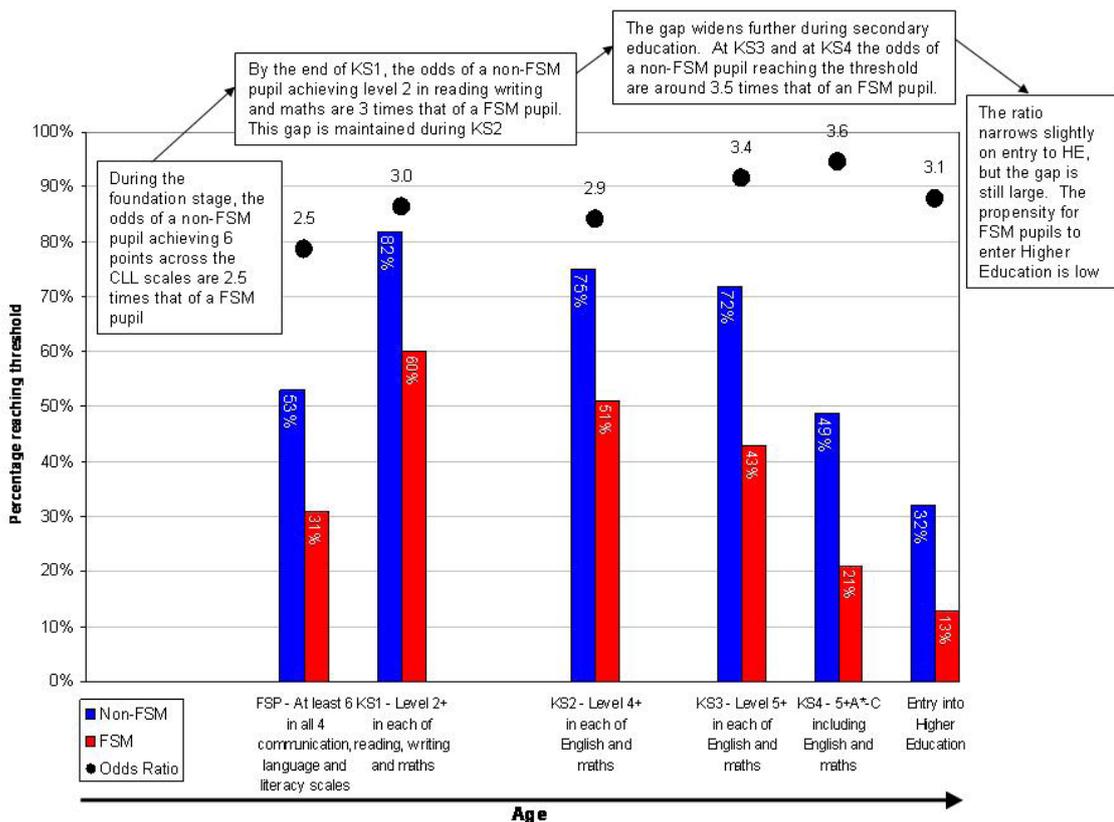
#### Lower levels of attainment

Authors of previous literature reviews and policy documents have suggested that dips in attainment occur after key transition points (for example, Greenhough *et al* 2007). This subsection is based on a small number of empirical studies that shed light on the attainment of groups identified in Section 5 as being at risk at transition.

One of the consistent findings of research into key stage assessment results is that there is a strong relationship between success in one key stage assessment and the next. For example, an analysis by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF 2008a) found that there was a strong correlation between achievement in the early years foundation stage profile in 2005 and children’s results at key stage 1 in 2007. The strongest relationships were evident between performance in communication, language and literacy and key stage 1 outcomes in reading, writing and maths two years later.

There is evidence of a widening gap between poorer children and those from more advantaged backgrounds as they progress through their educational career. Research undertaken by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF 2009a) found that by the end of each key stage, learners from deprived backgrounds (identified by eligibility for free school meals) made less progress in key stage assessments than those not eligible for free school meals. This is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Difference in pupils’ attainment over time, by free school meals**



**Notes:** CLL = communication, language and literacy; FSM = free school meals; FSP = foundation stage profile; KS = key stage.

Source: DCSF 2009a p 25. Data collected in 2008/2007 from key stage assessments. Higher education data from 2004/2005 and 2005/2006.

Figure 2 shows that at each key stage, the odds of a pupil who does not take free school meals achieving the required standard for his or her age is at least two and a half times that of a pupil taking free school meals.

The gap widens throughout education up to key stage 3, but appears to level off between key stages 3 and 4. Figure 2 also highlights how the odds ratio increases after key transition points. It is difficult to be certain about the influence of transition on this trend, but it is possible that difficulties experienced during transition have a greater effect on pupils from poorer backgrounds, and therefore transition is a contributory factor.

In relation to the influence of educational transition on attainment, evidence from Galton *et al* (2003) identified a lack of progress in English, mathematics and science after students made the transition to secondary school. The data showed that almost half of students made no progress a year after moving from primary to secondary school, while in mathematics the figure was almost a third. West *et al* (2010) found that young people who experienced a poorer transition to secondary school achieved lower grades at the end of secondary school and gained fewer qualifications by age 19, suggesting that difficulties in adjusting to secondary school may have longer-term implications for young people's educational achievement.

### Less positive attitudes to learning

Galton *et al* (2003) studied students' enjoyment and attitudes towards school over time. Primary school pupils reported high levels of enjoyment in primary school. Their enjoyment remained high straight after transfer to secondary school, but then dipped significantly by the end of their first year in secondary school. While the pattern was similar in boys and girls, the dip in enjoyment was more pronounced in boys.

Students' attitudes towards the core subjects were also found to change after transition. Both girls and boys showed a decline in attitude towards mathematics and science after transition to secondary school, with their attitudes being the most negative a year after transition into secondary school. However, attitudes towards English remained at a similar level after the transition to secondary school. The extent to which this is due to the experience of transition or to other factors (such as adolescence or a response to the secondary curriculum) is not clear.

### Disengagement from education

Disengagement from education has been associated with less successful transitions. For example, a review of the literature carried out by Judd (2008) cited evidence that during transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3, students were likely to disengage from learning if they believed they were being 'treated like children' by their teachers.

It has been argued that disengagement from education at the age of 16 can result from a culmination of factors, such as higher levels of absences and higher rates of exclusion or a less positive attitude to school (Cowen and Burgess 2009). However, we were unable to find any evidence that looked directly at the link between difficult transitions and disengagement post-16.

## Poorer mental health

A poorer transition experience may have consequences for young people's mental health. West *et al* (2010) found that young people who had difficulties making the transition between primary and secondary school had lower self-esteem and experienced more feelings of depression at ages 13, 15, 18 and 19. The associations between poor transition experiences and lower self-esteem were strongest two years post-transition and then generally weakened over time. However, depression among young people who had experienced a more negative transition persisted across time, suggesting that transition experiences could be particularly strongly associated with this aspect of young people's mental wellbeing. Overall, these results suggest that poor transition experiences may have longer-term consequences for a young person's mental health (but it should be noted that these were associations, rather than conclusive evidence of a causal relationship).

## What are the challenges for services?

The fact that transition poses a potential risk to the good progress and wellbeing of children and young people has been recognised in recent policy developments, which have placed greater responsibilities on children's services to contribute to positive transition experiences. This is particularly important in light of the recent Raising the Participation Age agenda, in which local services will have more responsibility for ensuring engagement post-16. This subsection builds on the findings in Section 6, looking at the organisational challenges associated with easing the difficulties faced by children and young people.

As noted previously, a lack of curriculum continuity can have a negative impact on children's transition across the key stages (Galton 2003; Sanders *et al* 2005; Shield 2009). The issue for curriculum planners is to seek better alignment between curricula for different ages and key stages.

This is clearly an issue for curriculum developers as well as practitioners. However, to improve curriculum continuity there needs to be greater alignment between the curricula at key transition points (Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum 2009). Equally, local authorities, schools and early years settings face a number of challenges in encouraging joint curriculum planning and practice sharing, which can be both time-consuming and expensive to undertake (Gulati and King 2009).

A lack of collaborative working and information sharing has been found to impede successful transition (Chapman 2003; Galton *et al* 2003; Merry 2007). In order to overcome this barrier, teachers and schools need to work more closely together, which involves dedicating resources, especially staff time.

Children and young people's socio-emotional needs are related to their transition outcomes, and poor socio-emotional adjustment can lead to poor transitions (Evangelou *et al* 2008). In addressing these needs, early years settings and schools need to ensure that they provide children with adequate time to adjust to their new settings (Sherbert Research 2009). This can pose challenges to busy practitioners and requires effective management to ensure that children and young people receive social and emotional care, as well as academic support.

Working more closely with families can impact positively on transition (Sanders *et al* 2005; McIntyre *et al* 2007), but poses a range of challenges, particularly when trying to engage hard-to-reach groups due to cultural or language barriers. The role of schools and extended services in strengthening family wellbeing is addressed in a separate report under the C4EO Schools and Communities theme (Statham *et al* 2010.)

## 8 What works in improving transitions?

The evidence suggests that while many children cope well with educational transition, it can present a number of challenges, particularly for vulnerable children. This section considers what local authorities, services, schools and other stakeholders can do to improve all children and young people's transition experiences, prevent difficulties and help ensure that children and young people remain engaged in education.

### Key messages

- It is worth putting effort into transition practices and initiatives because these can improve social and academic outcomes for all children and young people, and are particularly beneficial for those most at risk of experiencing transition difficulties.
- When local authorities or schools are implementing transition practices, it is good practice to: focus on the whole child; implement a number and variety of practices; provide targeted support for at-risk groups; be flexible and responsive to local needs; and ensure strong leadership and high-quality delivery.
- Effective transitions promote good communication between all stakeholders, including staff, parents and children and young people.
- Parental involvement in transition plays an important role in helping to improve outcomes for children and young people, especially for younger children.
- Some of the most effective practices are those that introduce children and young people to the new school in advance, so that they know what to expect at the next stage.

The use of transition practices and initiatives in schools is beneficial for all children and young people, and those who are at risk of difficulties at transition benefit the most (Schulting *et al* 2005; Bryan *et al* 2007; LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008). Generally, the use of transition practices is associated with greater adjustment to the new school environment and improved social and emotional skills among children and young people. This is important because (as discussed in Section 6), poor social skills and low levels of self-esteem and resilience have been identified as risk factors for transition difficulties. However, findings on the impact of such practices on academic outcomes are inconsistent, with some improvement in young people's attainment found in some academic subjects (Bryan *et al* 2007), but no change found in their attainment in other subjects (Bryan *et al* 2007; Standing *et al* 2008). However, Bryan *et al* (2007) found that at-risk groups benefit more in this respect, with a notable improvement in their grades.

## What is best practice in implementing transition initiatives?

When implementing transition practices and initiatives, the evidence suggests that local authorities and schools should:

- **Focus on the whole child** to ensure that children and young people's personal and social needs are met as well as securing good progress in meeting academic outcomes (Fletcher-Campbell *et al* 2003; Bryan *et al* 2007; Greenhough *et al* 2007; Wiggins *et al* 2008).
- **Implement a number and variety of practices**, because the more transition practices that are in place to support transition, the greater the benefit for children and young people (Schulting *et al* 2005; Evangelou *et al* 2008; LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008; Carlson *et al* 2009). For instance, LoCasale-Crouch *et al* (2008) found that when pre-kindergarten teachers used a high number of transition practices, children showed better social competence and fewer problem behaviours at kindergarten (LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008). Similarly, Schulting *et al* (2005) found that each transition practice used by kindergarten teachers resulted in a corresponding increase in children's achievement at the end of the year. The authors suggest that this was due to the use of transition practices encouraging greater parental involvement in the school. The use of a high number of practices was particularly beneficial for children in 'at-risk' groups, such as those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, children living in poverty and those with special educational needs (Schulting *et al* 2005; LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008; Carlson *et al* 2009).
- **Provide targeted support for at-risk groups**, such as looked-after children and those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Fletcher-Campbell *et al* 2003; Mantzicopoulos 2003; Maguire and Rennison 2005; Bryan *et al* 2007).
- **Be flexible and responsive to local needs** (Bryan *et al* 2007; Greenhough *et al* 2007; Page 2008). The implication of these findings suggests that transition initiatives should not be overly prescriptive and allow schools to tailor them to their needs.
- **Ensure strong leadership and high-quality delivery**. This includes strong leadership from the local authority (Day and McKenna 2008) and full engagement from senior management within schools (Bryan *et al* 2007). Careful recruitment of staff for the curriculum delivery is equally important (Bryan *et al* 2007; DCSF 2009b).

## Types of transition practices and initiatives

The studies reviewed looked at the effect of particular transition initiatives and also evaluated the effects of school transition practices already in place. Many of the studies found that teachers and schools used a variety of methods to support successful transitions (Sanders *et al* 2005; Evangelou *et al* 2008) and the studies that evaluated the impact of initiatives aimed at improving transitions often included more than one strategy within the same initiative (e.g. Mantzicopoulos 2003; Bryan *et al* 2007). Box 1 presents some examples of transition practices that have been used for all transitions and those that are specific to particular transitions.

### **Box 1: Examples of transition practices**

#### **General**

- Teachers visiting each other's classes and developing an understanding of each other's curricula.
- Teachers sharing information and records about individual pupils.
- Parents and children visiting new schools and classrooms and meeting new staff.
- Transition information sessions for parents (at the start of primary and secondary school).
- Preparing children/young people for the next stage, including development of specific skills.
- Pre-school/school linking schemes.
- Buddying schemes.
- Transition courses aimed at parents of disengaged young people.

#### **Home/preschool to school**

- Induction and orientation meetings before the child starts school.
- Shortened school days at the beginning of the school year (part-time attendance at first).
- Continuation of some of the activities and routines from the EYFS into key stage 1.

#### **Primary to secondary school**

- Joint transition planning between primary and secondary schools.
- Bridging 'units' and materials aiming to ensure curriculum continuity.
- Joint social events.
- Summer schools in literacy and numeracy for lower attaining and gifted year 6 students.
- Familiarisation/orientation programmes.

#### **Key stage 4 to post-16**

- Mentoring schemes.
- High-quality careers information and guidance.
- Activity agreement contracts between young people and Connexions aimed at re-engaging young people in education, employment and training.

## What are the most important elements of transition practices?

Although a variety of transition practices were used by some schools and were evaluated by the studies, there were three key principles that underpinned effective practice at all transitions: communication, induction and preparation, and continuity and change.

### Communication

The evidence suggests that good planning, communication and collaboration between teachers in different sectors and also with other services are key elements in all successful transition initiatives. Good communication with parents and the children and young people themselves is also key. Parental involvement is particularly important in preparing their child for transition.

In general, the evidence showed that where communication between all parties was better, the transition programme was more successful (Bryan *et al* 2007). A number of studies also found that it was beneficial for teachers in different sectors to visit each other's schools and work closely with each other – such as observing each other's classes or discussing the curriculum – to develop greater integration and understanding of each other's work (Bryan *et al* 2007). This was identified as one of the most effective transition practices for improving the transition to both primary and secondary school (Bryan *et al* 2007; LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008).

A small scale study of all-through schools (Sutherland *et al.* 2010) found evidence of better communication between teaching staff which led to a smoother transition for learners between the primary and secondary phases of education. The authors suggested that because teachers in all-through schools had a greater knowledge of the primary and secondary standards, they were able to pass on that knowledge to the learners.

Good information sharing between schools, services and teachers was also vital, such as effective exchange of information about pupils (Sanders *et al* 2005; Stormont *et al* 2005; LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008). This was especially important for vulnerable children where a number of services may be involved (Fletcher-Campbell *et al* 2003; Stormont *et al* 2005). An Ofsted (2004) report found that at transition to secondary school, only around half of the schools visited were transferring information effectively. Where transfer of information was good, this was where secondary schools were proactive, planned ahead and requested additional information about the child. This emphasises the importance of local authorities and schools having effective processes in place to ensure the timely sharing of information.

Parental involvement in transition is particularly important in supporting children. A systematic review (Harris and Goodall, 2009) found that support for parents and families at transition points could make a significant difference to children's attainment. Strategies included involving parents in the preparation for transition and

developing their understanding of the school culture and what to expect (Greenhough *et al* 2007).

Many schools already involved parents at an early stage in the preparation for transfer from primary to secondary school (Ofsted 2004). Results from the evaluations of the pilots of the transition information sessions (Day and McKenna 2008; Page 2008) showed that parents perceived a number of benefits from the sessions, including having the opportunity to engage with their child's new school, becoming familiar with members of staff and finding out how to support their child's learning (Page 2008). Overall, parents found transition information sessions helpful, and rated them as more helpful than written information, but less helpful than open days (Day and McKenna 2008). Parents with no other children in the school reported the greatest gains from the sessions (Day and McKenna 2008). For transition information sessions to be fully effective, though, schools need to consider how to make these sessions sustainable in the future (for example through embedding the sessions into strategic plans and through planning how to use their resources to support the sessions), involve parents in the planning stage, market the sessions and engage hard-to-reach groups (Page 2008).

A study undertaken by Gulati and King (2009) identified an example of how one area was targeting parents of disengaged learners in junior and secondary school. The local authority commissioned a voluntary agency to provide home-school support for disengaged children and young people. Families were identified through schools, and were offered a range of extended services, including transition courses (Gulati and King 2009).

Strategies to enhance the exchange of information between the home and school can help improve young people's outcomes at transition. For example, another study (Greenhough *et al* 2007) focused on the Home-School Knowledge Exchange project, which aimed to improve the exchange of information between the home and school when children were making the transition to secondary school. The study found that the initiative helped children to adjust more quickly to secondary school and had a positive impact on their progress in literacy from year 6 to year 7.

Research also suggests that transition processes should include communication with the children and young people themselves. For example, for children in the early years, transition practices that directly involved them were the most effective in improving social and academic outcomes (Schulting *et al* 2005; LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008). Sanders *et al* (2005) found that young children who were well informed about transition to key stage 1 had fewer anxieties and settled better into their new class. It is also interesting to note that activities involving both parents and their children can be effective. For example, Day and McKenna (2008) found that parents engaged better when transition information sessions involved the child.

## Induction

A key type of transition practice was ensuring that children were prepared and knew what to expect in the new school. Simple strategies were very effective here, such as enabling the child to meet their new teachers and visit their new school or classroom and find out more about the nature of the work that they would be expected to do (Bryan *et al* 2007; LoCasale-Crouch *et al* 2008). For example, Schulting *et al* (2005) found that enabling parents and children to visit the kindergarten classroom was the most effective practice of all for improving academic outcomes. Similarly, LoCasale-Crouch *et al* (2008) found that transitional activities that directly involved the child, such as class visits and induction, were especially associated with improved social competence among children from low-income families. Sanders *et al* (2005) interviewed parents, children and staff both before and after the transition to key stage 1. This quote from a post-transition interview with parents acknowledges the benefits to one child of her school's induction practices:

*'She talked a little bit about the routine, she said that she already knew [the year 1 teacher] and knew what to do. She had met [the teacher] and she now considered that she knew her and she knew what was expected of her'.  
(Sanders *et al* 2005 p 119)*

This practice is already established in many English schools (Ofsted 2004). Although it requires some organisation, it is a relatively low-cost practice for local authorities and teachers to implement.

## Continuity and change

All educational transitions involve changes in the physical and social environment, the curriculum and routines. The more different the child's experiences, the greater the risk of difficulty in adjusting. Transition strategies aimed at ensuring some degree of continuity between the child's previous environment and the new one have been identified as helpful. These could include ensuring the continuation of support services (Mantzicopoulos 2003) or the presence of familiar staff, routines and activities (Sanders *et al* 2005). However, it is also important to consider that children expect and even look forward to the changes associated with getting older and becoming more competent. Transition can provide positive new opportunities and experiences for children and young people, enabling them to demonstrate their interests and learn new skills (Galton *et al* 2003; Sanders *et al* 2005). As Galton *et al* (p v-vi) state:

*'Schools need to review the balance of continuities and discontinuities around the transfer experience, bearing in mind that, for pupils, discontinuity marks a new and important stage in their school careers. In particular, a shift of focus is needed towards strategies that sustain the 'excitement' of learning (and commitment to learning that such excitement can generate) beyond the initial stages of transfer. [...] For young people, being a year older matters. Pupils want – and expect – to be treated more like adults and to have more autonomy and trust; disappointment can lead to disengagement. Their increasing social maturity needs to be marked and planned for by yearly enhancements of opportunities and responsibilities.'*

For these reasons, a balance is needed between ensuring continuity while providing some new challenges and opportunities for children and young people as they progress through their educational careers.

## What transition strategies are beneficial at each key stage?

The scope of this review is wide ranging (covering transitions of children and young people throughout education up to the age of 19 or 25 for those with special educational needs). We are therefore limited in the amount of information we are able to provide for each key transition point, but some useful information on strategies for particular age groups is given below.

### Early years to key stage 1/home to school

In addition to the general transition strategies detailed above, the evidence suggests that providing some continuity between the early years setting and year 1, by adopting similar routines and activities (Sanders *et al* 2005), can be beneficial to all children starting year 1. This can include, for instance, ensuring familiar routines, providing opportunities for free and outdoor play, and enabling teaching assistants to 'move up' with the class.

Below is an example of one school's successful transition strategy, aimed to improve continuity from foundation stage to key stage 1. This example was taken from research carried out by Sanders *et al* (2005) which found evidence that these practices helped children to make a smooth transition to year 1. **Practice example: ensuring continuity between reception and year 1**

In one English primary school, teachers and support staff encourage children to be more independent towards the end of the reception year. The school carries out a range of induction practices, including arranging for reception children to visit the year 1 classroom and meet their new teacher before the transition. Reception class groups are kept intact after transition to year 1 to help preserve the children's friendship groups, and teaching assistants move up with the class to ensure that children have a familiar member of staff.

The school holds an evening early in the new year when children bring their parents to see their new classrooms and meet their new teacher. Year 1 classes adopt similar routines to those in the reception class, including registration and the order of activities during the day. The curriculum structure between reception and year 1 is kept similar, with more formal activities being introduced gradually, and play-based learning resources being shared with reception during the transition phase.

Parents felt induction activities were beneficial. One mother said that the following aspects had helped her daughter to settle in well: '*Having the same teacher and being with her friend. A lot of the routines are familiar to her and...I think she has definitely benefitted from...a more play-based approach this year*' (p.124). The head teacher felt the school's transition strategy had been particularly helpful for teachers, children and parents alike, and the researchers noted that reception children and their parents felt confident about the move to year 1.

As well as these general strategies that might benefit all children, a US study (Mantzicopoulos 2003) focused on strategies for children from economically deprived households and suggested that continuing Head Start services into elementary school improved children's adjustment to school. Schools adopted a Head Start transition programme that took a holistic approach to transition.

## Transitions between key stages 2, 3 and 4

A number of strategies have been found to be helpful in aiding young people's transitions between primary and secondary school. These include:

- Relaxation of the rules in the first few weeks of secondary school (Evangelou *et al* 2008).
- Helping young people to find their way around the school when they start (Evangelou *et al* 2008; West *et al.* 2010).
- Providing curriculum interventions (Bryan *et al* 2007), such as bridging units in English, science and mathematics (Galton *et al* 2003) and summer schools in literacy and numeracy (offered as part of the key stage 3 strategy; Ofsted 2004), which have been found to help improve young people's attitudes to learning and, in some cases, to improve their attainment.
- Developing transition plans. Estyn (2008) found that Welsh schools with the most effective plans had identified specific priorities to address over a three-year period, made transition plans a core part of the school improvement plan and measured pupils outcomes effectively.

Again, there is evidence of positive benefits from targeted interventions at the transition to secondary education. An example of this is provided by the ENABLE project in Scotland (Bryan *et al* 2007) which aimed to improve the transition experiences of vulnerable and low-achieving young people in the first two years of secondary school.

### **Practice example: the ENABLE project**

The Eastbank Network for Academic, Behavioural and Learning Education (ENABLE) project was implemented at Eastbank Academy in 2002 by the school and Glasgow City local authority. The project aimed to improve young people's transition from primary to secondary school, particularly for vulnerable and low achieving young people, by providing them with tailored support.

Students were taught literacy and numeracy in a separate class by a primary school teacher during their first two years at secondary school to help them develop their basic skills. These classes consisted of no more than 15 pupils, allowing more individual support. The pupils had contact with their main teacher for two hours a day and had fewer teachers for other subjects than their peers. One of the network support teachers commented: *'The routines and rules and methods are the same [as primary] – you're only changing one thing, the environment'* (p.90). Pupils returned to mainstream classes in the third year.

The evaluation found evidence of improvements in these pupils' Standard Grade results at the end of secondary school. Pupils also reported feeling more confident about moving into mainstream classes and fewer dropped out of school than those in a comparison group.

Another targeted intervention, in London, aimed to help prepare children for secondary school by reducing their concerns and fears about the transition to secondary school (Shepherd and Roker, 2005). Children identified as vulnerable and withdrawn were invited to attend a club for one and a half hours a week over a ten-week period. The club used group work to build children's self-confidence and skills and help them to deal with difficult situations. The evaluation showed that children's self confidence had increased and some children showed improvements in their school work. Before attending the club, they had a wide range of concerns regarding their transition to secondary school, but by the end of their attendance most reported that they did not have any particular concerns.

In relation to the transition from key stage 3 to 4, a systematic literature review (Moon *et al* 2004) looked at the impact of careers education and guidance. The authors found evidence of a positive impact on this transition. In particular, they concluded that providing effective careers, advice and guidance at key stage 3 can help learners to develop important skills and confidence, which prepares young people for the transition to key stage 4.

## **Post-16 transitions**

There are many influences on transition and progression to post-16 education, including the choices available and the different demands placed on learners (for example, an increasing requirement for independent learning).

This review did not identify any individual research studies focusing specifically on post-16 transition, apart from two studies that looked at young people's transition to higher education (The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions 2009; Curtis *et al* 2008). The findings from these studies are reported in the following sections. However, evidence from a systematic review of the literature (Smith *et al* 2005) identified both careers education and guidance and parental support as important influences on the success of post-16 transitions. For example, the review found that careers education and guidance activities, such as access to career-related information and group-work activities, helped learners to make smooth transitions.

Most of the evidence reviewed on post-16 transitions focused on initiatives aimed at engaging those who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET, rather than on improving the transition for learners who remain engaged with education or training. These initiatives for young people at risk of becoming/already NEET included: mentoring and structured careers information (Shiner *et al* 2004, Gulati and King 2009); transition support (Maguire and Rennison 2005); activity agreement programmes between young people and Connexions (Hillage *et al* 2008; Tanner *et al* 2009); personalised programmes (Cowen and Burgess 2009); and targeted youth support (DCSF 2009c). All these interventions were associated with improved outcomes for vulnerable young people, including:

- **Increasing the number who were engaged** in education, employment or training (Shiner *et al* 2004; Maguire and Rennison 2005; DCSF 2009c; Hillage *et al* 2008; Tanner *et al* 2009). For example, Shiner *et al* (2004) found that at the end of the mentoring and structured careers advice intervention, 59 per cent of the young people who were NEET at baseline were engaged in education, employment or training. The studies suggest that effective information, advice and guidance was particularly important in improving outcomes (Shiner *et al* 2004; Hillage *et al* 2008; Tanner *et al* 2009).
- **More positive first destinations** (Cowen and Burgess 2009).
- **Improved retention** of these young people into years 12 and 13 (Maguire and Rennison 2005).

The evidence reviewed also suggests that it may be better to intervene early to prevent young people becoming NEET, rather than focusing resources exclusively on dealing with problems once they arise (Maguire and Rennison 2005; Cowen and Burgess 2009; DCSF 2009c). The importance of early intervention and preventative services is highlighted in research by Evans and Slowley (2010), which followed the process of re-engagement in education of young mothers (a group which are largely NEET). Many young mothers already have a propensity to enter the NEET group prior to pregnancy and have had negative school experiences, which pose additional challenges when seeking to re-engage them in education or training. Services provided by Barnado's to help re-engage young mothers include a specialist unit where young women can complete their GCSEs, provision of antenatal and parenting courses, and information and guidance to ensure young women are aware of the financial support and childcare provision available to them.

## Higher education

A report by The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (2009) highlighted evidence that disadvantaged young people are less likely to go to university than their more affluent peers and that this gap has not closed over time. Furthermore, young people from private or academically selective schools are over-represented in more prestigious universities in comparison to those from non-selective state schools (Curtis *et al* 2008). In their research for the Sutton Trust, Curtis *et al* (2008) suggest that non-selective schools can help more of their students to make the transition to the best universities by:

- Encouraging students at an early stage to consider university, especially students who come from families where no-one else has previously gone to university.
- Providing strong support and direction with university applications, including identifying potential Oxbridge applicants.
- Engaging in university outreach activities, such as Aimhigher, to foster links with universities.

The study of state schools which had a good track record of sending students to prestigious universities included an example of the type of practices adopted in one school (Curtis *et al* 2008).

### **Practice example: encouraging transition to higher education**

A school based in the North of England with a good track record in sending students to prestigious universities adopted the following practices to encourage students to consider applying for university:

- Student ambassadors from Newcastle University visit the school each year and speak to learners about various aspects of university life.
- Mentors (undergraduates at a local university) provide advice and support for learners when writing their university application form.
- The school has a formal strategy for identifying potential Oxbridge students based on GCSE grades and the Head of Sixth Form actively encourages students to apply.

## 9 Conclusions and implications

This section presents the main conclusions from the review. It also addresses review question 5: 'What are the implications of questions 1 to 4 for local systems and change?'

The review included evidence across a wide age range of transitions, from preschool to post-16, and therefore we could not provide in-depth information for particular transitions. Nevertheless, we were able to identify several gaps in the evidence base. In particular, there appeared to be less evidence about the nature and impact of transition strategies for young people post-16. This is important in light of raising the participation age to 18 by 2015 and the emphasis on increasing opportunities for children and young people from all backgrounds.

Transition is a time of vulnerability. Children and young people are particularly concerned about the new environment they are moving to and whether they will make new friends, and they worry about the possibility of being bullied. Poor transitions may have longer-term consequences for a young person's mental health including lower self-esteem and depression. A poor transition experience may also be related to lower attainment and the achievement of fewer qualifications later in a young person's school career.

It can be seen from the evidence presented, that the children and young people most at risk are those who lack the skills, confidence and/or support to negotiate the transition process with confidence. Groups that are particularly vulnerable during transition include those from deprived backgrounds and those with special educational needs. These groups are not necessarily the only groups at risk of difficulties at transition points, but they were the ones most consistently identified as experiencing difficulties in the evidence base examined for this review. Others who may be at risk (but for which we have less evidence) are those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those with English as an additional language and looked-after children.

Transitions can be made more challenging for children and young people through curriculum discontinuity, a lack of collaboration and practice sharing and by not having adequate support systems in place.

Support from family, friends and staff helps to ensure a positive transition experience for children and young people. Indeed, the evidence suggests that a range of practices and initiatives aiming to improve transition are associated with greater adjustment to the new environment and improved social and emotional skills among the children and young people concerned.

## What are the implications for services?

The most important messages about transition that apply to all services for children and families are:

- **Universal strategies to improve transition are beneficial for all and are relatively inexpensive to implement.** A range of transition strategies can be adopted by services, such as staff visiting each other's classes and developing an understanding of each other's curriculum, sharing information and records about children and young people, informing parents and children about expectations of the next stage of education and enabling parents and children to visit their new schools and meet new teachers prior to transition.
- **The more you do the better.** One piece of research conducted in the USA found that the more practices children were involved with, the better the outcomes for them. This suggests that increasing the number of inexpensive, universal practices may have more impact on children and young people than investing in a single approach. In addition, two further studies from the USA found that an increase in the number of transition practices was particularly beneficial to vulnerable groups.
- **Vulnerable groups may need specific support.** As particular groups are more vulnerable at times of transition, it is important to provide targeted support to help children in these groups. This could include improving continuity between early years services such as Sure Start and primary school, or targeting at-risk students with specific courses which aim to help them to develop the skills needed to make a successful transition. Therefore universal, inexpensive practices coupled with some targeted practices would help to improve the outcomes of all children, particularly those most at risk.
- **Involve families and children and young people in transition practices.** The evidence confirms that it is good practice to involve parents and carers in transition practices and suggests that parental involvement can be further enhanced by involving children and young people along with their parents. Children and young people may have anxieties about impending transitions that services can easily address by discussing the process and explaining what to expect. Transition also provides an opportunity for encouraging parental engagement in their child's education, because parents tend to be keen to engage with schools at this time. The implication for schools is that they need to know their local community well in order to anticipate the needs of families before children join the school. Parents said they received the most information and support during their child's early years. They experienced less support at the transition between key stage 2 and 3, and felt they lacked information on post-16 transitions in particular. Early years staff may therefore provide a potential resource for staff at other stages wishing to embed a culture of involving and consulting with parents, both generally and specifically in relation to transition.

- **Early intervention.** The evidence suggests that early years transitions may be particularly important for children and young people, because they help to develop the social and emotional skills needed to cope with transition in the future. This reinforces the positive benefits of investing in support for children and families in the early years. Also, in light of the Raising the Participation Age agenda, early intervention before age 16 is important in preventing those at risk of disengagement entering the NEET group at the transition to post-16 learning. For example, strategies such as the Education Maintenance Allowance work best as a preventative measure rather than a re-engagement tool.

The review identified three key themes underpinning successful transition strategies: communication, induction, and balancing continuity and change.

## Communication

Good communication between all those involved (i.e. staff of the sending and receiving services, the child and their parents) is a key principle of transition initiatives and practices: where communication is better, the programmes are more successful. This refers to all aspects of transition, including teachers from different stages visiting each other, good information sharing, engaging with parents and joint planning. In order for separate organisations to work together effectively, there is a need to allow relationships to develop over time. One method of improving communication is to bring staff together through cross-phase training. The training does not have to be specifically about transition, rather it could be a vehicle for encouraging the development of closer relationships between staff of different organisations and services.

## Induction

Induction strategies are an essential aspect of helping children and young people to adjust to their new environment and to become familiar with changes prior to transition. These can be relatively inexpensive and include visits to new schools and induction days, ensuring children and young people have the opportunity to meet their peers and teachers. Another option for schools, colleges and training providers is to encourage new entrants to use their facilities before the point of transition, so that they are aware of the new environment.

## Balancing continuity and change

There needs to be a trade-off between providing continuity for children and young people during transition while also providing them with the opportunity to have different experiences and develop new skills. For example, evidence suggests that there is a need to provide curriculum continuity and maintain friendship groups for emotional security and include elements of familiar routine (at least during the 'settling-in' period). However, children understand that some change is inevitable and welcome new opportunities for development, which can contribute to an enhanced motivation to learn.

Finally, it is important to put children and young people at the centre of transition planning and therefore practice should reflect this. This includes consulting children and young people on their needs, expectations and interests and focusing on supporting their social and emotional security as well as their academic progress, to enable them to adjust and cope with their new environment.

## Recommendations for further research

In the light of this review, we have identified the need for more research in the following areas:

- Analysis of existing datasets to examine children's trajectories over time and assess at which point difficulties may occur, and to identify which transitions may be particularly problematic for vulnerable groups.
- Evaluations of the effectiveness of universal and targeted approaches aimed at improving transitions, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Studies comparing the implications for children and families of the 'typical' English system of schooling (separate pre-school, primary and secondary schools) with systems that avoid the need for children and young people to make a transition to a separate school (for example, early childhood units or all-age schools).
- Studies examining transitions in the early years of education and evaluating the longer-term impact of early interventions designed to prevent or reduce transition challenges.
- In terms of study design and methodology, studies using an experimental design to examine the impact of transition practices and initiatives on children and young people's outcomes.

Longitudinal studies to assess the longer-term impact of different transition practices and initiatives, including their impact on mental health. We recommend that any such studies gather the perspectives of children/young people, families and staff and consider a range of outcomes for learners, including social and emotional wellbeing (e.g. stress and anxiety, self-confidence, motivation, behaviour, attitudes to learning) as well as academic progress.

## Related research

For more information on areas related to, but not directly focused on, the process of transition, please refer to the following documents:

- For engagement and re-engagement of learners at key stage 3: Morris and Pullen (2007) and Cooke *et al* (2008).
- For best practice in re-engaging young people who are NEET through positive activities: Spielhofer *et al* (2009).
- For the importance of careers education and guidance in post-16 progression: Smith *et al* (2005).

## Data annexe

### Introduction and availability of data

One of the hoped-for outcomes of previous Government's policy is that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages and services, 0–19 years (25 years for care leavers). The main focus of this data annexe is to identify the demographic characteristics and educational outcomes of children and young people who are disengaged from (or not fully engaged in) learning from early years through to key stage 5, relative to the mainstream school population.

It is possible to identify most (though not all) of those who have actively disengaged from the compulsory educational system, whether through behaviours such as truancy (persistent absenteeism) or as a result of exclusion (whether permanent or fixed-term) from an institution during compulsory education. Post-16, disengagement is generally deemed to be manifest among those who have not taken up a place in a designated learning environment or workplace (NEET).

Other children and young people may have passively withdrawn from the educational system (whether cognitively or emotionally) and, although they may currently be 'engaged' insofar as they attend a school, college or training location, may be disaffected and no longer see the purpose of school or learning. Equally, children and young people may be prevented from participating fully in education as a result of:

- limiting, longstanding illness
- acute (though not always longstanding) illness
- unmet educational or other support needs, family circumstances (including young carers)
- high degrees of mobility (including looked-after children who are moving between placements and children of service families).

No databases systematically record the children and young people in these categories, although children of service families are now recorded in the Annual School Census and can be traced through the National Pupil Database and information on looked-after children is collected via the SSDA903; work is under way to match SSDA903 data to the National Pupil Database.

As a result, we have no comprehensive understanding of the full scope and extent of disengagement (or potential disengagement). Nonetheless, policy makers, practitioners, researchers and informed commentators have identified a range of different parameters of disengagement, across both the educational and social spectrums, and certain groups of young people have been identified as more likely to disengage than others. We have identified data not only on those who have actively disengaged, but also on those who previous research has indicated are at risk of disengagement.

This data annexe presents further discussion about the data currently available on children and young people at risk of disengaging from learning (or actively disengaged from learning). It provides:

- a summary of the search strategy for identifying the data
- an overview of the nature and scope of the data that was found, with a brief commentary on the quality of this data, and any gaps that have been identified.

## Search strategy

There are a number of archival databases in the UK, such as the National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD) and the UK data archive, some of which have services that facilitate searching or access to macro- and micro-datasets (including ESDS International). Even so, searching for current and recently published data cannot yet be conducted in the same way as searching for published research findings. Access to newly published data is not supported by comprehensive searchable databases in the same way that literature searches are supported.

Data for this annexe was obtained by a combination of search methods but primarily by obtaining online access to known government publications (such as the Statistical First Releases and Statistical Volumes from the Department for Education and access to data published by the Office for National Statistics). The data exploration stage also considered a range of national longitudinal studies, including the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England and the Youth Cohort Study (DCSF 2008b and 2009d), with searches of other cohort studies (including the Millennium Cohort Study<sup>1</sup>, the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education study (Sylva *et al* 2004) and the Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education study<sup>2</sup>) also taking place. Since the main focus was on educational outcomes, sources of data on other outcomes (including other government departments, the National Health Service and other national, regional and local bodies) were not explored in great detail. It should be noted that links to statistical sources that were live at the time of searching may not remain live at the time of publication.

## Nature and scope of the data

There is no universally agreed definition of 'disengagement', which presents a significant challenge when trying to scope the scale, timing and location of the issue among children and young people. Fredricks *et al* (2004), in a review of international literature on the topic, argued that the concept of educational engagement (hence educational disengagement) was poorly understood and insufficiently conceptualised, with the links between different types of disengagement and educational and progression outcomes not yet clearly established. Smith *et al* (2005), in an EPPI-Centre review of motivation to learn, were careful to distinguish between young people who were 'disaffected' (those who could no longer see the purpose of learning) and those who were 'disengaged' (those who had lost contact with the learning process). Morris and Pullen (2007) suggest that active

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/text.asp?section=000100020001>

<sup>2</sup> <http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/index.htm>

disengagement from school (such as truancy or persistent absenteeism) does not necessarily indicate active disengagement from learning. It may instead be a reaction to problems encountered in the school (such as bullying) or may reflect difficult situations in the young people's home lives (young carers, for example), rather than a 'disaffection with learning, a lack of willingness to engage with learning or a broader reaction against the concept of education'.

Equally, Morris and Pullen argue, young people who appear to be actively engaged in school (with regular attendance and completion of class work, homework and coursework) and who are not actively or passively opposing their teachers may still have cognitively or emotionally withdrawn (even if only temporarily) from the learning process: 'Indeed, it could be argued that all young people may go through such phases of disengagement at different times in their school lives' (Morris and Pullen 2007 p 13). By focusing on those children and young people who have overtly disengaged (i.e. are no longer present at – or are infrequently absent from – an educational institution), we are in danger of both overestimating the extent of the problem among some groups and underestimating it in others. As a result of the relative lack of clarity around the concept of disengagement, this data scoping study has adopted a broad spectrum approach to providing a demography of children and young people who appear to have disengaged from learning (or, research would suggest, appear to be in danger of disengaging from learning) and their educational outcomes.

## Data sources

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department of Education) was the main source of data on educational engagement (attendance) and outcomes (attainment and progression) for all children and young people (including children and young people who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months)<sup>3</sup> up to the age of 16. It provides comprehensive data on a range of educational outcome indicators (including attendance and attainment at key stages 1 to 4). Data on children aged 16 and over is also available from the Department for Education, but is not as complete:

- Information on those who remain in school is collected in the Annual School Census and recorded on the National Pupil Database.
- Data on those who take up a training place (whether full time or part time) is recorded via the Individual Learning Record, which can be matched to the National Pupil Database.
- Data on young people whose transition at 16 is to a job without training – or who take up no training or an employment option – is not systematically recorded, although the various Connexions Customer Information Systems will have records of those with whom they have been able to make contact.

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<sup>3</sup> Data on young people who have been looked after for a shorter period (or for short-term breaks as respite care) is not published nationally.

Data-recording strategies for two key groups (looked-after children and children and young people with special educational needs) deserve further illumination, in order to demonstrate the care with which demographic and outcome data need to be viewed.

## **Data on children and young people with special educational needs**

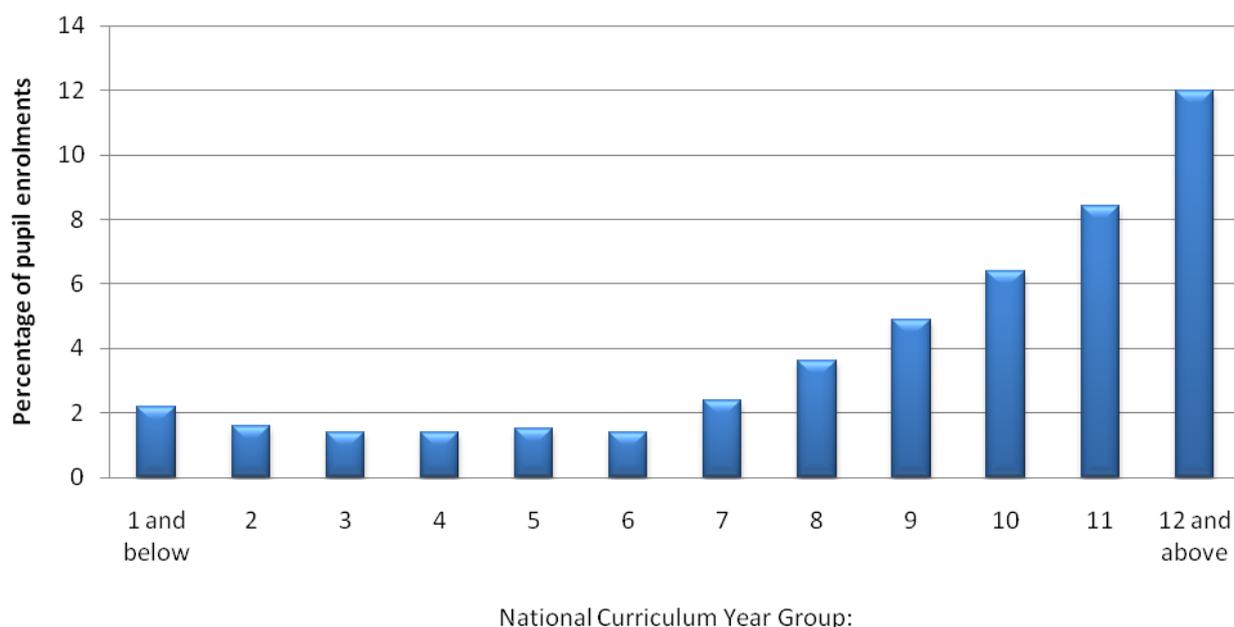
Data in the Annual Schools Census records the primary and secondary special educational needs of children and young people in the educational system. These needs may or may not relate to a specific disability (or disabilities). Information is coded at three levels (School Action, School Action Plus and Statement of Special Educational Needs), with the default being that a child has no special needs. At the level of School Action, any additional support is school-based, while at the level of School Action Plus, support or advice may be sought from the local authority or from health or social work professionals. If a child's needs cannot be met through School Action Plus, the local authority may decide to undertake a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, a multidisciplinary assessment to establish a Statement of Special Educational Needs, setting out the needs and the special educational provision to be made for them. Although there is a special educational needs Code of Practice (to which schools, early education settings, local authorities and others must, by law, have regard), the subjective nature of the decision as to whether or not a child is making progress and responding to differentiation means that an element of variation in identifying and recording special educational needs exists between schools and between local authorities.

## **Persistent absentees and the influence of living in poverty**

In drawing together a demographic profile of children and young people who have disengaged from learning (or who are in danger of disengaging from learning), we have focused primarily on those who are persistent absentees and on the influence of poverty on post-16 outcomes.

Persistent absentees – those whose absence (authorised or unauthorised) from school is for more than one-fifth of the school year (a mean of 63 missed half days, or more than six weeks) – form a small part of the primary school roll, but a larger part of the secondary school population, with 8.4 per cent of the 2008/09 year 11 cohort being classed as a persistent absentee and therefore actively disengaged from school (if not the learning process) (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Persistent absentees**

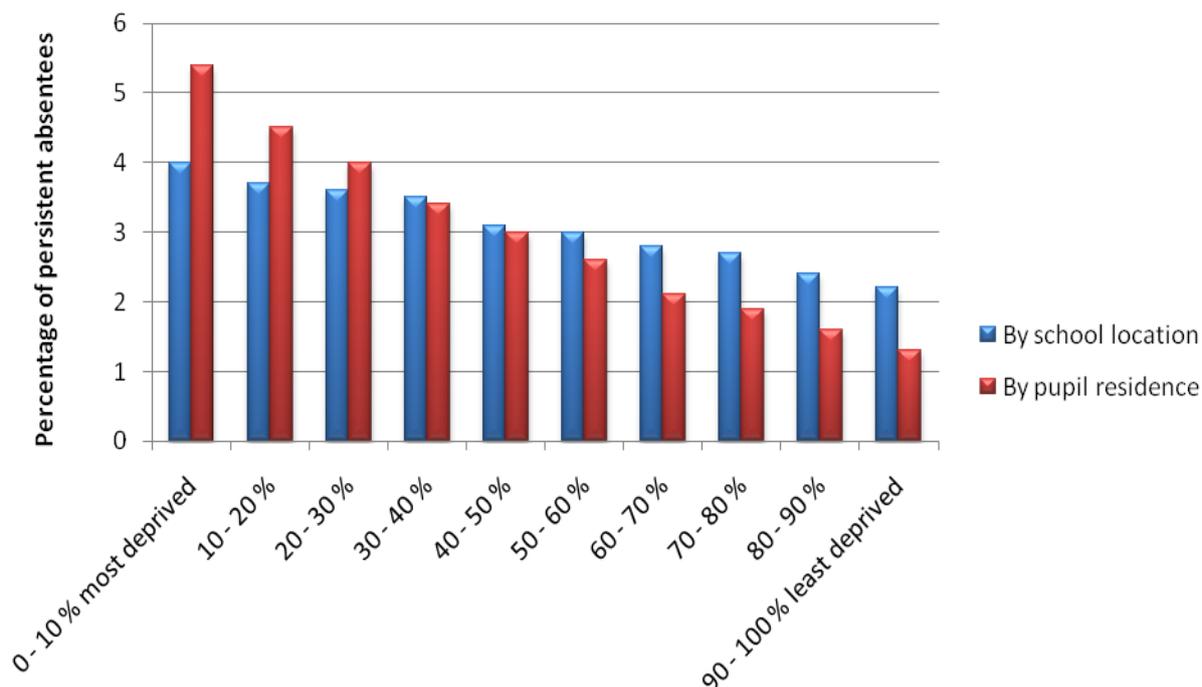


Source: DCSF 2010c

Although there is no significant gender difference among persistent absentees, such absenteeism is particularly evident among those who are eligible for free school meals and among children and young people designated as School Action Plus (those for whom additional school-level support alongside differentiation has not proved effective), or with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The pre-eminence of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties among the persistent absentees (on a par with the level of absenteeism among children with profound and multiple learning difficulties) suggests that there is a high risk of elective disengagement for these pupils.

The picture of higher absenteeism among young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds (those eligible for free school meals) is brought into sharp focus when one looks at the relationship between persistent absentees and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). As Figure 4 highlights, the IDACI of a child's home residence may be a more telling indicator of possible absenteeism than the IDACI of the school.

**Figure 4. Persistent absentees: by IDACI of school and of pupil residence**

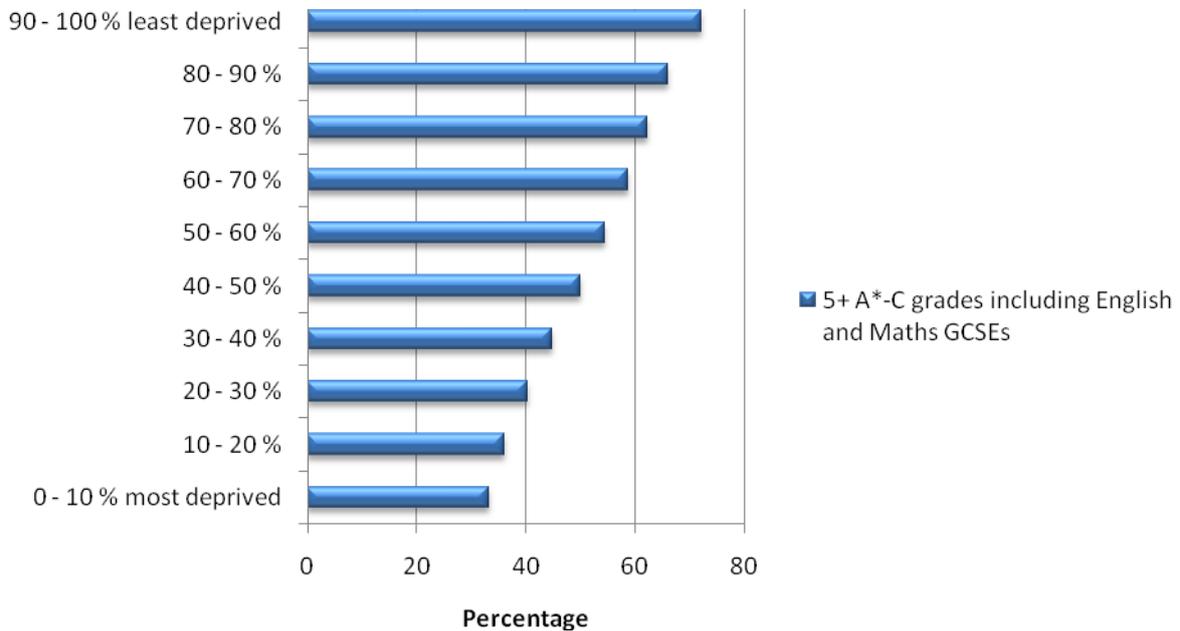


Source: DCSF 2010c

Persistent absenteeism is not just an urban issue; rates in hamlets and areas of isolated dwellings may be lower, but only by less than one percentage point, for both primary and secondary schools.

Key stage 4 attainment outcomes for children living in areas of high deprivation also show a stark relationship between poverty and lower levels of achievement at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (see Figure 5). Just 33 per cent of young people living in the most deprived areas achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C (including English and mathematics) compared with 72 per cent of those living in the least deprived areas – a 39 percentage point gap in attainment for National Indicator 75.

**Figure 5: Outcomes at key stage 4: by IDACI**



Source: DCSF 2010a

This relationship is also evident when one considers individual deprivation. Although the gap in attainment between those eligible for free school meals and all other pupils has been closing since 2002 (when it was 30.7 percentage points, it is still in the order of 28 per centage points (DCSF 2010a).

### Engagement and disengagement: post-16

The proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 who were in the NEET category (not in education, employment or training) increased slightly between 2000 and the end of 2009 from 13 per cent to 15 per cent (DCSF 2010b). The NEET issue is clearly one that is relatively intractable. Although it is possible to identify the characteristics of young people who are NEET, many suffer from multiple problems (and multiple deprivation) and any analysis that looks solely at single characteristics is unlikely to identify all of the underlying problems and tensions.

The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, alongside the Youth Cohort Study (DCSF 2008b and 2009d), provides some insights into the medium- and longer-term outcomes of some of the groups who are potentially most at risk of disengaging from learning and becoming NEET. Young people who have been excluded (particularly those who have been permanently excluded), who have truanted (especially persistent truants) or who have a disability, as well as those from households with lower self-reported levels of parental qualification, appear to dominate the NEET category in these longitudinal studies.

## In summary

There is a wealth of data on the outcomes of young people who traditionally have been regarded as 'at risk' of disengaging from learning, although the concept of disengagement is, perhaps, not fully defined as yet. For some groups, such as looked-after children, those with special educational needs (whether or not they are statemented), those in receipt of free school meals, those living in areas of high deprivation and those who are persistent absentees or who have been excluded, national data on attendance and educational attainment is available up to the age of 16. Data becomes less comprehensive for all groups post-16, with a greater reliance on longitudinal studies to provide insights. On the other hand, there is little evidence showing trajectories of children and young people over time, as they grow older and experience educational transitions. As a result, assessing whether *all* children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages and services is not yet possible in England.

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## Appendix 1: Knowledge review methods

This review follows a C4EO scoping study (George *et al* 2009) and a C4EO research review (Evans *et al* 2010) on the theme of ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages.

The review includes literature identified by a C4EO scoping study as relevant to the review questions. The scoping study used systematic searching of key databases and other sources to identify literature that was then screened and coded (see Appendices 2 and 3 for the search strategy, coding frame and parameters document). Apart from reference harvesting and including references highlighted by the C4EO Theme Advisory Group, no further searching for material other than that located by the scoping review was undertaken for this review.

The review team used a 'best evidence' approach to select literature of the greatest relevance and quality for the knowledge review. This entailed identifying:

- the items of greatest relevance to the review questions
- the items which came closest to providing an ideal design to answer the review questions
- the quality of the research methods, execution and reporting.

The team reviewed all priority items and summarised their findings in relation to the review questions. The reviewer also assessed the quality of the evidence in each case. In judging the quality of studies, the team was guided by principles established to assess quantitative research (Farrington *et al* 2002) and qualitative studies (Spencer *et al* 2003).

The review also contains evidence from service providers and service users (see Appendix 5).

## Appendix 2: Scoping study process

The first stage in the scoping study process was for the Theme Lead to identify the areas of interest and for the Head of Reviews to devise the review questions and search parameters in agreement with the Theme Lead (see Appendix 3 for the full set of parameters). The list of databases and sources to be searched was also agreed with the Theme Lead. Sets of keywords were selected from the British Education Index (BEI) and were supplemented with free text phrases. The keywords comprised a set addressing the range of transitions encountered by children and young people moving into, within and from education. Further sets were devised to cover concepts relating to educational achievement, integrated working, groups at risk of discontinuing or disengaging from education, and a range of approaches to tackling those risks (referred to throughout as 'Strategies').

The keywords were adhered to as far as possible for all bibliographic databases, with closest alternatives selected where necessary. Web-based databases were searched using a more limited number of terms enabling a simultaneous search across the three priority areas within the C4EO schools and communities theme.

A list of websites considered relevant to the search was compiled by the NFER team and supplemented by key organisations identified in the National Children's Bureau (NCB) organisations database, the British Education Internet Resource Catalogue (BEIRC) and by others identified in the course of the bibliographic database searches. Current research was specifically searched for in the CERUKplus (education and children's services research) database, in the Research Register for Social Care and on the websites of key organisations. Members of the Theme Advisory Group (TAG) were invited to suggest relevant documents, networks and websites.

The next stage in the process was to carry out searching across the specified databases and web resources. The database and web searches were conducted by information specialists at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and, in the case of ChildData, by an information specialist at the National Children's Bureau (NCB). Initial screening was done at this stage to ensure that the results conformed to the search parameters. The records selected from the searches were then loaded into the EPPI-Reviewer database, duplicates were removed and missing abstracts sourced. The scoping team members used information from the abstract and/or the full document to assess the relevance of each piece of literature in addressing the key questions for the review. They also noted the characteristics of the text, such as the type of literature, country of origin and relevance to the review question. A 10 per cent sample was selected at random and checked for accuracy by another member of staff.

The number of items found by the initial search, and subsequently selected, can be found in the following table. The three columns represent:

- items found in the initial searches
- items selected for further consideration (that is those complying with the search parameters after the removal of duplicates)
- items considered relevant to the study by a researcher who had read the abstract and/or accessed the full document.

**Table 1. Overview of searches**

| <b>Source</b>  | <b>Items found</b> | <b>Items selected for consideration</b> | <b>Items identified as relevant to this study</b> |
|--|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Databases</b>   |                    |   |   |
| Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)                                  | 131                | 20                                      | 12  |
| Australian Education Index (AEI)   | 52                 | 25                                      | 10  |
| British Education Index (BEI)  | 13                 | 13                                      | 7   |
| ChildData  | 370                | 75                                      | 15  |
| Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)  | 186                | 82                                      | 48  |
| PsycINFO   | 203                | 42                                      | 23  |
| Social Policy and Practice   | 116                | 54                                      | 22  |
| <b>Internet databases/portals</b>  |                    |   |   |
| British Education Index Free Collections (BEIFC)                                     | 41                 | 25                                      | 12  |
| CERUK Plus   | 28                 | 19                                      | 9   |
| Educational Evidence Portal (EEP)  | 66                 | 13                                      | 12  |
| Research Register for Social Care  | 19                 | 2                                       | 2   |
| Social Care Online   | 392                | 59                                      | 20  |
| <b>TAG recommendations (including texts and items found on recommended websites)</b> | Not applicable     | 6                                       | 5   |

*Please note that Table 1 does not include items from the web searches. These are listed in the table of organisations at the end of this Appendix. As shown in that table of organisations, 36 items from web searches were initially selected by the NFER library. Note that **all** of these were identified by the review team as relevant to this study.*

This section provides information on the keywords and search strategy for each database and web source searched as part of the review.

All searches were limited to publication years 2003–2009, in English language only.

A brief description of each of the databases searched, together with the keywords used, is outlined below. The search strategy for each database reflects the differences in database structure and vocabulary. Smaller sets of keywords were used in the more specialist web-based databases and for those databases which provide non-UK coverage. Terms were not automatically ‘exploded’ to search on all narrower terms in those databases offering this facility. However, wherever possible, narrower terms were included in the search string.

Key:

- ‘ft’ denotes that a free-text search term was used
- \$ denotes truncation of terms
- ? is used as a wildcard to accommodate variant spellings.

### **Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)**

(searched via CSA 07/07/09)

ASSIA is an index of articles from over 500 international English language social science journals.

#### **Educational achievement set**

- #1 Outcomes
- #2 Academic achievement
- #3 Performance
- #4 School failure
- #5 Underachievement
- #6 Educational achievement (ft)
- #7 Low achievement (ft)
- #8 Improving achievement (ft)
- #9 Improving performance (ft)
- #10 Narrowing the gap (ft)
- #11 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10

#### **Integrated services set**

- #12 Federations
- #13 Collective responsibility
- #14 Consortia
- #15 Integrated services
- #16 Interagency collaboration
- #17 Joint working
- #18 Service integration
- #19 Targeting
- #20 Universal services (ft)
- #21 Targeted services (ft)

- #22 Extended school\$ (ft)
- #23 Extended service\$ (ft)
- #24 Wider offer (ft)
- #25 Partnership working (ft)
- #26 Integrated working (ft)
- #27 Multiagency working or Multi agency working (ft)
- #28 School organisation (ft)
- #29 Integrated service delivery (ft)
- #30 Integrated youth support service\$ (ft)
- #31 Behaviour and attendance partnership\$ (ft)
- #32 CAF or Common assessment framework (ft)
- #33 #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31 or #32

### At risk groups set

- #34 Behaviour management
- #35 Alienation
- #36 At risk
- #37 Attendance
- #38 Disengagement
- #39 Dropping out
- #40 Exclusion
- #41 High risk
- #42 Nonattendance
- #43 NEET or 'Not in education, employment or training' (ft)
- #44 Behaviour problems (ft)
- #45 Antisocial behaviour or Anti social behaviour (ft)
- #46 Disruptive behaviour (ft)
- #47 Pupil behaviour (ft)
- #48 Student behaviour (ft)
- #49 #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48
  
- #50 #11 and #33 and #49

### Transitions set

- #51 Transfer
- #52 Continuity
- #53 Progression
- #54 School leavers
- #55 School to work transition
- #56 Transition
- #57 Transition programmes
- #58 School readiness
- #59 Transfer pupil\$ (ft)
- #60 Transfer student\$ (ft)
- #61 Starting school (ft)
- #62 School entr\$ (ft)
- #63 Home to school (ft)

- #64 Preschool to primary (ft)
- #65 Key stage 3 dip or Key stage three dip (ft)
- #66 Year 8 dip or Year eight dip (ft)
- #67 Transition education (ft)
- #68 Primary secondary transition (ft)
- #69 Primary secondary transfer (ft)
- #70 Transition between key stage\$ (ft)
- #71 School to further education transition (ft)
- #72 School to higher education transition (ft)
- #73 Trajectory\$ (ft)
- #74 (Further education or Higher education) and Transition (ft)
- #75 #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70 or #71 or #72 or #73 or #74
- #76 #11 and #49 and #75

**Strategies set**

- #77 Leaders
- #78 Leadership
- #79 Access to information
- #80 Advice
- #81 Early intervention programmes
- #82 Educational guidance
- #83 Guidance
- #84 Individualization
- #85 Individualized
- #86 Individualized education programmes
- #87 Learning support
- #88 Personal development
- #89 Personalization
- #90 Tutors
- #91 Vocational counselling
- #92 (Staff or Paraprofessionals or Teachers) and Training
- #93 Personal skills (ft)
- #94 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #95 14-19 or Fourteen to nineteen (ft)
- #96 IAG or 'Information, advice and guidance' (ft)
- #97 Connexions (ft)
- #98 #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83 or #84 or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95 or #96 or #97
- #99 #49 and #75 and #98

## **Australian Education Index (AEI)**

(searched via Dialog Datastar 01/07/09)

AEI is Australia's largest source of education information covering reports, books, journal articles, online resources, conference papers and book chapters.

### **Educational achievement set**

- #1 Academic achievement
- #2 Educational achievement (ft)
- #3 Low achievement
- #4 Improving achievement (ft)
- #5 Improving performance (ft)
- #6 Underachievement
- #7 Academic failure
- #8 Outcomes (ft)
- #9 Narrowing the gap (ft)
- #10 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9

### **At risk groups set**

- #11 At risk persons
- #12 Children at risk (ft)
- #13 Attendance
- #14 Expulsion
- #15 Exclusion (ft)
- #16 Disengagement (ft)
- #17 Disaffection (ft)
- #18 Student alienation
- #19 Dropouts
- #20 NEET or 'Not in education, employment or training' (ft)
- #21 'Danger of becoming NEET' (ft)
- #22 Behaviour problems
- #23 Antisocial behaviour
- #24 Disruptive behaviour (ft)
- #25 Behaviour management
- #26 Student behaviour
- #27 Pupil behaviour (ft)
- #28 #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27

### **Transitions set**

- #29 School entrance age
- #30 Learning readiness
- #31 School readiness
- #32 Preschool primary transition
- #33 Home to school transition (ft)
- #34 Starting school (ft)
- #35 Primary secondary transition
- #36 Primary secondary transfer (ft)

- #37 Continuity (ft)
- #38 Developmental continuity
- #39 Progression (ft)
- #40 Transition education
- #41 Secondary postsecondary transition
- #42 School to work transition
- #43 Transition (ft)
- #44 School leavers
- #45 Transfer students
- #46 Transfer pupil\$ (ft)
- #47 Transition between key stages (ft)
- #48 Key stage three dip or Key stage 3 dip (ft)
- #49 Year eight dip or Year 8 dip (ft)
- #50 Transition (ft) and TAFE
- #51 Transition (ft) and Higher education
- #52 Trajector\$ (ft)
- #53 #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52
- #54 #10 and #28 and #53

### Strategies set

- #55 Personalisation or Personalization (ft)
- #56 Individualised teaching
- #57 Personalised learning (ft)
- #58 Learning support (ft)
- #59 Individual development
- #60 Personal skills (ft)
- #61 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #62 Early intervention
- #63 14-19 or Fourteen to nineteen (ft)
- #64 Post 16 or Post sixteen (ft)
- #65 Access to information
- #66 Guidance
- #67 Educational counselling
- #68 Career guidance
- #69 IAG or 'Information, advice and guidance' (ft)
- #70 Tutors
- #71 Connexions (ft)
- #72 Leaders
- #73 Leadership
- #74 Leadership training
- #75 (Support staff (ft) or Resource staff or Teachers or Academic staff) and Training
- #76 #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70 or #71 or #72 or #73 or #74 or #75
- #77 #28 and #53 and #76

## British Education Index (BEI)

(searched via Dialog Datastar 01/07/09)

BEI provides information on research, policy and practice in education and training in the UK. Sources include over 300 journals, mostly published in the UK, plus other material including reports, series and conference papers.

### Educational achievement set

- #1 Academic achievement
- #2 Educational achievement (ft)
- #3 Low achievement
- #4 Improving achievement (ft)
- #5 Improving performance (ft)
- #6 Underachievement
- #7 Academic failure
- #8 Outcomes (ft)
- #9 Narrowing the gap (ft)
- #10 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9

### Integrated services set

- #11 Universal service\$ (ft)
- #12 Targeted service\$ (ft)
- #13 Extended school\$ (ft)
- #14 Extended service\$ (ft)
- #15 Wider offer (ft)
- #16 Integrated working (ft)
- #17 Multi agency working or Multiagency working (ft)
- #18 Inter agency working or Interagency working (ft)
- #19 Partnership working (ft)
- #20 Collective accountability (ft)
- #21 Consortia
- #22 School federations
- #23 School organisation
- #24 Integrated service delivery (ft)
- #25 Integrated youth support service\$ (ft)
- #26 Behaviour and attendance partnership\$ (ft)
- #27 CAF or Common assessment framework (ft)
- #28 #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27

### At risk groups set

- #29 Children at risk
- #30 High risk persons
- #31 Attendance
- #32 Expulsion
- #33 Exclusion
- #34 Disengagement (ft)
- #35 Pupil alienation

- #36 Disaffection (ft)
- #37 Dropouts
- #38 NEET or 'not in education, employment or training' (ft)
- #39 'Danger of becoming NEET' (ft)
- #40 Behaviour problems
- #41 Antisocial behaviour
- #42 Behaviour management (ft)
- #43 Pupil behaviour
- #44 Student behaviour
- #45 #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44
- #46 #10 and #28 and #45

**Transitions set**

- #47 Developmental continuity
- #48 Continuity
- #49 Progression
- #50 Transition
- #51 School leavers
- #52 Transition education
- #53 School to work transition
- #54 Transfer pupils
- #55 Transfer students
- #56 Transition between key stages (ft)
- #57 Between year transition (ft)
- #58 Primary secondary transition
- #59 Primary secondary transfer (ft)
- #60 Key stage 3 dip or Key stage three dip (ft)
- #61 Year 8 dip or Year eight dip (ft)
- #62 School to further education transition (ft)
- #63 School to higher education transition (ft)
- #64 Trajectory\$ (ft)
- #65 School entrance age
- #66 Learning readiness
- #67 School readiness
- #68 Home to school transition (ft)
- #69 Preschool to primary transition (ft)
- #70 Starting school (ft)
- #71 #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70
- #72 #10 and #45 and #71

### Strategies set

- #73 Personalisation (ft)
- #74 Personalised learning (ft)
- #75 Learning support (ft)
- #76 Individual development
- #77 Personal development (ft)
- #78 Personal skills (ft)
- #79 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #80 Early intervention (ft)
- #81 14-19 or Fourteen to nineteen (ft)
- #82 14-19 strategy or Fourteen to nineteen strategy (ft)
- #83 14-19 entitlement or Fourteen to nineteen entitlement (ft)
- #84 Post 16 or Post sixteen (ft)
- #85 Access to information
- #86 Guidance
- #87 Educational guidance
- #88 Vocational guidance
- #89 IAG or 'Information, advice and guidance' (ft)
- #90 Tutors
- #91 Connexions service\$ (ft)
- #92 Leaders
- #93 Leadership
- #94 Leadership training
- #95 (Teachers or Academic staff or Support staff) and Training
- #96 #73 or #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83 or #84  
or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95
- #97 #45 and #71 and #96

### British Education Index Free Collections

(searched 08/07/09)

The free collections search interface of the British Education Index (BEI) (formerly the British Education Internet Resource Catalogue) includes access to a range of freely available internet resources as well as records for the most recently indexed journal articles not yet included in the full BEI subscription database.

### Educational achievement set

- #1 Academic achievement
- #2 Academic failure
- #3 Low achievement
- #4 Performance
- #5 Underachievement
- #6 Educational achievement (ft)
- #7 Outcomes (ft)
- #8 Narrowing the gap (ft)
- #9 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8

**Integrated services set**

- #10 Consortia
- #11 School federations
- #12 School organisation
- #13 Extended services (ft)
- #14 Extended schools (ft)
- #15 Targeted services (ft)
- #16 Universal services (ft)
- #17 Wider offer (ft)
- #18 Multiagency working or Multi agency working (ft)
- #19 Integrated working (ft)
- #20 Partnership working (ft)
- #21 Collective accountability (ft)
- #22 Integrated youth support services (ft)
- #23 Integrated service delivery (ft)
- #24 Behaviour and attendance partnerships (ft)
- #25 CAF or Common assessment framework (ft)
- #26 #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25

**At risk groups set**

- #27 Antisocial behaviour
- #28 Attendance
- #29 Behaviour problems
- #30 Dropouts
- #31 Exclusion
- #32 Expulsion
- #33 High risk persons
- #34 Pupil alienation
- #35 Pupil behaviour
- #36 Student alienation
- #37 Student behaviour
- #38 Behaviour management (ft)
- #39 NEET or 'Not in education, employment or training' (ft)
- #40 'Danger of becoming NEET' (ft)
- #41 Disaffection (ft)
- #42 Disengagement (ft)
- #43 Children at risk (ft)
- #44 #27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43
  
- #45 #9 and #26 and #44

### Transitions set

- #46 School entrance age
- #47 Learning readiness
- #48 School readiness
- #49 Starting school (ft)
- #50 Home to preschool (ft)
- #51 Infant to primary (ft)
- #52 Preschool to primary (ft)
- #53 Home to school transition (ft)
- #54 Developmental continuity
- #55 School leavers
- #56 School to work transition
- #57 Transfer pupils
- #58 Transfer students
- #59 Transition education
- #60 Transition (ft)
- #61 Continuity (ft)
- #62 Progression (ft)
- #63 Transition between key stages (ft)
- #64 Primary secondary transfer (ft)
- #65 Primary secondary transition (ft)
- #66 Key stage three dip or Key stage 3 dip (ft)
- #67 Year eight dip or Year 8 dip (ft)
- #68 School to further education transition (ft)
- #69 School to higher education transition (ft)
- #70 #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57  
or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or  
#69
- #71 #9 and #44 and #70

### Strategies set

- #72 Personalisation (ft)
- #73 Personalised learning (ft)
- #74 Learning support (ft)
- #75 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #76 Personal development (ft)
- #77 Personal skills (ft)
- #78 Individual development
- #79 Early intervention (ft)
- #80 Guidance
- #81 Educational guidance
- #82 Vocational guidance
- #83 IAG or 'Information, advice and guidance' (ft)
- #84 Access to Information
- #85 Post 16 or Post sixteen (ft)
- #86 14-19 or Fourteen to nineteen (ft)
- #87 Sixteen to nineteen education
- #88 Tutors
- #89 Connexions (ft)

## Ensuring that all children and young people make successful transitions

- #90 Leaders
- #91 Leadership
- #92 Leadership training
- #93 (Academic staff or Support staff or Teachers) and Training
- #94 #72 or #73 or #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83  
or #84 or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93
- #95 #44 and #70 and #94

## **CERUKplus**

(searched 07/07/09)

The CERUKplus database provides access to information about current and recently completed research, PhD level work and practitioner research in the field of education and children's services.

### **Educational achievement set**

- #1 Academic achievement
- #2 Low attainment
- #3 Underachievement
- #4 Outcomes
- #5 Narrowing the gap
- #6 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5

### **Transitions set**

- #7 Curriculum continuity
- #8 Transition
- #9 Transition between key stages
- #10 Transition between school years
- #11 Transition between schools
- #12 Transfer pupils
- #13 School leavers
- #14 School to further education transition
- #15 School to higher education transition
- #16 School to vocational training transition
- #17 School to work transition
- #18 Primary secondary transfer
- #19 #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18
- #20 #6 and #19

### **Integrated services set**

- #21 Extended schools
- #22 Extended services
- #23 Multi agency working
- #24 School organisation
- #25 Services integration
- #26 Common assessment framework
- #27 Inter agency collaboration
- #28 Interagency collaboration
- #29 #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28
  
- #30 #19 and #29

**Strategies set**

- #31 Personalised learning
- #32 Personal development
- #33 Learning support
- #34 Youth support
- #35 Early intervention schemes
- #36 Fourteen to nineteen education and training
- #37 Post sixteen
- #38 IAG
- #39 Guidance
- #40 Educational guidance
- #41 Careers education and guidance
- #42 Pupil support
- #43 Student support
- #44 Connexions
- #45 Leadership
- #46 School leadership
- #47 Leadership training
- #48 Teachers AND Training
- #49 Support staff AND Training
- #50 #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42  
or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49
- #51 #19 and #50

**At risk groups set**

- #52 Children at risk
- #53 Vulnerable children
- #54 Attendance
- #55 Exclusions
- #56 Permanent exclusion
- #57 Disengagement
- #58 Disaffection
- #59 Dropouts
- #60 NEET
- #61 Disruptive pupils
- #62 Behaviour problems
- #63 Behaviour management
- #64 Pupil behaviour
- #65 Student behaviour
- #66 #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63  
or #64 or #65
- #67 #19 and #66

## ChildData

(searched 20/07/09)

ChildData is the National Children's Bureau database, containing details of around 80,000 books, reports and journal articles about children and young people.

### Educational achievement set

- #1 Educational achievement (ft)
- #2 Academic achievement
- #3 Low achievement (ft)
- #4 Improving achievement (ft)
- #5 Improving performance (ft)
- #6 Underachievement (ft)
- #7 Academic failure (ft)
- #8 Outcomes
- #9 Narrowing the gap (ft)
- #10 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9

### Integrated services set

- #11 Universal services (ft)
- #12 Targeted services (ft)
- #13 Extended schools
- #14 Extended services (ft)
- #15 Schools delivering a wider offer (ft)
- #16 Integrated working (ft)
- #17 Multi agency working (ft)
- #18 Partnership working (ft)
- #19 Collective accountability (ft)
- #20 Consortia (ft)
- #21 School federations (ft)
- #22 School clusters (ft)
- #23 School organization (ft)
- #24 Integrated service delivery (ft)
- #25 Integrated youth support services (ft)
- #26 'Behaviour and attendance partnerships' (ft)
- #27 Common assessment framework
- #28 CAF (ft)
- #29 Multiagency
- #30 Partnership
- #31 #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30

**At risk groups set**

- #32 Children at risk
- #33 High risk persons (ft)
- #34 At risk persons (ft)
- #35 Attendance (ft)
- #36 Children in care
- #37 Truancy
- #38 Expulsion (ft)
- #39 Exclusion (ft)
- #40 Exclusions
- #41 Disengagement (ft)
- #42 Disaffection
- #43 Dropouts (ft)
- #44 NEET (ft)
- #45 'Not in education, employment or training' (ft)
- #46 Danger of becoming NEET (ft)
- #47 Behaviour problems
- #48 Antisocial behaviour (ft)
- #49 Anti-social behaviour
- #50 Disruptive behaviour (ft)
- #51 Behaviour management (ft)
- #52 Pupil behaviour (ft)
- #53 Student behaviour (ft)
- #54 #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53
- #55 #10 and #31 and #54

**Transitions set**

- #56 Continuity (ft)
- #57 Developmental continuity (ft)
- #58 Progression (ft)
- #59 Transition
- #60 School leavers
- #61 School to work transition (ft)
- #62 Transition education (ft)
- #63 Transfer pupils (ft)
- #64 Transfer students (ft)
- #65 Transition between key stages (ft)
- #66 Primary secondary transition (ft)
- #67 Primary secondary transfer (ft)
- #68 Key stage 3 dip (ft)
- #69 Year 8 dip (ft)
- #70 School to further education transition (ft)
- #71 School to higher education transition (ft)
- #72 Trajectory\$ (ft)
- #73 Leaving care
- #74 #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70 or #71 or #72 or #73
- #75 #10 and #54 and #74

### Strategies set

- #76 Personalisation (ft)
- #77 Personalised learning (ft)
- #78 Learning support (ft)
- #79 Personal skills (ft)
- #80 Personal development (ft)
- #81 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #82 Early intervention
- #83 14-19
- #84 14-19 strategy (ft)
- #85 '14-19 and entitlement' (ft)
- #86 Post 16 (ft)
- #87 Access to information (ft)
- #88 Guidance (ft)
- #89 Educational guidance (ft)
- #90 Vocational guidance (ft)
- #91 'Information advice and guidance' (ft)
- #92 IAG (ft)
- #93 Tutors (ft)
- #94 Connexions service\$ (ft)
- #95 Leaders (ft)
- #96 Leadership (ft)
- #97 Leadership training (ft)
- #98 (Teachers or Academic staff (ft) or Support staff (ft) or Learning support assistants or Teaching assistants) and Training
- #99 #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83 or #84 or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95 or #96 or #97 or #98
- #100 #54 and #74 and #99

### Educational Evidence Portal (EEP)

(searched 26/06/09)

EEP provides access to educational evidence from a range of reputable UK sources using a single search.

- #1 Transition (ft) or Transitions (ft)

## Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)

(searched via Dialog Datastar 03/07/09)

ERIC is sponsored by the United States Department of Education and is the largest education database in the world. Coverage includes research documents, journal articles, technical reports, program descriptions and evaluations and curricula material.

### Educational achievement set

- #1 Academic achievement
- #2 Low achievement
- #3 Educational achievement (ft)
- #4 Improving achievement (ft)
- #5 Improving performance (ft)
- #6 Underachievement
- #7 Academic failure
- #8 Outcomes (ft)
- #9 'Narrowing the gap' (ft)
- #10 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9

### Transitions set

- #11 Developmental continuity
- #12 Continuity (ft)
- #13 Progression (ft)
- #14 Transition (ft)
- #15 School entrance age
- #16 Learning readiness
- #17 School readiness
- #18 Student promotion
- #19 Articulation education
- #20 Home to school transition (ft)
- #21 Starting school (ft)
- #22 Education work relationship
- #23 Transitional programs
- #24 School leavers (ft)
- #25 Transfer students
- #26 Further education and Transition (ft)
- #27 Higher education and Transition (ft)
- #28 Post-secondary education and Transition (ft)
- #29 Elementary secondary transition (ft)
- #30 Elementary secondary transfer (ft)
- #31 Primary secondary transition (ft)
- #32 Primary secondary transfer (ft)
- #33 Transfer between grades (ft)
- #34 Trajectory\$ (ft)
- #35 #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34

**At risk groups set**

- #36 At risk persons
- #37 Children at risk (ft)
- #38 Attendance
- #39 Expulsion
- #40 Exclusion (ft)
- #41 Disengagement (ft)
- #42 Disaffection (ft)
- #43 Alienation
- #44 Dropouts
- #45 NEET or 'Not in education, employment or training' (ft)
- #46 Behavior problems
- #47 Antisocial behavior
- #48 Student behavior
- #49 Behavior management (ft)
- #50 #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49
- #51 #10 and #35 and #50

**Strategies set**

- #52 Individualized instruction
- #53 Personalization (ft)
- #54 Personalized learning (ft)
- #55 Learning support (ft)
- #56 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #57 Early intervention
- #58 14-19 or Fourteen to nineteen (ft)
- #59 Access to information
- #60 Guidance
- #61 Career guidance
- #62 School guidance
- #63 Educational counseling
- #64 IAG or 'Information, advice and guidance' (ft)
- #65 Tutors
- #66 Connexions (ft)
- #67 Leaders
- #68 Leadership
- #69 Leadership training
- #70 (Teachers or Paraprofessional school personnel) and Training
- #71 #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70
- #72 #35 and #50 and #71

## PsycINFO

(searched via Ovid SP 22/06/09)

PsycINFO contains references to the psychological literature including articles from over 1,300 journals in psychology and related fields, chapters and books, dissertations and technical reports.

### Educational achievement set

- #1 Academic achievement
- #2 Academic underachievement
- #3 Academic failure
- #4 Low achievement (ft)
- #5 Improving achievement (ft)
- #6 Outcomes (ft)
- #7 Narrowing the gap (ft)
- #8 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7

### Integrated services set

- #9 Integrated services
- #10 Needs assessment
- #11 Universal services (ft)
- #12 Targeted services (ft)
- #13 Extended schools (ft)
- #14 Extended services (ft)
- #15 Wider offer (ft)
- #16 Integrated working (ft)
- #17 Multi agency working or Multiagency working (ft)
- #18 Partnership working (ft)
- #19 Collective accountability (ft)
- #20 Consortia (ft)
- #21 School federations (ft)
- #22 School clusters (ft)
- #23 School organization (ft)
- #24 Integrated service delivery (ft)
- #25 Integrated youth support services (ft)
- #26 Attendance partnerships (ft)
- #27 Common assessment framework (ft)
- #28 #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27

### At risk groups set

- #29 At risk populations
- #30 School attendance
- #31 Behavior problems
- #32 School expulsion
- #33 School suspension
- #34 Dropouts
- #35 School dropouts
- #36 Potential dropouts

- #37 Antisocial behavior
- #38 Alienation
- #39 Disengagement (ft)
- #40 Disaffection (ft)
- #41 NEET (ft)
- #42 Behavior management (ft)
- #43 Student behavior (ft)
- #44 #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43
- #45 #8 and #28 and #44

#### Transitions set

- #46 School transition
- #47 School adjustment
- #48 School readiness
- #49 Transfer students
- #50 School leavers
- #51 School to work transition
- #52 Primary secondary transition (ft)
- #53 Primary secondary transfer (ft)
- #54 Continuity (ft)
- #55 Progression (ft)
- #56 Trajectory (ft)
- #57 #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56
- #58 #8 and #44 and #57

#### Strategies set

- #59 Personalization
- #60 Early intervention
- #61 School based intervention
- #62 Educational counseling
- #63 Occupational guidance
- #64 Career education
- #65 Leadership
- #66 Teachers
- #67 Learning support (ft)
- #68 Personal skills (ft)
- #69 Personal development (ft)
- #70 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #71 Fourteen to nineteen (ft)
- #72 Post sixteen (ft)
- #73 Access to information (ft)
- #74 Guidance (ft)
- #75 Tutors (ft)
- #76 Connexions (ft)
- #77 Leaders (ft)
- #78 Leadership training (ft)
- #79 #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70 or #71 or #72 or #73 or #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78
- #80 #44 and #57 and #79

## **Research Register for Social Care (RRSC)**

(searched 29/06/09)

The RRSC provides access to information about ongoing and completed social care research that has been subject to independent ethical and scientific review. Student research was excluded.

- #1 Transitional services or Transition (ft) or Transitions (ft)

## **Social Care Online**

(searched 09/07/09)

Social Care Online is the Social Care Institute for Excellence's database covering an extensive range of information and research on all aspects of social care. Content is drawn from a range of sources including journal articles, websites, research reviews, legislation and government documents and service user knowledge.

### **Educational achievement set**

- #1 Educational performance
- #2 Outcomes
- #3 Low achievement (ft)
- #4 Underachievement (ft)
- #5 Narrowing the gap (ft)
- #6 Academic failure (ft)
- #7 Improving achievement (ft)
- #8 Improving performance (ft)
- #9 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8

### **Integrated services set**

- #10 Integrated services
- #11 Interagency cooperation
- #12 Joint working
- #13 Youth work
- #14 #10 or #11 or #12 or #13

### **At risk groups set**

- #15 Anti-social behaviour
- #16 Behaviour problems
- #17 School attendance
- #18 School exclusion
- #19 Vulnerable children
- #20 At risk (ft)
- #21 Children at risk (ft)
- #22 At risk persons (ft)
- #23 High risk persons (ft)
- #24 Expulsion (ft)
- #25 Disengagement (ft)

- #26 Disaffection (ft)
- #27 Dropouts (ft)
- #28 NEET (ft) or 'Not in employment, education or training' (ft)
- #29 Alienation (ft)
- #30 Behaviour management (ft)
- #31 #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26  
or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30
- #32 #9 and #14 and #31

### Transitions set

- #33 Leaving care
- #34 Transitional services
- #35 School leavers (ft)
- #36 Transition education (ft)
- #37 Primary secondary transfer (ft)
- #38 Primary secondary transition (ft)
- #39 School to work transition (ft)
- #40 Transition between key stages (ft)
- #41 School to further education transition (ft)
- #42 School to higher education transition (ft)
- #43 School readiness (ft)
- #44 Learning readiness (ft)
- #45 Starting school (ft)
- #46 School starting age (ft)
- #47 School entry (ft)
- #48 Preschool to primary transition (ft)
- #49 Home to school transition (ft)
- #50 #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44  
or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49
- #51 #9 and #31 and #50

### Strategies set

- #52 Personalisation
- #53 Early intervention
- #54 Access to information
- #55 Access to services
- #56 Information services
- #57 Advice services
- #58 Child guidance
- #59 Staff and Training
- #60 Leadership
- #61 Personalised learning (ft)
- #62 Learning support (ft)
- #63 Personal skills (ft)
- #64 Personal development (ft)
- #65 Targeted youth support (ft)
- #66 Fourteen to nineteen (ft) or 14-19 (ft)
- #67 Post sixteen (ft) or Post 16 (ft)
- #68 Guidance (ft) or 'Information, advice and guidance' (ft) or IAG (ft)

- #69 Tutors (ft)
- #70 Connexions (ft)
- #71 #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70
- #72 #31 and #50 and #71

## **Social Policy and Practice**

(searched via Ovid SP 30/6/09)

Social Policy and Practice is a bibliographic database with abstracts covering evidence-based social policy, public health, social services, and mental and community health. Content is from the UK with some material from the USA and Europe. Searches were carried out across the descriptors, heading word, title and abstract fields, to enable retrieval of terms both as keywords and free text.

## **Educational achievement set**

- #1 Educational achievement
- #2 Academic achievement
- #3 Low achievement
- #4 Improving achievement
- #5 Improving performance
- #6 Underachievement
- #7 Academic failure
- #8 Outcomes
- #9 Narrowing the gap
- #10 #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9

## **Integrated services set**

- #11 Universal services
- #12 Targeted services
- #13 Extended services
- #14 Extended schools
- #15 Wider offer
- #16 Integrated working
- #17 Multiagency working
- #18 Multi agency working
- #19 Partnership working
- #20 Collective accountability
- #21 Consortia
- #22 School federations
- #23 School clusters
- #24 Integrated service delivery
- #25 Integrated youth support services
- #26 Behaviour and attendance partnerships or Behavior and attendance partnerships
- #27 CAF or Common assessment framework
- #28 #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27

**At risk groups set**

- #29 Children at risk
- #30 At risk persons
- #31 High risk groups
- #32 Attendance
- #33 Expulsion
- #34 School exclusion
- #35 Exclusion from school
- #36 Disengagement
- #37 Alienation
- #38 Disaffection
- #39 Dropouts
- #40 NEET
- #41 Behaviour problems or Behavior problems
- #42 Behaviour management or Behavior management
- #43 Antisocial behaviour or Antisocial behavior or Anti-social behaviour or Anti-social behavior
- #44 Disruptive behaviour or Disruptive behavior
- #45 Pupil behaviour or Pupil behavior
- #46 Student behaviour or Student behavior
- #47 Pupil engagement
- #48 Student engagement
- #49 #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48
- #50 #10 and #28 and #49

**Transitions set**

- #51 Continuity
- #52 Developmental continuity
- #53 Progression
- #54 Transition
- #55 School leavers
- #56 School to work transition
- #57 Transition education
- #58 Transfer pupils
- #59 Transfer students
- #60 Home to school transition
- #61 Preschool to primary transition
- #62 Primary secondary transfer
- #63 Primary secondary transition
- #64 Transition between key stages
- #65 Transition between school years
- #66 Transition between school grades
- #67 Key stage three dip or Key stage 3 dip
- #68 Year eight dip or Year 8 dip
- #69 School to further education
- #70 School to higher education
- #71 Trajectory

- #72 #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70 or #71
- #73 #10 and #49 and #72

**Strategies set**

- #74 Personalisation or Personalization
- #75 Personalised learning or Personalized learning
- #76 Learning support
- #77 Personal skills
- #78 Personal development
- #79 Targeted youth support
- #80 Early intervention
- #81 14 to 19 or Fourteen to nineteen
- #82 Post 16 or Post sixteen
- #83 Access to information
- #84 Guidance
- #85 Educational guidance
- #86 Vocational guidance
- #87 IAG or 'Information, advice and guidance'
- #88 Tutors
- #89 Connexions
- #90 Leaders
- #91 Leadership
- #92 Leadership training
- #93 Teachers and Training
- #94 Academic staff and Training
- #95 Support staff and Training
- #96 #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83 or #84 or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95
- #97 #49 and #72 and #96

## Organisations

A list of key organisations was recommended by the Theme Advisory Group and then supplemented with others considered relevant by the NFER team. The following websites were browsed for additional sources not already found in the database searches. This entailed browsing through the publications and/or research and policy sections.

| Organisation  | URL  | Records selected |
|---|--|------------------|
| Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO)           | <a href="http://www.c4eo.org.uk">www.c4eo.org.uk</a>   | 3                |
| Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)     | <a href="http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk">www.cwdcouncil.org.uk</a>   | 2                |
| DCSF 14-19 Reform                                   | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/">www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/</a>   | 3                |
| Every Child Matters (Connexions)                    | <a href="http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/connexions">www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/connexions</a>           | 1                |
| Institute of Education                              | <a href="http://www.ioe.ac.uk">www.ioe.ac.uk</a>   | 0                |
| • Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning         | <a href="http://www.learningbenefits.net/">www.learningbenefits.net/</a>   | 1                |
| • Thomas Coram Research Unit                        | <a href="http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/174.html">www.ioe.ac.uk/research/174.html</a>   | 0                |
| • Eppi-Centre                                       | <a href="http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms">http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms</a>  | 0                |
| • EPPSE   | <a href="http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/index.htm">http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/index.htm</a>  | 0                |
| • Post-14 Innovation and research                   | <a href="http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/165.html">www.ioe.ac.uk/research/165.html</a>   | 0                |
| Learning and Skills Council (LSC)                   | <a href="http://www.lsc.gov.uk">www.lsc.gov.uk</a>   | 2                |
| Local Government Association (LGA)                  | <a href="http://www.lga.gov.uk">www.lga.gov.uk</a>   | 1                |
| National College for School Leadership (NSCL)       | <a href="http://www.ncsl.org.uk">www.ncsl.org.uk</a>   | 1                |
| National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) | <a href="http://www.nfer.ac.uk">www.nfer.ac.uk</a>   | 10               |
| Research in Practice (Website and Evidence Bank)    | <a href="http://www.rip.org.uk">www.rip.org.uk</a>   | 5                |
| Social Exclusion Task Force (Cabinet Office)        | <a href="http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force.aspx">www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force.aspx</a> | 5                |
| Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)   | <a href="http://www.tda.gov.uk">www.tda.gov.uk</a>   | 2                |

*Note that of the 36 items initially identified in the web searches, all were identified by the review team as relevant to this study.*

## Appendix 3: Parameters document

*(Copy of parameters document agreed by National Foundation for Educational Research and C4EO Theme Advisory Group for the scoping study.)*

### 1. C4EO Theme: Schools and Communities

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#### 2. Priority 2:

*All children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages and services, 0-19 yrs (25 for care leavers).*

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#### 3. Context for this priority

This priority reflects key concerns and areas for improvement set out in *21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools* for ensuring that all children – particularly those from vulnerable groups who are in danger of not engaging effectively in learning, falling out of education or being excluded - not only remain in education, but also become motivated, engaged learners learning and participate in school life.

This priority has been launched in the context of the Government's policy to raise the school-leaving age to 17 in the first instance, and the local improvement and support strategies that need to be in place to ensure the continuing engagement and participation in education of all children, especially those from vulnerable groups.

The C4EO Children and Young People's panel is keen on finding better ways of helping young people who struggle academically or behaviourally to continue to engage and receive appropriate interventions and support.

The **key ECM outcomes for this priority** are:

- Enjoy and achieve, economic well being, active participation and staying safe.

**4. Main review questions <sup>4</sup>to be addressed in this scoping study (no more than five; preferably fewer)**

[The data scope will provide a numerical profile of the numbers, characteristics and educational outcomes of different groups of children and young people disengaged from, and not fully engaged in, learning over Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, relative to the mainstream school population]

- 1. What are the issues, needs and challenges that children not fully engaged in learning present to schools and other services?**
- 2. What does the evidence tell us about what works best in ensuring that all children make sustained progress and remain engaged through all transitions into, through and from secondary education?**

This question will explore, *inter alia*, what works in dealing with issues arising from children's initial transition into secondary school and the problems associated with the so-called 'KS3 dip' in motivation and achievement. KS3 and KS4 are also important periods in which children choose whether and where to stay on in education and training, and prepare for the world of work. The review will also review what works in encouraging participation in FHE after age 16, 17 or 18, particularly by vulnerable groups. A key focus should be on strategies and conditions for maximising learning and re-engaging children and young people in learning during transition.

- 3. Which strategies and processes work best for those not fully engaged in learning to ensure their effective take-up of, and transition between, services that support the work of teachers and schools?**

By their nature and the range of problems that they present, those disengaged, or at risk of disengagement, from school and learning are generally those who a) need and receive targeted provision (e.g. such as special learning support) and b) have most contact with services outside of education such as the welfare, care and health services and the police. This question seeks to find out what works in smoothing their transitions as they move between key stage and these services.

- 4. What are the implications for local systems change in terms of improving governance, strategy, processes and front-line delivery, and in preparing for the raising of the participation age?**
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<sup>4</sup> See guidance note on setting review questions at the end of this parameters document? Can't find any guidance note – delete if not included.

**5. Which cross-cutting issues should be included?**

Child poverty  
Equality and diversity  
Integrated service delivery.

**Links to C4EO themes and ECM outcomes:**

Child Poverty theme – developing effective area-wide strategies to reduce poverty.

Youth theme: developing the impact of Targeted Youth Support, increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities.

Achieve and Enjoy, Economic Well Being and part of Staying Safe ECM outcomes.

Early Years Theme priorities on Narrowing the Gap and Family Support in particular.

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**6. Definitions for any terms used in the review questions**

Disengaged and not fully engaged groups include NEETs, excluded, poor or non-attenders, those with behavioural difficulties, those not able to participate fully because of family or other circumstances such as poverty, mobility or ill-health and those who need additional learning support for whatever reason.

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**7. What will be the likely geographical scope of the searches?**

UK for Questions 1 and 4  
UK, plus Europe and especially USA and other English speaking countries for Questions 2 and 3

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**8. Age range for children and young people:**

The focus will be on the current Year 7, who will be the first to be affected by raising the participation age to 17.

0- 19, and 25 for care leavers

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**9. Literature search dates**

Start year

## **10. Suggestions for key words to be used for searching the literature.**

### ***Key words and phrases:***

- universal services; schools delivering a wider offer; targeted services
- personalisation and personalised learning; learning support; development of wider personal skills; learner engagement;
- continuity and progression; transition; individual trajectories; raising the participation age;
- early intervention;
- at risk groups; attendance; pupils in danger of exclusion; behaviour management; behaviour and attendance partnerships; CAFs;
- schools and college consortia; cluster working; school organisation; integrated service delivery;
- integrated youth support services; targeted youth support;
- KS2-KS3 transition; the key stage 3 dip in achievement and engagement;
- 14–19 strategy and entitlement; post 16 transition; information, advice and
- guidance; personal tutor; Connexions services;
- leadership and workforce development.

Please see full proposed list of key words in Parameters Document Appendix

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## **11. Suggestions for websites, databases, networks and experts to be searched or included as key sources.**

DCSF, DIUS; NCSL, CWDC; TDA; RiP; MRC; IoE; LGA, SETF; NFER websites and publication databases

ASSIA, CERUK Plus and Research Register for Social Care

Also worth looking at Connexions and LSC – funded research and research relating to Information, advice and guidance (IAG) for young people in transition

EPPSE longitudinal programme of research at IoE for early results on KS2/3 transition

Long experience at NFER of working in the transition area – particularly in the later years of schooling – suggests that there is a good, but not fully exploited, evidence base on school transitions overall, and strong evidence on IAG and the transition to FHE and adult and working life.

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## **12. Any key texts/books/seminal works that you wish to see included?**

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### 13. Anything else that should be included or taken into account?

Key policy documents that should help frame the context section in main review:

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *The Children's Plan one year on: a progress report*, London: DCSF (available at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/oneyearon/ae/uploads/documents/progress.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/oneyearon/ae/uploads/documents/progress.pdf), accessed 27 August 2009) has been published and identifies a range of areas which now need strengthening across the ECM outcomes.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *21<sup>st</sup> schools: a world-class education for every child*, London: DCSF (available at <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-01044-2008.pdf>, accessed 27 August 2009) sets out some ambitious goals for the future of schooling and indicates the ways of achieving these, with a particular focus on: raising standards, supporting children's progress, developing their wider personal skills and ensuring their healthy and enriched childhoods, meeting their additional needs through early intervention and ensuring effective parental engagement.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Children's Trusts: statutory guidance for inter-agency cooperation*, London: DCSF (available at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/localauthorities/documents/content/1711080004\\_7961-DCSF-Childrens%20Trusts%20Guidance.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/localauthorities/documents/content/1711080004_7961-DCSF-Childrens%20Trusts%20Guidance.pdf), accessed 27 August 2009) emphasises both the partnership role within Children's Services that schools now need to play and the more holistic approach to ensuring children's well-being that they now need to adopt more decidedly.

Steer, A. (2009) *Review of pupil behaviour: interim report 4*, London: DCSF (available at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/13324/alan%20steer's%20report%20060209.pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/13324/alan%20steer's%20report%20060209.pdf), accessed 27 August 2009) has just been published. This centres on a) the importance of early intervention by behaviour and attendance partnerships, b) the impact of pupil behaviour on learning and teaching and c) SEN and disability related behavioural issues.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce strategy*, London: DCSF (available at [http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CYP\\_Workforce-Strategy.pdf](http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CYP_Workforce-Strategy.pdf), accessed 27 August 2009). This strategy sets out how the Government will work with partners, and people in the workforce, to ensure that all the children and young people's workforce are: ambitious for every child and young person, excellent in their practice, committed to partnership and integrated working and respected and valued as professionals.

## **Parameters document Appendix: Key words and phrases for transitions priority**

### **SET x Educational achievement**

Educational achievement  
Academic achievement  
Low achievement  
Improving achievement  
Improving performance  
Underachievement  
Academic failure  
Outcomes  
Narrowing the gap

### **SET x Transitions**

Continuity  
Developmental continuity  
Progression  
Transition  
School leavers  
School to work transition  
Transition education  
Transfer pupils  
Transfer students  
Trajectories

### **SET x Participation**

Participation  
Participation in school life  
Participation in FHE  
Engagement (in learning)  
Disengagement (from learning)  
Raising of the school leaving age

### **SET x Integrated services**

Universal services  
Targeted services  
Extended schools  
Extended services  
Schools delivering a wider offer  
Integrated working  
Multi agency working  
Partnership working  
Collective accountability  
Consortia  
School federations (cf school clusters)  
School organisation  
Integrated service delivery  
Integrated youth support services

Behaviour and attendance partnerships  
CAF/common assessment framework

**SET x Personalised learning**

Personalisation  
Personalised learning  
Learning support  
Personal skills  
Personal development  
Targeted youth support

Early intervention

Children at risk  
High risk persons (at risk persons)

Attendance  
Expulsion/Exclusion (NB latter used by BEI in sense of non-disciplinary removal)  
Behaviour problems  
Antisocial behaviour (cf disruptive behaviour)  
Behaviour management  
Pupil behaviour  
Student behaviour  
Key stage 3 dip / Year 8 dip 14-19  
14-19 strategy  
14-19 and entitlement  
Access to information  
Guidance  
Educational guidance  
Vocational guidance  
Information, advice and guidance / IAG  
Tutors  
Personal tutors  
Connexions services

Leaders  
Leadership  
Leadership training  
(Teachers / Academic staff / Support staff) and Training  
Workforce development

## Appendix 4: Relevant national indicators and data sources

This appendix lists the national indicators and associated data sources relevant to this knowledge review.

| National indicator (NI)  | NI detail  | Data source (published information)  | Scale                                  | Frequency of data collection | First data collection                  | Latest data collection | Link to data source  |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| <b>Enjoy and achieve</b> |  |  |  |                              |  |                        |  |
| NI 72                    | Achievement of at least 78 points across the EYFS with at least six in each of the scales in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy | DCSF: Foundation stage profile   | National, regional and local authority | Annual                       | 2007                                   | 2009                   | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs/gateway/DB/SFR/s000879/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs/gateway/DB/SFR/s000879/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 75                    | Proportion of pupils achieving five or more A*–C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and mathematics   | DCSF: GCSE attainment by pupil characteristics, in England 2008/09 (Statistical First Release 34/2009) | National, regional and local authority | Annual                       | Trend data from 2006 onwards available | 2009                   | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs/gateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs/gateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml</a> |

|       |   |  |  |        |                                |      |   |
|-------|---|--|--|--------|--------------------------------|------|---|
| NI 79 | Achievement of a level 2 qualification by the age of 19 | DCSF: Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people in england measured using matched administrative data: attainment by age 19 in 2009 (Provisional) | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2004 available | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000917/index.shtml">http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000917/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 79 | Achievement of a level 2 qualification by the age of 19 | DCSF: Youth cohort study and longitudinal study of young people in england: the activities and experiences of 17-year-olds: England 2008         | National – England                     | Annual | 2004                           | 2008 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml</a>        |
| NI 80 | Achievement of a level 3 qualification by the age of 19 | DCSF: Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people in england measured using matched administrative data: attainment by age 19 in 2009 (Provisional) | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2004 available | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000917/index.shtml">http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000917/index.shtml</a> |

Ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress

|       |   |  |  |        |  |      |   |
|-------|---|--|--|--------|--|------|---|
| NI 87 | Secondary school persistent absence rate                    | DCSF: Pupil absence in schools including pupil characteristics, England: 2008/09 (Statistical First Release 06/2010)                     | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2005 onwards available | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml">http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 91 | Participation of 17-year-olds in education or training      | DCSF: Youth cohort study and longitudinal study of young people in England: the activities and experiences of 17-year-olds: England 2008 | National – England                     | Annual | 2004                                   | 2008 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml</a>        |
| NI 99 | Children in care reaching level 4 in English at key stage 2 | DCSF: Outcome indicators for children looked after, Twelve months to 30 September 2009 - England (Statistical First Release 08/2010)     | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2005 onwards available | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000930/index.shtml">http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000930/index.shtml</a> |

|        |  |  |  |        |  |      |   |
|--------|--|--|--|--------|--|------|---|
| NI 100 | Children in care reaching level 4 in mathematics at key stage 2  | DCSF: outcome indicators for children looked after, Twelve months to 30 September 2009 - England (Statistical First Release 08/2010) | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2005 onwards available | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000930/index.shtml">http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000930/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 101 | Children in care achieving five A*–C GCSEs (or equivalent) at key stage 4 (including English and mathematics)                    | DCSF: Outcome indicators for children looked after, Twelve months to 30 September 2009 - England (Statistical First Release 08/2010) | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2005 onwards available | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000930/index.shtml">http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000930/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 102 | Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at key stages 2 and 4 | DCSF: GCSE attainment by pupil characteristics, in England 2008/09 (Statistical First Release 34/2009)                               | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2006 onwards available | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml</a>        |

Ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress

|        |  |  |  |        |   |      |  |
|--------|--|--|--|--------|---|------|--|
| NI 105 | Achievement gap between special educational needs (SEN) and non-SEN pupils achieving five A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics | DCSF: GCSE attainment by pupil characteristics, in England 2008/09 (Statistical First Release 34/2009)                             | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2006 onwards available  | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 108 | Key stage 4 attainment for black and minority ethnic groups  | DCSF: GCSE attainment by pupil characteristics, in England 2008/09 (Statistical First Release 34/2009)                             | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 2006 onwards available  | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 114 | Rate of permanent exclusions from school   | DCSF: Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England 2007/08  | National, regional and local authority | Annual | Trend data from 1997 onwards available. | 2008 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000860/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000860/index.shtml</a> |
| NI 117 | 16- to 18-year-olds who are NEET   | Youth cohort study and longitudinal study of young people in England: the activities and experiences of 16-year-olds: England 2007 | National – England                     | Annual | 2004                                    | 2007 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SBU/b000795/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SBU/b000795/index.shtml</a> |

|                                   |                                  |  |  |           |   |      |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|-----------|---|------|--|
| NI 117                            | 16- to 18-year-olds who are NEET | DCSF: NEET statistics quarterly brief  | England and regional                   | Quarterly | Data collected by Statistical First Release since 1994. Trend data available from other measures collected since 1984 | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/STR/d000890/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/STR/d000890/index.shtml</a> |
| Additional indicators             | Outcomes at age 19               | DCSF: Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009 (Statistical First Release 25/2009) | National, regional and local authority | Annual    | Trend data from 2005 onwards available  | 2009 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml</a> |
| <b>Achieve economic wellbeing</b> |                                  |  |  |           |   |      |  |
| NI 117                            | 16- to 18-year-olds who are NEET | DCSF: Youth cohort study and longitudinal study of young people in England: the activities and experiences of 17-year-olds: England 2008   | National – England                     | Annual    | 2004  | 2008 | <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml">www.dcsf.gov.uk/rs_gateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml</a> |

## Appendix 5: Stakeholder data

### Children and young people

The views of children and young people were obtained through a survey organised by the National Children's Bureau (NCB), which received 226 responses from young people aged 10 to 18 (over three quarters were aged 14 to 17). The survey was developed using an online survey tool and piloted with the help of six Young NCB members. A link to the survey was posted on the Young NCB website and sent out through several other networks of professionals working directly with children and young people, including:

- UK Youth Parliament
- NCB Members' Bulletin – a bulletin sent out monthly to professionals employed in the children's sector
- Participation Works – a consortium of six national children and young people's agencies which enables organisations to involve children and young people effectively in the development, delivery and evaluation of services that affect their lives
- NCB's Participation Working Group – a cross-NCB group comprising participation workers
- PEAR Group – a group of young people supported by NCB's Research Department to develop research skills and engage with adult researchers
- C4EO Young Researchers Group – a group of young people supported by C4EO and NCB's Research Department to develop research skills.

It is important to bear in mind that the young people who responded to this survey were not sampled in a rigorous manner, and are therefore not a representative sample of all young people aged 10 – 18 in England.

A focus group was also held with 45 members of Brent Youth Parliament, to provide qualitative feedback on the areas investigated in the survey. The group comprised 26 girls and 19 boys, mostly attending sixth form (20) or secondary school (19) but also including six primary school pupils. The majority were from black or minority ethnic groups.

The following overarching questions were used to generate more specific questions in the survey and focus group discussion:

- What were you nervous about when you first started school?
- What did you find difficult?
- What did you like in the first few weeks at the school?
- What information or preparation did you receive before you started at the school?
- What should schools do to prepare pupils to move onto the next stage/school?

## Parents and carers

Evidence from parents and carers was collected through a C4EO panel run by the Family and Parenting Institute (FPI). This panel comprises 40 parents and carers from across the nine English regions. The executive summary from the earlier research review (Evans *et al*/2010) was sent to the Parents and Carers Panel by email, and group discussions were also held in London in March 2010. Feedback was collated by FPI and forwarded to the review team. Participants were asked the following questions:

- What information or preparation did you receive when your child started his/her current school or pre-school? What did you find the most helpful?
- What other support or information would you have wanted when your child started at the school? What could schools do to help support children and their families during transition?
- What else would help children and their families to make good transition at particular ages (e.g. home to pre-school, pre-school to school, between key stages, primary to secondary, secondary school to training/education/work)?

## Service providers

Evidence was gathered from service providers and managers during discussion groups at C4EO knowledge workshops (events at which the authors presented findings from the Schools and Communities research reviews). These were held in Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, London and Bristol during May 2010. Thirty-four service providers took part in facilitated groups, focusing on the following questions for discussion:

- What arrangements exist in your local area that facilitate smooth transitions for children and young people?
- What are the main challenges in ensuring effective transitions for children and young people? (For example: raising awareness/partnership working/workforce development) How are these challenges managed in your local area?
- What are the barriers in terms of involving children, young people and families? Do you have any examples of how these can be overcome?
- How do you (or could you) ensure that data/knowledge/skills are shared between schools and services to support effective transition?

**SEPTEMBER 2010**

## Ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages

This knowledge review tells us what works in ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between school key stages. It is based on a rapid review of the research literature involving systematic searching and the views from children and young people, parents and service providers. It summarises the best available evidence that will help providers to improve services and, ultimately, outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) carried out this review and compiled the data on behalf of the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO).

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