Norwich Opportunity Area
Transitions

Interim report 1

P Kirkman, S Tsegay,

E Lithari, C Mangafa, R Hunt, S Pratt-Adams

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Opportunity Area Programme

The UK Governments' Opportunity Area programme was announced in October 2016 as a 'Social mobility package' that aims to '*see local partnerships formed with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities to ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential*' (DfE, 2016).

Norwich was one of the initial set of six areas (West Somerset, Norwich, Blackpool, Scarborough, Derby and Oldham) identified using the Social Mobility Index which seeks to identify the most and least socially mobile areas of the country. The methodology of the Social Mobility Index examines in each of the 324 local authority areas both i) the educational attainment of children and young people across early years to HE, and ii) adults' prospects of 'good adulthood outcomes' through indicators such as average income, availability of professional jobs, and housing affordability (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (SMCPC), 2016).

According to this 2016 measure, Norwich was the second worst performing authority in England (*Ibid..*) and was classified in

> '**Performance zone 4 - Weak performance across the board.** There areas provide little opportunity for young people to acquire the education and skills they need to achieve good outcomes as an adult and, even if they are able to overcome this, a weak labour market and/or high housing costs make it difficult to secure good outcomes in adult life and are the most concerning social mobility coldspots' (Ibid.).

Of particular interest in this context are the measures related to:

> i) 'School' where Norwich ranked 14th worst. The school measure provides an indication of 'differences in educational attainment between disadvantaged children and their peers' (p31), and:
> ii) 'Youth' where Norwich ranked 17th worst. The Youth measure provides an indication of young people's life chances and their trajectories as they make key choices about their lives (ibid.. p43).

Into this context, the Opportunity Area Initiative sought to provide '*energy, ideas and resources to provide children and young people with the opportunities to fulfil their potential*' (DfE, 2017). Following the initial award of £6million of funding, the Norwich Opportunity Area Partnership Board was formed comprising representatives from local business, education, the public sector, the voluntary sector, and HE. Four working groups were also established including one on 'transitions' (Crown Copyright, 2017).

1.2.　Opportunity Area Strategic Priorities

Subsequent to the formation of the Opportunity Area, Partnership Board and working groups, a Norwich Opportunity Area Delivery Plan (Crown Copyright, 2017) set out a series of four initial priorities that were identified as significant areas into which the initial should be invested. The four priority areas in the plan are:

- *Priority 1: Improve early speech, language, listening and communication. To give children a better start at school and improve their chances of success as they move through the key stages of education.*

- *Priority 2: Raise attainment through targeted, evidence-based continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers and stronger system leadership support. Targeting expert school improvement support so that children attain to a higher level, which will give them a greater choice of pathways to success. Working with existing school leaders to strengthen the system so that more great local schools and colleges are proactively offering support to other schools.*

- *Priority 3: Support children at risk of exclusion from school. Supporting schools to keep children in lessons so that they can access the educational opportunities available to them in Norwich.*

- *Priority 4: Give young people the information and support they need to move successfully between school, college, university and into work. A coordinated approach, bringing schools, colleges, employers, and universities together to ensure that all children understand the full range of options that are available to them for further study and future careers.*

1.2.1. Opportunity Area Targets

Alongside these priorities a series of targets were Identified:

Priority 1:

a) *By September 2021, 95% of eligible three- to four-year-olds and 75% of eligible two-year-olds will be benefitting from funded early education.*
b) *By 2021, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development will be in the top half for all local authority districts in England.*

Priority 2:

c) *By 2021, attainment at key stage 2 and key stage 4 will be in the top half of all local authority districts in England.*
d) *By 2021, 50% of nineteen-year-olds will be qualified to level three.*
e) *By 2021, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and all pupils will be half what it was in September 2017.*

Priority 3:

    f) *In 2020/21, the rate of fixed term and permanent exclusions will have reduced by two thirds from the rate in 2016/17.*

Priority 4:

    g) *90% of the 2018-19 cohort who were eligible for pupil premium in year eleven will be in a sustained destination 6 months after completing key stage 4.*

    h) *By 2021, 40% of young people in Norwich will go on to higher education or a higher-level apprenticeship.*

    i) *By 2021, 85% of pupils who were eligible for pupil premium in year eleven and who studied for a level three qualification will go on to a sustained destination after key stage 5.*

<div align="right">Source: Crown Copyright, (2017)</div>

1.3.   The Transitions Working Group

One of the working groups established by the Norwich Opportunity Area Partnership Board was the Transitions Working Group. In early 2019 together with primary and secondary schools in the city cluster, they began work on a programme of activities aimed to improve exclusions rates for students moving from Y6 to Y7 (Priority 3, Target f). The projects adopted a range of approaches to influence key areas recognised anecdotally as causing poor transition by the schools and organisations represented on the Transitions group: Avenue Junior, Bignold Primary, City Academy, City of Norwich School, Education Participation, Educator Solutions, Heart Trust, Infrastructure and Partnership Service, Jane Austen College, Lakenham Primary, Norfolk County Council, Mile Cross Primary School, Open Academy, The Hewett Academy, Wensum Primary and Nelson Infants.

Key themes emerging from the Transitions Working Group's review of 'absolute fundamentals for a vulnerable child that's at risk of exclusion when going through a transition' were:

- Honest and full information sharing in relation to:
  - transfer (standardised and comprehensive) including pupil's needs, safeguarding Information, information about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), pupil's positive attributes, knowledge of past attendance,
  - understanding of what works and what does not in relation to support for pupils
- Pastoral care and relationship building
- Resilience and skills training
- Mentoring (student and adult) – before and after transition.
- Joint planning for transitions (primary and secondary) including:
  - Secondaries to share behaviour expectations with primaries to support prior to transition.
  - Family engagement - parenting, financial needs, attendance,
  - Gradual transition – identify links they already have (positive and negative) especially for in-year moves.

<div align="right">Source: Transitions group notes 30/04/19</div>

We note that this review of 'fundamentals for a *vulnerable* child' [emphasis ours] may provide a different range of foci than a review of 'fundamentals' for the potentially broader range of students at risk of exclusion in the Norwich Opportunity Area, or for disadvantaged children (in line with the Norwich Opportunity Board priorities - 2e). However, from the evidence that we have reviewed, this review appears to have framed the range of transitions project development work that followed. Thus, it is important to note this starting point in order to allow for the project outcomes to be subsequently considered in the light of the operational priorities of the transitions working group as well as the Opportunity Area Board Strategic Priorities and the Opportunity Area Board Targets.

1.4. Project Development

Following an initial planning stage in early 2019, the project work began in September 2019, the final year of the Norwich Opportunity Area's initial confirmed three-year funding. As a result, development time was limited. Alongside this, the 'normal' transition period for schools across the summer of 2020 was impacted by the school lockdown which occurred as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This meant that many of the planned projects had to be adapted and/or rolled over to the following summer. Funding for a fourth year of support for the Norwich Opportunity Area was announced in November 2019 (GOV.UK, 2019) but funding to allow some of this activity to be carried over into the summer 2021 transition period was only confirmed in the summer holidays of 2020 (NOA, 2021). The time frame for transitions project Is illustrated in figure 1.4.

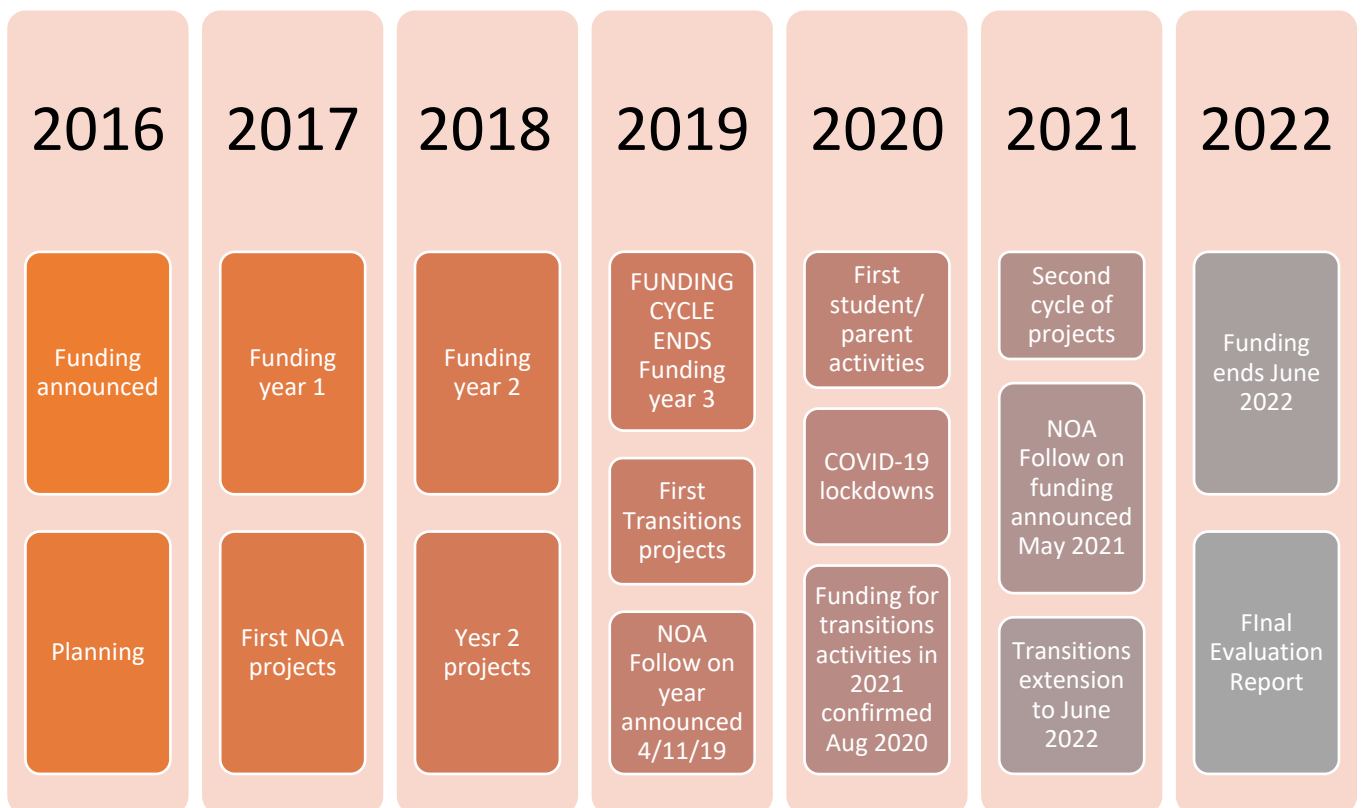| 2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Funding announced	Funding year 1	Funding year 2	FUNDING CYCLE ENDS Funding year 3	First student/parent activities	Second cycle of projects	Funding ends June 2022
			First Transitions projects	COVID-19 lockdowns	NOA Follow on funding announced May 2021	
Planning	First NOA projects	Yesr 2 projects	NOA Follow on year announced 4/11/19	Funding for transitions activities in 2021 confirmed Aug 2020	Transitions extension to June 2022	FInal Evaluation Report

Figure 1.4: timeframe for transitions project work.

In response to the time constraints and COVID-19 disruption, the primary focus of the transitions projects became their implementation. In this regard the working group sought to make as much of an impact as possible on the fundamental areas noted above, rather than spending time developing an evidence-based series of Interventions. In addition, the approach adopted has sought to prioritise:

- opportunities for feedback and evaluation.
- a collaborative approach between primary and secondary schools particularly in the first year.
- partnership working with Norfolk County Council's Children's Services 'Good Practice' work on transition.

1.5.   Evaluation Project Aims

This document is part one of three reports that will present an evaluation of the transitions project work. Starting in February 2021 we have focused on examining the projects which took place during Summer 2019-2020.
Our aims are i) to collate the projects undertaken by each school and how many students they directly affected, ii) establish the success of the range of approaches and interventions delivered by the transition projects in relation to:

a) student resilience and behaviour
b) Academic and behaviour understanding
c) Parent/carer engagement in the transition process
d) Value

This document is the first of three reports that will together provide an account of the impact of the transitions projects and will consider this in the light of the initial financial investment in the projects.

1.5.1. Student groups and metrics

It should also be noted that the transitions activities with students and parents began in the summer of 2020 so children who were in Year 6 during the first year of the projects will now be at the end of year 7 and aged 11-12. Thus, for the purposes of this report, the relevant priorities and targets from the Norfolk Opportunity Area Deliver Plan are *Relevant Priorities 2-4* (above) and Relevant Targets e) and f) (above).

1.6.   Project Team

Below are the details of the evaluation project team; based in the School of Education and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University.

Dr Phil Kirkman is the Principal Investigator for the evaluation. Phil is Associate Professor and Education Partnerships lead at Anglia Ruskin University and has 22 years of experience in education. He started his career as a teacher and was later a department manager and year leader in UK Secondary schools. He subsequently led Secondary PGCE courses (Professional Studies and Music) at the University of Cambridge and since 2016 has been based at Anglia Ruskin University where, as lead for education partnerships, he has led the team building a new teacher education and development portfolio. Dr Kirkman also runs the MBA in Educational leadership and Management and supervises doctoral students. His work focusses on promoting sustainable improvement in education, educational technologies, and wellbeing.

Dr Eleni Lithari is Senior Lecturer in Education at Anglia Ruskin University. She runs the MA in Special Educational Needs and Disability and supervises doctoral students focused in the area of Inclusion and SEND. Her main area of interest is inclusion, SEND and transitions. Dr Lithari has published in international journals and her doctoral research was based on the primary to secondary school transitions for young people with Dyslexia. She is a reviewer for national and international journals focused on SEND and she has experience in supporting children for Dyslexia Action and working in UK primary schools.

Dr Chrissy Mangafa is a Lecturer in Education at Anglia Ruskin University. She teaches and supervises students about accessibility and SEND. Her main research interests are inclusion, SEND and transition from primary to secondary school settings. She works in close partnership with teachers, parents, and children as co-researchers and is interested in community engagement, having organized various communication events for teachers and the wider public. She is a Convenor of the Children and Childhood Special Interest Group of the British Educational Research Association and member of the editorial board 'Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning'. Her background is in teaching in mainstream and special schools for over 10 years.

Dr Ros Hunt is a Senior Lecturer and Course Group Leader for Social Care in Cambridge. Ros has worked as a social worker with deaf people for most of her professional career. Before joining the local authority, she worked in the voluntary sector with women and children who had experienced violence. She is particularly interested in teaching the skills needed for practice and the links with theory and has worked extensively on research projects in the areas of, Deaf studies, LGBTQIA, and Marginalised groups. She has developed several innovative methodologies to assist in her research with underrepresented groups.

Dr Simon Pratt-Adams is Acting Director of the Centre for Innovation in Higher Education (CIHE) and Associate Professor in Academic Development. Simon has proven expertise in conducting qualitative research. His funded PhD research, A Study of the Significance of the Same-Sex Peer Group on the Development of Young Males, was a longitudinal study and involved four individual research projects. He's also worked as a research colleague with professors from King's College, London, Goldsmiths College, University of London, and Roehampton University. From 2009 to 2013, Simon had a contract with Continuum International Publishers as series editor for the Contemporary Issues in Education Studies; seven books were published in this series. In 2006, Simon's book, The Urban Primary School, was published by OUP/McGraw-Hill and was TES book of the week. His second book, Changing Urban Education, was published by Bloomsbury in 2010, and by the East China University Press in 2017. He has published a co-authored book with Dr Elizabeth Burn in 2015 entitled Men Teaching Children 3-11: Dismantling Gender Barriers.

Professor Marie-Pierre Moreau is Professor in Education and Education Research Lead at ARU, with experience of conducting research in schools, working with a range of policymakers and funders, including the DfE and the European Commission. Before joining Anglia Ruskin, Marie-Pierre was Reader in Sociology of Education and Director of the RISE (Research in Inequalities, Societies and Education) research centre at the University of Roehampton, London. Marie-Pierre's research is primarily informed by feminist post-structuralist theories and located at the nexus of education, work, and equality issues. She has a keen interest in researching the re/production of identities and inequalities based on gender, social class, ethnicity and other identity markers in education and work settings. She is the author or co-author of over 100 publications, including three books: Les enseignants et le genre (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2011); Inequalities in the teaching profession: A global perspective (Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2014); and Teachers, gender, and the feminisation debate (Routledge, London, 2019). She was an elected executive member of the Gender and Education Association (2013-17) and a lead organiser of the 2015 Gender and Education Association conference (with Prof Debbie Epstein).

2. Background and Literature

While the transitions project work and Opportunity Area work more broadly has been previously framed by Government, Opportunity area Partnership Boards, and projects teams predominantly using in 'Grey Literature'[1] (Auger, 1975), there is also a significant and growing body of academic literature which speaks to these and related key areas and themes.

2.1. Primary Areas of Focus

While a comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this evaluation, we firstly sought to identify those themes within the literature that would provide potentially useful indicators of project efficacy in relation to the primary areas of focus as defined in the project brief:

- student resilience and behaviour
- academic and behaviour understanding
- parent/carer engagement in the transitions process
- value

These areas of focus are the primary aims of the transitions projects as each project has been implemented with these 'core' aims in mind. We noted that at the start of the projects the decision was made to focus on *'implementation to improve on those areas as practically as possible, not on an evidence-based research plan, although all the work has had some element of feedback and evaluation'* (NOA, 2021). Thus, we started by defining each of these themes in relation to existing academic literature on transitions and school transfer. Table 2.1 shows our working definitions of the primary areas of focus.

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[1] Materials and publications that fall outside of academic publications and which therefore cannot be assumed to conform to accepted standards of scientific rigor.

Focus	Definition	Illustrative reference
Student resilience and behaviour	Resilience is a dynamic process contingent on internal and external factors that leads to successful adaptation in challenging circumstances. Behaviours are manifest in teacher-student and student-student interactions, framed by whole school, classroom, individual and personal factors.	Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008, Chaplain, 2003.
Academic and behaviour understanding	Also called 'social competence', involves acceptance into social contexts (peer, classroom, school) and leads to feelings of self-determination. For example, to gain approval from teachers or peers, to cooperate with classmates or to meet a standard of achievement.	Wentzel (2003), Bailey & Baines (2012).
Parent/carer engagement in transition processes*	Also sometimes referred to as 'parental involvement'. Falls into three categories: direct participation, academic encouragement, and expectations for attainment (Chen and Gregory 2009, in Hanewald 2013).	Chen and Gregory 2009
Value	'Public value' can be defined as delivering services, achieving social outcomes, and maintaining trust and legitimacy. In this context this can be thought of as i) delivering transitions projects, ii) achieving the priorities and targets of NOA, ii) maintaining engagement from pupils, parents, teachers, and school leaders.	Moore, 1995, Mintrom and Luetjens, 2017

Plural processes emphasises that there are several interacting processes in play

2.2.   Secondary Areas of Focus:

Following our review of the primary areas of focus, we turned to the broader goals of the Norwich Opportunity Area to define a further six secondary[2] areas of focus which come from the Priority Areas and Targets of the Norwich Opportunity Area Board:

- student attainment
- continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers
- system leadership support
- fixed term and permanent exclusion
- transfer and transition
- disadvantaged pupils

As with the five primary areas of focus, no grounding in research literature was assumed, therefore we have also defined each of these themes in relation to the body of academic literature as it relates to transitions and school transfer. Table 2.2 shows our working definitions of the secondary areas of focus.

[22] It is important to note that the 'secondary' areas of focus are categorized in relation to their centrality to the current evaluation rather than their educational importance or educational level.

Focus	Definition	Illustrative reference
student attainment	Grade outcomes of academic measures, equivalent to GCSEs at aged 15/16 and A-Levels at aged 17/18 in England and Wales. While statistically problematic at the level of the individual, attainment is often measured against predicted individual trajectories using data trends and normal distribution curves towards these outcomes.	West, et.al. 2010; Leckie and Goldstein, 2019
continuous professional development and support (CPD) for teachers	Training and/or support through courses, ongoing learning programmes or specialist provision to enhance the quality of teaching and/or relationship building skills.	Bailey & Baines, 2012; Cole et al., 2019
system leadership support	Support for leaders to move towards a leadership approach through which they: a) facilitate conditions that enable others to foster social change b) see the 'whole system' c) use reflection and dialogue to move the focus from reactive problem solving to building futures.	Senge, 1995; Senge, Hamilton and Kania, 2015
fixed term and permanent exclusion	In 1986 in the UK, 'fixed-term' and 'permanent' exclusions were introduced as a last resort to remove a pupil from a school if they had been persistently or severely deviating from the school's behaviour policy (Education Act, 1986). A fixed-term exclusion may last for hours or days for a maximum of 45 days in an academic year. A permanent exclusion removes the child or young person (CYP) from the school's roll or transfers them to an alternative provision such as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) (Department for Education (DfE), 2012).	Messeter and Soni, 2018
transfer and transition	These terms are sometimes used interchangeably. However, more focussed studies employ transfer to refer to the move from one school to another and transition to refer to other moves such as from one year group to the next within a school or personal changes such as house moves or new carers.	Galton et al. 1999; Reynolds, Miller and Weiner, 2003
disadvantaged pupils	While noting the transitions working group focus on the needs of a '*vulnerable child that's at risk of exclusion when going through a transition*" (see section 1.3), we have also prioritised the term 'disadvantaged' as this encompasses a wider range of students and hence is more likely to capture the wider range of potential impact arising from the transitions projects. Disadvantage in the English school system is currently defined in relation to whether someone has ever had free school meal (FSM) eligibility over a six-year period is the measure. This is a socio-economic measure and while there are some students who are not identified by this measure, recent studies suggest that its predictive power is only mildly lower than other potential measures. Vulnerable children as defined as those who i) are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child, ii) have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan, iii) have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities.	Ilie, Sutherland and Vignoles, 2017; DfE, 2021

2.3. Tertiary Areas of Focus

Following on from our review of the academic literature in relation to the primary and secondary areas of focus of the NOA transitions project work, we turned to the themes emerging directly from the academic literature itself. Our rationale for inclusion of this third level was the initial practical starting point for the transitions project work. While our review is not claiming to be comprehensive, we adopted a structured approach to the literature. This final stage revealed a further eight factors associated with effective support for school transfer and transition.

- building inclusive shared values and positive relationships
- multi-agency collaborative support
- clear shared and enacted policy
- local and school level support
- focused support for specific identified: whole-school, group, individual
- Organisational/administrative support
- Psychosocial support
- Student voice/involvement in decision making

Table 2.3 shows our working definitions of the tertiary areas of focus.

While the working definitions summarise the key outcomes of the literature review which informed the first stage of this evaluation, our wider literature review also draws together current understanding of good practice in relation to each of these areas (where possible and within the resource constraints of the study). This allows for us to conduct an evidence-based evaluation of the potential efficacy of each of the transitions project designs in relation to the primary areas of focus, the Norwich Opportunity Area Board Strategic Priorities and Targets, and the potential demonstrated in the wider academic literature. This is a key aspect of our emergent research design as we responded to the ongoing challenges of conducting an evaluation of projects so significantly affected by national, local, and school responses to the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The full literature review will be presented in the September 2021 evaluation report.

Table 2.3 Tertiary areas of focus defined in academic sources.

Focus	Definition	Illustrative reference
Building inclusive shared values and positive relationships	Inclusive values and systems at whole-school level (starting at 'the top') has been recognised as a significant factor impacting on exclusions and key factors of these 'inclusive' systems include caring school staff who attend to child and parent concerns, compassionate teachers who are able to perceive and support peer relationships and strong external support networks.	Cole et al., 2019; Coffey, 2013; Topping, 2011 Hamm et al. 2011.
multi-agency collaborative support	Collaboration between the local authority, schools, external agencies, parent, and pupils is particularly significant in relation to the likelihood of successful interventions to support transfer, transitions and to prevent subsequent exclusions.	McCluskey et al., 2019; Evangelou et al., 2008
clear shared and enacted policy	Co-creation and co-design of policymaking 'in partnership' with stakeholders (school leaders, local authorities, parents, leaders, teachers), are more likely to result in a high degree of consensus and support.	McCluskey et al., 2019; Cooper, & Tiknaz 2007
local and school level support	Support from partners/collaborators within the community is significant in supporting individual schools, promoting consistency between schools and for drawing together and sharing regional expertise and intelligence.	Evangelou et al., 2008; Galton et al. 1999
focused support at different levels: whole-school, group, individual	A range of support and interventions that target individuals, groups of students and whole-school level provide for different student needs. Targeted interventions for particular identified individuals are also suggested.	Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008; McGee et al., 2003; Pratt and George, 2005.
organisational/administrative support	Positive relationships and good communication channels before, during and after transition key and teachers play a critical role. Regular information sharing including concerning individual children is an indicator of strong practice.	Coffey, 2013; Chedzoy and Burden, 2005.
Psychosocial support	Psychological support with the social aspects of transfer (e.g., making friends, maintaining friendships, fitting in, managing the fear of getting lost, avoiding being victimized).	Chedzoy and Burden, 2005, Tobbell and O'Donnell, 2013; Anderson et al., 2000.
student voice/involvement in decision making	This is an aspect of transfer that appears to be neglected. However, there is significant and growing evidence of the importance in involving all stakeholders as equal partners in interventions and the need to communication with pupils rather than about them.	van Rens et al., 2018.

2.4.   Towards a Set of Evaluation Criteria

Drawing together these themes from the primary secondary and tertiary areas of focus, we subsequently developed a set of evaluation criteria and the evaluation questions presented in table 2.4, which can be applied at the project level.

Table 2.4: Evaluation criteria for transitions project work

Focus	Key questions	Level of focus
Student resilience and behaviour	• To what extent does this project create external support for resilience? • To what extent does this project foster internal support for resilience? • To what extent does this project foster positive teacher-student interactions? • To what extent does this project foster positive student-student interactions?	Primary
Academic and behaviour understanding	• To what extent does this project foster peer acceptance? • To what extent does this project foster positive classroom relationships? • To what extent does this project foster feelings of being a part of the school? • To what extent does this project foster feelings of self-determination? • To what extent does this project make achievements more visible?	Primary
Parent/carer engagement in transition processes	• To what extent does this project foster direct participation from parents? • To what extent does this project foster academic encouragement from parents? • To what extent does this project foster attainment expectations from parents?	Primary
Value	• To what extent does this project deliver support for school transfer? • To what extent does this project support transitions more widely? • To what extent does this project contribute to achieving the priorities of the Norwich Opportunity area? • To what extent does this project contribute to achieving the targets of the Norwich Opportunity area? • To what extent does this project contribute to achieving the priorities of the Transitions working group? • To what extent does this project maintain engagement from pupil? • To what extent does this project maintain engagement from parents? • To what extent does this project maintain engagement from teachers? • To what extent does this project maintain engagement from school leaders?	Primary
Student attainment	• To what extent does this project support individual attainment in Y7? • To what extent does this project support an improved individual attainment trajectory?	Secondary

Continuous professional development and support (CPD) for teachers	• To what extent does this project provide support to teachers for relationship building? • To what extent does this project provide specialist support to teachers? • To what extent does this project provide support to teachers' further ongoing development? • To what extent does this project provide support to teachers' ongoing development to teaching and learning?	Secondary
System leadership support	• To what extent does this project provide support for leaders to facilitate conditions that enable others to foster social change? • To what extent does this project provide support for leaders to see the whole system? • To what extent does this project provide support for leaders to use reflection and dialogue to move the focus from reactive problem solving to building futures?	Secondary
Fixed term and permanent exclusion	• To what extent does this project help to prevent fixed-term exclusions? • To what extent does this project help to prevent permanent exclusions? • To what extent does this project help to prevent behaviour leading to fixed-term or permanent exclusions?	Secondary
Transfer and transition	• To what extent does this project foster support for school-school transition? • To what extent does this project foster support for pupil transitions?	Secondary
Disadvantaged pupils	• To what extent does this project provide support for disadvantaged pupils? • To what extent does this project provide support for vulnerable pupils?	Secondary
Building inclusive shared values and positive relationships	• To what extent does this project support the development of inclusive values at whole-school level? • To what extent does this project support the development of inclusive system/processes at whole-school level? • To what extent does this project foster caring school staff? • To what extent does this project attend to parent concerns? • To what extent does this project attend to pupil concerns? • To what extent does this project foster strong peer relationships? • To what extent does this project foster strong external support networks?	Tertiary
Multi-agency collaborative support	• To what extent does this project foster inter-school/agency collaboration? • To what extent does this project foster collaboration with parents? • To what extent does this project foster collaboration with pupils?	Tertiary
Clear shared and enacted policy	• To what extent does this project support the co-creation of policy? • To what extent does this engage parents in the creation of policy? • To what extent does this engage pupils in the creation of policy? • To what extent does this engage parents in the process of enacting policy?	Tertiary

	• To what extent does this engage pupils in the process of enacting policy? • Top what extent does this project foster consensus?	
Local and school level support	• To what extent does this project draw together the expertise of a wide range of stakeholders? • To what extent does this project promote consistency? • To what extent does this project provide support for schools? • To what extent does this project facilitate expertise sharing? • To what extent does this project facilitate intelligence sharing?	Tertiary
Focused support at different levels: whole-school, group, individual	• To what extent does this project provide support that targets the needs of all individuals? • To what extent does this project provide support that targets the needs of targeted individuals? • To what extent does this project provide support that targets the needs of different groups of students? • To what extent does this project provide support at a whole school level? • To what extent does this project provided allow for support at individual, group, and whole school level?	
Organisational/administrative support	• To what extent does this project foster positive relationships between schools and school staff before school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster positive relationships between schools and school staff during school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster positive relationships schools and school staff after school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster good communication channels schools and school staff before school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster good communication channels schools and school staff during school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster good communication channels schools and school staff after school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster information sharing about individual children before school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster information sharing about individual children during school transfer? • To what extent does this project foster information sharing about individual children after school transfer?	Tertiary
Psychosocial support	• To what extent does this project provide support to help pupils to make new friends? • To what extent does this project provide support to help pupils to make maintain existing friendships? • To what extent does this project provide support to help pupils to feel confident that they fit in? • To what extent does this project provide support to help pupils to feel confident that they know what to do? • To what extent does this project provide support to help pupils to feel confident that they are safe?	Tertiary
student voice/involvement in decision making	• To what extent does this project allow the views of pupils to be heard as equal partners? • To what extent does this project allow pupils to make key decisions as equal partners?	Tertiary

The following additional questions in table 2.4.2 were developed to allow for a holistic check to be carried out on transfer and transition provision:

Table 2.4.2: Additional 'holistic' project questions.

Focus	Key questions	Level of focus
Student resilience and behaviour	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for student resilience and behaviour? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Primary
Academic and behaviour understanding	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for academic and behaviour understanding? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Primary
Parent/carer engagement in transition processes*	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for parent/carer engagement in transition processes? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Primary
Value	• To what extent do the projects offer value across a range of indicators? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Primary
Student attainment	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for student attainment? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Secondary
continuous professional development and support (CPD) for teachers	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for teacher continuous professional development and support? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Secondary
system leadership support	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for systems leadership? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Secondary
fixed term and permanent exclusion	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for students at risk of exclusion? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Secondary
transfer and transition	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for student transfer? • To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for student transition? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Secondary
disadvantaged pupils	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for disadvantaged pupils? • To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for vulnerable pupils? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Secondary
Building inclusive shared values and positive relationships	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities to build inclusive shared values and positive relationships? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Tertiary
multi-agency collaborative support	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities for multi-agency and collaborative working? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Tertiary

clear shared and enacted policy	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities to generate clear policy? • To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities to act on clear policy? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	Tertiary
local and school level support	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities for local support? • To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities for school-level support? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	
focused support at different levels: whole-school, group, individual	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities for support at different levels: whole-school, group, individual? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain	
organisational/administrative support	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of opportunities for organisational/administrative support? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	
Psychosocial support	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of psychosocial support? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	
student voice/involvement in decision making	• To what extent do the projects offer a range of support for student voice and involvement in decision making? • What, if any, gaps in provision remain?	

The above evaluation criteria provide an evidence-based method of evaluating the extent to which individual transitions projects and the portfolio of projects meet the areas of interest within the primary, secondary and tertiary areas of focus. These will be subsequently applied across each of the project reviews (see interim report 2).

3. Project Details

The following section outlines the research design as it has emerged over the first five months of the project.

3.1.   Research Questions

We began the project by identifying five research questions from the project brief and divided the focus of these across two project phases. Phase 1 was initially from February to June 2021 and Phase 2 was from July 2021 to January 2022. Due to various project constraints including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (see below) and an extension of Opportunity Area funding which allowed for an expansion of the original design, these timeframes shifted to Phase 1: February 2021 – September 2021, Phase 2: September 2021 – June 2022.

The focus of the Phase 1 research is the following questions:

RQ1) What was the qualitative nature of the 2019-2020 school transition interventions?

RQ2) Who was involved in the school transition interventions?

RQ3) To what extent do stakeholders perceive an impact of these school transition interventions, based on the following indicators:

   (1) Student resilience and behaviour
   (2) Academic and behaviour understanding
   (3) Parent/carer engagement in transition processes
   (4) Value

The focus of the Phase 2 research is the following questions:

RQ4) What was the impact of project activities running during Spring/Summer 2021 on:

   (1) Student resilience and behaviour
   (2) Academic and behaviour understanding
   (3) Parent/carer engagement in transition processes
   (4) Value

RQ5) What was the impact of project activities running during Spring/Summer 2021 on individual year 6 students in relation to:

   (1) Student resilience and behaviour
   (2) Academic and behaviour understanding
   (3) Parent/carer engagement in transition processes
   (4) Value

3.2.   Research Design

We adopted a two-phase mixed methods approach (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Phase one examines and describes each project/intervention and identifies their successes.

Following an initial review of the documentary evidence provided by the Norwich Opportunity Area Transitions Team, a review of pertinent grey and academic literature allowed us to clearly articulate the key areas of focus for the evaluation and to define key terms (see above). We also used this review to define the project and holistic evaluation questions that would help to frame our thinking in relation to the subsequent data collection processes.

While a comprehensive systematic literature review was beyond the scope of this current evaluation and, given the scale of the task, its' usefulness would be open to question. Instead, we took a structured approach to this review in an attempt to piece together a 'rapid umbrella review' (Coe. Et. al, 2020) that sought to be comprehensive (to include everything that is relevant) and which sought to mitigate bias (attempted to compensate for preferences towards favoured perspectives or approaches). We began with a search in the British Education Index: for '*transfer AND school AND (UK or united kingdom or Britain or England or Wales or Scotland or Northern Ireland) AND Support*' between 2000 and 2021, and '*transition AND school AND (UK or united kingdom or Britain or England or Wales or Scotland or Northern Ireland) AND support*' between 2000 and 2021. These searches returned 386 and 111 results respectively. These results were then manually sifted to identify results relevant to between school transfer or within school transition and subsequently were inductively and deductively coded to identify primary, secondary, and tertiary areas of focus in relation to the key features of projects that seek to facilitate or support effective transition and transfer. This process gave rise to the core evaluation criteria (see section 2).

Alongside this, we examined 342 relevant documents from across the various projects and conducted fourteen interviews and eleven discussions about the transitions projects to put together summaries and descriptions of each project. At the same time, we gathered evidence from interviews and discussion (n=23), surveys (n=20) and student focus groups (n=4) about who was involved in the different projects and the extent to which they felt the projects were successful. Owing to the challenges of access to school data, school and staff engagement, COVID-19 restrictions, and project timings (see below) we adapted our original design and focussed on a smaller teacher survey (Y7 staff only) and pupil focus groups rather than a pupil survey. While the data gathered cannot claim to represent the views of most school teaching staff and Y7 pupils across the Norwich opportunity Area, we do feel they are a good representation of the key subjects arising in relation to each project and have a 'robust enough' level of representation to make conclusions for meaningful in terms of the evaluation of previous work and the development of further practice. Furthermore, the evaluation criteria and measures of impact that will be taken forward into phase two therefore emerge from the wider literature as well as from the data gathered (indictive and deductive).

Phase two begins in September 2021 and will address research questions four and five:

RQ4) What was the impact of project activities running during Spring/Summer 2021?
RQ5) What was the impact of project activities running during Spring/Summer 2021 on individual year 6 students?

Alongside this, a project extension has given us the capacity to develop a self-assessment audit tool, for use at the school and local level, to facilitate stakeholders to engage in ongoing evaluation of the transition and transfer provision. This is based on the Norwich Opportunity Area targets and priorities as well as the Transitions Working Group review priorities and the academic literature and is presented in the September 2021 evaluation report.

Phase two also involves a teacher survey, pupil focus groups and interviews with school senior leadership to address research questions four and five and to facilitate the trialling of a pupil tracking process which has been developed to allow for tentative correlational links to be made between pupil and school involvement in transfer and transitions activities and student outcomes over time. This tracking tool will be trialled in phase two and shared with the Norwich Opportunity Area Transitions Team at the end of the evaluation process. This tracking process carries a degree of risk in that it requires access to anonymised pupil-level school tracking data about behaviour (low impact and exclusions), attendance, attainment, special educational needs and disabilities, other school interventions and pupil characteristics (age, access to free school meals, vulnerable pupil, child in need, primary school, project involvement). However, with the assistance of school leaders, we are confident that we can support schools in the Norwich locality to gain an insight into the impact of transitions projects on pupil outcomes.

3.2.1. Mapping of research questions to methods:

The research questions map to the data collection methods as shown in tables 3.2.1 (phase 1) and 3.2.2 (Phase 2).

Table 3.2.1: Phase 1 data collection

Phase 1: Feb 2021 – July 2021					
Research question	Review of literature (497+)	Document review (342+)	Interviews and discussions (23)	Teacher survey (n-20)	Pupil focus groups (n=4, Y7)
RQ 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RQ 2			✓	✓	✓
RQ 3	✓		✓	✓	✓

Table 3.2.2: Planned phase 2 data collection

Phase 2: Sept 2021 – June 2022				
Research question	School/ student data tracking (5 secondaries)	Teacher survey 2 (n=50)	Pupil focus groups (n-10)	Interviews with SLT & transition coordinator (n=5)
RQ 4		✓	✓	✓
RQ 5	✓			

n = number of anticipated responses

4. Project Timeline

4.1. Evaluation Details Feb 2021- June 2022

The project timeline is shown in figure 4.1 Each aspect of the project is discussed in turn below.

Norwich Transitions Project
Project Timeline

		Phase 1								Phase 2								
		Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan-22	Feb	March	April	May	June
	Project Planning Phase 1 including Ethics	■																
	Review of literature	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■									
	Document collation and analysis	■	■	■	■													
	Interviews and analysis		■	■	■	■	■	■										
	Teacher Surveys and analysis				■	■	■	■										
	Pupil focus groups and analysis				■	■	■	■										
	Success/evaluation criteria				■	■												
	Design tracking process					■	■	■										
Milestone	Report 1						*											
Milestone	Report 2								*									
	Project Planning Phase 2 including ethics updates						■	■										
	School data tracking and analysis									■	■		■	■		■	■	
	Teacher survey and analysis									■	■	■	■	■				
	Pupil focus groups and analysis									■	■	■	■	■				
	Interview with SLT and analysis								■	■	■							
Milestone	Report 3																	*
Milestone	Paper 1									*								
Milestone	Paper 2																	*
Milestone	Policy briefing																	*

Figure 4.1: Revised transitions evaluation project timeline

4.1.1. Review of literature

The project team have reviewed over 497 journal articles and relevant sources. This began in February 2021 and has proceeded as planned. This has allowed us to produce working definitions of the areas of interest and to inform the design of the interview questions, survey questions and focus group questions. Work is ongoing and is on schedule for completion in September 2021.

4.1.2. Document review and analysis

We have reviewed over 342 documents relating to the projects and transitions project schools. This has fed into our project descriptions and design of the interview questions, survey questions and focus group questions. This work is completed.

4.1.3. Interviews, discussions, and analysis

Between March and May 2021, we have conducted 23 interviews and discussions from a range of participants including teachers, transitions coordinators and project leaders across primary schools, secondary schools, and partner organisations. Emails were sent inviting all schools in the Norwich Opportunity Area to participate in the interview process. A variety of responses were received. Some schools did not respond. Some were focussed across several projects and others were focussed on particular projects. The interview schedule is provided in appendix 2. Work is ongoing and is on schedule for completion in September 2021.

4.1.4. Teacher Surveys and analysis

Between May and June 2021, we received 20 responses to our teacher survey. As this survey was focused on evaluating the experiences of students now in year 7, all secondary schools were invited to respond. The survey questions are provided in appendix 3. A variety of responses were received. Some schools did not respond. Work is ongoing and is on schedule for completion in September 2021.

4.1.5. Pupil focus groups and analysis

In a change to the original design, four focus groups were organised between June and July 2021. The decision was made to conduct focus groups in preference to a pupil survey because of the fallout of COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on teacher/pupil time. The challenge of engagement across the interviews and teacher surveys indicated that a pupil survey was unlikely to receive a high enough response rate. Therefore, we made the decision to prioritise depth over breadth and to use conversations with pupils to gain a deeper insight into their experiences and concerns. We also felt that this process was in line with the recommendations to involve students more deeply arising from the literature. Work is ongoing and is on schedule for completion in September 2021.

4.1.6. Success/evaluation criteria

Drawing on the evidence from the literature, Norfolk Opportunity areas priorities and targets, and Transitions Working Group priorities we developed evaluation success criteria across May – June 2021. A set of eighteen project criteria and eighteen holistic criteria have emerged from this process and have fed into the process of designing the pupil focus groups and the tracking tool. This process is completed although the success/evaluation criteria are open to modification and refinement until the end of the project.

4.1.7. Design tracking process

The process of designing the tracking tool began in June 2021 and will continue throughout August. Drawing on the review of literature, analysis of documents, interviews, focus groups and surveys until this point we are designing a tool that maps school data on individual pupils and pupil and school project involvement to student outcome indicators (such as behaviour data, attendance, attainment, and effort grades). While this relies heavily on the engagement of school leaders, with this in place, we are confident that we can support schools in the Norwich locality to gain an insight into the impact of transitions projects on pupil outcomes. This work is ongoing and on target for a launch in September 2021.

4.2.   Reflections on Data Collection

Across the first phase of work between February 2021 and July 2021, several significant aspects of the evaluation have shaped our approach to data collection and consequently the findings that have emerged. As they will likely have a bearing on the outcomes of the project as a whole, we are noting them at this point under the heading 'reflections' as these have formed part of our thinking as we have the evaluation process has emerged.

4.2.1. Project definitions

We have noted that the projects themselves are only loosely defined in practice. It seems that the project aims, and descriptions have not been clearly defined or collated. One might expect this give the practical and emergent approach adopted to the transitions project work. As a result, we have noted a range of perspectives on what constitute 'the transitions projects'. Our ultimate guide has been the funding stream and intelligence of our transitions project team contact. Alongside this we have drawn on the academic literature more than originally planned in order to bring rigor and precision to our delineation of terms and descriptions.

4.2.2. School engagement

School engagement has been a challenge. We assumed that engagement would have been good from schools with the Norwich Opportunity Area work given the financial incentives for involvement. However, our experience indicates that this engagement and goodwill is patchy. It may be that the financial incentives have served to promote a culture of traded services rather than partnership, although those who have been more involved tend to present a contrasting perspective. Schools and individuals who have benefited most from greater engagement describe a culture of cooperation, collaboration and continual improvement that is assisted by financial compensation and enabling processes rather than being driven by it. As yet, we have been unable to obtain any evidence of engagement with dissemination of 'what works' in terms of support for effective Y6-7 transfer to the wider Norwich Opportunity Area schools by the EEF designated research school. It may be that more targeted questions are needed to explore these links. In addition, engagement from the research school would assist in collating this narrative.

4.2.3. COVID-19

The covid-19 pandemic and the related pressures that this has placed on schools has clearly had a huge impact on the integrity and ability of schools and partnerships to deliver the projects as originally intended. The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the evaluation team's ability to access relevant individuals and schools and to foster the kind of engagement necessary for more comprehensive representation in an evaluation project of this nature. Nevertheless, we are confident that our emergent research design and revised schedule of work will provide the necessary data to make a robust evaluation of project effectiveness, monitoring toolkit, and recommendations for further work. In addition, we are in a position to provide a school-level audit tool that will be a legacy contribution of the evaluation work.

4.2.4. Challenges/barriers

Further challenges and barriers to the evaluation work so far have been:

- Changes to evaluation project team – two of the original team of three staff members left Anglia Ruskin at the end of May 2021. This caused delays in data collection and additional handover work that was more than we had anticipated.

- A large number of interviews and discussions that were planned were missed or rearranged at the last minute by school staff. The totals amounted to almost half of the final successful total of interviews. Some appointments were missed more than once. This created significant pressures on staff time which were avoidable and not anticipated. At the same time, this did provide an indication of the level of importance placed on external

appointments in different schools and highlighted one of the significant challenges of working across organisations.

- Many of the schools across the Norwich Opportunity Area have had more than one school transitions lead across the lifespan of the Opportunity Area Work. While there is a central list help by the NOA transitions lead, keeping this current relies on schools communicating these changes. This does not always happen. In addition, these changes mean that a well-developed body of 'transitions intelligence' is not yet in place. At the same time, it is also an indication of the relative importance given by different schools to collaborative work, external relationships, and transitions activities.

- As an independent organisation the NOA team do not have any authority to challenge lack of engagement. This reliance on goodwill does not sit easily alongside a system that is marketized and which sets schools in competition against each other. What incentive is there for the best schools to engage and share expertise? Indeed, there are many disincentives.

- Given that students who experienced transitions across summer 2020 are still only Y7 students (Y8 in Sept 2021), any significant impacts on outcomes are unlikely to be emerge until at least 2023. This highlights the challenges of funding cycles for special projects (such as NOA and transitions) that have a long lead time. The current evaluation is mitigating this 'time lag' by examining impact in a broad sense, however the limitations of such a short timescale for examining broader impact are clear.

- Significant further limitations which should be noted are the small sample sizes (noted above), the self-selected participants for interviews and surveys (meaning that the feedback is likely to be skewed towards those who have something they would like to contribute) and level of engagement (noted above). At the same time, it is likely that the data gathered will still highlight the most significant qualitative project descriptors and impact areas.

4.3.   Emerging Themes

The following section presents our emerging findings, project descriptions and briefly presents some emerging themes.

4.3.1. Project definitions

Including the Transition working group, fourteen transitions projects have been identified from documents, interviews, and discussions. They are outlined as follows:

1. Bridging Project
2. CPOMS
3. Common Transfer Document
4. Interschool Visits
5. Parent Information Evening
6. Booklet
7. Summer Schools
8. STAR survey
9. ELSA
10. Peer mentoring
11. Young minds
12. SEN CPD
13. Transitions week
14. Other Resources
15. Transitions working group

Each is discussed in turn.

1. Bridging Project

This was completed in autumn 2020 (end of February 2020). In this project the English Department of two secondary schools collaborated with three Junior Schools. This intervention was created due to the fact that there were different approaches were used when teaching the primary versus secondary English curriculum and students were not engaged in learning. The lessons/teaching resources/and lesson plans for the English lessons are available on the website https://norwichopportunityarea.co.uk. This project was facilitated by inter-school visits which enabled staff to understand the gaps in the curriculum which could benefit from a bridging project. As well as the English project, the Maths project has been taken up to be developed further by the local Maths Hub who produced a 'Theme Park' bridging resource and Farmyard Maths resource in collaboration with schools across Norwich.

2. CPOMS

CPOMS is a safeguarding software package for schools. Using this package, teachers can comment on their key areas of concern. There is also space to add extra elements and a variety of tabs that can be used, to provide different data views. The aim of using CPOMS across all schools was to improve communication between schools by getting every Norwich school using the same safeguarding software. CPOMs was chosen as this was already used by most of the NOA schools. The NOA paid for schools to change to this system. Not all schools participated due to the policies of Academy Chains.

3. Common Transfer Document

The Common Paperwork (Common Transfer File/Common Transfer Document) was collaboratively designed and comes with a best practice document which contains guidelines for good transition seems to be very helpful. The common paperwork is an excel sheet with key information about the child. It has a number of tabs to be filled in relating to: the secondary school the child will go do, their name and surname; details of the teacher completing the form (name, e-mail address, school), the statement 'this child will settle in well at secondary school'; the areas/tables that are filled in are: academically, socially with peers, socially with teachers, to new routine; SATS in maths, reading and writing; information about SEND, EAL, CLA, safeguarding, young carer; any concerns about the child; information that might assist their class teacher not listed elsewhere; attendance; pupil premium; free school meals; and, concern for the safer school team. All this information provided gives teachers the opportunity to pass down a significant amount of information to the new school. Since it is an excel spreadsheet, it is free to use and can be shared via providers such as OneDrive. All schools are sent the document and the instructions on how to use it. All NOA high schools apart from one have used the new document with their feeder primary schools this summer for cohort 2020-2021'. From the NOA evaluation survey sent to all schools, the Common Transfer Document was scored easy to use, beneficial and helpful with school planning, and it eased communication with primary schools after the request of information had been made.

4. Interschool Visits

Staff members join schools to observe practice, build relationships, make notes, and design collaborative projects. The intention of these visits was to encourage communication and understanding so key staff could see what life was 'really like' in the secondary school for primary staff, or primary school for secondary staff. 11 primary schools sent staff to various secondary schools and staff from most secondary schools visited up to 8 primary schools. Some schools also engage in additional visits outside the remit of the transitions project visits.

5. Parent Information Evening

This Parents evening (admissions) project was delivered in September 2019 in a NOA community centre and was a drop in event which sought to encourage Y6 parents to look at multiple schools when applying for high schools. 5 of the NOA high schools were present at the event. The aim was to help prevent oversubscriptions to popular schools and to help raise the profile of under subscribed schools. The Council admissions team were present to explain the process involved. A guide was produced to support parents. The open evening was well attended by parents.

Some primary schools and secondary schools also run their own information evenings which provide parents with key updates on transfer to Y7. Several use data from the STAR survey to inform these evenings. The intention was for the STAR survey to be sent out prior to the evening so the primary could gauge the groups biggest concerns and then address them in the meeting. The success of their event would then be measured in the survey being sent out again to compare results. Resources the school could use for this event are here.

6. Booklet

*Transition Spring 2020 (*Good Practice Guide*)*: A guide to current practice in Norwich Opportunity Area schools' is a booklet designed to share good practice between schools, with the intention of encouraging school visits and exchange of ideas. There are a lot of good practice examples around the NOA area, but these are not always shared; this is where the booklet becomes very useful. 17 out of the 40 schools asked successfully contributed to this booklet. The booklet was intended as a 'good practice' document but became a 'snapshot of current practice', which is still very useful. The turnaround for the booklet was very tight, so it was rushed.

A *Parents Guide* Transition booklet was also used during summer 2020 since transitions/school visits/open evenings could not be scheduled due to Covid. This drew on information from the School Transition & Adjustment Research Study (STARS) (UCL, 2021a).

A template for a *Y7 Welcome Booklet* was also produced (Y7 Transition Booklets) in lieu of interschool visits being cancelled because of COVID. These were repeated in summer 2021 when schools could not hold visits once more and includes a pupil evaluation form at the end of the booklet.

Norfolk County Council has bank of additional resources for transition to secondary school, such as transition booklets available here.

7. Summer Schools

This is a common practice and is in line with the government initiative (DfE, 2013) which started in September 2011 (with the first schools starting their participation in 2012), was aimed at children on free school means (disadvantaged) and looked after pupils and provided targeted support in their primary to secondary school transition. The summer schools ran during the summer holidays, with the main aims being to prepare pupils socially and emotionally and to improve their learning engagement. Main activities involved team building, arts, and sports. Through these experiences, children become familiar with the school premises and staff, while staff members get to know more about their new pupils (including identifying additional needs). Schools were able to design their programmes based on the needs their future Y7 cohort had, and they could decide on the activities to be offered, how the participation days would be blocked. Non-disadvantaged pupils were also offered this opportunity, if eligible pupils turned down a place or if there was surplus funding; non-disadvantaged pupils made up 37% of the attendees.

8. STAR survey

The team behind the STARS programme (Rice et al.) define the primary to secondary school as successful when: 'A successful transition involved functioning well in two areas: 1) being academically and behaviourally involved in school and 2) feeling a sense of belonging to school' (UCL, 2021a) which were measured by primary and secondary school teachers, using a custom scale developed by the researchers. These concerns tend to get better once the transition has happened. Interestingly, they found that children's self-control is associated with both positive classroom behaviour, academic attainment, and also positive health outcomes (this trait is also positively linked to parental warmth with long term effects). High level of parental concerns affected how children settled academically to their new schools. Parents need to be sensitive when sharing their own concerns. Friendship stability was important to the children undergoing transitions and it can have an impact in academic attainment, conduct and prosocial behaviours. The aim of this project was to provide baseline data that would inform project development, and which would also inform evaluations.

9. ELSA

Emotional literacy support assistants (71 learning support assistants) were trained in November 2020 by EPSS Norwich (educational psychologists Norfolk/Suffolk County Council). They are a licensed training provider who run weekly training sessions. Training is now complete and currently LSAs are practising the ELSA early intervention with students with SEMH/trauma experiences that are waiting for CAMHS assessment. There is a dedicated website on ELSA https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/ with educational resources and training courses opportunities. Examples of things covered on the course are social skills, emotions, bereavement, social stories and therapeutic stories, anger management, self-esteem, counselling skills such as solution focus and friendship.

10. Peer mentoring

After visiting all the high school on their transition days in summer 2019, it was observed that all the schools had some sort of buddy system or similar for their new Y6 visitors. Peer mentoring was a way to establish and embed this practice and give better and more thorough training and confidence to those buddies and to encourage schools to start to use peer mentoring more widely across other year groups and when the Y6 started at the school as the new Y7. This was run by Essex Community CIC early this year (2021) and has not yet finished. Training was intended to help older students to support younger students: initially Y8 supporting Y7/6. This project has been expanded to include additional age groups and training moved online in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

11. Young minds

Young Minds is an organisation focusing on mental health for young people. Young Minds was introduced to offer support to teachers to better support parents of those less resilient children, as it was thought by supporting those less resilient parents they could in turn better support their children. The course offered by YoungMinds involves understanding resilience and its importance (alongside relevant theories behind resilience) and teaches those taking it how to build resilience in the young people they work with. This includes introducing activities that build resilience and building resilient practice in the school settings. There are also academic resilience practices that can be offered, which would benefit the most disadvantaged students.

12. SEN CPD

Facilitators/ Educational Psychologists have developed training packages around SEN for school staff. SEN resources included a booklet and training programme as well as webinars.

13. Transitions week

An agreement between primary and secondary schools in the Norwich Opportunity Area to streamline transition visits for Year 6 students led to most visits being held being within the same two weeks, including one week specifically for vulnerable students. In addition to easing planning for transitions this minimises disruption to learning for year 6 students. Despite the original intention, not all schools were able to commit to the same days and timeframe.

14. Other Resources

Other transition resources were created by the outreach team at the UEA with input from NOA and SEN advisor at Norfolk County Council.

15. Transitions working group

The transitions working group was set up to bring together some stakeholders (teachers, school leaders, local agency representatives) to develop and implement strategy around transitions project work. See 1.3 for further information. We have included the transitions work in our list of 'project definitions' as this has emerged in phase one as a significant resource for the staff involved, and one which the early data suggests meets some of the evaluation criteria.

4.3.2. Further emerging themes

Early review of the data suggest that some key themes are emerging across several of the data sources. In addition to aspects mentioned above in section 2, several further themes appear to be significant in terms of their impact on transitions. These are all features of projects that stakeholders identify as significant: 'transition' and 'transfer', wellbeing, SEND, school leadership involvement, the importance of school leadership support in facilitating inter-school/staff collaborations, challenges of collaboration and competition, challenging timelines, COVID-19, disengaged staff and schools, and time.

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6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1: Revised Project Outline

Project	Transition Evaluation
Provider	Anglia Ruskin University
Agreed Price	########
Key Deliverables:	

Key Deliverables:

- Report into the impact of transition activity during 2019-2020 on,
  - Resilience and behaviour of Y7 students
  - Academic and behaviour understanding of new Y7s by their new secondary school
  - Parent/carer involvement as a stakeholder in the transition process
  - Understanding the value for money of different interventions
- Create a tracking system and complete tracking process to review the impact of the transition projects on identified students from across the NOA Schools 2021-2022 cohort, based on above criteria.
- To track all the current Y6 students identified by their primary schools in the Common Transfer Document as being at risk of poor transition – a minimum of 100 students across at least four of the six participating secondary schools (see below)*
- Provide a simple evaluation tool for schools to continue tracking students and projects in future years.
- Report on results in January 2022, including a portfolio of case studies to highlight 'what worked' and any recommendations.
- All stats and tracked students should reflect information gathered from the following secondary schools: *CNS (City of Norwich School), City Academy, Jane Austen Academy, Hewett Academy, Open Academy, and Sewell Park Academy. Notre Dame High School took no part in our transition projects but as an NOA school may be approached as a comparative or for other supporting information the research deems useful.
- A minimum of eight primary schools should be chosen by the research team to best reflect the type and amount of NOA projects they participated in.

Report No #	Date	Milestones (Engagement, progress against outputs, evidence of impact, other)		Payment Date
	29th March 2021	Ethical approval complete All NOA transition data transferred	#######	April 2021 (late payment, not gone as of June 2021)

		to the Anglia Ruskin team All following milestones below confirmed.		
	30th April 2021	All NOA and school stats have been collated and interviews with staff, students and parents completed.		
M3	30th July	Interim report on retrospective projects has been completed. Tracking process has been finalised.	#######	August 2021
	30th September 2021 25th October 2021	Final Retrospective Project report. To include a portfolio of case studies to highlight 'what worked' Transition Audit tool available for use based on research findings so far.		
	29th October 2021	Surveys completed and data gathered from schools. Tracking targeted Y7 in place		
	Dec 2021	First term of tracked data from across the NOA high schools		
	18th April	Second term of tracked data from high schools has been collated		

M4	30th June 2022	Final report and recommendations Evaluation tool complete and handed over to schools and wider stakeholders for future use.	#######	Feb 2022

Issues/Risks	Agreed actions
Safe transfer of data between the NOA and schools and the University to comply with GDPR.	Both parties to agree upon a suitable solution.
Covid and lockdown preventing visits	Work will be conducted remotely by the Anglia Ruskin team.
Time scale is tight to run the first, retrospective phase of the project. Some schools may struggle to find time to be involved, or choose not to Parents may be difficult to engage with.	NOA will lend the Anglia Ruskin Team access to meetings and contacts as much as possible to facilitate their introductions to the schools. This includes key contacts.

Comments
Key Contacts for NOA:
Emma van Deventer Transition Manager e.vandeventer@sewellpark.org
07917553705
Katie White Programme Director katie.white@newanglia.co.uk 07384117147
Mel Fargo Finance Officer Melinda.fargo@norfolk.gov.uk 01603 222638
Any PO will be raised by Mel and sent to you to invoice the agreed amount according to the above timescale. Please send you invoice to invoices@norfolk.gov.uk and title it NOA Transition Evaluation. NCC takes approximately 30 days to clear an invoice, so your payment should be in line with the above Payment column on the agreement.

Interview Schedule

Research questions

RQ1) What was the qualitative nature of the 2019-2020 school transition interventions?
RQ2) Who was involved in the school transition interventions?

1. Introduction

- Attach permissions letter and participant information sheet in chat
- Purpose if the evaluation project and interview.

- Thank you for giving up your time
- The interview will last for no more than 1 hour.
- If at any time you want to pause or stop the interview, then please let me know and we can take a break or stop.
- Is that OK?
- The aim of this study is to better understand the impact of the transitions activities on students' resilience and behaviour in Y7. This will lead to a report of good practice and a tool to help you to measure the effectiveness of future interventions.
- We need to speak to the schools who have been involved in transitions activities so that we can gather together a series of case studies of good practice and so that these can be shared across the opportunity area.
- The questions will ask you about what the projects were, who was involved, whether they were useful and what you might change if you do it again.
- Is that OK?
- Just before we start with the questions, I would like to read through the consent form and ask you to give your consent verbally.
- [Read through consent form…]
- After the interview please could you email a signed consent form to me to approve our use of this interview.
- Is that OK?
- PRESS RECORD

> 1. *Beginning – check their involvement*
> 2. *Can you confirm who you are and where you work, please?*
> 3. *which projects you were involved in?*

Transfer info to 'Norwich school contacts' file.

> 4. *** Can I just check on my list that there aren't any others that you were involved in?*
> 5. *For each project they were involved in:*
> 6. *Can you tell us who was involved in this project?*

How were they involved?

Approx. how many students/parents/teachers/other?

7. How long did the project last?
8. How often have you run it?
9. Can you tell me about the project from your perspective?

- (Let them tell us about it first – then follow up…)
- Why did you choose to do this project in particular? (What is it that you mainly look for when you participate in this project?)
- Why is it important to your school/for your students?
- Have you found it useful? In what way?
- Do you think the students/parents found it useful? In what way?
- Has this project helped with the transition process? If so, how?
- Do you have any evidence of this?
- Were there any particular challenges or limitations? If so, what were they?
- What do you think you might change, add or do differently if/when you do it next time?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell us that you think is important (which we haven't covered)?

10. For particular projects…

Common Transfer document:

- Where does this information go?
- Who reads the document? The teachers?
- How are you using the information?

Bridging Project:

- Did the Bridging Project have a positive impact on behaviour/motivation/ students' engagement?

CPOMS:
- Did this tool improve the communication between schools?
- Did CPOMS serve its purpose of information sharing?

ELSA Hubs- ELSA (emotional literacy support assistants)
- Is your school using the ELSA intervention for transition purposes?
- How are the LSAs supporting students in Y6/Y7?

11. Ending

- This is the end of the interview
- Thank you for your time

12. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us that you think is important (which we haven't covered)?

6.3. Appendix 3: Survey Questions

1. Which secondary school do you work at?

2. How long have you been working at this school?

3. What is your role at the school? (e.g., head, lead of transition, SENCO, pastoral etc)

4. How do you find year 7 pupils when they start at your school? Please comment thinking about the following: a) their resilience b) their behaviour c) their understanding of academic expectations d) their Parent's/carer's involvement?

5. What do you think are the barriers that prevent new Y7 pupils from settling in? Please comment thinking about the following: a) their resilience b) their behaviour c) their understanding of academic expectations d) their Parent's/carer's involvement?

6. What do you think are the things that help new Y7 pupils from settling in? Please comment thinking about the following: a) their resilience b) their behaviour c) their understanding of academic expectations d) their Parent's/carer's involvement?

7. What are the factors that affected your school's capacity to support year 7s' transition from primary school over last 12 months (e.g., covid, family life)?

8. Activities that supported students' transition to the secondary school: How much do you agree with the following statements? In principle – do you think these will work?
    8.1. The bridging project is an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
    8.2. Use of CPOMS is an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
    8.3. Use of the Common Transfer Document is an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
    8.4. Interschool visits is an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
    8.5. School information booklets is helpful for pupils when they start at the secondary school
    8.6. Summer Schools is a good way of supporting pupils who might struggle in secondary school
    8.7. Using the STAR survey is an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
    8.8. Peer mentoring is useful for pupils in Y7
    8.9. Parent information evenings about pupil's transition to secondary school is effective in supporting pupils during their transition to Y7
    8.10. Emotional literacy support assistants are an effective way of supporting pupils who struggle in Y7
    8.11. Training to support SEND students is effective in supporting pupils during their transition to Y7
    8.12. Young Minds training is an effective way of supporting pupils who struggle in Y7
    8.13. Transitions Week is an effective way of supporting pupils during their transition period

8.14. The transition working group is an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school

9. In practice (with COVID): In the light of COVID how did this actually work last year?
9.1. The bridging project was an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
9.2. Use of CPOMS was an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
9.3. Use of the Common Transfer Document was an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
9.4. Interschool visits were an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
9.5. School information booklets were helpful for pupils when they start at the secondary school
9.6. Summer Schools were a good way of supporting pupils who might struggle in secondary school
9.7. Using the STAR survey was an effective way of supporting students' transfer to secondary school
9.8. Peer mentoring was useful for pupils in Y7
9.9. Parent information evenings about pupil's transition to secondary school were effective in supporting pupils during their transition to Y7
9.10. Emotional literacy support assistants were an effective way of supporting pupils who struggle in Y7
9.11. Training to support SEND students was effective in supporting pupils during their transition to Y7
9.12. Young Minds training was an effective way of supporting pupils who struggle in Y7
9.13. Transitions Week was an effective way of supporting pupils during their transition period
9.14. The transition working group were effective in working to support students' transfer to secondary school
9.15. The transitions projects helped to improve pupil resilience
9.16. The transitions projects helped to improve pupil behaviour
9.17. The transitions projects helped to improve pupil academic performance
9.18. The transitions projects helped to improve parental/carer involvement in the transition process

9.a. If you have been involved in any NOA transitions projects, please comment on how the programme/activity could be improved (please be as specific as possible - e.g., by schools, by colleagues, by the NOA staff, by the NOA structure).

10. Please indicate whether you agree with the following statements:
10.1. Support for new Y7 students is a high priority at our school.
10.2. Our school does further things to support Y6-Y7 transition (more than the projects noted above).
10.3. My involvement with the NOA transitions activities has improved my approach to supporting year 7 students.
10.4. Our involvement with the NOA transitions activities has improved the approach of my school to supporting year 7 students.

11. Please give further details on your answers above (if relevant).

12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

End