

Easing the Transition from Primary to Secondary School

Evaluation of three Scottish pilot projects

Ruth Bryan | April 2007



Introduction

- Aims of the evaluation
- The 3 pilot projects
- Research methods
- Results
- Conclusions

Aims of the evaluation

- Process evaluation
 - Implementation
 - Operation
- Outcome evaluation
 - Attainment (primary & secondary)
 - Experiences of transition to secondary school
- What works where/pilot models

The pilot projects

■ Literacy pilot – North Lanarkshire

- 2 learning partnerships
- Started in 2004/05 – 2 years
- Literacy Development Officers (LDOs)
- All pupils (P7-S2)
- **Primary**
 - Year 1: observation/fact finding/building trust, team teaching
 - Year 2: class/group work, specific topics
- **Secondary**
 - Team teaching
 - New methods (cooperative learning, reciprocal reading, formative assessment)
 - National Assessments
 - Other activities

The pilot projects

- Numeracy pilot – East Ayrshire
 - 2 learning partnerships
 - Started in 2004/05 – 2 years
 - All pupils (P7-S2)
 - Cross-sector working
 - Primary staff teaching in S1 & S2
 - Secondary staff teaching in P7
 - Whole class/group teaching
 - New methods
 - Both sectors introduced new methods
 - Interactive methods, Maths games
 - Maths language, ICT
 - New Programme of Study (levels D & E Maths)
 - Consistency in Maths teaching across sectors and in all schools

The pilot projects

- The ENABLE project – Eastbank Academy, Glasgow
 - Secondary only – no primaries involved
 - Started in 2002/03
 - Separate classes for the least able, most vulnerable children in S1 & S2
 - Smaller classes (average 15)
 - Primary trained teachers for numeracy & literacy
 - Adapted curriculum for other subjects
 - Focused pastoral care/social elements of transition/raising self-esteem etc
 - Return to mainstream in S3

Research methods

■ Qualitative consultation

- All secondaries, at least 2 primaries each

■ Teachers

- Key project staff, head teachers, principal teachers, classroom teachers, other school staff

■ Pupils

- NL/EA: 3 pupil cohorts, P7-S2
- Eastbank: 4 pupil cohorts, S1-S3

■ Quantitative data analysis

- 5-14 attainment data
 - Reading, Writing, Maths
 - School and cohort analysis
- Additional data for ENABLE
 - Attendance, Standard Grade results etc

Results

- Impacts in primary schools (NL/EA)
 - Pupil motivation/'P7 syndrome'
 - Pupils recognised new skills learned
 - Group work – confidence, p/t ratios
 - Use of technology
 - Attainment
 - Reading improvement
 - No pattern in Writing/Maths
 - Results to be seen in S1?

Results

- Impact of LDOs in secondaries
 - Support for class teachers
 - National Assessments
 - New teaching methods
 - Success of cooperative learning & reciprocal reading
 - Voluntary activities – reading
 - Attainment (especially in Reading)

Results

- Impact of numeracy pilot in secondaries
 - New methods/ICT used in S1 & S2
 - Made Maths 'fun'
 - Pupil/teacher ratios
 - Most benefit for the least able
 - Attainment
 - Improvement in one of two pupil cohorts
 - Results likely to be seen later?

Results

- **Impact on experiences of transition**
 - **Experience of pupils**
 - Mostly non-academic concerns
 - 'Friendly face' at secondary
 - Reassurance about standard/quantity of work, discipline & marking procedures etc
 - **Cross-sector transfer of information**
 - More accurate info about pupils' strengths & weaknesses
 - Not repeating work or 'standing still' in S1
 - Importance of new Programme of Study in EA
 - Allowed accurate setting of pupils in Maths

Results

■ Impact of ENABLE

■ Transition to S1

- Pupils had a range of concerns
- Smaller classes, fewer teachers, holistic approach
- Pupils settled in well & felt secure
- No stigma attached to ENABLE
- Confidence & personal development

■ Transition to mainstream S3

- Better prepared academically for S3
- Sustained informal support from ENABLE teachers

Results

■ Impact of ENABLE cont'd

■ Attainment

- Must be realistic
- Most mastered basic skills by end of S2
- Better Standard Grade results than comparable group of pupils

■ Engagement in education

- Pupil motivation
- Improved attendance
- Improved drop-out rates

Conclusions

■ Conclusions

- Pilots improved on existing transitions arrangements
- Qualitative evidence, largely supported by quantitative analysis, indicates all 3 pilots met their aims
- Developed to meet local needs – each pilot model was successful