What is Known About the Concerns Reported by Pupils During the Transfer from Primary to Secondary School?
A Mixed Methods Literature Review and Empirical Research

James Rhys Weetman

Doctorate of Applied Educational Psychology

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

May 2013

Acknowledgments

Disclaimer

This is being submitted for the award of Doctorate of Applied Educational Psychology. This piece contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other university module or degree. To the best of my knowledge, this work contains no material previously published or written by another person except where referenced.

James Weetman

May 2013

Abstract

Research shows that the transfer of pupils between the primary and secondary tiers of schooling is a key point in their lives, causing them anxiety and impacting on their ability to engage with learning. Yet despite this, research also concludes that this area is not given the attention it deserves.

From a literature review of available research into pupil concerns prior to and following the transfer to secondary school, it is argued that quantitative and qualitative studies in this area can be combined in order to increase understanding of the concerns reported by pupils at this time. In order to show how specific concerns change across the transfer process, a Waterfall Model of Transfer is offered as a representation of the findings from the literature.

In order to test the Waterfall Model of Transfer and explore pupil concerns further during the transfer process, a mixed methods study was conducted, focusing around a sorting task completed by 28 pupils in Year 6 and 6 pupils in Year 7. Additional qualitative and quantitative aspects were incorporated to support the findings of the sorting task.

The results obtained show that overall levels of concern decrease following transition, but individual analysis highlights that for some pupils, specific concerns remain or increase in severity following transfer. The findings also support a revised Waterfall Model of Transfer as a tool to show how pupil concerns change at this key point in pupils' lives. Theoretical and practical applications, as well as further research opportunities are also discussed.

What is Known About the Concerns Reported by Pupils During the Transfer from Primary to Secondary School?
A Mixed Methods Literature Review and Empirical Research

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Literature Review

Abstract

The transfer of pupils between tiers of schooling is a key feature of the English education system and are major events in pupils' lives (Capel, Zwozdiak-Myers & Lawrence, 2007). The transfer of pupils from primary to secondary school is reported in the literature as a vulnerable time for pupils and when pupil progression is most at risk (Dann, 2011). This review focused on the views of pupils during their transfer from primary to secondary school, specifically the concerns reported by pupils prior to and following the transfer.

Available research was collected following a three stage process; searching, mapping and synthesis. Following the synthesis of the research, it became clear that research into pupil transfer has been conducted using a range of methods, so a decision was made to explore the findings from quantitative and qualitative research separately. This enabled a detailed analysis of content as well as discussion of methodological issues and concerns, before a final synthesis of all studies.

The findings of this review suggest that quantitative and qualitative studies into this area can be combined in order to produce a holistic picture of how pupil concerns change across the transfer to secondary school. From the research, a Waterfall Model of Transfer is offered as a possible representation of how specific concerns are held prior to transfer, then either 'wash out' over the summer holidays or persist into secondary school.

Introduction

The transfer[1] of pupils is an '…integral part of the education system in England.' (Capel, Zwozdiak-Myers, & Lawrence, 2007, p.14). There are typically three transfers in the English education system; nursery to primary school, primary school to secondary school, and from

---

[1] To avoid confusion, Galton, Gray and Ruddick's (1999) definitions will be used for the purpose of this review. The term 'transfer' will refer to movement from one educational setting to another, and 'transition' will refer to movement between year groups within the same setting.

secondary school to higher education or work (Chedzoy & Burden, 2007; Topping, 2011).[2] Whilst each is an important and significant event (Capel et al., 2007; Di Santo & Berman, 2011; Maras & Aveling, 2006), this review will focus on the transfer from primary to secondary school which has been identified as a vulnerable time for all pupils (Dann, 2011). At this point, pupil progression is most at risk for several reasons including lack of communication between schools and issues with curriculum continuity (Department of Education and Science, 1985; Marshall & Hargreaves, 2007; Sweetser, 2003).

Given that this transfer is seen as a '…key rite of passage…' (Pratt & George, 2005, p.16), it is somewhat surprising that researchers continue to report that it is not given the recognition it requires (e.g. Topping, 2011; Vinson & Harrison, 2006), particularly in the United Kingdom (West, Sweeting, & Young, 2010). The research that has been published also lacks continuity, switching focus between three strands of research: curriculum and organisational issues, educational attainment and the experiences of pupils transferring schools (Chedzoy & Burden, 2007; Galton et al., 1999; West et al., 2010).

Of these three strands, this review will look at research into pupils' experiences of the primary-secondary school transfer. Previous authors have stated the importance of including the views of children and young people in educational research (e.g. Davis & Watson, 2001; Lightfoot, Wright, & Sloper, 1999) as children often have the clearest idea of what factors affect their development (Cefai & Cooper, 2010) and have views that may differ from the adults around them (Frederickson, Dunsmuir, Lang, & Monsen, 2004). In addition, Van Ophuysen (2009) argues that the transfer to secondary school is a critical life event that requires individual adjustment, suggesting that views of the pupils are crucial to understanding how it affects those undergoing the transfer.

Research into pupil views on school transfer has drawn varying conclusions. West et al. (2010) conclude that most pupils report concerns relating to formal and non-formal aspects of their secondary school prior to transfer. This is in contrast to findings by Berndt and Mekos (1995) and Sirsch (2000, in Ophuysen, 2009) that children in their studies were more positive than negative in their expectations of the school transfer. Studies generally conclude there is a reduction in concerns once pupils have transferred (e.g. West et al.,

---

[2] Some school systems will have more transfers, for example first, middle and high schools instead of primary and secondary schools (Akos & Galassi, 2004; Topping, 2011).

2010; Zeedyk et al., 2003), but Lohaus et al. (2004) report that there is less of a consensus regarding how specific concerns change pre- and post-transition. Topping (2011) stated that whilst there is a growing body of literature in the area of pupil views regarding primary to secondary school transfer, there are still areas which require further exploration.

This literature review will therefore bring together the research regarding pupil views on the primary-secondary transfer, with the aim of providing clarity as to how different factors affect the transfer using the review question:

What is known about the concerns of young people before and after the transfer from the primary to the secondary tier of education?

Methods

For this literature review, the method outlined by Petticrew & Roberts (2006) was used, which splits the process into three stages; searching, mapping and synthesis (Cole, 2008)[3]. Following the mapping out of study findings, it became apparent that research into pupil views on transfer from the primary stage of education to the secondary has been conducted with differing methodologies, leading to quantitative and qualitative results. Including both qualitative and quantitative research in a mixed-methods systematic review has been explored in the literature, with several researchers concluding that systematic reviews should combine research from different methodologies (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Sandelowski, Barroso, & Voils, 2007; Thomas et al., 2004), thus allowing the researcher to identify overlapping facets, augment information, work with contradictions across the multiple sources and add overall scope and breadth (Greene et al 1989).

One of the issues in including both quantitative and qualitative studies in a systematic review is how the review synthesises the findings from the different types of studies (Dixon-Woods & Fitzpatrick, 2001).   This is because "Traditional systematic reviews usually answer a single question, use one type of study and, hence, only require one method of synthesis to combine the findings of studies." (Harden & Thomas, 2005, p.257).

---

[3] See Appendix A for a full outline of the process.

In order to include information from all relevant research obtained from the database searches, a decision was made to follow the process outlined by Thomas et al.'s (2004) systematic review. This approach involves three syntheses; a quantitative synthesis, a qualitative synthesis and a synthesis of both the quantitative and qualitative studies. Each synthesis has been further sub-divided into the differing aspects of the research question, exploring concerns pre-transfer and post-transfer.

Quantitative Synthesis

Before exploring the results of the studies, it is important to first discuss the methodology. Whilst all studies used questionnaires to gather data, their construction and how the results were reported make exact comparisons difficult. For example, in Akos' (2002) study, the pupils were asked to select concerns from a list of 13 themes, which had been generated from an activity earlier in the study. The checklist also included an open-ended response for additional concerns if required. In comparison, Rice, Frederickson and Seymour (2011) used the School Concerns Questionnaire, which asks pupils to rate seventeen concerns on a Likert scale (Lietz, 2010).

This raises several possible issues for comparison. Firstly, the same range of options was not made available to each set of participants, particularly with the lack of an open-ended response in some studies. Secondly, the use of a rating scale allows pupils to express the level of concern they have around a questionnaire item. In the Akos (2002) study, it is assumed that it was left up to the individual pupil to decide how great a concern an item had to be before it was marked as a concern on the questionnaire, as no guidance is given in the paper as to the level of concern required before an item is recorded as such.

Of the six quantitative studies, only two reported full tables of results for concerns pre-transfer (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2008; Zeedyk et al., 2003), with the others providing data on the most common concerns (Akos, 2002; Rice, Frederickson, & Seymour, 2011) or those '…highlighted as worthy of further consideration…' (Chedzoy & Burden, 2007, p.27) (Chedzoy & Burden, 2007; Graham & Hill, 2003). This presents an issue when comparing the findings of the different studies, as concerns may not have been highlighted in the questionnaires or not reported in the results. A further issue when comparing studies

is how the quantitative data is reported. Some studies report the exact percentages of pupils that listed a factor as a concern. However, other studies give approximations, using phrases such as 'Nearly 70% of students…' (Chedzoy & Burden, 2007, p.30) or use graphs with insufficient information to ascertain the accurate percentages (West et al., 2010). Whilst slight variation in percentages may not be viewed as important by some, it remains a potential issue for comparing data. For example, phrases such as 'nearly' or 'almost' are open to interpretation.

Meta-analyses tend to exclude studies not reporting sufficient data to allow for effect size calculations (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2011)[4]. Of the studies obtained from the database search outlined, no studies reported sufficient results to calculate an effect size for the data comparing specific concerns pre- and post-transfer.

Whilst some researchers may not have intended for their data to be used to calculate an effect size, it is important for data to be reported fully, so accurate and informed decisions can be made. A study by Bakker and Wicherts (2011) found that around 50% of psychological papers published contain reporting errors, which can only be checked if a complete data set is available. They also found that author reluctance to share research data was associated with more errors in the reported data and relatively weaker evidence. It would therefore appear that full transparency of data during the research procedure is crucial for identifying quality studies with robust, unbiased data from which to draw evidence (Plonsky & Gass, 2011).

Despite the methodological considerations discussed above, the quantitative findings reported in the studies enable exploration of the types of concerns mentioned by pupils pre- and post-transfer, and how often certain concerns were reported.

---

[4] Effect size is a standardised metric showing the difference between two groups (typically an intervention group and a control group), and is calculated to give a numerical value which can then be interpreted and compared to other values to explore the magnitude of the effect (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). Using Cohen's interpretation of effect size (1988), an effect size that is less than 0.20 is regarded as 'small', an effect size that is between 0.20 and 0.50 is regarded as 'moderate', and an effect size greater than or equal to 0.80 is regarded as 'large'.

Pre-transfer

Study	Concern	Data	Notes
Akos (2002)	older students	14% of concerns reported	Four most common concerns reported
	homework	13% of concerns reported	
	using one's locker	12% of concerns reported	
	getting good grades	12% of concerns reported	
Chedzoy & Burden (2007)	homework	reported by 81% of students	Selected concerns discussed
	strict teachers	reported by 79% of students	
	Academic work	reported by nearly 70% of students	
	being picked on	reported by just over 50% of students	
Zeedyk et al. (2003)	bullying	reported by 31% of sample	
	getting lost	reported by 13% of sample	
	peer relations	reported by 12% of sample	
	workload	reported by 12% of sample	
	new teachers	reported by 6% of sample	
	academic performance	reported by 6% of sample	
	other concerns	reported by less than 5% of sample	
	no concerns	reported by 33% of sample	
INTO (2008)	bullying	reported by 68% of sample	
	getting lost	reported by 36% of sample	
	making friends	reported by 18% of sample	
	coping with new subjects	reported by 18% of sample	
	increased workload	reported by 16% of sample	
	new teachers	reported by 14% of sample	
	academic performance	reported by 4% of sample	
Rice, Seymour & Frederickson (2011)	homework	mean score for concern = 5.2/10	Five most commonly endorsed concerns reported
	being bullied	mean score for concern = 5.1/10	
	remembering equipment	mean score for concern = 4.4/10	
	size of the school	mean score for concern = 4.2/10	
	changing classes	mean score for concern = 4.2/10	

Table 1. Findings of quantitative studies regarding pre-transfer concerns

Comparing the findings from these studies, there is one concern that is reported in all five, bullying or being picked on[5]. Additionally, this concern is the most common concern in three studies (Akos, 2002; Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2008; Zeedyk et al., 2003) and the second most reported concern in another study (Rice et al., 2011). In the Chedzoy and Burden (2007) study, where a selection of results was reported, more than half the

---

[5] In Akos' (2002) study, the 'older students' concern also incorporated bullying as part of the concern.

pupils reported concerns of being picked on. This data suggests that for pupils preparing to make the transition to secondary school, bullying is a significant concern.

Some of the concerns mentioned in the studies above could be grouped into a set focused around academic concerns. This could include homework (reported as a concern in three of the studies), workload and academic performance (both mentioned in two studies), as well as coping with new subjects and the difficulty of the work (each listed as a concern in one study).

The remaining concerns for students pre-transfer can be grouped into environmental concerns (using one's locker, getting lost, size of the school, changing classes), organisational concerns (remembering equipment) and social/interpersonal concerns (relationships with peers and teachers, making friends, not knowing anyone).

Post-transfer

Study	Concern	Data	Notes
Akos (2002)	older students/bullying	24% of concerns reported	103 Randomly selected students from pre-transfer sample
	getting lost	19% of concerns reported	
	getting good grades	19% of concerns reported	
	no concerns	14% of concerns reported	
	being late	7% of concerns reported	
Akos (2002)	getting lost	26% of concerns reported	97 academically successful (C grade average and higher) students
	making friends	13% of concerns reported	
	class schedule	11% of concerns reported	
	using lockers	10% of concerns reported	
	being late	8% of concerns reported	
	no concerns	5% of concerns reported	
Chedzoy & Burden (2007)	homework	reported by 72% of students	Selected concerns discussed
	academic work	reported by 41% of students	
	bullying	reported by 20% of students	
Zeedyk et al. (2003)	bullying	reported by 48% of sample	
	getting lost	reported by 23% of sample	
	peer relations	reported by 14% of sample	
	workload	reported by 10% of sample	
	new teachers	reported by 9% of sample	
	being the youngest	reported by 6% of sample	
	other concerns	reported by less than 5% of sample	
	no concerns	reported by 8% of sample	
West, Sweeting & Young (2003) [6]	bullying	reported by ~50% of sample	
	timetable	reported by ~35% of sample	
	amount of work	reported by ~30% of sample	
	older children	reported by ~25% of sample	
	bullying	reported by ~20% of sample	
	getting to school	reported by ~15% of sample	
	different teachers	reported by ~15% of sample	
	mixing with peers	reported by ~15% of sample	
	making new friends	reported by ~10% of sample	
Rice, Seymour & Frederickson (2011)	being bullied	mean score for concern = 4.9/10	Five most commonly endorsed concerns reported
	homework	mean score for concern = 4.7/10	
	older children	mean score for concern = 4.4/10	
	remembering equipment	mean score for concern = 3.6/10	
	ability to do the work	mean score for concern = 3.1/10	
Graham & Hill (2003)	homework	reported by 21% of sample	Two thirds reported no anxiety after a month
	navigating the school	reported by 15% of sample	
	more teachers	reported by 5% of sample	

Table 2. Findings of quantitative studies regarding post-transfer concerns

---

[6] The percentages reported from the West, Sweeting and Young (2010) study are approximations interpreted from the graph presented in the study, as no exact figures were provided.

As with the pre-transfer results, bullying was a significant concern for pupils post-transfer, being listed as a concern in four of the six studies[7]. Peer relations and making friends, getting lost and teachers were concerns reported in three of the five studies, with timetable and scheduling being reported as concerns in two studies.

Comparing Pre- and Post-transfer Quantitative Results

For comparative purposes, all the concerns reported in the research pre- and post-transfer were compiled into a table. The concerns were grouped into categories around academic (e.g. workload and academic performance), environment (e.g. getting lost and the size of the school), organisational (e.g. remembering equipment, being late), social (e.g. bullying and making friends) and teacher issues (e.g. strictness and having more teachers).

Pre-transfer Concern	Study	Post-transfer Concern	Study
Academic - Homework	Akos (2002)	Academic - Homework	Graham & Hill (2003)
Academic - Homework	Rice et al. (2011)	Academic - Homework	Rice et al. (2011)
Academic - Homework	Chedzoy & Burden (2007)	Academic - Performance	Rice et al. (2011)
Academic - New subjects	INTO (2008)	Academic - Performance	Akos (2002)
Academic - Performance	INTO (2008)	Academic - Workload	West et al. (2003)
Academic - Performance	Zeedyk et al. (2003)	Academic - Workload	Zeedyk et al. (2003)
Academic - Performance	Akos (2002)		
Academic - Workload	INTO (2008)		
Academic - Workload	Chedzoy & Burden (2007)		
Academic - Workload	Zeedyk et al. (2003)		
Environment - Changing classes	Rice et al. (2011)	Environment - Getting lost	Akos (2002)
Environment - Getting lost	INTO (2008)	Environment - Getting lost	Zeedyk et al. (2003)
Environment - Getting lost	Zeedyk et al. (2003)	Environment - Navigating School	Graham & Hill (2003)
Environment - School Size	Rice et al. (2011)	Environment - School Size	West et al. (2003)

---

[7] Bullying was reported as a concern for the general sample in Akos' (2002) study, but not for the academically successful student sample. Additionally, it is not indicated in the Graham and Hill (2003) study whether bullying was a concern or not for the pupils.

Environment - Using Lockers	Akos (2002)	Environment - Using Lockers	Akos (2002)
Organisational - Remembering Equipment	Rice et al. (2011)	Organisational - Being late	Akos (2002)
		Organisational - Being late	Akos (2002)
		Organisational - Getting to School	West et al. (2003)
		Organisational - Remembering Equipment	Rice et al. (2011)
		Organisational - Timetable	Rice et al. (2011)
		Organisational - Timetable	West et al. (2003)
Social - Bullying	INTO (2008)	Social - Bullying	Rice et al. (2011)
Social - Bullying	Rice et al. (2011)	Social - Bullying	West et al. (2003)
Social - Bullying	Zeedyk et al. (2003)	Social - Bullying	Zeedyk et al. (2003)
Social - Bullying	Chedzoy & Burden (2007)	Social – Bullying/Older Children	Akos (2002)
Social - Making Friends	INTO (2008)	Social - Making Friends	Akos (2002)
Social - Older children	Akos (2002)	Social - Making Friends	West et al. (2003)
Social - Peer Relations	Zeedyk et al. (2003)	Social - Older children	Rice et al. (2011)
		Social - Older children	West et al. (2003)
		Social - Peer Relations	Zeedyk et al. (2003)
		Social - Being the Youngest	Zeedyk et al. (2003)
Teachers - New	INTO (2008)	Teachers - New	Zeedyk et al. (2003)
Teachers - New	Zeedyk et al. (2003)	Teachers - Different	West et al. (2003)
Teachers - Strictness	Chedzoy & Burden (2007)	Teachers – Having More	Graham & Hill (2003)

Table 3. Comparison of quantitative findings pre- and post-transfer.

Figure 1. Process model of reported concerns pre- and post-transfer for studies using quantitative approaches
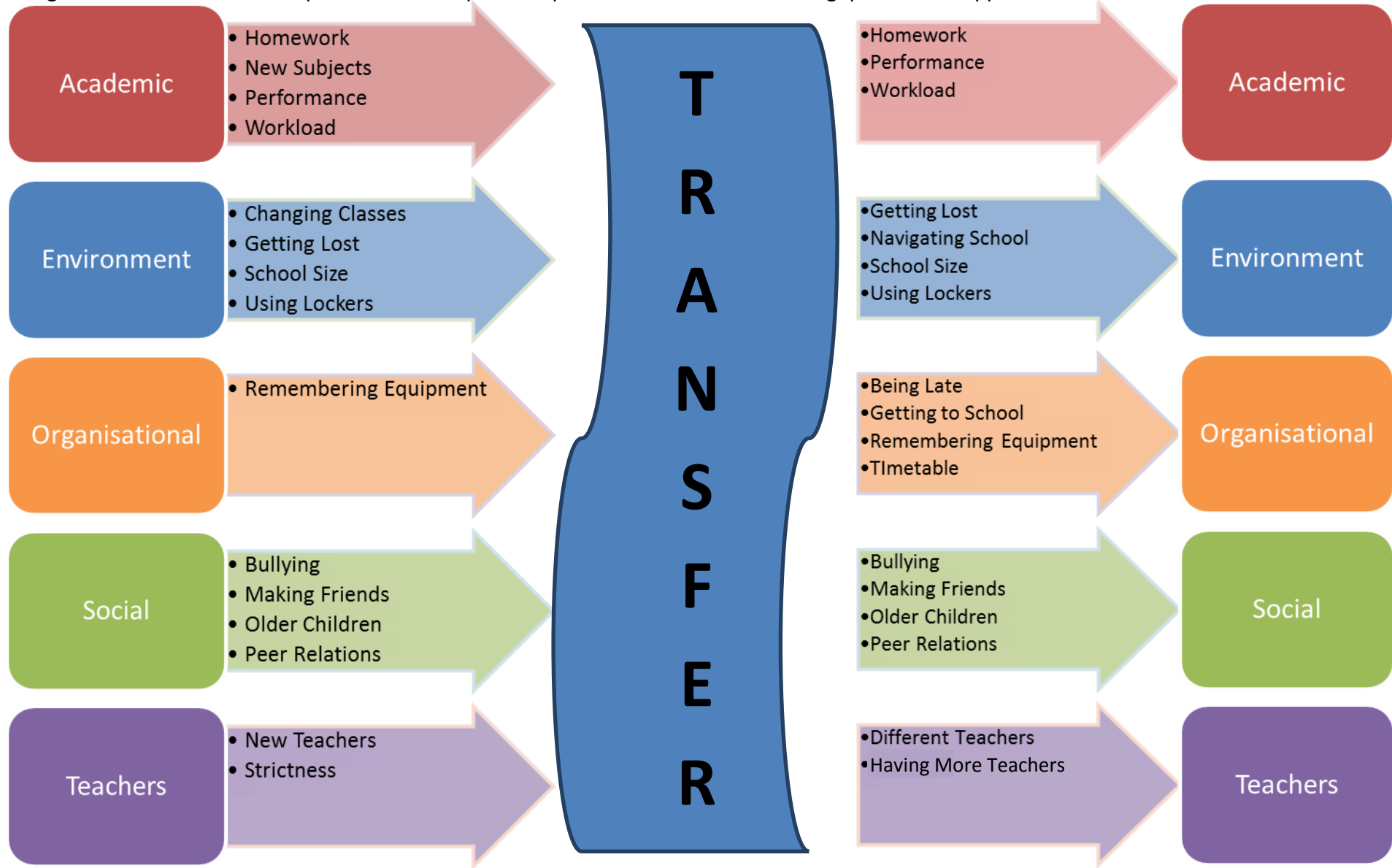
In Zeedyk et al.'s (2003) study, bullying and getting lost increased in frequency of reporting as post-transfer concerns (17% and 10% respectively). Peer relations and new teachers were slightly more reported post-transfer (2% and 3% increases).   New environment, workload and academic performance were reported as concerns slightly less (2% reductions in frequency of reporting).

Older students continued to be the most frequently reported concern for the random post-transfer sample in Akos' (2002) study, increasing from 14% of concerns pre-transfer to 24% of concerns post-transfer. Getting good grades also remained a concern, increasing from 12% pre-transfer to 19% post-transfer. Using lockers was another theme that continued to be a concern post-transfer, although homework was not reported as a concern for either the random or academically successful samples post-transfer.

Getting lost became a greater concern post-transfer making up less than 12% of responses pre-transfer, increasing to 19% of the randomly selected sample's responses and 26% of the academically successful sample's concerns following transfer.

Three of the five most commonly endorsed concerns in the Rice, Seymour and Frederickson (2011) study, homework, being bullied and remembering equipment for school, continued to be concerns following the transfer to secondary school.

From an initial comparison of concerns reported by pupils, academic, environmental, organisational, social and teacher concerns are present pre- and post-transfer. However, on closer inspection, the nature of some of the concerns does differ slightly across the school transfer, as shown in Figure 1 above.

Post-transfer, new organisational concerns are reported, such as being late, getting to school and timetable issues. Also concerns regarding teachers change across the transfer, with pre-transfer concerns around having new teachers and their perceived strictness being replaced with concerns about having more teachers, and different teachers for different subjects.

In academic concerns, homework and academic performance remained concerns post-transfer. Academic work and workload, reported as concerns in three studies pre-transfer, appear to be less concerning following the transfer to secondary school. This drop in

concern is highlighted in the Chedzoy and Burden's (2007) study, where nearly 70% of students perceived the work would be difficult in secondary school pre-transfer, but only 41% confirmed this post-transfer. Furthermore, the percentage of pupils finding the work easy rose from 1% pre-transfer to 12%, as the percentage of children who felt they would have to work hard fell from 65% to 40% following transfer. One possible explanation for this is mentioned in the study, with 46% of pupils reporting the work was somewhat or very similar to the work they had done at primary school.

Social concerns remained similar across the transfer, with bullying, making friends, older children and peer relations all considered as being issues that persisted across the transfer. Environmental concerns also persisted across the school transfer, with getting lost, school size and using lockers remaining as concerns for pupils once in secondary school.

Qualitative Synthesis

Qualitative methodology allows for a richness of data and increased likelihood of the emergence of human meaning surrounding the research context (Graue & Walsh, 1998, in Tobbell, 2003). In order to report these data effectively and compare findings from different studies, the research data for the qualitative studies were analysed, themes relating to school transfer concerns were drawn out and then organised into the same groups used for the quantitative data analysis. As with any set of data, interpretation by another party leads to the possibility of it being re-interpreted, due to that party's beliefs, knowledge, experience etc. This concept of hermeneutics (Teevan, 2005) is particularly important when interpreting qualitative data, as categorisation may alter the intended meaning, leading to inaccurate conclusions.   The categories used in this review are only intended as a rough guide to group concerns reported in the different studies.

Another important point to note is that two of the qualitative studies, Dann (2011), and Maras and Aveling (2006), report the views of pupils with special educational needs. Whilst their views are no more or less valid than children without special educational needs, there are some concerns that may be more relevant to different populations[8].

---

[8] for example, having a reduced timetable at school or access to specialist support staff

Methods

At this point, it is important to discuss the methodologies used by the qualitative studies reported in this review. Ashton (2008) used two methods to obtain data, a questionnaire and a set of classroom activities to explore what pupils were looking forward to about secondary school and what they were worried about. The themes arising from the data are then discussed using results from both approaches. The three other qualitative studies used semi-structured interviews (Dann, 2011, Maras & Aveling, 2006, Tobbell, 2003), but the amount of information given by each study differs. Neither Tobbell (2003) nor Maras and Aveling (2006) offer any specific rationale for the use of a semi-structured interview, but the interview framework used in the Maras and Aveling (2006) study was developed through the use of pilot studies. The use of pilot studies can ensure the method (for example, an interview framework) is relevant to the sample (Norwich, Richards, & Nash, 2010) and any issues reported can be addressed before conducting the rest of the research.

In addition to reporting the methods used in studies, it is also important for studies to report how qualitative data is analysed. Qualitative methods can generate large amounts of data, which then have to be interpreted by a researcher (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). Transparency of the method or approach used to do this is important for ruling out issues such as researcher bias, which can be avoided through the use of multiple coders to obtain a measure of inter-rater reliability. It is interesting to note that only the study by Dann (2011) outlines how inter-rater reliability was obtained. However, Tobbell (2003) explains that the findings in the study are a personal interpretation of the data and that another researcher may have interpreted the themes differently.

It is crucial for researchers to include all relevant data in their research, so that readers can make informed decisions about the results obtained from the study and the validity of the conclusions that can be drawn from them. Incomplete or non-transparent reporting of methods may lead to confusion in understanding how results were obtained and prevent results being replicated in the future (Des Jarlais, Lyles, Crepaz, & TREND Group, 2004). Whilst quantitative methodologies may differ from qualitative approaches in analysing the reliability and validity of data (Tobbell, 2003), the approaches and techniques used in qualititative research should still be reported.

One of the strengths of qualitative research is the detail and depth of data that quantitative research cannot provide (Patton, 2002). When researching pupil transitions, qualitative methods can provide detailed information on the perspectives of the pupils (Weiss, 1998), as well as exploring why each concern is raised, rather than just reporting it (Patton, 2002). However, exploring these issues requires a careful approach that engages pupils with the research, and collects and represents their views in a genuine and non-judgemental way (Johnston, 2005). It is important to acknowledge the needs of young people when working with them as participants (Nieto, 1994), for example, providing a visual resource to support pupils when they were asked questions (Dann, 2011).   Pupils also express themselves differently in mixed or single sex groups and their views may be affected by peer pressure issues (Curtis, Roberts, Copperman, Downie, & Liabo, 2004). Some pupils may therefore prefer individual discussions, but others may be threatened by them (Johnston, 2005).

Given the open nature of qualitative methodology to allow for ideas to emerge which had not been anticipated by the researcher (Rutter, 2005; Smith, 1996 in Smith, Harre, & Van-Langenhove, 1996) it is perhaps unsurprising that few concerns persisted exactly across the transfer.

Making new friends continued to be a concern post-transfer, as were organisational skills. Concerns about the school environment were raised both pre- and post-transfer regarding the layout of the school building and how to navigate around the school to avoid being late.

One difference was the lack of concerns regarding academic issues and teachers in the pre-transfer studies by Maras and Aveling (2006), Dann (2011) and Ashton (2008), compared to the concerns raised by post-transfer pupils in Tobbell's (2003) study. Ashton (2008) notes that "There were very few comments from students about the work they would be doing at high school" (Ashton, 2008, p.180), attributing this to the importance of social and environmental factors of transfer for pupils.

Study	Pre-transfer Concern	Post-transfer Concern	Study
Maras & Aveling	Environment - No specialist support	Academic - Homework	Maras & Aveling
Ashton	Environment - Getting lost	Academic - Increased time at school	Maras & Aveling
Maras & Aveling	Environment - Lack of information regarding behaviour expectations	Academic - Increased workload	Maras & Aveling
Dann	Environment - Layout of school and key places	Academic - Lessons too short	Tobbell
Ashton	Organisational – organising self	Environment - general	Maras & Aveling
*Ashton	Social - Bullying, including racial bullying	Environment - Late for lessons	Tobbell
Ashton	Social – Falling in with 'a bad crowd'	Environment - Navigating around school	Tobbell
Maras & Aveling	Social - Making new friends	Organisational - general	Maras & Aveling
Ashton	Social - Making new friends	Organisational - Timetable issues	Tobbell
Maras & Aveling	Social - New social context	Social - Being the youngest in school	Tobbell
Maras & Aveling	Social - Not knowing anyone	Social - Being treated like adults/change in expectations	Tobbell
Ashton	Social - Not knowing anyone	Social - Bullying	Dann
		Social - Making new friends	Maras & Aveling
		Social - Older students	Tobbell
		Teachers - do not know who you are	Tobbell
		Teachers – Exclude you from lessons if you are not clever	Tobbell
		Teachers - Multiple teachers/lack of continuity	Tobbell

Table 4. Comparison of qualitative findings pre- and post-transfer.

Figure 2. Process model of reported concerns pre- and post-transfer for studies using qualitative approaches.

Environment
- No Specialist Support
- Getting Lost
- Behaviour Expectations
- School Layout

Organisational
- Organising Self

Social
- Bullying
- Falling in with 'a bad crowd'
- Making friends
- New social context
- Not knowing anyone

TRANSFER

- Homework
- More time at school
- Lessons too short
- Workload

Academic

- General concerns
- Being late for lessons
- Navigating school

Environment

- General concerns
- Timetable issues

Organisational

- Youngest in school
- Change in expectations
- Bullying
- Making new friends
- Older students

Social

- Do not know who you are
- Exclude you from lessons
- Multiple teachers

Teachers

The qualitative responses also give some elaboration as to the nature of the concerns. For example, the concerns around teachers reported in Tobbell's (2003) study are made with reference to specific examples, such as feelings of being excluded from lessons due to the vocabulary being used, teachers not knowing pupils' names and a lack of continuity between lessons due to the changes in room and teacher between subjects. Sometimes, the concerns were related to each other, for example one pupil reported concerns around being able to navigate around school successfully affecting their ability to concentrate in class (Tobbell, 2003).

Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Studies

The results from the quantitative and qualitative studies were brought together with the aim of providing a holistic picture of the concerns expressed by pupils across the transfer from the primary to secondary stage of education. Another benefit of combining quantitative and qualitative data together is the opportunity for findings to be compared and contrasted, in order to generate possible explanations for results. In terms of convergence (Greene et al., 1989), the data obtained from the qualitative and quantitative studies appear to sit alongside each other, with similar concerns being reported. For example, getting lost, organisation, bullying and making friends were all pre-transfer concerns reported in at least one qualitative and one quantitative study. Post-transfer concerns such as homework, timetable issues, bullying and making friends were mentioned in quantitative and qualitative studies. Comparing these two sets of results also suggests that bullying and making friends are concerns that persist across the transfer regardless of the method used. Ashton (2008) supports this finding, concluding that '…students' heads were full of the social and environmental aspects of moving school…' (Ashton, 2008, p.180) and not ready to think about any other issues until concerns relating these areas were resolved.

One pre-transfer academic concern not present in the post-transfer results was a concern around new subjects. In Chedzoy and Burden's (2007) study, having new subjects was actually the most enjoyed aspect of the pupils' new school. Uncertainty about the content of the new subjects may have been a factor in reporting it as a concern, which could also

lead to concerns about the ability to complete the work set in the subject. Both these concerns were raised pre- and post-transfer, suggesting that once pupils start the new subjects, the academic concerns are similar to other familiar subjects.

A similarity can be drawn between this change in academic concern towards new subjects and the lack of concern about new teachers post-transfer. It is possible that both these concerns are due to their unknown nature (Gullone & King, 1992) and once pupils have made the transfer, these concerns are replaced with others (such as having different teachers for different subjects).

Certain organisational concerns are only raised post-transfer, possibly due to a lack of awareness of the changes that accompany starting secondary school, along with a shift in responsibility towards the pupil. This may be partially explained by a concern raised in Tobbell's (2003) study, that there is an expectation for the newly transferred pupils to behave like adults, which some pupils reported not being ready for. It seems that some students were aware of the change in expectations from older siblings, as the expectations of being organised and having to move around a large building were concerns mentioned both pre- and post-transfer in some studies (e.g. Ashton, 2008, Akos, 2002). For other aspects of secondary school organisation such as timetables and being late, a lack of familiarity may explain why they are not reported as a concern until after the transfer.

Social concerns for pupils during the transfer can be split into two areas; concerns around older children at school, most commonly bullying, and issues around making friends and relationships with their peers. As discussed earlier, bullying is a concern reported in the majority of the studies in this review. A related concern raised in Ashton's (2008) study suggests that for some pupils in a primary school with an almost exclusively Asian heritage population, the concern around bullying focused around possible racist incidents in their new secondary school. Ashton (2008) also comments that the proportion of students mentioning bullying in her study was not as high as might have been expected (17% of written comments). This may have been due to the separation of comments about bullying into worries and questions, for example, 'I am scared about being bullied' and 'Will there be bullies?', something that may not have been possible in quantitative studies.

The other significant social concern was making friends. Pupils raised this as a concern in several studies, whether they were transferring on their own or with familiar children. This concern was still an issue post-transfer, but for some pupils it became less of an issue, with strategies such as 'buddies' from other year groups and pre-transfer visits (Dann, 2011) giving some children the opportunity to get to know one another before transfer. Interestingly, the pre-transfer visits also raised the issue of wanting to avoid negative friendships, or falling in with a 'bad crowd' (Ashton, 2008). Given the uncertainty about the composition of classes and form/tutor groups post-transfer, some children also reported being positively surprised at seeing friends from their old school (Dann, 2011).

Study	Pre-Transfer Concern	Post-Transfer Concern	Study
Akos	Academic - Homework	Academic - Homework	Akos
Chedzoy	Academic - Homework	Academic - Homework	Maras & Aveling
Rice	Academic - Homework	Academic - Homework	Rice
INTO	Academic - New subjects	Academic - Increased time at school	Maras & Aveling
Akos	Academic - Performance	Academic - Increased workload	Maras & Aveling
INTO	Academic - Performance	Academic - Lessons too short	Tobbell
Zeedyk	Academic - Performance	Academic - Performance	Akos
Chedzoy	Academic - Workload	Academic - Performance	Rice
INTO	Academic - Workload	Academic - Workload	West
Zeedyk	Academic - Workload	Environment - general	Maras & Aveling
Rice	Environment - Changing classes	Environment - Getting lost	Akos
Ashton	Environment - Getting lost	Environment - Getting lost	Akos
INTO	Environment - Getting lost	Environment - Late for lessons	Tobbell
Zeedyk	Environment - Getting lost	Environment - Navigating School	Tobbell
Maras & Aveling	Environment - Lack of information regarding behaviour expectations	Environment - Navigating School	Akos
Dann	Environment - Layout of school and key places	Environment - School Size	West
Maras & Aveling	Environment - No specialist support	Environment - Using Lockers	Akos
Rice	Environment - School Size	Organisational - Being late	Akos
Akos	Environment - Using Lockers	Organisational - Being late	Akos
Ashton	Organisational – organising self	Organisational - general	Maras & Aveling

Rice	Organisational - Remembering Equipment	Organisational - Getting to School	West
Chedzoy	Social - Bullying	Organisational - Remembering Equipment	Akos
INTO	Social - Bullying	Organisational - Timetable	Rice
Rice	Social - Bullying	Organisational - Timetable	West
Zeedyk	Social - Bullying	Organisational - Timetable	Tobbell
Ashton	Social - Bullying, including racial bullying	Social - Being the youngest in school	Tobbell
Ashton	Social – Falling in with 'a bad crowd'	Social - Being treated like adults/change in expectations	Tobbell
INTO	Social - Making new Friends	Social - Bullying	Akos
Ashton	Social - Making new friends	Social - Bullying	Dann
Maras & Aveling	Social - Making new friends	Social - Bullying	Rice
Maras & Aveling	Social - New social context	Social - Bullying	West
Ashton	Social - Not knowing anyone	Social - Making Friends	Akos
Maras & Aveling	Social - Not knowing anyone	Social - Making Friends	West
Akos	Social - Older children	Social - Older children	Rice
Zeedyk	Social - Peer Relations	Social - Older children	West
INTO	Teachers - New	Social - Peer Relations	West
Zeedyk	Teachers - New	Teachers - Different	West
Chedzoy	Teachers - Strictness	Teachers – Taught by more	Akos

Table 5. Quantitative and qualitative concerns reported pre- and post-transfer.

Conclusions

This literature review set out to explore the transfer of pupils from the primary to the secondary tier of education using both qualitative and quantitative methods. By combining the data in this way, it is possible to use the qualitative data to explain some of the findings of the quantitative studies, and vice versa. By analysing the research using a mixed methods approach, it is possible to see how concerns change and remain over the course of the primary to secondary transfer. The different methodologies also appear to complement each other's findings, with any contradictions being explained by methodological issues such as differing questionnaires, grouping of concerns and reporting of data.

Being able to compare data from a range of methods has raised several points to be considered by future research in the area. The first of these is the quality of the evidence

used. With a range of aims, methodologies and results, it is difficult to apply a consistent measure of quality across quantitative and qualitative studies. For this reason, a decision was made to use the Weight of Evidence tool (Deakin-Crick R., Sebba J., Harlen W., Guoxing Y., & Lawson H., 2005), which enables researchers to make judgements about various aspects of each study, based on an explicit rationale, to compare the quality of evidence between studies. Of the ten studies used in the review, three studies were rated as low quality, two as medium quality, two as high/medium quality and only two as high quality studies[9] . Looking at the concerns reported by the studies judged as low quality, the majority of these studies' findings are replicated by other, higher quality studies. However, some of the unique concerns reported by the lower quality research, such as strictness of teachers, remembering equipment and being taught by multiple teachers, may need to be treated with caution until more robust studies replicate these findings.

There is also a need for full reporting of all data obtained in future research, to show how all possible concerns change over the transition. It is important to know which concerns are present in the transfer process and at which points they are raised, so that support and interventions can be offered at appropriate times to support pupils. As discussed in the section on quantitative methods, it is important to know how the data were gathered when interpreting the results or comparing them to other data sources. Factors that may influence the gathering of quantitative data include flexibility choices such as the inclusion of open questions/responses, how a list of concerns was generated, confidentiality and use of rating scales to express level of concern. For qualitative methods other details may be important, such as the structure (or lack of structure) of an interview or how results were transcribed and coded.

Finally, there is a need to consider how different groups of pupils find the transfer. Whilst there have been some studies looking at specific populations such as children with special educational needs (Dann, 2011; Maras & Aveling, 2006) , further research is needed to confirm the findings of these studies.

---

[9] See Appendix B for the full Weight of Evidence assessment

One way of visualising the results of this literature review is borrowed from the 'whirlpool of grief' model of parental experience of grief (Wilson, 1993 in Spall & Callis, 1997), in which someone going along 'The River of Life' is taken down 'The Waterfall of Bereavement' to 'The Whirlpool of Grief' below. When the time is right, the person can move back onto 'The River of Life'. If we apply the transfer process to this model, a child moves along the 'river of schooling' until they reach the end of their primary schooling, at which point they go down the 'waterfall of change' into the 'whirlpool of school transfer'. At this point, some concerns from before the transfer might 'wash off', whereas others remain. In the 'whirlpool of transfer', there are also other new concerns that the child may come into contact with before the 'river of schooling' resumes its course.

The figure below attempts to combine all the information from these studies into one process diagram, borrowing from the 'whirlpool of grief' model (Wilson, 1993 in Spall & Callis, 1997). The concerns reported pre-transfer are carried through the transfer to secondary school, at which point some concerns are 'washed off' (shown in the blue box below), and others continue to cause concern post-transfer. In addition, new concerns are reported post-transfer, represented on the right side of the diagram.

Pre-transfer

Academic
- Homework
- New Subjects
- Performance
- Workload

Environment
- Changing Classes
- Getting Lost
- School Size
- Using Lockers
- No Specialist Support
- Behaviour Expectations

Organisational
- Remembering Equipment
- Organising Self

Social
- Bullying
- Falling in with 'a bad crowd'
- Making Friends
- New soial context
- Not knowing anyone
- Older Children
- Peer Relations

Teachers
- New Teachers
- Strictness

TRANSFER

Post-transfer

Academic
- Homework
- Performance
- Workload

Environment
- Getting Lost
- School Size
- Using Lockers

Organisational
- Remembering Equipment

Social
- Bullying
- Making Friends
- Older Children
- Peer Relations

Teachers

New concerns

Academic
- More time at school
- Lessons too short

Environment
- Being late for lessons
- Navigating School

Organisational
- Being Late
- Getting to School
- Timetable

Social
- Youngest in school
- Change in expectations

Teachers
- Different Teachers
- More
- Do not know who you are
- Exclude you from lessons

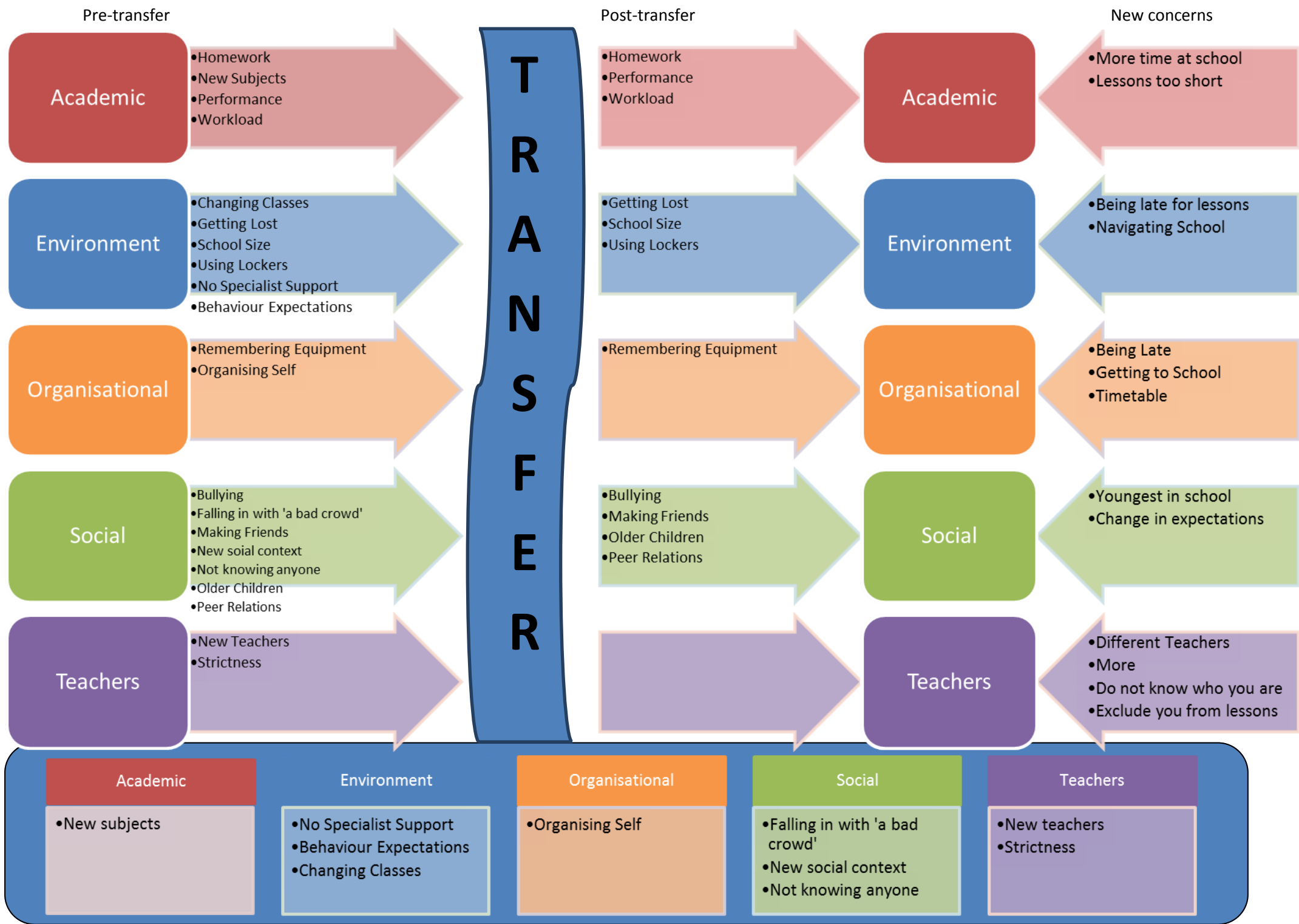| Academic	Environment	Organisational	Social	Teachers
• New subjects	• No Specialist Support • Behaviour Expectations • Changing Classes	• Organising Self	• Falling in with 'a bad crowd' • New social context • Not knowing anyone	• New teachers • Strictness

Figure 3. Waterfall Model of Transfer.

Having generated a model to show the concerns reported by pupils both pre- and post-transfer, it is possible to look at the research as a whole, and look for patterns and explanations as to why certain types of concern are more common at given stages of transfer, or why certain concerns do or do not persist across the transfer.

There are various reasons why concerns may appear at the pre- or post-transfer stage. The transfer process will be different for each school, with a variety of activities and sessions organised between primary and secondary schools around transfer, including induction days, transition units of work and meeting new teachers (Ashton, 2008). These opportunities may address certain concerns, for example, if the children are given a session explaining their timetables before transfer, it might be expected that concerns related to this area would be lower following the session than if the children did not have this input.

A related possibility is that uncertainty may account for some of the concerns pre-transfer, due to a lack of information (Gullone & King, 1992; Meisenhelder, 1994). Once children make the transfer to secondary school, they are presented with the information they need or find that negative rumours are not borne out (Graham & Hill, 2003). Possible solutions for tackling pre-transfer concerns have been generated by pupils involved in some of the studies in this literature review, including opportunities for pupils to visit their new school, meet some of their new teachers and look at timetables and other organisational tools (Ashton, 2008; Maras & Aveling, 2006)[10]. The information gathered for this review suggests that the children participating in studies on transition are a valuable resource for the transfer process; they are able to identify and articulate their concerns and suggest ways of alleviating them (Ashton, 2008). One possible area for further exploration is whether former pupils could return to primary schools as part of the transition process, and offer their thoughts and advice on the transfer to secondary school.

This review also highlights a change in expectations from primary to secondary education as pupils are given new responsibilities in an unfamiliar environment. It is noted in Tobbell's (2003) study that the pupils felt they were given a month's grace to learn how to navigate the school, after which they would be in trouble. The change to secondary school brings a

---

[10] See Appendix C for a full list of ideas to support the transfer process generated by pupils

significant change to the pupils' social world, such as bullying, being separated from friends and being the youngest pupils in school (Graham & Hill, 2003; Zeedyk et al., 2003), all during the onset of puberty, bringing another set of challenges for pupils to face (Tobbell, 2003).

Given the personal and social concerns mentioned above, and the stress and anxiety placed on pupils by trying to adapt to a new school (Tobbell, 2003), it is perhaps not surprising that some studies conclude that social and environmental aspects of the school transfer dominate children's thoughts, and until those aspects are resolved, academic concerns are not viewed as important (Ashton, 2008). This relates to needs psychology, where basic human needs (such as physiological and safety needs) must be met before an individual will focus on higher level needs (such as knowledge and learning) (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010). Relating this to school transfer, it is arguable that unless a pupil feels safe and secure in their environment, they are unlikely to focus on achievement, problem solving, learning and other higher level needs. Research published by the Department for Children, School and Families (Evangelou et al., 2008)[11] acknowledges the importance of meeting basic needs as part of a successful transfer, and the important role schools can play in helping children to settle in to their new environments. The following empirical research aims to underline the importance of these factors in successful school transfer and the impact they have on children's well-being, as well as academic achievement (Ashton, 2008; Galton et al., 1999; Tobbell, 2003).

---

[11] As of March 2012, the research is available on the incumbent government's education website
https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-RR019

Bridging Document

Moving Forward from the Literature

As I neared the end of my literature review, I began to consider how the review might link into a piece of empirical research. Oliver (2012b) writes that;

"The doctoral thesis has traditionally involved the generation of an original contribution to knowledge, but the writing of any thesis provides an opportunity to create fresh insights into the social world" (Oliver, 2012b, page 4).

I was therefore keen to reflect on my literature review and find a way to use my findings to create a piece of unique research that builds up on the existing literature in a novel and useful way (Gocsik, 2004).

My literature review set out to explore the transfer of pupils from the primary to the secondary tier of education, a critical life event for pupils (Ophuysen, 2009). Some researchers have also suggested that the onset of puberty (Akos, 2002), leaving behind the familiar (Pratt & George, 2005) and the academic pressures of assessments such as Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) (Chedzoy & Burden, 2007), as well as changes in social interactions and institutional expectations (Rice et al., 2011; Tobbell, 2003) may cause the transfer to secondary school to be a stressful and anxious one (Jindal-Snape, Vettraino, Lowson, & McDuff, 2011).

However, Lucey & Reay (2000) argue that this anxiety is part of the emotional impact of transition and is necessary to develop coping strategies and move towards the greater autonomy that is associated with the beginning of adolescence. The change in educational setting during transfer can also be a time of opportunity for young people (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2008), and successful navigation of transfers such as that from primary to secondary school can lead to extended periods of positive well-being (Rutter, 1989). In addition, there is a strong body of evidence that shows successful transfers between primary and secondary schools are viewed as important to pupils and their parents, as well as teachers, other educational staff and Government workers (England, 2002; Maras & Aveling, 2006; Marston, 2008; Rice et al., 2011).

Given these concerns and the potential impact transfer may have on pupils, I was keen to contribute to this area from personal experience as a primary school teacher, where the transfer to secondary school was a topic that was revisited throughout the year for the children making the transfer.

West, Sweeting and Young (2010) state that 'There is near universal agreement that the majority of pupils express some concerns and anxieties prior to transfer about a range of issues associated both with the formal school system (e.g. the size of the school) and informal system of peer relations (e.g. making friends)…' (West et al., 2010, p.22). I was interested in unpicking this statement and attempting to explore what specific concerns young people had about the transfer to secondary school and whether these concerns changed after making the transfer.

Following my search for literature regarding pupil transfer, it became apparent that a range of methodologies and approaches had been used to research this area. A decision was made to combine the information from both qualitative and quantitative studies, not only to give overall scope and breadth of findings (Greene et al., 1989), but to ensure that all the pupils' views collected in the literature were reported, without any methodological restrictions. To combine results from the diverse literature, the 'whirlpool of grief' model of parental experience of grief (Wilson, 1993 in Spall & Callis, 1997) was adapted. The concerns reported pre-transfer are carried through the transfer to secondary school, at which point some concerns are 'washed off' and others continue to cause concern post-transfer. In addition, new concerns that are reported post-transfer are also depicted.

I felt this attempt to portray concerns regarding the transfer to secondary school both before and after the transfer could be potentially useful to schools, as it might help them understand the concerns their pupils have before transferring to secondary school and whether these concerns become more or less of an issue following the transfer. I was therefore keen to test the model I had generated from the literature review, and whether the results I obtained matched the literature.

Epistemology and Methodology

After deciding on the area for the focus of my research, I next needed to consider how to design and carry out the research. This involved consideration of a range of factors, including epistemology and methodology.

When considering epistemology, I feel it is important to briefly discuss my own views, as well as those in the literature. Knowing the viewpoints and beliefs of those behind the research is important in trying to understand why a particular method may have been chosen. Equally, my personal views may also affect my choice of approach, so I feel it is important to document them here.

I feel that my views best fit the epistemology of critical realism. Whilst I agree with social constructionist views that perceptions of things can be mediated by culture, history and language (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 1999), I believe there is a reality independent of our minds, of which our perceptions may differ. Critical realism combines the positivist view that a reality external to human consciousness exists with the social constructionist view that any meaning to be made of this reality is mediated by social constructs (Houston, 2001).

This stance has led some to call critical realism 'a philosophy in search of a method' (Yeung, 1997, p.51). However, Anastas (2012) states that critical realism supports 'methodological pluralism', the idea that both qualitative and quantitative methods can be equally useful and valid. Some realists argue against aligning with a specific method in order to ensure that the research process is determined by the question under study (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). This means that critical realism does not restrict how research is done (Oliver, 2012a) but rather seeks to conduct research using the most appropriate method, in order to gain insight into the structures and underlying mechanisms that help us understand our experiences (Clegg, 2005). I also feel that this places the views of the pupils at the forefront of the research by not restricting their contribution due to my epistemological stance.

This approach to research resonated with me as I feel it is important to use the best 'tool for the job', rather than deciding on a method and fitting a study around it. Regarding what method to use, my literature review had taken results from both qualitative and quantitative studies, and found benefits and drawbacks to both approaches. The biggest

concern I had with studies of both types was the incomplete reporting of information. In several studies, important information regarding the types of questions asked during an interview made it difficult to ascertain how the information was obtained from these studies (for example, whether open or closed questions were used). Some quantitative studies also only reported some of the results, for example the five most commonly endorsed concerns in the study (Rice et al., 2011). Access to all the data would have allowed for comparisons of all concerns pre and post-transition. Whatever my method was going to be, it had to be open, replicable and detailed, in order to produce a valid and reliable set of data.

Methodology and Research into School Transfer

Another important consideration was the field I was researching – school transfer. I was keen for the research to be 'with' children, rather than 'on' children (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). This view has recently become more prominent in literature, referred to by some as the 'new sociology of childhood' (Dockett & Perry, 2011), which views children as persons in their own right, experts in their own lives and able to share this expertise and give their own opinions (James & Prout, 1997).

I felt it was important to choose a method that gave the children opportunity to express themselves to ensure the data I received was authentic and not affected by the method I chose. I considered an open-ended interview approach, but decided that a lack of structure may have put off some pupils (given that tasks set for pupils in school usually have some structure to them) and have led to some participants not being able to provide a response. I felt that a compromise between structure and open expression was important.

Given the drawbacks of the questionnaire based studies highlighted in my literature review, I felt a more participatory approach would actively engage the children more with the task and offer flexibility in response and freedom of expression (Beazley, Bessell, Ennew, & Waterson, 2009; O'Kane, 2000). Approaches such as the diamond ranking technique, where participants rank items by position (typically in a diamond shape, with the highest ranked at the top of the diamond and the lowest at the bottom) have been used in classroom research

with pupils to explore their thoughts and feelings regarding a particular topic (Rockett & Percival, 2002). As the formation of the diamond is up to each individual, there are no right or wrong answers, a point I felt was important to emphasise with the participants in order to minimise apprehension and avoid pupils giving the answers they feel I want. In addition, the diamond ranking technique allows for deliberation and comparison between statements, allowing researchers to explore participants' reasoning behind their ranking.

Research Design

Taking inspiration from the diamond ranking technique, I designed a task where children were to sort a set of concerns according to how much of a concern they felt each statement was to them. A decision was made to have four categories (no concern, little concern, some concern, very concerning) as one criticism levelled at some questionnaires was how to discriminate between fine divisions (for example explaining the difference between a score of 3 and 4 out of 10). It was felt that this approach could lead to a simple two stage process for each statement; is the statement a concern or not? If so, how much of a concern is it for that participant?

The statements were taken from the study conducted by Rice, Frederickson and Seymour (2011), who in turn used a list taken from the Buckinghamshire School Concerns Questionnaire (Thomasson, Field, O'Donnell, & Woods, 2006). This study was chosen as it scored highly using the Weight of Evidence tool (Deakin-Crick R. et al., 2005) during my analysis of studies in my literature review. From this starting point, the list of statements used in the Frederickson study was compared to the overall list of concerns generated from the Literature Review. Any concerns not in the Rice, Frederickson and Seymour (2011) study were added to the list, with the exception of concerns due to individual circumstances (such as not having the same Teaching Assistant (TA) for support, (Maras & Aveling, 2006)). I was aware that this list would not be exhaustive, so as not to restrict the children's responses, the option to add concerns was given in the form of blank statements (as a reminder to include them if it was felt necessary).

I hoped that the interactive nature of the task (cutting out the statements, positioning them before sticking them down into a category) would encourage the children to consider the

statements in more detail, rather than rushing through a questionnaire. Additionally, by encouraging the children to arrange all the statements into categories before sticking them down, I felt that it might give the children an opportunity to compare statements as they went through the task and adjust previous answers.

For this study, I felt the best environment would be a classroom. This would allow access to any resources needed (for example, additional scissors and glue to complete the sorting task), minimise disruption to the school timetable and allow the research to be conducted in a familiar setting with a familiar adult present (the class teacher). For my research to be successful, it was important that the school, as well as the teachers of the children I intended to work with were willing to participate (Alibali & Nathan, 2010; Bender et al., 2011). Teachers that choose to be involved in the study tend to cope better with the disruptions caused by the research, such as timetable changes and arranging alternatives for non-consenting students (Alibali & Nathan, 2010).

Consent

I approached several schools in the local authority in which I am on placement as a trainee Educational Psychologist to explore whether the schools would be interested in the research. From initial discussions, three primary schools expressed an interest in the research. I held detailed discussions with members of staff, including the Year 6 class teacher at each school, outlining the method I intended to use and the amount of time the research would take. Once the discussions had taken place, all three schools were happy to participate in the research.

Using children as research participants requires consideration of consent from various sources. I viewed consent for this study as coming from three sources; the children, their parents/guardians and the school. The parents/guardians and the school act as gatekeepers, ensuring that children are protected from potentially harmful research (Coyne, 2010b). In addition to these sources, approval was required from the university ethics board to commence the study, which I obtained prior to approaching the schools.

Having obtained permission from the schools to conduct the research in school, I next needed to obtain consent from parents and guardians. Whilst BERA Guidelines (BERA, 2011) stipulate that consent can only be given by the participant, it is advised that researchers should seek consent from a responsible other, such as a teacher or parent (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). There are two main methods used to obtain parental consent; active parental consent, where a parent must explicitly provide a record of their consent (typically by returning a form) in order for the child to participate, and passive consent, where permission is assumed unless a parent retracts permission (I. Marshall, 2010).
I first proposed active parental consent to the schools, by way of a letter explaining the study and a form to be filled in and returned to the school. I hoped that this approach would ensure that parents read the letter, understood the study and were therefore able to give informed consent (Pokorny, Jason, Schoeny, Townsend, & Curie, 2001). Whilst this approach may been seen as the ideal for some researchers (Hughes & Gutkin, 1995), I found that this method was viewed with scepticism by members of staff, who believed that this active consent approach would lead to low return rates over an extended period of time compared to obtaining passive consent.

In trying to arrange dates and times for the research to be carried out in one school, it was felt by school staff that if active parental consent was sought for the study, the response rate would be too low to conduct the study on the dates agreed by the Year 6 teacher. Given that I had consent from school staff to conduct the study, who in their role as teachers assume a degree of responsibility towards their pupils under the Children's Act 1989 (Children Act, 1989), as well as giving the parents an opportunity to remove their children from the study if they wished, I decided passive parental consent was acceptable for this study, given the low risk of any harm coming from the study (and the right of the participants to withdraw at any time for any reason) (Marshall, 2010). It also has been argued that it is possible to acknowledge in law that "…a child's full capacity to refuse [medical] treatment usurps the power of consent held by persons with parental responsibility." (Gilmore & Herring, 2011, p.5), suggesting that obtaining consent from the child should be the primary concern when conducting research with children. It is also argued that passive consent procedures are necessary to achieve high participation rates and avoid sampling bias (Pokorny et al., 2001).

Unfortunately, by the time I reached my decision to ask for passive parental consent, the school where concerns had been raised about active parental consent was unable to reschedule an opportunity for me to carry out the research. The two remaining primary schools agreed that passive parental consent was an appropriate approach and letters were sent out detailing my research and the task I intended to ask their children to participate in[12].

Having sent these forms out, I then arranged for opportunities to introduce myself and the research to the Year 6 pupils. I asked for these introductions to be one day before the research, as I wanted to ensure the pupils had the opportunity to discuss the study amongst themselves and reflect on their participation before finally deciding whether to consent the following day. To outline the research and the task, I gave a short presentation, including opportunities to ask questions about any aspect of the study. The information given in the study was reproduced in a child-friendly letter, which was given to each child along with a consent form[13]. I felt this approach gave the highest chance of children understanding the study and providing informed consent, as well as providing an opportunity to ask questions and have standardised material to re-read and discuss with others if required (Alderson & Morrow, 2004).

I made it clear that participants were able to stop or not participate at any time for any reason (which did not have to be shared). One drawback of my approach was that it was already implied that consent had been sought by a hierarchy of gatekeepers (school, parents, university) for the children to participate, before the children had been asked. Whilst this approach was necessary to ensure my research could be carried out, it may be that children feel unable to refuse to participate when significant adults have all consented (Coyne, 2010a). I acknowledge this is a potential issue with this study and for some children the option to not participate may have been a difficult choice for them to make. However, several children in one of the schools decided not to participate, which suggests that at some level, the option to withdraw was possible for those children. In the other school one

---

[12] See Appendix E for an exemplar form.
[13] See Appendix D for an exemplar form.

pupil initially indicated that they did not want to participate, but told me the following day she had misunderstood the consent form and wanted to participate. Given that several other members of her class were also keen to tell me that this pupil had made a mistake and did want to participate indicates that some conversation had taken place between my visits regarding the study.

During the task, I attempted to talk to each participant. I was firstly keen to offer an opportunity for any questions or clarification on an individual basis, rather than in front of the rest of the group. I also gave children the opportunity to discuss their responses, for example why particular items were placed in certain categories, or whether there was one concern that 'stood out' for a particular reason. It was also important to discuss any additional concerns written by participants, to ensure I understood what was meant by each statement. The majority of children were keen to share their responses with me, and all children who provided their own concerns explained them for me. Further opportunity for discussion was given at the end of each session, where I asked the participants for any feedback on the task. Feedback was universally positive, with comments including that the task was enjoyable and easy to do. All participants were given a verbal debrief at the end of their involvement, as well as a written debrief form.[14]

---

[14] See Appendix F for an exemplar debrief form and Appendix G for further debrief details.

Empirical Research

Abstract

The transfer of pupils from the primary to the secondary tier of English education is an important yet under-researched time in the lives of children. Following a review of the available research, the Waterfall Model of Transfer was created to represent how concerns change during transfer.   This inquiry examined the validity of the Waterfall Model of Transfer by asking pupils to complete a sorting task ranking concerns regarding transfer to secondary school in Year 6 prior to transfer and again in Year 7 following transfer.

28 pupils participated in the sorting task in Year 6, of which 6 pupils repeated the task in Year 7. Following a fully mixed methods approach, a decision was made to support the findings of the sorting task with additional qualitative and quantitative aspects, comprising a six item questionnaire and open-ended discussions.

The results support the conclusions of the literature that overall, concerns decrease following the transfer to secondary school. However, for some pupils certain concerns persist or increase following transfer. In light of the results obtained, it is felt that a revised Waterfall Model of Transfer can be used to accurately portray concerns reported by pupils throughout the transfer process. These findings are further discussed in terms of impact for educational settings, theoretical applications alongside modern needs psychology and opportunities for future research.

Introduction

Pupil Transfer Definition

The terms transition and transfer are used interchangeably to describe the movement of pupils between educational institutions and year groups at certain ages or phases in their education (Topping, 2011; Westminster Institute of Education, 2006). For the purposes of this paper, the following definitions will be used; pupil transfer is the movement of pupils between educational settings and pupil transition is the movement of pupils between year groups in the same setting (Galton et al., 1999).

Research Rationale

There are typically three transfers in the English education system; nursery to primary school, primary school to secondary school and from secondary school to higher education or work (Chedzoy & Burden, 2007; Topping, 2011).[15] This research will focus on the transfer from primary to secondary school which has been identified as a '...major event in the school lives of children...' (Topping, 2011, p.268) that occurs at a vulnerable time for the pupils due to the changes associated with the onset of puberty (Dann, 2011; Peterson & Crockett, 1985). This transfer also leads to changes in social expectations and requires pupils to leave behind the familiar environment of primary school and begin to establish themselves and their needs within the hierarchy of their new secondary school. These changes can cause the transfer to secondary school to be a stressful event (Jindal-Snape et al., 2011).

Alongside the concerns reported above, the successful transfer of pupils to secondary education is viewed as important by pupils, parents, teachers, educational staff and government workers (England, 2002; Maras & Aveling, 2006; Marston, 2008; Rice et al., 2011). A positive transfer into secondary school can also lead to an extended period of wellbeing for pupils (Rutter, 1989).

As explained in the Literature Review, this research will focus on pupil experiences, as it is arguable that the views of those undergoing the transfer are the most important (Ophuysen, 2009), particularly as research suggests that children often have the clearest idea of what factors affect their development (Cefai & Cooper, 2010) and have views that may differ from the adults around them (Frederickson et al., 2004). There is also a danger that as adults we ignore the opinions of children in educational research and attempt to fit the child's needs to the current demands of the school (Connors & Stalker, 2007; Davis & Watson, 2001).

Current Findings in Pupil Transfer Research

The current research into pupil's views of school transfer is inconclusive, with areas that require further exploration (Topping, 2011). West, Sweeting and Young (2010) state that 'There is near universal agreement that the majority of pupils express some concerns and anxieties prior to transfer about a range of issues associated both with the formal school

---

[15] Some school systems in England have more transfers, for example between first, middle and high schools instead of between primary and secondary schools (Akos & Galassi, 2004; Topping, 2011).

system (e.g. the size of the school) and informal system of peer relations (e.g. making friends)…' (West et al., 2010, p.22), whereas Berndt and Mekos (1995) and Sirsch (2000, in Ophuysen, 2009) conclude that children were overall more positive than negative in their expectations of the school transfer. Studies also report a reduction in concerns once pupils have transferred (e.g. West et al., 2010; Zeedyk et al., 2003), although there is still uncertainty as to how specific concerns change pre- and post-transition (Lohaus et al., 2004).

A Model from the Literature

For exploring the research data, a three stage process of searching, mapping and synthesis was used, as outlined by Petticrew and Roberts (2006)[16]. Following an analysis of the available literature[17], quantitative and qualitative studies exploring pupils' views of the transfer to secondary school were synthesised adopting an approach outlined by Thomas et al. (2004). A decision was made to combine research using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to identify overlapping facets, augment information, explore contradictions across the multiple sources and add overall scope and breadth, in order to develop a model of convergence for the results that provided a holistic picture of pupils' concerns both before and after transfer to secondary school (Greene et al., 1989).

These results were then conceptualised by adapting the Whirlpool of Grief model of parental experience of grief (Wilson, 1993 in Spall & Callis, 1997) (See page 42). This model attempts to conceptualise the bereavement process by portraying life as a river, with a waterfall representing a disruption to that person's life. This waterfall leads to a whirlpool where there is a feeling of emotional disorganisation, which could lead to the person being washed up on the banks of the river and unable to continue. With gradual acceptance of the loss, the person is then able to continue back along the river of life. Applying ideas from this model provides a visual representation of how concerns present during the transfer from primary to secondary school.

---

[16] See Appendix A.
[17] The following databases were searched for relevant articles: CSA Illumina, Ovid (including PsycInfo), ProQuest (including the British Education Index, Australian Education Index and ERIC), Scopus and Web of Knowledge.

Children report concerns about secondary school before they transfer. These concerns are carried along the river of life until they reach the 'waterfall' of transfer to secondary school. In the subsequent 'whirlpool' following the transfer, some of the concerns reported pre-transfer are not realised or are less significant than anticipated and are therefore 'washed up' and do not continue on as concerns. Other concerns continue to cause concern following the disorganisation caused by the transfer to secondary school and remain in the river. A further adaptation to the Whirlpool of Grief model is the addition of a 'tributary' after the waterfall, representing the new concerns that may be encountered post-transfer that were not anticipated or known about before the transfer was made.
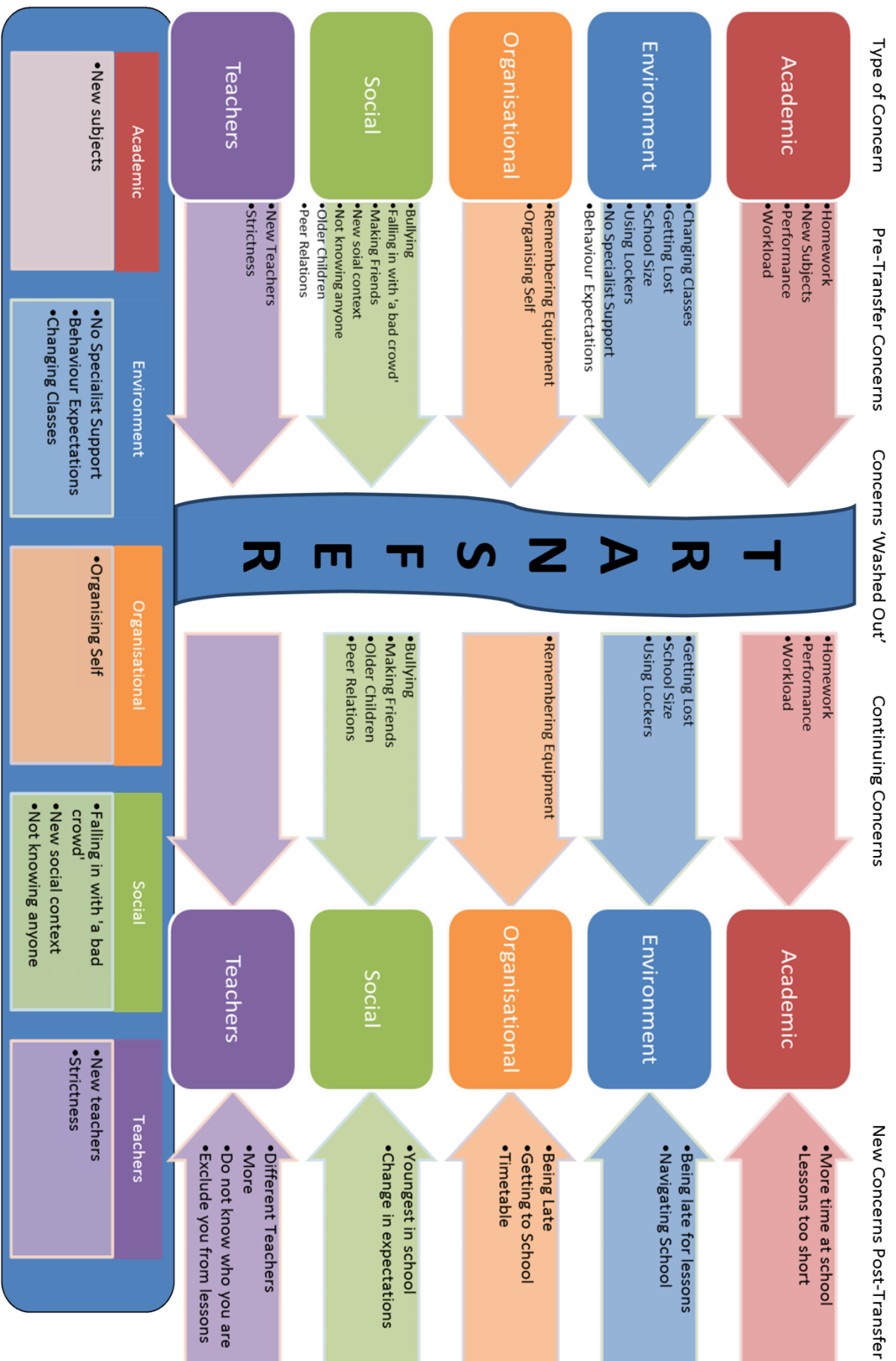
Figure 4. Proposed Waterfall Model of Transfer.

Underpinning Theory

As mentioned previously, research in the field of pupil transfer encompasses a wide range of methods and viewpoints. A decision was made to explore how the transfer process can be viewed in terms of epistemology, as it is argued that epistemology influences the underpinning theories, methodological design and tools used in research (Carter & Little, 2007). Before exploring this further, it is important to mention epistemological perspective. This thesis is written from a critical realist perspective, which for the purposes of this research is defined as combining the positivist view that a reality external to human consciousness exists with the social constructionist view that any meaning to be made of this reality is mediated by social constructs (Houston, 2001).

It is also the author's belief that the transfer of pupils to secondary school is a social construct, which is mediated by culture, history and language. Factors such as age, gender cultural background and perceptions of parents and carers have all been found to impact on the transfer process (Marston, 2008), leading some researchers to argue that the traditional divides of primary and secondary schooling were "…designed a long time ago, for a different social and economic world and there is general agreement by many that it no longer meets the more complex social and learning needs of today's young people." (Ramsey, 2003, p.86).

It would appear that there is no one clear epistemological stance in the field of pupil transfer as studies into pupil views of secondary school transfer have used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Anastas (2012) argues that critical realism gives qualitative and quantitative methods equal precedence, allowing the research process to be determined by the question rather than restricted by epistemology (Danermark et al., 2002; Oliver, 2012a).

Research Aims

This research aimed to test the findings of the available literature on pupil concerns regarding secondary school transfer. By combining the available data from the existing empirical literature into a tentative model (see Figure 4), the aim is for the model to be trialled on a sample of pupils undergoing the transfer to secondary school, in order to assess its validity. This is consolidated into the following research questions:

Research Questions

- What concerns are reported by pupils prior to their transfer to secondary school?

- What concerns are reported by pupils after their transfer to secondary school?

- Does the Waterfall Model of Transfer accurately convey the concerns reported by pupils during the transfer process?

These contribute to a broader reflective question about what can be known about pupils' experiences of transfer and the range of research approaches that can shed light on this area.

Method

Description and Selection of Participants

After obtaining ethical approval from the Newcastle University research ethics committee, primary schools in a Local Authority in the North-East of England where the author was on placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) were approached to participate in the study. Two Year 6 classes in two different primary schools[18] agreed to participate in the study. As I had worked in both schools in my role as a TEP, I acknowledged that there might be some bias in the form of prior knowledge of the children I would be working with, especially in one school where I had worked with a child in one of the Year 6 classes. I feel that for this child my prior knowledge was helpful, as I was able to arrange for a member of staff to be present to support the child with reading and breaking down instructions into single steps.

Data Collection

By adopting a pragmatic paradigm, the data collection process was driven by the research question (Maxcy, (2003) in Nastasi, Hitchcock, & Brown, 2009) and a mixed methods design was chosen (Teddlie & Yu, 2007), as well as following the inclusive mixed methods framework proposed by Nastasi et al. (2009)[19]. The data collection process for this paper followed a partially mixed sequential equal status design, meaning that the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research were administered separately, but given equal priority

---

[18] For the purposes of this research, the names of the schools have been changed
[19] For the full research design process, see Appendix 1

(Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In the analysis of the data, priority status was given to the qualitative data in order to explain the quantitative findings, whereas in discussion the implications of the models and theories drawn from the quantitative data were given priority. It is therefore argued that this paper has overall adopted a fully mixed design, giving equal priority to the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research. Scott (2005) argues that the 'critical' aspect of critical realism comes from the understanding that any attempt to understand the world is fallible, and therefore subject to critique and alternative understandings. By using qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential way, it is possible to acknowledge the fallibility of each aspect, whilst drawing on data from multiple sources to strengthen claims or suggest alternative ideas.

Regarding inference quality, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) propose an integrative framework for measuring mixed methods validity, spanning ten criteria across two areas, design quality and interpretative rigor.   These criteria were followed throughout to ensure a suitable and consistent design that allowed detailed analysis of the results leading to conclusions that are supported by multiple stages of the data gathering process.

Data collection at the primary phase was done in three steps. Firstly, once consent had been obtained from the schools and parents, a short presentation was given to each class outlining the research and the task they would be asked to complete. Pupils were then given an information sheet and a consent form to take away and return to school[20]. The pupils who gave active consent were then given a more detailed explanation of the research and asked to complete the sorting task. Pupils could withdraw from the study at any time and opportunities to enter or exit the process were frequently signposted.

The task was derived from the diamond ranking technique, a tool that has been used in research to explore pupils' thoughts and feelings (Rockett & Percival, 2002). Pupils were given a set of 27 possible concerns regarding the transfer to secondary school and asked to sort them into one of four categories (not concerning, slightly concerning, some concern, very concerning). 17 of the concerns were taken from the Buckinghamshire School Concerns Questionnaire (Thomasson et al., 2006), used in research into pupil concerns by Rice, Frederickson and Seymour (2011), to which ten additional concerns from the available

---

[20] See Appendix D

literature were added (see Table 6 below). Participants were also given the opportunity to record their own concerns by using blank pieces of paper.[21]

Homework	Following a timetable
New subjects	Being late
Amount of work	New school rules
PE	Remembering equipment
School work	Getting to school
Using toilets	Dinnertimes
Getting around school	Being bullied
Changing classes	Being the youngest in school
Getting lost	Making new friends
Using lockers	Not knowing anyone
Size of secondary school	Older children
New teachers	Other children in my classes
Different teachers for different lessons	Teachers being strict

Table 6. List of the 27 concerns used in the sorting task.

Of the 12 Year 6 pupils at Locomotion Primary, 11 initially consented. On the day of the research a second check was done, where it transpired that the child who had declined to participate made a mistake on the consent form and did in fact wish to participate. In the Year 6 class at Heatherfields Primary, 16 pupils consented to participate, with 4 pupils declining to participate. No forms were received to withdraw children from the study in either school.

Of the 28 participants in the first phase of the study, 6 repeated the task at the end of the first half term following their transitions to Bright Beacon Secondary and Rainbow Hill Special School. The high attrition rate was due to the participants transferring to six different secondary schools, delaying contact with these secondary schools to arrange the next research phase until it was known which of these schools the pupils who had consented to participate in the research were transferring to. Difficulties in establishing contact with several of the secondary schools and the importance of obtaining pupil views in a timely manner before their thoughts and feeling regarding the transfer were forgotten meant that it was only possible to repeat the task in two secondary settings.

---

[21] Please see Appendix H for a completed example of the sorting task.

A decision was then made to support the findings of the sorting task with open-ended discussions and questionnaire in order to enhance the scope and validity of the research. The open ended discussions were conducted after the 6 pupils had completed the sorting task a second time. The six item questionnaire was given out to 64 Year 7 children across 3 form groups at Bright Beacon Secondary, of whom 62 gave their consent to complete the questionnaire. The form groups were selected by form tutors replying to an e-mail sent out by the SENCo for participants. The questionnaire comprised four questions using four point Likert-type scales and two open ended questions[22];

- Thinking back to when you were in Year 6, how concerned were you about going to secondary school?
- Thinking back to the very start of Year 7, how concerned were you about going to secondary school?
- And now, after your first half term in secondary school how concerned are you about going to secondary school?
- After your first half term in school, do you feel you have 'settled in' to your new school?
- Is there anything that helped you 'settle in' to your new school?
- Is there anything that concerns you about secondary school now?

Findings

Before presenting the findings of this article, it is important to revisit the research questions in light of the research design outlined earlier:

- What concerns are reported by pupils prior to their transfer to secondary school?
- What concerns are reported by pupils after their transfer to secondary school?
- Does the Waterfall Model of Transfer accurately convey the concerns reported by pupils during the transfer process?

The first two questions will be answered by exploring the data obtained during the primary and secondary data collection phases. By then combining data from the pupils before and after their transfer to secondary school, the Waterfall Model of Transfer presented earlier can be compared to the findings obtained. Having analysed the available data, the broader

---

[22] Please see Appendix I for a completed example questionnaire.

reflective question regarding pupils' experiences of transfer and the range of research approaches that can shed light on this area will be discussed.

What concerns are reported by pupils prior to their transfer to secondary school?
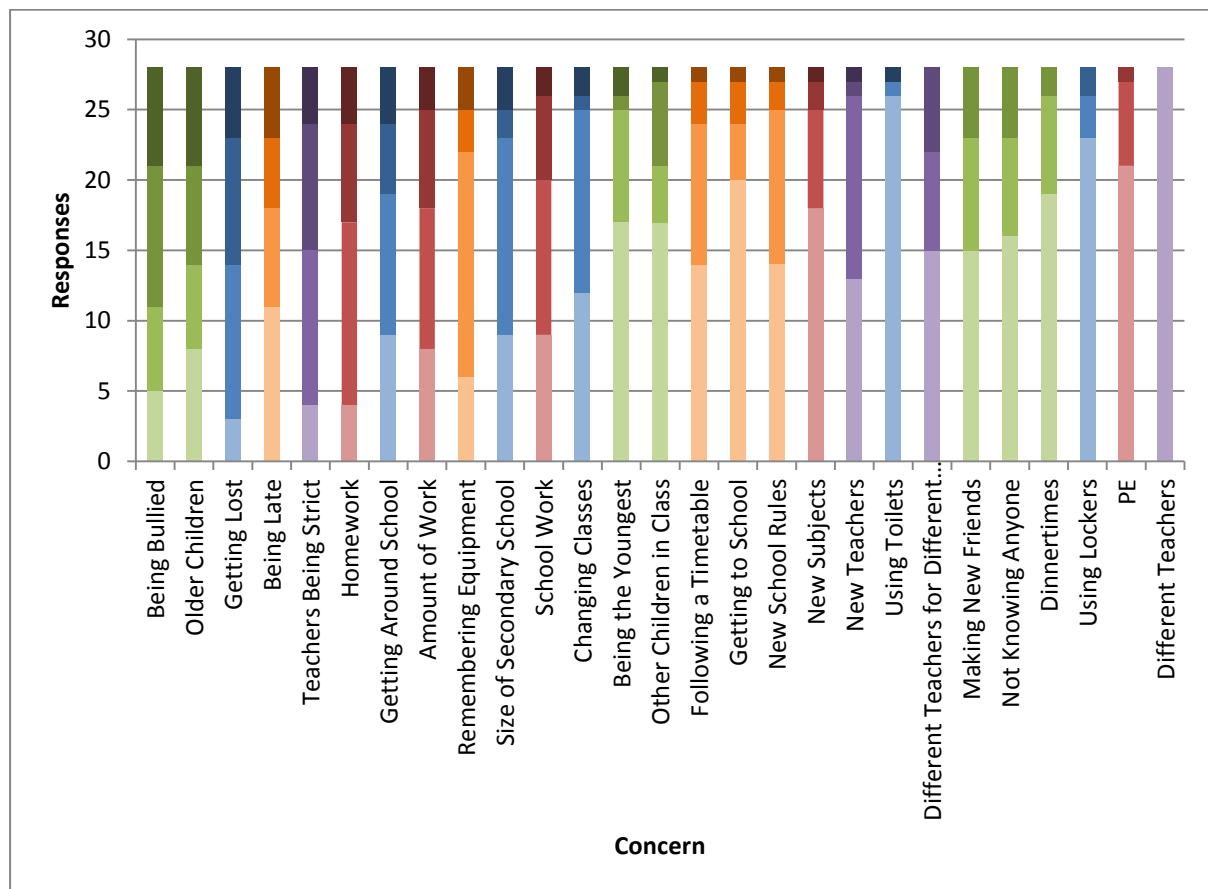
Where density of colour represents:

No Concern	Slightly Concerning	Somewhat Concerning	Very Concerning

Figure 5. Concerns reported by pupils prior to transfer, sorted from highest amount of 'Very Concerning' responses to lowest.

The results show that the seven items with the most 'Very Concerning' responses prior to transfer were; Being Bullied (7 pupils) Older Children (7), Being Late (5), Getting Lost (5), Teachers Being Strict (4), Homework (4) and Getting Around School (4). The six items with the most 'Somewhat Concerning' responses were; Being Bullied (10), Getting Lost (9),

Teachers Being Strict (9), Older Children (7), Amount of Work (7), Homework (7).

Of these items, Being Bullied appeared to be the most concerning item, with 17 over the 28 participants rating it as Somewhat or Very Concerning, followed by Older Children and Getting Lost, both rated as Somewhat or Very Concerning by half of the participants.

In addition to the items given to all participants to sort, blank items were given to each pupil for them to record any additional concerns. Twelve additional concerns were reported by ten pupils as follows:
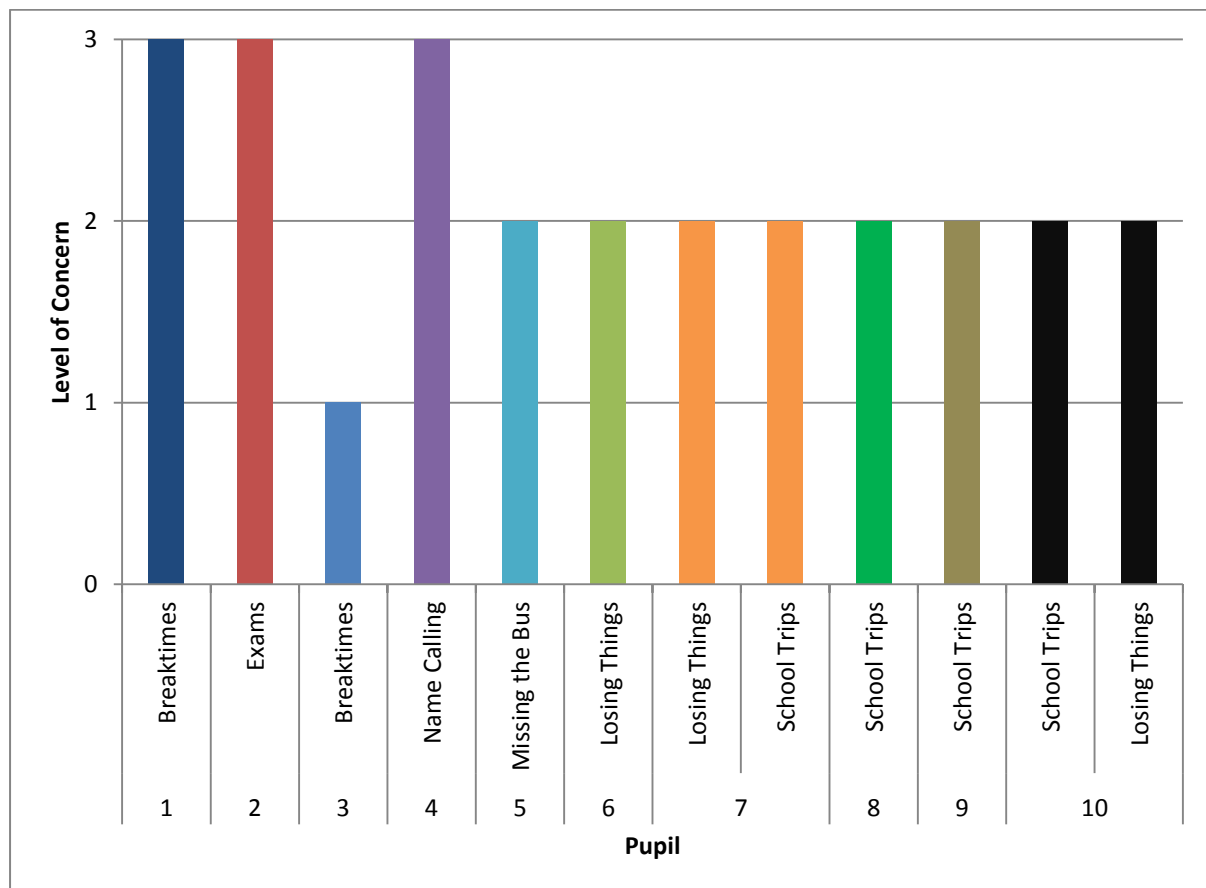
Figure 6. Additional concerns reported by pupils prior to transfer (where 0 is No Concern, 1 is Slightly Concerning, 2 is Somewhat Concerning and 3 is Very Concerning).

When adapting the Whirlpool of Grief model (Spall & Callis, 1997) for pupil transfer, to aid interpretation, a decision was made to group thematically related transfer concerns into five categories; academic (e.g. workload and academic performance), environment (e.g. getting lost and the size of the school), organisational (e.g. remembering equipment, being late), social (e.g. bullying and making friends) and teacher issues (e.g. strictness and having more teachers). The results in Figure 5 above show that high and low scoring items were present

in all categories, suggesting that concerns (or a lack of them) were not focused around a particular category, although the two most concerning items were from the Social category.

What concerns are reported by pupils after their transfer to secondary school?

Following the primary data gathering phase, six pupils completed the sorting task a second time following the transfer to their respective secondary schools. As with the primary data gathering phase, the pupils' responses were sorted according to the number of 'Very Concerning' responses post transfer, then the number of 'Somewhat Concerning' responses and so on.
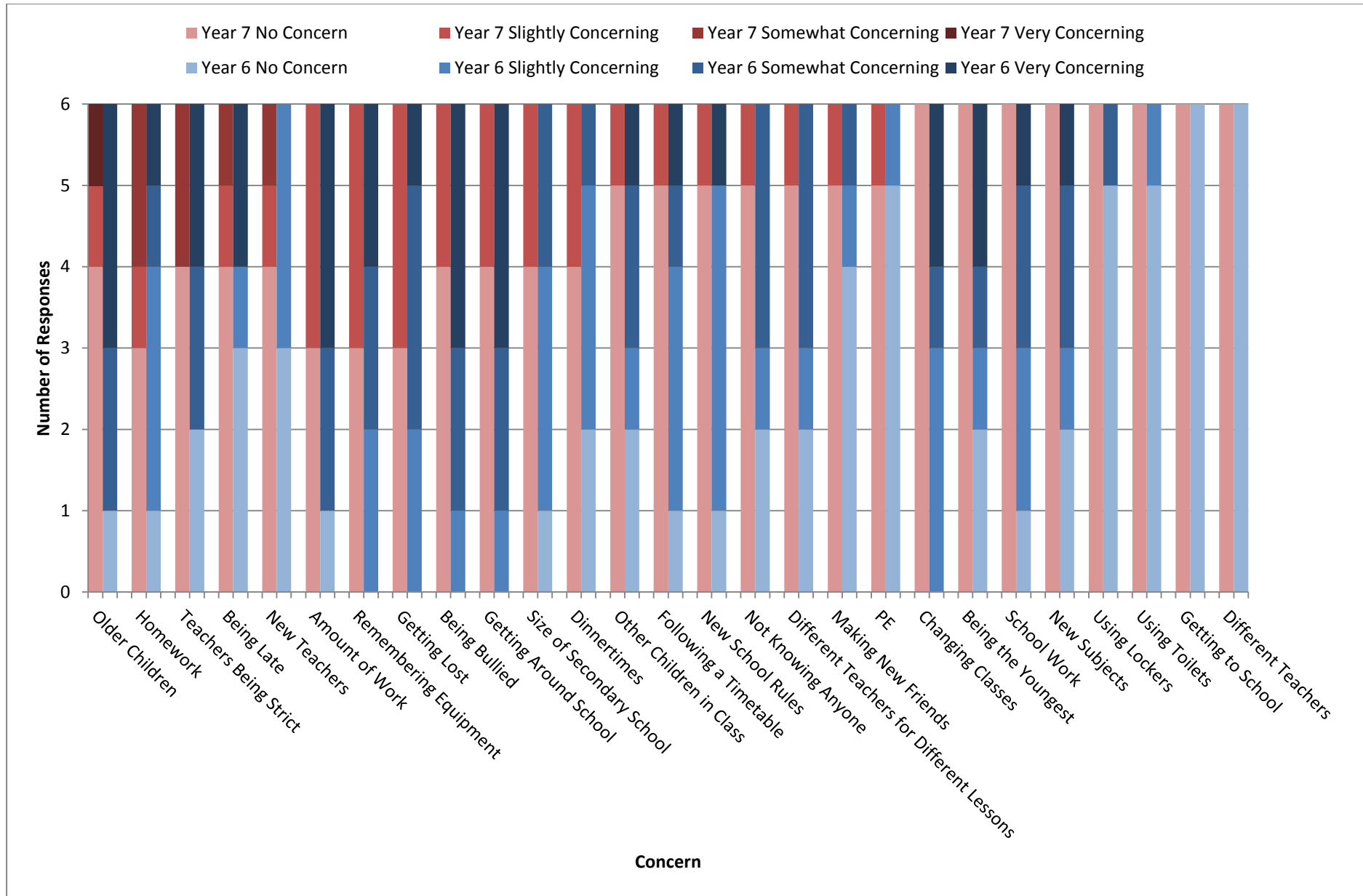
Figure 7. Comparison of concerns reported by pupils prior to and following their transfer to Secondary School.

The results show that following the transfer to secondary school eight items were reported as not being concerning to any of the pupils following the transfer; Changing Classes, Being the Youngest, School Work, New Subjects, Using Lockers[23], Using Toilets, Getting to School, and Different Teachers. It would appear that concerns around Getting Lost reduced signficiantly following transfer, as this was a concern reported by all six pupils prior to transfer.   Older Children was the only concern to have a 'Very Concerning' response following transfer.

Analysis of each pupil's individual task indicates a somewhat different picture. Whilst the majority of items were viewed as less concerning overall, for four of the pupils, the level of concern remained the same or increased for some items following the transfer to secondary school:

---

[23] The secondary schools attended by the pupils did not have lockers, so this item was discounted from the sorting task.
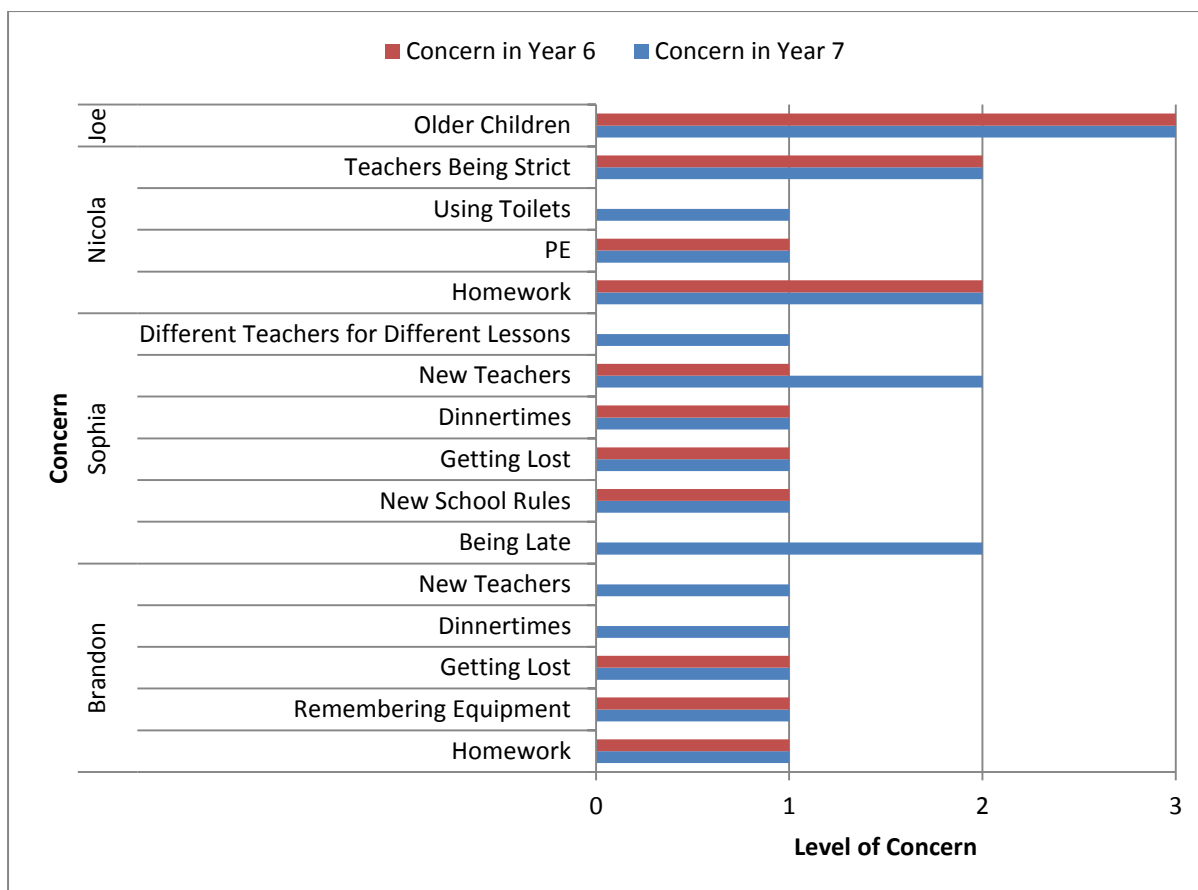
Figure 8. Items that remained as concerning or increased in concern following the transfer to secondary school for four pupils[24] (where 0 is No Concern, 1 is Slightly Concerning, 2 is Somewhat Concerning and 3 is Very Concerning).

Comparing Concerns

When shown their responses from Year 6 as a comparison, the pupils were shocked and surprised:

"Oh my god! I had everything [as a concern]!"

"Sir, I'm not too happy about the first one [Year 6 responses]."

"Sir can I change it?! [Year 6 responses]."

"Surprises me that I had one in every single box… now I'm used to it."

Following this initial shock, the pupils recalled that at the very start of the transfer into Year 7, it had not been easy;

---

[24] As with the school names, pupils names are pseudonyms to preserve anonymity.

"I was scared."

"People were shouting, people were crying."

"I'm going to be honest… I cried."

This initial level of uncertainty and upset did subside over the first few weeks, with pupils reporting that they "…got used to it". This was also the message that the five pupils from Bright Beacon Secondary would have given to their Year 6 selves, "you get used to it." For the pupil attending Rainbow Hill, knowing that "you'll have the best teacher in the world, really kind. That would have helped me [in Year 6]."

Following the completion of the secondary data collection phase, five of the six pupils were asked to discuss their transfer to secondary school as a group. This was conducted as an open-ended discussion that started with asking the group if they would like to share anything about their transfer to secondary school. The sixth pupil, who attended Rainbow Hill Special School, was interviewed separately. The pupils' responses were analysed and grouped according to the same categories as the quantitative data, for ease of comparison. Analysing these responses indicated that some concerns in different categories were linked together.

Academic and Organisational Concerns
Following the transition to secondary school, homework was the highest reported concern (see Figure 7), but not because of the actual work set. Instead, the concern was more of an organisational one, having to remember the homework, as well as the inconsistent sanctions applied by different teachers as a consequence if homework was forgotten:

"Homework is easy, but remembering it isn't."

"If you forget it [homework] you should have a warning before detention."

Returning to the quantitative data, it is possible to link this example to three of the five highest reported concerns, Homework, Teachers Being Strict and Remembering Equipment.

Other academic concerns were not focused on the lessons and their content, but rather the different timetables the pupils had been placed on, which may fall under the concern

grouping of PE, Following a Timetable and New School Rules. Two of the pupils were had been allocated extra Maths and English lessons, instead of Foreign Languages and PE. The other members of the group were disappointed that they had not been given a choice of foreign language class;

"I don't want to learn French, I wanna do Spanish."

Environmental Concerns

Pupils reported getting lost during the initial transfer period, as well as being concerned by the size of the school. This is reflected in the high level of concern reported prior to transfer for four Environmental factors (Getting Lost, Getting around Secondary School, Size of Secondary School and Changing Classes). But the levels of concern were significantly reduced at the secondary data collection phase and pupils were able to give examples of things that had helped them navigate their new school;

"I can follow friends now."

"The corridors are different colours for different subjects. That helps."

"I spoke to Miss M [teacher at the school] and she told me it's just like a circle, so you just keep going through Maths and English and Science."

"A teacher told me getting around school is easy – it's a circle."

Social Concerns

In this area, the dominant theme was the older children in school. The general consensus was that their concerns regarding bullying prior to transfer had not been founded; "being bullied hasn't happened, so it's not a concern." The quantitative data supports this, with Older Children being reported as a higher concern post-transfer than Bullying. It appeared that a distinction had been made between low level incidents, such as cheeky or unkind comments made by older pupils, and more serious ones, such as being deliberately bumped by the older pupils in the corridor. The low level incidents seemed to be viewed as part of daily school life, with the pupils developing strategies to cope with them;

"I just tell them to talk to the hand."

"I pretend the older children aren't there."

In addition, the older pupils could be "funny" or "mess about" at times, which the pupils seemed to enjoy.

Quantitative Data Collection

Pupils who participated in this stage of the study reported an overall decrease in their levels of concern from Year 6 to the start of Year 7 and from the start of Year 7 to the end of the first half-term in Year 7 (when the questionnaire was administered). In addition, 91.8% of respondents felt they had 'settled in' to their new school.

A range of factors were reported as helping the pupils to 'settle in' to their new school;

Theme	Factor	Number
Academic	Academic support	1
Organisational	Knowing my way around school	1
	Teachers directing pupils around school	2
	Friends directing me around school	1
Staff	Helpful teachers	6
	Specific staff member	3
Social	My friends	10
	Making new friends	7
	Sibling in school	3
	Older pupils helping	2
	Knowing pupil in form group	2
	Friends helping me	5

Table 7. Responses to the question "Is there anything that helped you 'settle in' to your new school?"

Does the Waterfall Model of Transfer accurately convey the concerns reported by pupils during the transfer process?

By combining the data obtained to answer the previous two research questions, it is felt that the Waterfall Model of Transfer, drawn from the literature findings, provides an accurate representation of how concerns regarding transfer to secondary school change

over time. Whilst the specific items reported at different points may differ to those found in the literature, the findings indicate that concerns in all five areas; academic, environment, organisational, social and teachers were present prior to transfer. Following the transfer, several concerns were 'washed out onto the riverbank' and were no longer considered concerning for any pupil[25]. Of the concerns that remained, some persisted after the 'whirlpool of transfer', either at the same level of concern or in one case, an increased level of concern. In addition, the reporting of some concerns in Year 7 that were not felt to be a concern in Year 6, supports the idea of a tributary after the waterfall, representing the new concerns that may be encountered post-transfer that were not anticipated before the transfer was made.

One drawback of the original model is that it does not show how strong the level of concern is for each item. Splitting the 'river' in the model into 'streams' according to the strength of concern allows the model to show how the strength of individual concerns changes through the transfer process. In the example Figure 9 (see below), of the five concern items (A, B, C, D, E) reported prior to transfer, items A, B, C are 'somewhat concerning', item D is 'no concern' and item E is 'slightly concerning'. Following the transfer, item A has become more concerning, moving into the 'very concerning' category. Item B has become less of a concern than prior to transfer and item C has remained as 'somewhat concerning' post-transfer. Item D, which was previously felt not to be a concern pre-transfer, has become slightly concerning post-transfer. Item E, slightly concerning pre-transfer, has 'washed out' during the transfer and is now no longer a concern.

---

[25] New Academic Subjects, School Work, Getting to School, Changing Classes, Being the Youngest and Different Teachers.
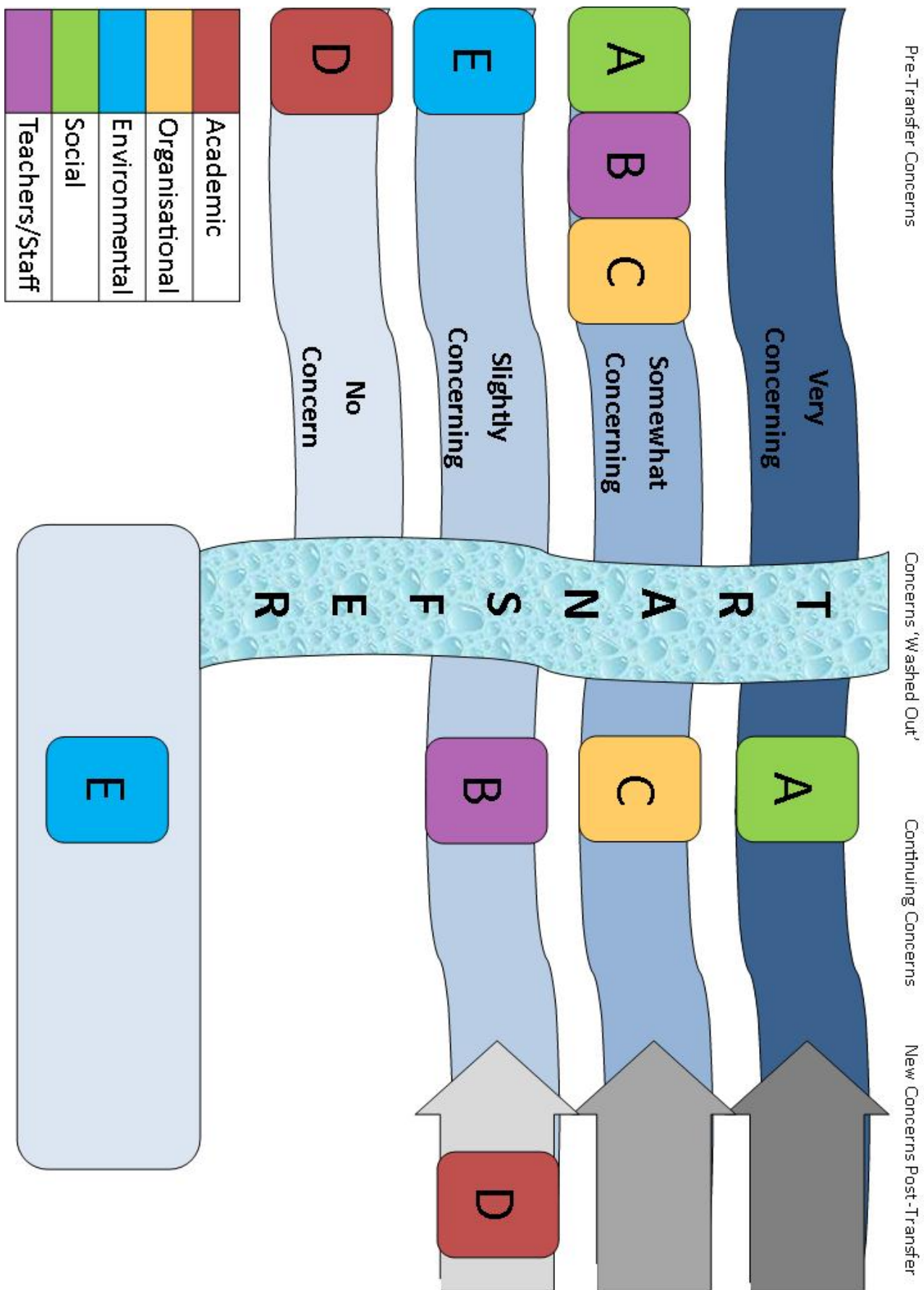
Figure 9. Redesigned Waterfall Model of Transfer.

Discussion

With the literature reporting that the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary school is not given the recognition it requires (e.g. Topping, 2011; Vinson & Harrison, 2006), this article set out to explore the available research into the concerns reported by pupils before and after their transfer to secondary school. A model was then created to show how concerns change through the transfer process. This led to a piece of empirical research which aimed to explore pupils' experiences of transfer and whether the model generated from the literature and the proposed methodology was an appropriate tool to explore this area further. The research adopted a mixed methods approach, which suited the research purpose of extending depth of understanding by exploring different perspectives through different methodological approaches (Greene et al., 1989). By following a pragmatic paradigm, one commonly associated with mixed methods research (Morgan, 2007), there is an emphasis on choosing the best method for answering the research questions independent of epistemology, whilst being mindful of the context in which the research is taking place and any potential implications of the research (Nastasi et al., 2009).

The results from this study support the overall conclusions of the literature that concerns decrease following the transition to secondary school (e.g. West et al., 2010; Zeedyk et al., 2003). By adopting a mixed methods approach for this article it is possible to explore how individual pupils view the transfer to secondary school, with a visual representation of how concerns change both during and after transfer provided by the revised Waterfall Model of Transfer (see Figure 7), alongside a qualitative discussion that allows the pupils to explain and expand on their completed sorting tasks. This choice of method also allows reporting of results at varying levels, from whole class to group to individual, as well as enabling analysis at a deeper level than a purely quantitative or qualitative approach. This is particularly important given that the individual results showed that for four of the six pupils, the level of concern remained the same or increased for some items following the transfer to secondary school.

Therefore, there is scope for the model and tools used in this article to be used as a whole school systemic approach to supporting pupils with the transfer to secondary school. Primary schools could use the tool to identify concerns and take steps to address reported concerns prior to transfer to secondary school. The secondary schools could make use of

the primary data to tailor their induction sessions to discuss and address reported concerns, potentially reducing worry and concern before the transfer is made. Following up the initial data gathering phase with data collection in the secondary tier of schooling allows schools to measure the impact of any interventions or support put in place to address the concerns raised prior to transfer, as well as be aware of any concerns that have arisen since the transfer to secondary school. This information can then be fed back to primary schools and enables them to refine their transfer support for the next cohort. This aim of a cyclical research process, where continued data collection allows sustainable change to be built, enables mixed methods approaches to engage participants as partners in creating change (Nastasi et al., 2009), which is of particular importance in the field of pupil transfer, given that research suggests pupils have the clearest ideas of what helps or hinders their achievement (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). This can only be achieved if the key stakeholders in this (pupils and school staff) engage with the research, due to the vested interests in the outcomes (support for pupils making the transfer to secondary school) (Nastasi et al., 2009).

In terms of further research, this tool may be used with small groups and individuals as a means of offering tailored support for pupils making the transfer. There is also potential for this tool to explore how different populations view the transfer to secondary, and whether their needs are similar or different to the overall picture, for example, exploring how concerns differ for children making the transfer to secondary school from a rural setting, or from a traveller background. As with Dann's (2011) research into transfer of pupils with Autism Spectrum Conditions, the Revised Waterfall Model of Transfer could be used in conjunction with a sorting task tailored for use with pupils with an Autism Spectrum Condition, or for other children with Special Educational Needs, in order to ascertain their views and ensure as successful a transfer as possible.

Theoretically, this research offers a model for understanding how concerns may change throughout transfer to secondary school. Having analysed the research, a question remained as to whether certain types of concerns took priority over others, as suggested in previous research (for example, Ashton, 2008). Prioritisation of needs draws parallels with Maslow's (1943) theoretical assumption that basic human needs must be met before higher order needs can be met. The linear nature of Maslow's hierarchy has been challenged by more recent research, although the structure still has considerable explaining power when

trying to conceptualise the relationship between concerns Adapting Kenrick et al.'s (2010) updated hierarchy may provide a platform for future theoretical developments in the field of pupil transfer:
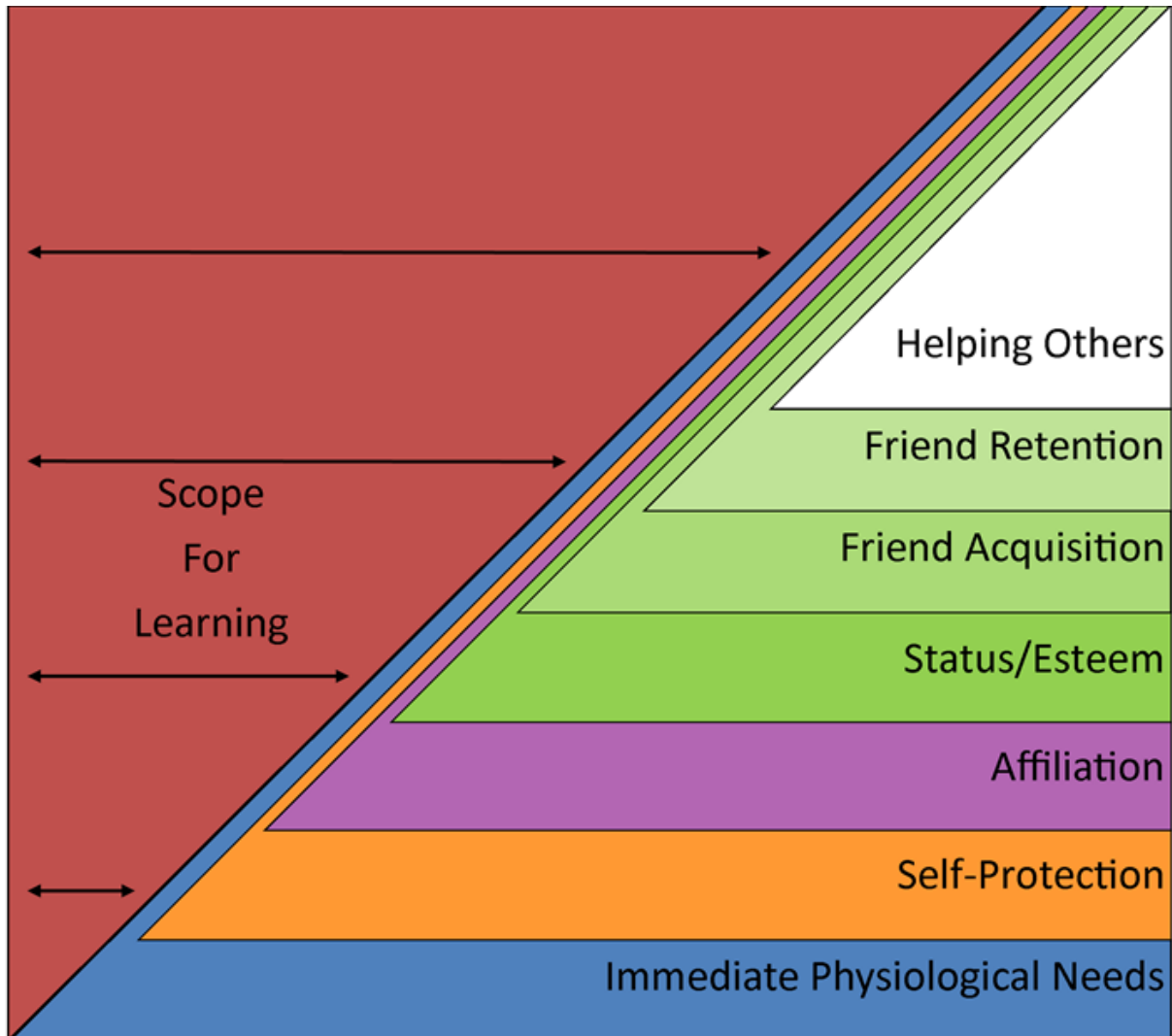
Figure 10. An adapted version of Kenrick et al.'s (2010) updated hierarchy of fundamental human motives for children undergoing the transfer from primary to secondary school.

There are several differences between Maslow's (1943) Pyramid of Needs and the hierarchy above. Following Kenrick et al.'s (2010) updated model, the levels of the hierarchy are depicted as overlapping rather than replacing each other. This indicates that the lower levels are still important once higher levels are reached and can still be triggered in response to the relevant environmental cues. The levels of the pyramid are adapted from Kenrick et al.'s (2010) model and apply to school transfer in the following ways:

Level of Hierarchy	Description
Immediate Physiological Needs	Basic needs in the school setting, for example, where toilets are located and how food can be purchased in the school cafeteria.
Self-Protection	Avoiding harm or reprimands, for example, the consequences of being late, not having the right equipment or being bullied.
Affiliation	Building relationships with members of staff and developing an affiliation or sense of belonging to the new school.
Status/Esteem	Feeling established within the new school setting and building self-esteem and confidence, for example, with peers.
Friend Acquisition	Having established affiliation and self-esteem, able to form initial friendships with peers.
Friend Retention	Able to retain a new friendship beyond the initial stage.
Helping Others	Able to offer support and help peers achieve other levels of the pyramid, for example, helping a peer to navigate the school environment or introduce them to a potential friend.

Table 8. Hierarchy level descriptors.

This model also indicates that a pupil's scope for learning increases as they progress up the hierarchy. If basic needs are not met, then research suggests these take priority until they are resolved (Ashton, 2008; Evangelou et al., 2008; Kenrick et al., 2010; Maslow, 1943) . If a child is unaware of where the toilets are, or where their next lesson is located, then learning is likely to be affected. Conversely, when a child's basic needs are met and they feel safe and affiliated to the school, then they are better able to focus on learning.

Applying the categories of concern used throughout this paper, it is also possible to link the categories to the levels of the hierarchy. Immediate physiological needs are represented by the environmental group of concerns and concerns regarding members of staff may impact on a pupil's affiliation with their new school. Aspects of self-protection can be linked to

both organisational concerns (e.g. being late) and social concerns (e.g. bullying). The next three steps in the hierarchy revolve around social concerns, before the pupil is able to help others with an aspect of the hierarchy. The scope for learning is related to academic concerns and increases as the pupil moves up the hierarchy. This supports the conclusion by Ashton (2008) that until pupils have sorted out the details of their new school and can make relationships, they cannot engage fully in learning.

Conclusion

Research has concluded that the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary school is a significant and stressful event in the lives of children (Jindal-Snape et al., 2011; Topping, 2011), but one that is not given the recognition it requires (Vinson, 2006; West et al., 2010). This research set out to explore whether the Waterfall Model of Transfer, based on the available research, accurately conveys the concerns reported by pupils prior to and after the transfer to secondary school. Exploring pupils' views using a fully mixed sequential equal status design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) has shown the Revised Waterfall Model of Transfer is a suitable tool to show how pupils' concerns change through the transfer process. Further analysis of the findings has drawn on needs psychology and led to a hierarchy of school concerns based on the work of Kenrick et al. (2010).

These tools can be used to help schools support pupils to cope with a naturally anxiety-provoking event at an individual, small group or year group level, with the generated data being used to support pupils currently undergoing the transfer process, as well as those making the transfer the following year.

It is hoped that both the Revised Waterfall Model of Transfer and the adapted hierarchy will generate interest and further research into pupil concerns, in order to reduce anxiety and provide pupils with the support they need to achieve their full potential at this critical time.

References

Adesope, O. O., Lavin, T., Thompson, T., & Ungerleider, C. (2011). Pedagogical strategies for teaching literacy to ESL immigrant students: A meta-analysis. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*(4), 629-653. doi: 10.1111/j.2044-8279.2010.02015.x

Akos, P. (2002). Student perceptions of the transition from elementary to middle school. *Professional School Counseling, 5*, 339-345.

Akos, P., & Galassi, J. (2004). Middle and high school transitions as viewed by students, parents, and teachers. *Professional School Counseling, 7*(4), 212-221.

Alderson, P., & Morrow, V. (2004). *Ethics, Social Research and Consulting with Children and Young People*. Ilford: Barnados.

Alibali, M. W., & Nathan, M. J. (2010). Conducting Research in Schools: A Practical Guide. *Journal of Cognition and Development, 11*(4), 397-407. doi: 10.1080/15248372.2010.516417

Anastas, J. (2012). From Scientism to Science: How Contemporary Epistemology Can Inform Practice Research. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 40*(2), 157-165. doi: 10.1007/s10615-012-0388-z

Ashton, R. (2008). Improving the transfer to secondary school: how every child's voice can matter. *Support for Learning, 23*(4), 176-182. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9604.2008.00391.x

Bakker, M., & Wicherts, J. M. (2011). The (mis)reporting of statistical results in psychology. *Behavior Research Methods, 43*(666-678).

Beazley, H., Bessell, S., Ennew, J., & Waterson, R. (2009). The right to be properly researched: research with children in a messy, real world. *Children's Geographies, 7*(4), 365-378. doi: 10.1080/14733280903234428

Bender, K., Brisson, D., Jenson, J. M., Forrest-Bank, S., Lopez, A., & Yoder, J. (2011). Challenges and Strategies for Conducting Program-Based Research in After-School Settings. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 28*(4), 319-334.

BERA. (2011, 22nd August 2012). Ethical Guidelines For Educational Research, from http://bera.dialsolutions.net/system/files/3/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf

Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.

Berndt, T. J., & Mekos, D. (1995). Adolescents' Perceptions of the Stressful and Desirable Aspects of the Transition to Junior High School. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 5*(1), 123-142. doi: 10.1207/s15327795jra0501_6

Capel, S., Zwozdiak-Myers, P., & Lawrence, J. (2007). The transfer of pupils from primary to secondary school: A case study of a foundation subject - physical education. *Research in Education, 77*, 14-30.

Carter, S. M., & Little, M. (2007). Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research, 17*(10), 1316-1328. doi: 10.1177/1049732307306927

Cefai, C., & Cooper, P. (2010). Students without voices: the unheard accounts of secondary school students with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 25*(2), 183 - 198.

Chedzoy, S. M., & Burden, R. L. (2007). Marking time or moving on: Student perceptions of school life in year 8 and their attributions for their success and failure in learning. *Research in Education, 77*(1), 31-45.

Children Act. (1989). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Clegg, S. (2005). Evidence based practice in educational research: a critical realist critique of systematic review. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 26*(3), 415-428. doi: 10.1080/01425690500128932

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Cole, R. L. (2008). A systematic review of cognitive behavioural interventions for adolescents with anger-related difficulties. *Educational & Child Psychology, 25*(1), 27-47.

Connors, C., & Stalker, K. (2007). Children's experiences of disability: pointers to a social model of childhood disability. *Disability & Society, 22*(1), 19 - 33.

Coyne, I. (2010a). Accessing children as research participants: examining the role of gatekeepers. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 36*(4), 452-454. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2214.2009.01012.x

Coyne, I. (2010b). Research with Children and Young People: The Issue of Parental (Proxy) Consent. *Children & Society, 24*(3), 227-237. doi: 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00216.x

Curtis, K., Roberts, H., Copperman, J., Downie, A., & Liabo, K. (2004). 'How come I don't get asked no questions?' Researching 'hard to reach' children and teenagers. *Child & Family Social Work, 9*(2), 167-175. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2206.2004.00304.x

Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. (2002). *Explaining Society: Critical Realism in the Social Sciences*. London: Routledge.

Dann, R. (2011). Secondary transition experiences for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASCs). *Educational Psychology in Practice, 27*(3), 293-312. doi: 10.1080/02667363.2011.603534

Davis, J. M., & Watson, N. (2001). Where are the children's experiences? Analysing social and cultural exclusion in 'special' and 'mainstream' schools. *Disability & Society, 16*(5), 671-687.

Deakin-Crick R., Sebba J., Harlen W., Guoxing Y., & Lawson H. (2005). Systematic review of research evidence of the impact on students of self- and peer-assessment. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

Department of Education and Science. (1985). The Curriculum from 5 to 16. HMI Series: Curriculum Matters No. 2 Retrieved 19th December, 2011, from http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/hmi-curricmatters/curriculum.html

Des Jarlais, D. C., Lyles, C., Crepaz, N., & TREND Group. (2004). Improving the reporting quality of nonrandomized evaluations of behavioral and public health interventions: The TREND statement. *American Journal of Public Health, 94*, 361-366.

Di Santo, A., & Berman, R. (2011). Beyond the Preschool Years: Children's Perceptions About Starting Kindergarten. *Children & Society*, no-no. doi: 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2011.00360.x

Dixon-Woods, M., & Fitzpatrick, R. (2001). Qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMJ, 323*(7316), 765-766. doi: 10.1136/bmj.323.7316.765

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2011). Researching with Young Children: Seeking Assent. *Child Indicators Research, 4*(2), 231-247. doi: 10.1007/s12187-010-9084-0

England, G. T. C. f. (2002). Transfer from the primary classroom Retrieved 19th December, 2011, from http://www.gtce.org.uk/tla/rft/trans_prim1002/

Evangelou, M., Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2008). What Makes a Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School? London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Frederickson, N., Dunsmuir, S., Lang, J., & Monsen, J. (2004). Mainstream-special school inclusion partnerships: Pupil, parent and teacher perspectives. *International Journal for Inclusive Education, 8*(1), 37-57.

Galton, M., Gray, J., & Ruddock, J. (1999). The Impact of School Transition and Transfer on Pupil Progress and Attainment. Nottingham: DfEE.

Gergen, K. J. (1999). *An Invitation to Social Construction*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gilmore, S., & Herring, J. (2011). 'No' is the hardest word: consent and children's autonomy. *Child and Family Law Quarterly, 23*(1), 3-25.

Gocsik, K. (2004). What is a Scholarly Paper? Retrieved 22nd August, 2012, from http://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/colleges+and+schools/school-of-professional-studies/Degrees-Programs/PhD-Studies/Downloads-Writing-Resources/WhatIsAScholarlyPaper.pdf

Graham, C., & Hill, M. (2003). Negotiating the transition to secondary school. In University of Glasgow (Ed.), *Spotlight 39*. Glasgow: The SCRE Centre.

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a Conceptual Framework for Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11*(3), 255-274. doi: 10.3102/01623737011003255

Gullone, E., & King, N. J. (1992). Psychometric Evaluation of a Revised Fear Survey Schedule for Children and Adolescents. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 33*(6), 987-998. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.1992.tb00920.x

Harden, A., & Thomas, J. (2005). Methodological Issues in Combining Diverse Study Types in Systematic Reviews. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 8*(3), 257-271. doi: 10.1080/13645570500155078

Houston, S. (2001). 'Beyond social constructionism: Critical realism and social work'. *British Journal of Social Work, 31*, 845-861.

Hughes, J., & Gutkin, T. (1995). Legal and ethical issues in conducting research on alcohol and drug use with children: A reaction to Havey and Dodd. *Journal of School Psychology, 33*(4), 319-326. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0022-4405(95)00018-H

Irish National Teachers' Organisation. (2008). *Transitions in the Primary School.* Paper presented at the INTO Consultative Conference on Education, Ireland.

James, A., & Prout, A. (1997). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*. London: Falmer.

Jindal-Snape, D., Vettraino, E., Lowson, A., & McDuff, W. (2011). Using creative drama to facilitate primarysecondary transition. *Education 3-13, 39*(4), 383-394. doi: 10.1080/03004271003727531

Johnston, J. (2005). Pupil Voice and Research: A Narrative Review. *Annual Review of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, 2*. Retrieved from http://research.ncl.ac.uk/ARECLS/vol2_documents/Joanna/joanna.htm

Kenrick, D. T., Griskevicius, V., Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. (2010). Renovating the Pyramid of Needs: Contemporary Extensions Built Upon Ancient Foundations. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5*(3), 292-314. doi: 10.1177/1745691610369469

Leech, N., & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2009). A typology of mixed methods research designs. *Quality & Quantity, 43*(2), 265-275. doi: 10.1007/s11135-007-9105-3

Lietz, P. (2010). Research into questionnaire design. [Article]. *International Journal of Market Research, 52*(2), 249-272.

Lightfoot, J., Wright, S., & Sloper, P. (1999). Supporting pupils in mainstream school with an illness or disability: young people's views. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 25*(4), 267-284. doi: 10.1046/j.1365-2214.1999.00112.x

Lipsey, M. W., & Wilson, D. B. (2001). *Practical meta-analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lohaus, A., Elben, C., Ball, J., & Klein-Hessling, J. (2004). School transition from elementary to secondary school: changes in psychological adjustment. *Educational Psychology, 24*(2), 161-173. doi: 10.1080/0144341032000160128

Lucey, H., & Reay, D. (2000). Identities in Transition: anxiety and excitement in the move to secondary school. *Oxford Review of Education, 26*(2), 191-205.

Maras, P., & Aveling, E.-L. (2006). Students with special educational needs: transitions from primary to secondary school. *British Journal of Special Education, 33*(4), 196-203.

Marshall, I. (2010). "Pourquoi Pas?" Versus "Absolutely Not!" Cross-National Differences in Access to Schools and Pupils for Survey Research. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research, 16*(2), 89-109. doi: 10.1007/s10610-010-9125-8

Marshall, N., & Hargreaves, D. (2007). Crossing the humpback bridge: primary–secondary school transition in music education. *Music Education Research, 9*(1), 65-80.

Marston, J. (2008). *Perceptions of students and parents involved in primary to secondary school transtion program*. Paper presented at the Annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review* Retrieved 2nd March, 2012, from http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm

Meisenhelder, J. B. (1994). Contributing Factors to Fear of HIV Contagion in Registered Nurses. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 26*(1), 65-69. doi: 10.1111/j.1547-5069.1994.tb00296.x

Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(1), 48-76. doi: 10.1177/2345678906292462

Nastasi, B. K., Hitchcock, J. H., & Brown, L. M. (2009). An Inclusive Framework for Conceptualizing Mixed Methods Design Typologies. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Nieto, S. (1994). Lessons from students on creating a chance to dream. *Harvard Educational Review, 64*, 392-426.

Norwich, B., Richards, A., & Nash, T. (2010). Educational psychologists and children in care: practices and issues. *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology, 26*(4), 375 - 390.

O'Kane, C. (2000). 'The development of participatory techniques: facilitating children's views about decisions which affect them'. In P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.), Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices. London: Falmer Press.

Oliver, C. (2012a). Critical Realist Grounded Theory: A New Approach for Social Work Research. *British Journal of Social Work, 42*(2), 371-387. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcr064

Oliver, C. (2012b). The Process of Academic Writing Retrieved 22nd August, 2012, from www.sagepub.com/upm-data/19047_01_Oliver_01.pdf

Ophuysen, S. v. (2009). Moving to Secondary School: on the role of affective expectations in a tracking school system. *European Education Research Journal, 8*(3), 434-446.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Peterson, A. C., & Crockett, L. (1985). Pubertal timing and grade effects on adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 14*(3), 191-206.

Petticrew, M., & Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A practical guide*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Plonsky, L., & Gass, S. (2011). Quantitative Research Methods, Study Quality, and Outcomes: The Case of Interaction Research. *Language Learning, 61*(2), 325-366. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00640.x

Pokorny, S. B., Jason, L. A., Schoeny, M. E., Townsend, S. M., & Curie, C. J. (2001). Do Participation Rates Change when Active Consent Procedures Replace Passive Consent. *Evaluation Review, 25*(5), 567-580. doi: 10.1177/0193841x0102500504

Pope, C., Ziebland, S., & Mays, N. (2000). Analysing qualitative data. *BMJ, 320*(7227), 114-116. doi: 10.1136/bmj.320.7227.114

Pratt, S., & George, R. (2005). Transferring friendship: girls' and boys' friendships in the transition from primary to secondary school. *Children & Society, 19*(1), 16-26.

Ramsey, G. (2003). Report on Future Directions for Secondary Education in the Northern Territory. Retrieved from http://www.education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/4525/ReportFullVersion.pdf

Rice, F., Frederickson, N., & Seymour, J. (2011). Assessing pupil concerns about transition to secondary school. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*(2), 244-263. doi: 10.1348/000709910x519333

Rockett, M., & Percival, S. (2002). *Thinking for Learning*. Stafford: Network Educational Press.

Rutter, M. (1989). Pathways from Childhood to Adult Life. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 30*(1), 23-51. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.1989.tb00768.x

Rutter, M. (2005). Autism research: Lessons from the past and prospects for the future. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders,, 35*(2), 241-257.

Sandelowski, M., Barroso, J., & Voils, C. I. (2007). Using qualitative metasummary to synthesize qualitative and quantitative descriptive findings. *Research in Nursing & Health, 30*(1), 99-111. doi: 10.1002/nur.20176

Scott, D. (2005). Critical Realism and Empirical Research Methods in Education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 39*(4), 633-646. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9752.2005.00460.x

Smith, J. A., Harre, R., & Van-Langenhove, L. (1996). *Rethinking methods in psychology*. London: Sage Publications.

Spall, B., & Callis, S. (1997). *Loss, Bereavement and Grief - A Guide to Effective Caring*. Cheltenham, England: Nelson Thornes.

Sweetser, G. K. (2003). *Transition from Primary School to Secondary School: The Beginning of a Journey*. Paper presented at the New Zealand Association for Research in Education and Australian Association for Research in Education (NZARE & AARE) Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed Methods Sampling: A Typology With Examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(1), 77-100. doi: 10.1177/2345678906292430

Teevan, D. (2005). *Lonergan, hermeneutics & theological method*: Marquette University Press.

The University of Georgia College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences. (2011). Using "Wildcards" Retrieved 22nd December 2011, 2011, from http://apps.caes.uga.edu

Thomas, J., Harden, A., Oakley, A., Oliver, S., Sutcliffe, K., Rees, R., . . . Kavanagh, J. (2004). Integrating qualitative research with trials in systematic reviews. *BMJ, 328*(7446), 1010-1012. doi: 10.1136/bmj.328.7446.1010

Thomasson, R., Field, L., O'Donnell, C., & Woods, S. (2006). *School Concerns Questionnaire*. Buckinghamshire: Buckinghamshire County Council.

Tobbell, J. (2003). Students experiences of transition from primary to secondary school. *Educational & Child Psychology, 20*(4), 4-14.

Topping, K. (2011). Primary–secondary transition: Differences between teachers' and children's perceptions. *Improving Schools, 14*(3), 268-285.

Vinson, T. (2006). *Good transitions: through the eyes of primary and secondary principals*. Paper presented at the Cornerstones: a conference for public education, Wesley Centre, Sydney.

Vinson, T., & Harrison, J. (2006). *Good Transitions: through the eyes of Primary and Secondary Principals*. Paper presented at the Cornerstones: a conference for public education, Wesley Centre, Sydney.
http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/1916/1/Good_Transitions_Paper.pdf

Weiss, C. H. (1998). *Evaluation methods for studying programs and policies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

West, P., Sweeting, H., & Young, R. (2010). Transition matters: pupils' experiences of the primary–secondary school transition in the West of Scotland and consequences for well‐being and attainment. *Research Papers in Education, 25*(1), 21-50. doi: 10.1080/02671520802308677

Westminster Institute of Education. (2006). Launchpad on Transition Retrieved 19th December, 2011, from
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/education/rescon/cpdgifted/docs/secondarylaunchpads/transition.pdf

Woodhead, M., & Faulkner, D. (2008). Subjects, objects or participants? Dilemmas on psychological research with children. In P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.), Research with children: Perspectives and practices. London: Falmer.

Yeung, H. (1997). 'Critical realism and realist research in human geography: A method or a philosophy in search of a method?'. *Progress in Human Geography, 21*(1), 51-74.

Zeedyk, M. S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B., & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the Transition from Primary to Secondary School. *School Psychology International, 24*(1), 67-79. doi: 10.1177/0143034303024001010

Appendices

Appendix A: Literature Review Process and Textual Narrative Synthesis

Searching

1. Generate search terms for databases

To begin the process of locating relevant studies, three key term types were identified from the review question. For each of these term types, relevant words and phrases were generated for use with electronic databases, based on alternative terms used in the existing literature:

Type of term	Words/phrases generated
Target population	Primary school / elementary school / secondary school / middle school/ high school / pupil / child*[26] / student / learner
Research area	Transition / transfer (school transition / school transfer)
Outcome	Thought / perception / opinion / expectation / view

2. Database search for studies that are relevant to the question

Following the generation of terms, the following databases were searched using all the possible combinations of term types generated in step 1 for research that matched the search terms either in the title, abstract or as keywords:

CSA Illumina, Ovid (including PsycInfo), ProQuest (including the British Education Index, Australian Education Index and ERIC), Scopus and Web of Knowledge.

From these searches, 37 papers were found using the search terms in step 1 that were related to the review question. These papers were then brought forward for screening.

---

[26] Where '*' indicates a wild card that specifies zero or more characters in its place (The University of Georgia College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, 2011). For example child* will return results including 'child', 'children' and 'childhood'.

3. Screen relevant studies to identify those to be included in the synthesis

To refine the results obtained from the initial database searches, a set of inclusion criteria based on the research question were created, as an initial screening for relevant studies:

Essential Criteria	Description
Language	Only studies reported in English were considered, to maintain accuracy
Transfer	Studies that focused on the transfer from the primary tier of education to the secondary tier (e.g. in England, this is commonly between the end of primary school in Year 6 to the first year of secondary school, Year 7) were considered. This excludes amongst other transfers, starting school, and the transition to further/higher education.
Transition	Studies that reported on transitions (defined as movement between year groups within the same setting (Galton et al., 1999)) were not included.
Participants	Only studies that used school-age children as participants were considered, as the views of children form a key part of the research question (depending on the country, the age of the child at transfer may differ).
Desirable Criteria	Description
Study/Participants	Studies that obtained the views of participants pre- and post-transfer were desirable, to provide direct comparisons of pupil views during the transfer

Of the 37 papers found in the database search, 15 met the inclusion criteria and were brought forward to the mapping phase.

Mapping

4. Map out study findings and appraise studies for quality

The 15 studies that met the inclusion criteria outlined in step 3 were analysed in detail in the following areas: study aims/research question(s), design, participants, method (including analysis and data collection) and study outcomes[27]. At this stage, four studies were

---

[27] See Step 5 for this textual narrative synthesis.

removed as they met the criteria to pass the screening step, but the study aims and data generated from these studies were not suitable to explore the review question.

Synthesis

5. *Synthesise study findings*

The analysis from step 4 was compiled into a table to provide a general overview of the 11 studies that passed the screening and mapping steps, as well as the four studies that were rejected at the mapping phase.

Study	Participants		Context	Aims	Design/Method/Additional Information
	Age	N			
Rice, Frederickson & Seymour 2011	Age 11 (Year 6) Age 12 (Year 7)	147 (69M, 78F) 263 (143M, 130F) * error reported in study	England	To assess the validity of a quantitative self-report measure of school concerns as an assessment tool during the primary–secondary school transition.	School Concerns Questionnaire, and other tools measuring self-reports of school concerns and school liking as well as self-reported and peer assessments on a range of psychological adjustment measures
West, Sweeting & Young 2010	Age 11 (Primary 7) Age 13 (Secondary 2)	2586 2371	Scotland	(1) To describe the extent and nature of school and peer concerns reported by pupils following transfer to secondary schools; (2) To examine how such concerns vary by primary and/or secondary school, and what school-based factors might account for differences in pupils' experiences of transition	Part of the West of Scotland 11 to 16 Study. Baseline survey completed by participants. No data of pre-transfer anxieties, views obtained from participants retrospectively.

Graham & Hill 2003	Age 11 (Primary 7) Age 12 (Secondary 1)	268 343	Scotland	To examine the experiences and views of children making the transition from primary to secondary school.	School based questionnaires supplemented by a small number of focus group discussions
Zeedyk et al 2003	Age 11 (Year 6) Age 12 (Year 7)	192 128	UK	To survey five components of the move to secondary school: 1) aspects of secondary school to which children looked forward to 2) pupils concerns about secondary 3) parent's concerns re: secondary 4) skills perceived to be useful for the transition 5) suggestions for facilitating the transition	Survey addressing the five aims. Part of the Quality Contact Project.
Ashton 2008	Age 11 (Year 6)	1673 (902M, 764F)	England	To focus on the transition process as well as the content and provide an example of how every child's view can contribute to improving transition	A questionnaire sent to students and three class visits to participate in transition focused activities.
Akos 2002	Age 12 (5th Grade)	331 (156M, 175F)	USA	What questions do students have	Longitudinal analysis of

	Age 13 (6th Grade)	103		about middle school? What specific concerns do students have about middle school? What aspects of middle school are seen as positive? What do students think middle school will be like? Whom do students turn to for help during the transition? What it is important for students to know about the transition?	student perceptions over four phases. 1) Questions about middle school 2) Questionnaire about student perspectives 3) Questionnaire similar to 2) 4) Sample of successful students answered a questionnaire.
Chedzoy 2005	Age 11 (Year 6) Age 12 (Year 7)	207 (104M, 103F) 207 (104M, 103F)	England	To explore ways in which valid and reliable information could be obtained from students pre- and post- transition	Questionnaire with items relating to previous literature in the area, including; 1) General feelings pre- and post- transition 2) expectations about the level of work and the reality of work

Maras & Aveling 2006	Age 11 (Year 6)	6 (4M, 2F)	England	Looked at the perceptions and expectations of young people with SEN toward the primary-secondary transition, in order to identify features of the primary–secondary school transition that might facilitate successful transition for young people with special educational needs.	Qualitative study. Semi-structured interviews with six young people (and their teacher or parent), carried out pre- and/or post- transition.
INTO 2008	(6th Class to 1st Year)	50	Ireland	To ascertain the expectations and concerns of pupils, parents and teachers in the following areas: Pupils' expectations of post-primary school Pupils' concerns about post-primary school Parents' concerns about post-primary school Personal attributes which aid transition Means by which schools could facilitate transition	Research was carried out using questionnaires, interviews and focus groups over a period of three years.

Dann 2011	Age 11 (Year 6)	6 (5M, 1F)	England	The present study hopes to address a gap in the research by looking specifically at the transition experiences of pupils with ASC.	Data was collected at two separate times to allow comparison between primary school and following a term at secondary school. A qualitative methodology was used based on Frederickson et al. (2004). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups surveyed the experiences of participant
Tobbell 2003	Age 12 (Year 7)	30 (30F)	England	The current research aims to ask students about their experiences at primary and secondary school and their feelings about the transition process, as a basis for generating psychological models	Qualitative interview design using a semi-structured interview technique, as well as a focus group.

Studies removed at Step 4 (Mapping) of the Literature Review Process					
Lucey & Reay 2000	Age 9-11 (Year 5&6)	90	England	To consider some of the ways in which anxiety does figure in children's narratives around the secondary school transfer.	Focus group sessions around pupil's thoughts and feelings on the move to secondary school. Ten pupils were interviewed individually.
Shachar, Suss & Shlomo 2002	(7th Grade)	952 (464M, 488F)	Israel	1) Do students express serious concerns about their transition to junior high school or, perhaps, their concerns are not really worrisome at all? (2) If students do express serious concerns, with what intensity do they appear and what are the most salient of these concerns? (3) Does the fact that the junior high school has been functioning for many years assist students to make the	Three part questionnaire administered on the first day of junior high school: 1) personal and family background 2) feelings and expectations on arrival at junior high school 3) statements about their future experience in junior high school

				transition more smoothly?	
Humphrey & Ainscow 2006	Age 11 (Year 6)	38	England	RQ1: In what ways does *Transition Club* facilitate a more successful transition process (in terms of pupils' perceptions of their academic progress and social and psychological adjustment)? RQ2: How do pupils feel about their participation in *Transition Club*?	Qualitative methodology: 1) Participant observations 2) Questionnaires 3) Focus group interview
Van Ophuysen 2009	Age 13	635 (309M, 315F)	Germany	Can personal variables (achievement, academic self-concept and school dislike) predict pupils' expectations? Can expectations predict pupils' adjustment in terms of consequences in the above-mentioned personal characteristics?	Data from a larger investigation, in which questionnaires were given to pupils six times over three years. This study uses data from questionnaires prior to transition, and one year later.

Appendix B: Weight of Evidence tool used to assess quality of research evidence

Study	Akos	Ashton	Chedzoy	Dann	INTO	Maras	Rice	Tobbell	West	Zeedyk
Overall Weight of Evidence	Low	High/ Medium	Low	High	Low	Medium	High	High/ Medium	High/Medium	Medium
Are there ethical concerns about the way the study was done? *Consider consent, funding, privacy, etc.*	Yes, somewhat. Researcher was a school counsellor at the middle school. Acknowledges bias. No information given on consent.	No. Part of wider project. Covering letter sent out with questionnaire.	No. Pupils given option to not partake in study or to complete it anonymously.	No. Consent given by all parents.	Yes, somewhat. No information given on consent.	No. Written consent asked for from parents and students.	No. Approved by university ethics committee.	No. Anonymous responses, participants could choose not to comment or attend focus groups.	No. Part of wider project (West of Scotland 11 to 16 study). Approved by Glasgow University Ethics Committee.	Yes, somewhat. No information given on consent.
Were students and/or parents appropriately involved in the design or conduct of the study?	Yes, a lot. Students participated in the study, submitting questions and answering questionnaires.	Yes, a lot. Students participated in the study, answering questionnaires and participating in focus groups. Summary	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study.	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study. Parents involved through semi-structured interviews.	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study. Parents also involved.	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study. Consent asked from both parents and pupils.	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study.	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study.	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study.	Yes, a lot. Pupils involved throughout conduct of study.

		document of findings shared with participants once completed.								
Is there sufficient justification for why the study was done the way it was?	Yes, somewhat. Limited to one primary researcher. Researcher felt insight from 'successful' students would be valuable.	Yes. Questionnaires (including open questions) and focus groups used.	Yes. Questionnaire types varied to provide cross-validation (by means of triangulation).	Yes. Data collection at two separate times to allow comparison pre- and post-transition. Triangulation of stakeholder's views.	Yes. Data collection over three years with three cohorts to allow comparison pre- and post-transition and across cohorts.	Yes. Data collection at two separate times to allow comparison pre- and post-transition.	Yes. Range of measures used to explore different transition variables.	Yes. Qualitative interview design to allow for a 'richness of data'. Aims to focus on pupils.	Yes. Data collection at four separate time points. Questionnaires used to obtain pupil views.	Yes. Data collection from multiple sources (primary and secondary pupils and parents).
Was the choice of research design appropriate for addressing the research question(s) posed?	Yes, completely. Quantitative and qualitative data collected. Data collected longitudinally over the	Yes, completely. Qualitative data collected from multiple data procedures.	Yes, completely. Questionnaires used to elicit pupil views, through both closed and open questions.	Yes, completely. Qualitative data collected from multiple sources and using different procedures.	Yes, completely. Qualitative data collected from multiple data procedures (questionnaires, focus	Yes, completely. Semi-structured interview used to allow for some flexibility in data collection.	Yes, completely. Questionnaires used to elicit pupil views, through both closed and open questions.	Yes, completely. Design aimed to let students explore their experiences and feelings using qualitative interviews.	Yes, completely. Questionnaire data collected longitudinally at four points.	Yes, completely. Questionnaire data collected from multiple sources and focuses on views of participants.

	transition.			Pupils supported using 'Talking Mats' resources.	groups and interviews).					
Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the repeatability or reliability of data collection methods or tools?	Yes, somewhat. Acknowledges that data needs replication. Some outline of how data collection tools were generated, but no copies in appendix.	Yes, somewhat. Procedure and content of questionnaires and focus group activities outlined, but no copies in appendix.	Yes, somewhat. Procedure and content of questionnaires generally outlined, but no copies in appendix.	Yes, good. Procedures outlined in main body of the text. Full lists of questions and resources given in Appendix.	No. No details of procedure given.	Yes, good. Procedures outlined in main body of the text. Interview schedules also reproduced.	Yes, good. All measures used outlined in study.	Yes, somewhat. Methods outlined, but no indications of interview structure.	Yes, somewhat. Some information on measures used in data collection e.g. Rosenberg self-esteem scale.	Yes, somewhat. Some information on measures used in questionnaire, but no complete copy in appendix.
Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the validity or trustworthiness of data collection tools and	No, none. Data collection tools based on themes generated by students.	No, none. No explanation of where questions were generated from.	No, none. Questionnaires generated from previous literature (not specified).	Yes, somewhat. Methodology based on Frederickson et al. (2004) and others.	No, none. No explanation of where questions were generated from.	No, none. No explanation of where questions were generated from.	Yes. Reliability measures (Cronbach's a) included.	No, none. No reference to how interview questions were generated.	Yes, somewhat. References made to measures used in study.	Yes, somewhat. Questions generated from prior survey.

methods?										
Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the repeatability or reliability of data analysis?	Somewhat. Data analysis procedure detailed. Data were subjected to content analysis.	Somewhat. Open coding analysis followed the first steps of a grounded theory approach.	No. No outline of data analysis procedure.	Yes. Data analysis procedure detailed. Interpretative analysis.	No. No outline of data analysis procedure.	No. No outline of data analysis procedure.	Yes. Data analysis procedure fully outlined.	Yes. Data analysis procedure outlined.	Yes. Data analysis procedure described in main body of text.	Yes. Descriptive analysis only.
Have sufficient attempts been made to establish the validity or trustworthiness of data analysis?	No, none. Data analysis coded by researcher with no inter-rater reliability.	No, none. No indication of independent coding.	No, none. No indication of independent coding.	Yes. Inter-rater reliability 83%.	No, none. No indication of independent coding.	No, none. No indication of independent coding.	Yes. P values given for relevant data.	Yes. Acknowledges possible difference in interpretations between individuals.	Yes. Effect sizes of transition predictors given.	No, none. No indication of independent coding.
To what extent are the research design and methods employed able to rule out any other	A little. School counsellor conducted the study, and may have a vested interest in	A little. Questionnaire generated by researcher, with an open ended response.	A little. Subjects answered both open and closed questions.	A lot. Views of parents, students and school staff all collected and triangulated.	A lot. Views of parents, students and school staff all collected and triangulated.	N/A Reporting of interview answers, possible researcher bias. Some sample	A lot. Full design and methods process outlined, supported by measures of reliability	N/A Reporting of interview answers, possible researcher bias.	A lot. Research data identifies the effect size of each factor for predicting school transitions.	N/A Reporting of interview answers, possible researcher bias.

sources of error/bias which would lead to alternative explanations for the findings of the study?	the outcomes. Questionnaire items were generated by students.	Focus groups led by researcher.				attrition in post-transition measure.				
How generalisable are the study results?	Only one school district in USA used. Replication required.	Results from one local authority in the UK. Further replication required.	Results from one local authority in the UK, in response to another study.	6 pupils with ASC in one local authority.	Data from multiple cohorts.	6 pupils with SEN in one local authority.	6 primary schools and 2 secondary school in one county in England.	Female sample only. Not necessarily generalizable.	Large sample (2000+) from 11-19 years old. Primary/secondary transition 1995/1996.	Sample includes teachers, pupils and parents.
In light of the above, do the reviewers differ from the authors over the findings or conclusions of the study?	Not applicable	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Have sufficient attempts been made to justify the conclusions drawn from the findings, so that the conclusions are trustworthy?	Medium trustworthiness. Limitations recognised and bias acknowledged.	Not applicable	Medium trustworthiness. Discussion refers to findings, but does not support them with other evidence.	High trustworthiness. Limitations recognised. Findings supported by other studies.	Medium trustworthiness. Limitations of study size recognised.	Medium trustworthiness. Limitations of sample size and attrition recognised.	Medium trustworthiness.	Medium trustworthiness.	Medium trustworthiness. Longitudinal study, but high levels of attrition factor (45% of original sample completed study).	Medium trustworthiness.

Appendix C: Ideas that may facilitate the school transfer process

Response	Number of responses	Study
Experience - more time at new school		Ashton
Experience - more time at new school		Graham
Experience - more time at new school		Zeedyk
Experience - Summer school in secondary school		Tobbell
Experience - Transition visit		INTO
Experience - Visit to secondary school		Maras
Knowing about expectations	18% (n=29)	Akos
Knowing what to expect in advance		Maras
Knowing what to expect in advance		Zeedyk
Knowledge - do not listen to rumours		Graham
Knowledge - that it is fun	9% (n=31)	Akos
Knowledge - that it is fun		Graham
Knowledge - locations	10% (n=16)	Akos
Knowledge - not hard	6% (n=9)	Akos
Knowledge - rules	23% (n = 36)	Akos
Knowledge - rules		Ashton
Knowledge - schedules		Ashton
Pupils - Buddy system		INTO
Pupils - contact between primary and secondary pupils		INTO
Pupils - Make friends		Graham
Pupils - Meet old friends and teachers		Ashton
Specialist SEN provision		Dann
Specialist SEN provision	1 (50%)/2 (40%)	Maras
Staffing - Continuity of LSA support		Maras
Staffing - Helpful and understanding staff		Maras

Staffing - Helpful and understanding staff		Dann
Staffing - Helpful and understanding staff		Zeedyk
Staffing - Helpful and understanding staff		Graham
Staffing - Helpful and understanding staff	8% (n=12)	Akos
Staffing - Meeting secondary school teacher		Ashton
Staffing - Meeting secondary school teacher		INTO
Staffing - Meeting secondary school teacher		Zeedyk

Appendix D: Child Consent Form and Information Sheet

<div align="right">

James Weetman
Trainee Educational Psychologist

james.weetman@darlington.gov.uk

</div>

Dear Year 6,

My name is James Weetman and I am training to be an Educational Psychologist.

I am doing a research project as part of my training to find out about the worries young people have when they go from primary school to secondary school.

I would really like to know what you think about moving to secondary school by doing a sorting questionnaire. I would like to do this questionnaire with you twice:

1) When you are in Year 6
2) When you have started Year 7

The questionnaire should take about 20 minutes to do each time.

Your answers will be anonymous – that means no one will know what your answers were.

If you don't want to answer a question, you can leave it and go on to the next one.
You can stop at any time.

You can say yes or no. It is up to you if you want to take part.
If you say yes, but change your mind later on, that is fine, you do not have to take part.

If you do want to take part, please sign the form below and return it to school.

If you have any questions, please contact me using the information at the top of the page.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely,

James Weetman
Trainee Educational Psychologist

james.weetman@darlington.gov.uk

Primary to Secondary School Concerns Research Project

If I agree to take part in the project:

- I understand my answer will be private
- I understand I do not have to answer a question if I do not want to
- I can stop at any time
- If I say yes, but I change my mind later on, I do not have to take part.

If you understand the statements above, you now need to decide whether you would like to take part in the project.

I have decided that I would like to take part in the project about secondary school worries.

Please put a **circle** around **No** or **Yes**.

No   **Yes**

Signed……………………………………….

Please print your name…………………………………………

Please return this form to school as soon as possible

Appendix E: Parent Consent Form and Information Sheet

<div align="right">
James Weetman
Trainee Educational Psychologist

james.weetman@darlington.gov.uk
</div>

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is James Weetman and I am training to be an Educational Psychologist. I am doing a research project as part of my training to find out about the concerns young people have as they transfer from primary school to secondary school. Studies show that the thoughts and feelings of young people are very important, and more should be done to give them a 'voice'. Other studies also show how important the transfer from primary to secondary school is for young people.

I would really value your help with this project by allowing your son/daughter to complete a questionnaire about the concerns they might have before and after the transfer to secondary school.

The plan is for each pupil to complete the questionnaire two times; firstly when they are in Year 6, and when they have made the transfer to Year 7. The questionnaire will ask pupils to sort a list of concerns relating to secondary school transfer according to how concerning they are. The pupils will also have a chance to write their own concerns down if they are not on the sheet, and add their own comments at the end.

The questionnaire will take about 30 minutes to complete each time. The answers will be anonymous, so your son/daughter's results will not be able to be identified. Your son/daughter's name will not appear in the results, or in any report. Full instructions will be given to the pupils taking part, and all pupils will be told what will be done with the data at the end of the study. The head-teacher of the school is interested in and willing to cooperate with my research. The study has been approved by the ethics committee at Newcastle University.

I have asked the young people themselves for consent to take part in the project and have attached this information sheet for your information. I and staff who know your son/daughter well have spent some time explaining the study to them.

I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it to school. Your son/daughter has expressed an initial interest in taking part in the study and has completed a consent form (enclosed).   If you would like to know more about the project, I would be very happy to chat with you. If you wish to do this, please feel free to contact me at the above addresses.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely,

James Weetman
Trainee Educational Psychologist

james.weetman@darlington.gov.uk

Primary to Secondary School Concerns Research Project

I am aware that my child *(print name)*_____
has agreed to take part in your research project.

I *(please circle)*   **do**   **do not**   wish my child to take part in the project.

Signed _____ Parent/Guardian

Please print your name_____

Please return this form to school as soon as possible

Appendix F: Participant Debriefing Document

<div align="right">

James Weetman
Trainee Educational Psychologist

james.weetman@darlington.gov.uk
</div>

Dear Pupil,

You have been taking part in a research project as part of my training to find out about the worries young people have when they go from primary school to secondary school.

There has been a lot of research into finding out about when pupils move to secondary school, but I wanted to ask young people like you what you thought about moving to secondary school.

I hope to write up my results to show people what you and the other young people who took part in my study think about the transition to secondary school and suggest things schools might do in the future to make transition better.

Thank you very much for taking part in this study. If you have any more questions about the study, you can contact me using the details at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix G: Research Design Process

Obtain Ethical Approval

- Study approved by the Newcastle University Ethics committee.

Contact Primary Schools

- Primary Schools in a Local Authority in the North-East of England contacted.
- Summerside Primary – consent from school obtained, school unable to participate due to time constraints relating to obtaining a suitable level of active parental consent.
- Locomotion Primary – consent from school obtained, passive parental consent obtained for all pupils, active pupil consent sought.
- Heatherfields Primary – consent from school obtained, passive parental consent obtained for all pupils, active pupil consent sought.

Data Collection – Primary Phase

- Locomotion Primary – 12 pupils consented to participate throughout the study. 12 pupils completed the primary phase of the task, 0 withdrew from the study.
- Heatherfields Primary – 16 pupils consented to participate throughout the study, 4 pupils chose not participate. 16 pupils completed the primary phase of the task, 0 withdrew from the study.
- All pupils given a verbal debrief following the data collection, as well as a written debrief form (see Appendix F).

Contact Secondary Schools

- The secondary schools which the 28 pupils who completed the primary phase of the study were due to attend were contacted to arrange the secondary phase of the research.

- Bright Beacon Secondary – 5 pupils from the primary phase of the study due to transfer to this school. Consent from school obtained, passive parental consent re-obtained for all pupils, active pupil consent re-sought.

- Rainbow Hill Special School (attached to Bright Beacon Secondary) – 1 pupil from the primary phase of the study due to transfer to this school. Consent from school obtained, passive parental consent re-obtained for all pupils, active pupil consent re-sought.

Data Collection – Secondary Phase

- Bright Beacon Secondary – 5 pupils gave their continued consent to participate in the study. 5 pupils completed the secondary phase of the task, 0 withdrew from the study.

- Rainbow Hill Special School – 1 pupil gave their continued consent to participate in the study. 1 pupil completed the secondary phase of the task, 0 withdrew from the study.

- All six pupils given a verbal debrief following the data collection, as well as a second copy of the written debrief form (see Appendix F).

Data Collection – Secondary Quantitative Phase

- Following the primary collection phase, a decision was made to add a quantitative data collection phase using a 6 item questionnaire.

- Bright Beacon Secondary – 64 Year 7 pupils across 3 form groups were invited to complete the questionnaire. Consent from school obtained, passive parental consent obtained for all pupils and active pupil consent sought.

- 62 pupils gave their consent to participate in the study. 62 pupils completed the questionnaire, 0 withdrew from the task.

- Participants in the secondary quantitative data collection phase were given a verbal debrief, as well as the same debrief letter as the other participants (see Appendix F).

Appendix H: Completed Sorting Task

Not concerning	Slightly concerning	Somewhat concerning	Very concerning
Different teachers for different lessons	Older children	Teachers being strict	Getting lost
Changing classes	Other children in my classes	School work	Being late
New school rules	New teachers	Getting around school	Getting to school
Using lockers	Size of secondary school	Making new friends	
Being the youngest in school	Homework	PE	
Remembering equipment	Amount of work		
New subjects	Not knowing anyone		
Following a timetable	Being bullied		
Dinnertimes	Playtimes		
Using toilets			

'Playtimes' was recorded by the pupil as an additional concern.

Appendix I: Completed Secondary Questionnaire

Transition Research Project

Your responses are completely anonymous, so no-one will know which your answers are. If you do not wish to take part that is fine. You do not have to answer all the questions if you do not want to.

Thinking back to when you were in Year 6, how concerned were you about going to secondary school?

Not concerned   **A little concerned**   **Somewhat concerned**   **Very concerned**

Thinking back to the very start of Year 7, how concerned were you about starting secondary school?

Not concerned   **A little concerned**   **Somewhat concerned**   **Very concerned**

And now, after your first half term in secondary school how concerned are you about going to secondary school?

Not concerned   **A little concerned**   **Somewhat concerned**   **Very concerned**

After your first half term in school, do you feel you have 'settled in' to your new school?

Agree a lot   **Agree a bit**   **Disagree a bit**   **Disagree a lot**

Is there anything that helped you 'settle in' to your new school? Please write it below

My Friends. Year 8's Told me what to do and where to go.

Is there anything that concerns you about secondary school now? Please write it below

Forgeting something - i.e. planner, PE kit, etc.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.