

Chapter 4

Baseline Data

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter baseline data about SAG students are being presented. These were collected through ‘The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Children’ (Dewart and Summers, 1995) and Spence Test (1995). Furthermore, students, their parents and their teachers were asked to fill in a questionnaire which was associated with the ability of students to cope with changes and the transition from primary to secondary school.

4.2 The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Children

4.2.1 Introductory Information

This diagnostic tool was used in this research project so as data to be collected about the communication skills of children with communication difficulties. Dewart and Summers (1995) created a schedule for a semi-structured interview. In this interview, the themes under consideration are:

- A) Communicative functions,
- B) Response to Communication,
- C) Interaction and conversation and
- D) Contextual variation.

More specifically the following topics are being examined under each theme:

- A) Regarding communicative functions
 - 1. Attention directing
 - 2. Requesting
 - 3. Giving information
 - 4. Giving instructions
 - 5. Narrative
 - 6. Humour

7. Expression of emotion

B) Regarding response to communication

8. Gaining attention
9. Understanding indirect requests
10. Idiom
11. Sarcasm
12. Metalinguistic awareness
13. Responding with amusement
14. Negotiation
15. Request for clarification

C) Regarding interaction and conversation

16. Interest in interaction
17. Maintaining an interaction or conversation
18. Presupposition and shared knowledge
19. Conversational repair
20. Joining a conversation
21. Termination of a conversation

D) Regarding contextual variation

22. Person
23. Situation
24. Time
25. Topic
26. Books as a context for communication
27. Use of language in play
28. Peer interaction
29. Compliance with social conventions

In the end a summary sheet is being created which summarises data from the whole interview. This summary sheet is being divided into 4 parts which include the following information:

- A) Communicative functions: range of functions expressed, forms in which intentions are expressed
- B) Response to communication: type of input typically responded to, nature of child's response
- C) Interaction and conversation: child's contribution to initiating and maintaining interaction, interactional style
- D) Contextual variation: how communication varies with time, topic, situation and partner.

4.2.2 Students with Communication Difficulties

It was necessary personal pronouns not to be used; therefore children's pseudonyms are being repeated. In this chapter some basic information will be given regarding each child with communication difficulties. The complete report for each child could be found in Appendices 17- 23 (More specifically see Appendix 17 for Ashley, Appendix 18 for Bailey, Appendix 19 for Cameron, Appendix 20 for Casey, Appendix 21 for Crane, Appendix 22 for Drew, Appendix 23 for Wen).

Ashley (Summary Sheet)

The interviewee was Ashley's teaching assistant. The interview took place in the school.

A. Communicative Functions

- ▶ If ASH needs information, ASH will not ask for them.
- ▶ ASH usually doesn't take the initiative to give information.
- ▶ ASH would go on day-dreaming.
- ▶ When ASH is hurt or upset, ASH becomes withdrawn and irritable.

B. Response to Communication

- ▶ ASH doesn't like being touched at all.
- ▶ ASH usually understands indirect requests, but ASH doesn't comprehend idioms and sarcasm.

▶ ASH will try to do a task, even if ASH hasn't understood exactly what is wanted, but ASH will soon give up.

C. Interaction and Conversation

- ▶ ASH doesn't seem to be interested in interacting with other children.
- ▶ However ASH doesn't seem to be bothered about this.
- ▶ In the classroom ASH tends to be passive in group discussion.
- ▶ Sometimes ASH presumes that the other person knows more than he really does.
- ▶ When ASH wants to join a conversation, ASH will start talking immediately.
- ▶ If ASH wants to terminate a conversation, ASH will stop it rather abruptly.

D. Contextual Variation

- ▶ In the class there is a child who is particularly good with ASH, so they often talk.
- ▶ ASH doesn't ask questions about abstract ideas such as God, death or how the world began.
- ▶ At school ASH plays alone.
- ▶ When ASH is stressed, ASH has the tendency to act inappropriately.

Bailey (Summary Sheet)

The interviewee was Bailey's teacher. The interview was carried out in the school.

A. Communicative Functions

- ▶ BAI doesn't understand very well the rules in relation to turn-taking.
- ▶ When BAI is upset, BAI will express that by saying "Mr B. I am a bit annoyed."

B. Response to Communication

- ▶ BAI becomes puzzled with idioms and sarcasm.
- ▶ When BAI starts laughing, it is difficult for this child to control this, for example BAI may ask to go out of the classroom for a while in order to stop laughing.

C. Interaction and Conversation

- ▶ BAI prefers not to interact with other children in a group.
- ▶ BAI is very impatient waiting for group decisions.

▶ In a conversation BAI may assume that the other person knows more than he does.

▶ If the other person doesn't understand what BAI is saying, BAI tries again.D.

Contextual Variation

▶ BAI likes to be with or to talk to more than others with the teacher.

▶ BAI doesn't ask questions about abstract ideas such as God, death or how the world began.

▶ BAI is very polite.

▶ Sometimes BAI doesn't understand what others are talking about and gives an answer or makes a contribution which isn't really suitable.

Cameron (Summary Sheet)

The interviewee was the deputy head teacher of the second primary school, who was also Cameron's teacher. The interview was carried out in the primary school.

A. Communicative Functions

▶ CAM is very serious; CAM doesn't make any jokes.

▶ CAM can become quite upset and CAM may cry.

B. Response to Communication

▶ CAM is able to understand indirect requests such as "Isn't it time you cleared up?" and CAM responds appropriately.

▶ CAM has difficulty understanding idioms and in this case CAM wouldn't probably respond.

▶ Even though CAM is very serious, CAM would laugh as part of an audience.

▶ CAM doesn't usually requests clarification, even if CAM hasn't really understood something.

C. Interaction and Conversation

▶ CAM handles well 1:1 interactions but CAM remains usually silent in a group.

▶ When an adult speaks to CAM, CAM may complain about other children becoming annoying.

- ▶ During a conversation CAM will answer to questions but CAM will not make questions.
- ▶ CAM has difficulty expressing personal perceptions.
- ▶ CAM doesn't always perceive things as other people, but CAM doesn't realise this.
- ▶ When CAM is talking about something the other person doesn't know about, CAM doesn't give enough information to help the interlocutor understand.

D. Contextual Variation

- ▶ There is a friendship with one particular child, but CAM doesn't have a lot of friends and CAM is aware of that.
- ▶ CAM is probably more communicative with Cameron's family.
- ▶ CAM mostly talks to the teacher about people annoying CAM. CAM describes what has happened but the perception this child has is not always completely accurate.
- ▶ CAM doesn't ask questions about abstract ideas such as God and death.
- ▶ In group play, CAM has the tendency to play alongside other children and not to join them.
- ▶ CAM complies very much with social conventions all the time.

Casey (Summary Sheet)

The interviewee was Casey's mother. This interview was carried out in the first primary school, because this was more convenient for Casey's mother.

A. Communicative Functions

- ▶ If CAS needs assistance with something, CAS just asks for help.
- ▶ When CAS sees or hears something that CAS doesn't know about, CAS makes lots of questions.
- ▶ CAS doesn't give a lot of feedback, unless CAS is being asked to answer to many specific questions.
- ▶ When CAS is sad, CAS tends to cry quietly.

▶ Change worries CAS. CAS needs to be absolutely certain of what is happening next.

B. Response to Communication

▶ According to Casey's mother, CAS is able to understand indirect requests, such as "Would you like to wash your hands?", but CAS may delay responding to them.

▶ CAS doesn't understand idioms and sarcasm.

▶ Sometimes CAS laughs for not an apparent reason.

▶ When CAS needs clarification about something, CAS will ask for help or reassurance about what CAS is meant to be doing.

C. Interaction and Conversation

▶ CAS likes being near other children, but CAS will have a passive behaviour unless CAS is being told exactly what to do.

▶ CAS tends to presume that the other person knows more things than he/she is really aware of.

▶ CAS doesn't try to join in a conversation. CAS will probably wait until someone else draws CAS into a group discussion.

D. Contextual Variation

▶ CAS likes to be with and talk to Casey's family and Casey's school friends.

▶ CAS asks questions about abstract ideas. Birth and death seem to concern CAS, how and why they happen.

▶ CAS also likes a lot very factual books, such as encyclopaedias.

▶ CAS doesn't start the play with other children.

▶ CAS tends to be very polite.

Crane (Summary Sheet)

Interviewees were both parents of Crane. The interview was carried out in the second primary school.

A. Communicative Functions

- ▶ CRA is capable of asking for assistance.
- ▶ CRA likes talking about the school's Communication Unit or about the Social Art Group, because CRA enjoys taking part in the involved educational activities.
- ▶ When CRA narrates a story, CRA uses "lots of animation".
- ▶ Sometimes CRA needs reassurance whether the other person is joking or not and then CRA will laugh.
- ▶ CRA is not always able to express personal feelings, whether they are positive or negative, and inform Crane's parents about what is happening in the school.
- ▶ When CRA is sad, CRA may cry.
- ▶ CRA doesn't have a high opinion of CRA.

B. Response to Communication

- ▶ CRA is able to understand indirect requests, such as 'Can you help put things away?' or 'Isn't it time you cleared up?'.
- ▶ CRA has still the tendency to perceive idioms literally. However Crane's understanding of idioms has been improved recently, mainly due to the work of the school's Communication Unit.
- ▶ He is still not able to understand sarcasm most of the time.
- ▶ CRA is inclined to imitate and to adopt quickly accents, the way of talking and also mannerisms of other people.
- ▶ CRA is not able to negotiate with other children what group game they could play all together.
- ▶ If CRA has been asked to carry out an activity and CRA hasn't understood exactly what is wanted, CRA will ask for clarification, but at the same time CRA will be rather disappointed, because of the fact that CRA needed more explanations.

C. Interaction and Conversation

- ▶ CRA behaves more aptly in 1:1 interactions or in team activities of small groups.
- ▶ When CRA is talking about something the other person doesn't know about, CRA struggles to give enough information to help the interlocutor understand CRA.

- ▶ If people are having a conversation, CRA tries to join in but CRA may do this not at the right time.
- ▶ Most of the times a conversation with CRA draws to a close naturally. However, sometimes it can be terminated by CRA rather abruptly.

D. Contextual Variation

- ▶ CRA has got a couple of friends.
- ▶ CRA most of the time will not make questions about abstract ideas such as God or how the world began. However CRA has asked how dinosaurs started living and furthermore CRA has made some queries about death, because CRA was upset by the grandmother's death. But these conversations are not in depth and they are not often.
- ▶ According to Crane's mother, CRA has good imagination in a world of Crane's own though.
- ▶ As far as peer interaction is concerned, CRA takes part in basketball clubs, where CRA has a nice time, but CRA becomes bored after a while.
- ▶ Concerning compliance with social conventions, CRA is a polite child.

Drew (Summary Sheet)

Interviewees were both parents of Drew. The interview was carried out in their house.

A. Communicative Functions

- ▶ Drew (DRE) gains his parents' attention orally and can be rather persistent in order to make them focus their concentration on DRE and to retain their focus.
- ▶ DRE is willing to give detailed instructions only around topics of Drew's own interest, such as computers and play-stations.
- ▶ DRE is able to ask for assistance by Drew's parents in relation to homework or any other difficulties DRE may be facing.
- ▶ When DRE is upset or hurt, DRE often cries. In this case Drew's parents try to help DRE clarify what has happened.

B. Response to Communication

- ▶ DRE is easily distracted and DRE may “switch off”, if DRE decides that DRE doesn’t want to do something.
- ▶ Drew’s parents report that they have to be very forceful in an attempt to focus Drew’s attention on the tasks DRE has been asked to do.
- ▶ DRE is able to understand indirect requests such as “Would you like to wash your hands?” or “Can you help put things away?”, but DRE responds reluctantly to them.
- ▶ DRE has been taught to understand some idiomatic expressions. However, if these are used in a different context, DRE may be confused.
- ▶ DRE doesn’t understand sarcasm.
- ▶ DRE has the tendency to talk about comments made by other students, because DRE is often afraid that these may be insulting for DRE. DRE is not able to discern when DRE is just being teased in a playful and friendly way.
- ▶ If DRE has been asked to carry out an activity and DRE hasn’t understood exactly what is wanted, DRE will not make any attempt to do it.

C. Interaction and Conversation

- ▶ Favourable ratio for DRE is 1:1. In a group of 3 or more, DRE may withdraw and be absorbed in a solitary activity.
- ▶ Any kind of communication with DRE is dominated by Drew’s favourite topics of discussion.
- ▶ If someone cannot understand something DRE says, DRE will repeat it with patience until DRE becomes comprehensible.
- ▶ When people are having a discussion, DRE tries to join the conversation by interrupting them frequently.
- ▶ A conversation with DRE often ends with the parents of this child being “exhausted and exasperated”, according to Drew’s mother. This happens, because in order to be certain that DRE achieved to reach an adequate level of understanding they have to ask DRE many detailed questions.

D. Contextual Variation

- ▶ DRE prefers speaking to adults and DRE also talks to other children in 1:1 interactions, if DRE has things in common with them.
- ▶ DRE is more communicative, when DRE is doing something that DRE enjoys.
- ▶ Drew's mother reported that DRE has the tendency to refer to "people at school DRE would perceive to be not nice to DRE".
- ▶ When religious matters are being discussed at school, DRE sometimes asks questions about God, such as "Who is God?", "Where is God?", "Is God a good person?"
- ▶ During peer interaction, if DRE doesn't have common interests with other peers, DRE "switches off", according to both of Drew's parents.
- ▶ DRE is usually very well mannered. However, DRE doesn't understand that it is impolite to interrupt a conversation.

Wen (Summary Sheet)

The interviewee was Wen's mother. The interview was carried out in the second primary school.

A. Communicative Functions

- ▶ Wen (WEN) up to a year ago was quiet demanding in order to draw attention to WEN. But recently Wen's behaviour has improved a lot
- ▶ Wen has become more considerate and can "read more the signs now" in the other person's behaviour. Wen's mother attributes this change to the fact that Wen is older and to the work of the school's Communication Unit.
- ▶ Wen is able to ask for information or help, if this is necessary.
- ▶ Wen gives information about something, Wen doesn't want to be interrupted. Otherwise, Wen is annoyed.
- ▶ When Wen gives instructions, Wen can be rather bossy, as Wen wants to be in charge.
- ▶ Wen will describe everything with too many details.
- ▶ When Wen is hurt or upset, Wen usually cries, in order to gain others' attention, according to Wen's mother.

B. Response to Communication

- ▶ Wen is able to understand indirect requests, such as “Isn’t it time you cleared up?” or “Can you help put things away?”
- ▶ Wen has difficulty understanding idioms but Wen is able to ask for clarifications about them.
- ▶ According to the mother of this child, Wen is also capable of recognizing sarcasm and Wen is annoyed by it.
- ▶ Wen comments on the way other people talk.
- ▶ If Wen is asked to carry out an activity and Wen hasn’t understood exactly what is wanted, Wen will ask for explanations about it. Sometimes clarifications should be given many times, because Wen tends to be very talkative and forgets what is wanted.

C. Interaction and Conversation

- ▶ Generally, Wen tries to gain the attention of other children and if Wen doesn’t achieve this, Wen is annoyed.
- ▶ Wen is more confident with adults and Wen feels more comfortable with them.
- ▶ When Wen is having a discussion with another person, Wen is inclined “to take over the conversation”. However, Wen’s participation in the educational programme of the school’s Communication Unit has helped Wen to become more polite and to empathise more with other people.
- ▶ When Wen is talking about something the other person doesn’t know about, Wen helps the other person understand, as Wen describes very thoroughly everything.
- ▶ If another person cannot understand something Wen is saying, Wen becomes irritated; Wen attributes this to lack of attention.
- ▶ When Wen tries to join a conversation, Wen interrupts it.
- ▶ Wen doesn’t seem to be capable of terminating a discussion.

D. Contextual Variation

- ▶ Wen is annoyed, when other children play with Wen’s favourite friend and Wen is not accepted to join them.
- ▶ Wen is also very sensitive to teachers’ comments.

- ▶ According to Wen’s mother, “Wen is a chatterbox all day...”
- ▶ There are times when Wen asks questions about abstract ideas, such as God and death.
- ▶ Wen’s mother thinks that Wen is “a couple years behind in maturation”.
- ▶ Recently Wen has become more willing to participate in games suggested by other students.
- ▶ Regarding compliance with social conventions, Wen is polite.

4.2.3 Mainstream Students

For mainstream students a questionnaire was created based on the schedule of the above semi-structured interview (Appendix 58: Questionnaire 8). Questions 1-16 of this questionnaire are exactly the same or very similar to questions of the above interview schedule. The 2 final questions (17 & 18) are not included in this schedule. These were added in this questionnaire, because they give the opportunity to parents and teachers to express a more general opinion about the communication skills of their children or students respectively. Parents and teachers in the majority of questions (1-16) could select a positive or negative answer but they could also reply in an open-ended way. In question 17 they had to select a number from 1-10. These data are being presented in Appendix 24. In question 18 they had to give a written answer.

Comments

It is worthy of attention that the mother of Alexis gave a negative answer in questions 3 and 5 (See Appendix 24). Therefore Alexis is not able to communicate clearly when ALE gives information to Alexis’s mother. Furthermore ALE is unable to communicate sufficiently when ALE is telling about something that happened or when ALE is telling a story. Similarly Jerry’s mother reported that her child faces difficulties when JER tries to tell or to understand a joke.

Regarding question 18

Question 18: “Do you think that your child is quiet or outgoing in communication in general?”

Alexis

Parent

Alexis's mother replied that ALE is rather quiet especially with people ALE doesn't know well.

Teacher

Alexis's teacher answer to question 18 is the following:

"Quiet, can be withdrawn, daydreams, doesn't always interact with peers as can be daydreaming."

Blair

Parent

Blair's mother described the character of her child in the following way:

"I think Blair is quiet when with peoples BLA does not know well or with older peoples. BLA can be very outgoing within the family or with Blair's friends."

Teacher

Blair's teacher gave the next answer to question 18:

"A very polite/pleasant but quiet child. Communicates more freely with peers & friends than with adults."

Brett

Parent

According to Brett's mother, her child has a rather sociable and cheerful character.

Teacher

Brett's teacher made the remark that BRE "can be both" quiet and outgoing.

Coby

Parent

Coby's mother answered as follows to question 18:

"Coby is quiet in the right situation i.e. in class at school, church service. Outgoing in the right situation"

Teacher

Coby's teacher replied that COB is rather quiet and able to behave appropriately and in accordance with each situation.

Jamie

Parent

Jamie's mother expressed the opinion that her child has a gregarious personality.

Teacher

Not any answer given.

Jerry

Parent

Jerry's mother gave the following interesting answer:

"Depends on the circumstances. JER can be quiet when amongst strangers & in situations when JER lacks self confidence. JER can be outgoing amongst close friends & family. JER loves to organize games & treasure hunts. JER will take the lead role & explains the rules of the game to the family & checks that everyone understands. JER likes to add up the final scores & congratulates the winner."

Teacher

Jerry's teacher reported that her student is "*quiet with adults and outgoing with friends*".

Teagan

Parent

According to Teagan's mother her child is "*quiet outgoing*".

Teacher

Teagan's teacher gave the following short but apt answer:

"Teagan is quiet but competent and confident in communication"

4.3 Spence Test

4.3.1 Introductory Information

Spence Test (1995) was used as a means to gather information about the way students who participated in the SAG tended to communicate with their peers.

Therefore, data collected through Spence Test were mainly considered as baseline data. The Spence Test was implemented for the first time on the 7th meeting with the children. It was implemented for the second time on the 15th meeting with the children. The meetings in the primary school were totally 20 and the meetings in both primary and secondary school were totally 23. Spence Test questionnaires were filled by parents, teachers and pupils concerning mainstream students and students with C.D. The Spence Tests questionnaires that were filled were the following for parents, teachers and pupils:

- Social Competence with Peers Questionnaire (SCPQ)
- Social Skills Questionnaire (SSQ)
- Social Worries Questionnaire (SWQ)
- Social Situation Checklist (SSC)
- Assessment of Perception of Emotion from Facial Expression and Posture Cues (APEFE & PC)

From the sample of 14 participants (7 mainstream students and 7 students with C.D.), correctly completed 1st time Spence Test questionnaires were returned by parents for 11 (5 and 6 respectively), for social competence (SCPQ), social skills (SSQ) and social worries (SWQ). Of the participants themselves, all of them were able to complete the 5 Spence Test questionnaires for both 1st and 2nd time.

4.3.2 Processing Spence Test Questionnaires -Results

Each question in every Spence Test questionnaire was scored and the summary of the scores (total score) was calculated for each questionnaire. It is noticed that each question in SCPQ-Teacher, SSQ-Teacher, SWQ-Teacher, SCPQ-Parents, SSQ-Parents, SWQ-Parents, SCPQ-Pupil, SSQ-Pupil, SWQ-Pupil was scored with 0 (Not true), 1 (Sometimes true), and 2 (Mostly true). Also, each question in SSC-Pupil was scored with 0 (Yes), and 1 (No). Moreover, each question in APEFE & PC-Pupil was scored with 0 (Incorrect or no answer), and 1 (Correct answer).

The average score in each questionnaire for all the mainstream students and students with C.D. was calculated according to the definition of the average value (arithmetic mean or mean) which is the sum of all the values (total scores) divided by

the number of values (scores) and the mean (average score), \bar{x} , of n values (scores) is given by:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x_i}{n} \quad (4.1)$$

Additionally, the standard deviation of scores, which is a measure of the spread of values (scores), was calculated according to the following equation:

$$s = \sqrt{\sum_i (x_i - \bar{x})^2 / (n - 1)} \quad (4.2)$$

The average scores and the standard deviation of scores (Aron & Aron, 1997) were used to compare between Spence Test questionnaires in order to answer in the following questions regarding Spence Test:

- Question 1. Which is the status of SAG students with C.D. and mainstream students concerning impairment in Social Competence, Social Skills, Social Worries, Social Situation, and Perception of Emotion from Facial Expression and Posture Cues?
- Question 2. What was the gain from intervention for students with C.D. and mainstream students concerning Social Competence, Social Skills, Social Worries, Social Situation, and Perception of Emotion from Facial Expression and Posture Cues?
- Question 3. Do parents, teachers and pupils understand similarly the social impairments of students with C.D. as it can be drawn from the Spence Test questionnaires?

Question 1 (Regarding Spence Test): Social and Perceptual Abilities of Students with Communication Difficulties.

The social and perceptual abilities of students with C.D. were assessed by comparing the results of teachers, parents and pupils Spence Test questionnaires from mainstream students with these from students with C.D. Results regarding this question are being presented analytically in Appendix 25. According to the results of teachers' and parents' Spence tests questionnaires, it was confirmed that the group of students with C.D. was impaired in social competence and in social skills. However, this conclusion was not verified by the pupils themselves. According to the results of

teachers', parents', and pupils' Spence Test questionnaires there was no impairment in social worries in the group of students with C.D. The pupils' Spence Test questionnaires in the 1st and 2nd time for the social situation gave contradictory results. The results from pupils' questionnaires show that there was no impairment in perception of emotion from facial expression and posture cues for the group of students with C.D.

Question 2 (Regarding Spence Test): Gain from intervention for mainstream students and students with communication difficulties.

The gain in social and perception status of mainstream students and students with C.D. with intervention was assessed by comparing the results of pupils' Spence Test questionnaires the first and the second time. Results regarding this question are being presented analytically in Appendix 25. According to the results of pupils' Spence Test questionnaires for mainstream students and students with C.D., there was not any gain to social status between the first and the second time of the implementation of the Spence Test.

Question 3 (Regarding Spence Test): How the social difficulties of students with C.D. are perceived by their parents, their teachers and students themselves?

The way parents, teachers and pupils with C.D. perceive the social impairment of students with C.D. was assessed by comparing the results of teachers', parents' and pupils' Spence Test questionnaires for students with C.D. Results regarding this question are being presented analytically in Appendix 25. According to the results of parents', teachers' and pupils' Spence Test questionnaires, pupils with C.D. perceived their social skills similarly with their parents and their teachers. Furthermore, parents and teachers perceived similarly the social competence of students with C.D.

4.4 Questionnaire about Coping with Changes and Move from Primary to Secondary School

This questionnaire was filled in by all students when they started their participation in the SAG. Through this questionnaire information was collected about students' skills, perceptions and difficulties in the beginning of the intervention.

4.4.1 Students' Perspectives

► Students' answers to the following question: "Which are the areas where you feel that you have difficulty coping with changes?"

Table 4.1 Overall data about students' answers to the following question: "Which are the areas where you feel that you have difficulty coping with changes?"

	Answer Categories											
	Daily programme		Change of people		Change of objects		Change of places		School holidays		Sensory stimuli	
CD (n=7)	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	3	42.9%	5	71.4%	0	0%	3	42.9%
MSt (n=12)	5	41.7%	10	83.3%	4	33.3%	9	75%	1	8.3%	0	0%
Total (n=19)	9	47.4%	13	68.4%	7	36.8%	14	73.7%	1	5.3%	3	15.8%

Students with Communication Difficulties

According to their answers, students with C.D. were more concerned about changes of places (71.4 %) and changes in the daily programme (57.1 %) (Table 4.1). Apart from these topics, considerable anxiety was also reported about the change of people, the change of stimuli and the new sensory stimuli in secondary school (42.9 %). There were not any reported concerns about changes deriving from school holidays.

Mainstream Students

Mainstream peers were very concerned about the change of people (83%) and the change of places (75%) (Table 4.1). It could be noted that in these 2 topics, the reported concern of mainstream peers surpassed the concern of students with C.D. The percentage 83% is also the higher percentage in this table. Furthermore, mainstream students expressed their anxiety about changes in the daily programme (57.1%) and changes of objects (33.3%). Only 1 mainstream student referred to stressful changes related to school holidays and none made any reference to changes associated with sensory stimuli. Therefore in this topic of sensory stimuli there is a great difference in the average percentages of these 2 groups.

► Students' answers to the following question: "Which are the changes about which you feel excitement and enthusiasm? Why?"

Students' exact answers can be found in Appendix 26.

Students with Communication Difficulties

Overall the following answers were given;

- Specific subjects (3 times)
- New school building (2 times)
- School Holidays/ Journey (2 times)
- Dance Studio (1 time)
- None positive expectation (1 time)

Justification given for the above answers:

New subjects→ New interests, mixing chemicals (both answers given once)

New school Building→ Short distance from home (answer given once)

School Holidays/ Journey→ Enjoying roller coaster (answer given once)

Dance Studio→ Enjoying dancing (answer given once)

Mainstream Students

Mainstream peers referred to the following changes:

- Specific subject(s) (6 times)
- Holidays/ Journey (6 times)

Justification given for the above answers:

Specific subject(s)→ Being interesting, having fun (both answers given once)

Holidays/ Journey→ Having fun (answer given 4 times), relaxing (answer given 2 times), desire for exploration (answer given once)

► Students' answers to the following question: "Which are your concerns about your move from primary to secondary school?"

Table 4.2 Overall data about students' answers to the following question: "Which are your concerns about your move from primary to secondary school?"

	Answer Categories											
	Daily programme		Change of people		Change of objects		Change of places		School holidays		Sensory stimuli	
CD (n=7)	5	71.4%	6	85.7%	7	100%	5	71.4%	6	85.7%	1	14.3%
MSt (n=12)	12	100%	7	58.3%	8	66.7%	4	33.3%	10	83.3%	2	16.7%
Total (n=19)	17	89.5%	13	68.4%	15	78.9%	9	47.4%	16	84.2%	3	15.8%

Students with Communication Difficulties

All students with C.D. expressed their anxiety about changes of objects (Table 4.2). The 85.7% of students with C.D. were also concerned about changes of people and changes related to school holidays. Considerable concern was also reported by this group of students about changes in the daily programme and changes of places (71.4%). In this case, only 1 student with C.D. expressed apprehension about new sensory stimuli. This is a contradictory finding in relation to students' answers in the previous question: "Which are the areas where you feel that you have difficulty coping with changes?", where the 42.9% of students with C.D. had replied that they were worried about new sensory stimuli in secondary school (Table 4.1).

Mainstream Students

According to their answers, all mainstream students were worried about changes in their daily programme (Table 4.2); this percentage was higher than the equivalent percentage of students with C.D. (71.4%). Great concern was also expressed about changes related to school holidays (83%); in this topic the percentages reported by both groups were similar. Furthermore, mainstream students reported apprehension about changes of objects (66.7%), changes of people (58.3%) and changes of places (33.3%). It could be highlighted that in the topics 'change of objects' and 'change of people' students with C.D. reported considerable higher level of anxiety than their mainstream peers. Finally the percentages of both groups about changes related to sensory stimuli were rather low.

► Students' answers to the following questions: "Which are the good things you expect in your secondary school? Please give explanations for your answers."

Students' exact answers can be found in Appendix 27.

Students with Communication Difficulties

Overall students' answers are the following:

- None positive expectation (1 time)
- Specific subject(s) (5 times)
- Singing and drama (1 time)

Justification given for the above answers:

Specific subject(s)→ New interests (answer given once)

Singing and drama→ Enjoying these activities and desire to become a D.J. (answers given once)

Mainstream Students

Overall students' answers are the following:

- Specific subject(s) (9 times)
- Football pitches/ ash pitches/ new gym hall/ new equipment (4 times)

Justification given for the above answers:

Specific subject(s)→ New interests (answer given twice), having fun (answer given twice), having heard about it (answer given once), enjoying specific subject (answer given once)

Football pitches→ Enjoying football (answer given twice),

4.4.2 Parents' Perspectives

► Parents' answer to the following question: "To what extent does your child usually find changes easy or difficult?"

Parents of Mainstream Students

For 5 mainstream students there are not any data by their parents (Table 4.3). Two parents selected number 3, 3 parents chose number 2 and there were also 2 parents who selected number 1. By these answers it is obvious that mainstream peers find changes less difficult.

► Parents' answers to the following question: "Which are the areas where your child seems to have the greatest difficulty coping with changes?"

Table 4.4 Parents’ answer to the following question: “Which are the areas where your child seems to have the greatest difficulty coping with changes?”
 (Show by choosing a number about the extent or difficulty where 1= Less Difficulty & 5= More Difficulty)

	Student’s Name	Answer					
		Sensory stimuli	Daily programme	Change of people	Change of objects	Change of places	Transitional school periods
Students with C.D.	Ashley (ASH)	3	4	5	4	5	5
	Bailey (BAI)	2	5	2	2	2	1
	Cameron (CAM)	Not possible having data by parents.					
	Casey (CAS)	3	3	4	2	4	3
	Crane (CRA)	3	4	3	3	3	2
	Drew (DRE)	1	3	1	1	3	1
	Wen (WEN)	2	2	2	2	2	1
Mainstream peers	Addison (ADD)	Having stopped taking part.					
	Alexis (ALE)	2	3	2	1	1	2
	Blair (BLA)	1	1	2	1	1	2
	Brett (BRE)	1	2	2	1	2	2
	Brody (BRO)	Having stopped taking part.					
	Coby (COB)	1					
	Jamie (JAM)	1	2	2	1	1	1
	Jerry (JER)	1	2	2	1	2	1
	Taylor (TAY)	Having stopped taking part.					
	Teagan (TEA)	2	2	4	2	4	2
	Wylie (WYL)	Having stopped taking part.					
Zaiden (ZAI)							

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

More detailed answers were given by parents of Bailey, Crane and Drew (Table 4.4).

According to Bailey's mother, her child's reaction to noise and music has been improved greatly. BAI likes to leave the house at a certain time in the morning and this is difficult to change. Regarding change of people, BAI accepts new staff willingly, as this happens in after school care. BAI does not face great difficulty in adjustment during transitional school periods; Bailey's mother describes that BAI enjoys Bailey's holidays and that BAI relaxes in the mornings.

Crane's parents gave explanations about all areas where their child has some kind of difficulty coping with changes. Subsequently follow their exact answers regarding all these areas:

- a) Sensory stimuli: *"Lacks spatial awareness. Responds better to verbal than written instructions."*
- b) Daily programme: *"Needs to know what is going on in advance."*
- c) Change of people: *"Has improved with his age."*
- d) Change of objects: *"Likes to keep things the same."*
- e) Change of places: *"Gets nervous with change."*
- f) Transitional school periods (e.g. school holidays): *"Enjoys being away from school. Get nervous at returning."*
- g) Other areas of concern: *"Lacks confidence. Will always apologize when not his fault."*

Parents' replies about changes in the daily programme (b), change of objects (d) and change of places (e) reflect Crane's need for stability in his environment. Crane's nervousness at returning to school displays the child's need to be supported during transitional periods.

Drew's mother underlined the desire of her child to avoid changes in Drew's daily "routine".

Parents of Mainstream Students

Parents of 3 mainstream peers gave additional information about their children in relation to this question (Table 4.4). These students were Alexis, Blair, and Jerry.

Alexis's mother made the remark that her child "*requires guidance to plan ahead*" about Alexis's daily programme. Moreover she added that Alexis "*finds a structured day easier*".

Blair's mother replied that her child "*can be quiet shy*" with new people.

In relation to Jerry's adjustment to changes, Jerry's mother provided some interesting information. She mentioned that her child

"has difficulty remembering a change in Jerry's programme. A pen mark on Jerry's hand helps JER to remember." Jerry can also "*be disorientated, when in new places and has difficulty retracing Jerry's steps. JER has a limited sense of direction.*" However, JER is not 'disorientated' during transitional school periods. According to Jerry's mother, JER "*looks forward to school holidays and then looks forward to starting a new year in school.*"

► Parents' answers to the following question: "What are the changes that your child seems to look forward to with excitement/ enthusiasm?"

Parents' exact answers can be found in Appendix 28.

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

Parents of students with C.D. gave the following replies:

- Visiting places/ school holidays/ holidays (answer given 4 times)
- Travelling in trains
- Visiting relatives
- Going to other children's homes, when invited
- Gong to Communication Unit of Primary School
- New books
- New videos
- Getting a puppy

Apart from the reply regarding holidays and journeys, all other answers were given once.

Parents of Mainstream Students

Parents of mainstream peers gave the following responses:

- Changing school/ being in the secondary school (answer given twice)
- Holidays/ School holidays (answer given twice)

- Weekends
- Being one of the first pupils to attend the new secondary school
- Meeting new people
- Meeting new teachers
- Making new friends
- Trying new things

Apart from the first 2 answers, all other replies were given once.

► Parents' answers to the following question: "Why do you believe that your child shows this kind of attitude in relation to these specific changes?"

Parents' exact answers can be found in Appendix 29.

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

Parents of students with C.D. justified in the following way their answers:

- School holidays/ holidays → Freedom to do as the child chooses (answer given once), expects it like a routine (answer given once)
- Travelling in trains→ Fascinated by stations, trains, timetables
- Going to Communication Unit of Primary School→ Feeling very relaxed there
- Getting a puppy→ Something the child wants

The answer given by Bailey's mother regarding trains has been reported in the relevant literature review about other children with autism, too (Vuletic et al, 2005).

Parents of Mainstream Students

Parents of mainstream students gave the following justifications for their answers:

- Changing school/ being in the secondary school → A sign of growing up, being glad with the thought of becoming 'a big child', being with friends in secondary school, being with older brother in secondary school
- Holidays/ School holidays →To relax and have fun
- Weekends →To relax and have fun.

- Meeting new people→ Enjoying company of others
- Meeting new teachers→ Enjoying company of others
- Making new friends →Needing encouragement/ guidance/ suggestions as to what to do
- Trying new things →Needing encouragement/ guidance/ suggestions as to what to do

All the above justifications were given only once by parents, but in some cases they affected more than one of their answers.

► Parents’ answers to the following question: “Do you feel positive about your child’s transition to secondary school?”

Apart from one case (Crane’s parents), all other parents who participated in the research project gave a positive answer. Crane’s parents gave the answer that they cannot agree as parents.

► Parents’ answers to the following question: “Could you describe any personal expectations about your child’s transition to secondary school?”

Parents’ exact answers can be found in Appendix 30.

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

Parents of students with C.D. described the following personal expectations about their child’s transition to secondary school:

- Improvement of social skills- development of ability to mix with larger groups of children
- Participating in a bigger mix of children with the same ability
- Settling well
- Just being there is a progress for the child

All these answers were given once.

Parents of Mainstream Students

Parents of mainstream students described in the following way their personal expectations about their child's transition to secondary school:

- Making new friends/ making new friends with similar interests (answer given 4 times)
- Coping with new subjects/ more challenging learning experiences (answer given twice)
- Taking up new interests
- Trying new things
- Settling well
- Better opportunities available (career and academic)

Apart from the first and the second answer, all the others were given once.

► Parents' answers to the following question: "Do you have any concerns about your child's transition to secondary school?"

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

All parents of students with communication difficulties replied that they have concerns about their child's transition to secondary school.

Parents of Mainstream Students

The majority of parents replied that they have some concerns about their children's transition to secondary school; more specifically this was the answer given by the parents of 5 children; on the other hand the parents of 2 mainstream students answered that they do not worry at all about this.

► Parents' answers to the following question: "If you have concerns (social or academic), what are they?"

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

Overall the following concerns were reported by parents of students with C.D. in relation to their children's transition to secondary school:

Social Concerns

- Being bullied (mentioned 4 times)

- Easily being led into the wrong peer groups (mentioned once)
- Feeling panicky (mentioned once)

Academic Concerns

- Being able to cope with various subjects/ teachers (mentioned once)
- Not being able to succeed academically/ to cope with increased workload, class work and homework (mentioned twice)

General Concerns

- Adapting with changes in everyday schooling/ having the organizational skills required in order to cope with time-table changes (mentioned twice)
- Getting lost (mentioned once)
- Getting stuck in “foundation groups” (mentioned once)

Parents of Mainstream Students

Social Concern

- Coping with peer pressure (mentioned twice)

Academic Concerns

- Coping with subjects (mentioned twice)
- Not perceiving the importance of hard work & expectations of teachers (mentioned once)
- Methods of support being in place by the school (mentioned once)

General Concern

- Communication pathway between school and parents (mentioned once)

More social concerns were reported by parents of students with C.D. than by parents of mainstream students. It is characteristic that 4 parents of students with C.D. referred to the contingency of school bullying.

► Parents' answers to the following question: "Can you describe what your child is looking forward to in relation to his/her transition to secondary school?"

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

Overall, according to their parents, children with C.D. were looking forward to the following in relation to their transition to secondary school:

- new school/school building (mentioned twice)
- meeting new people (mentioned twice)
- making new friends (mentioned once)
- change- lots of opportunities to do different classes (mentioned once)
- art (mentioned once)
- writing (mentioned once)
- being at same school as big brother (mentioned once)

Parents of Mainstream Students

As reported by their parents, the positive feelings of mainstream peers about their transition to secondary school are related to the following:

- Trying new subjects/ finding new interests (3)
- Making new friends (3)
- Growing up
- Experiencing more freedom
- Being in contact with older sibling
- Getting away from current classmates
- Playing football in a big football pitch

Some answers of mainstream students, such as 'growing up' and "experiencing more freedom", indicate a higher level of abstract thinking and psychological maturation.

► Parents' answers to the following question: "How would you explain your child's positive attitude?"

Parents' exact answers can be found in Appendix 31.

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

Parents of students with C.D. gave the following explanations regarding the positive attitude of their children:

- Reasonable confidence
- ‘A brave face’
- Generally being happy

All the above answers were given once.

Parents of Mainstream Students

Parents of mainstream students gave the subsequent explanations in relation to the optimistic attitude of their children:

- Not generally being worried about the progression as this is being considered as part of growing up (answer given twice)
- Not being too worried about transition
- Quite healthy
- Having discussed about the transition for a long time and always in a positive way
- Generally being an optimistic child
- Older brother setting an example

Apart from the first answer, all the others were being mentioned only once.

► Parents’ answers to the following question: “Does your child seem to have any negative feelings about going to secondary school?”

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

According to parents’ answers, all students with C.D. have some negative feelings about going to secondary school.

Parents of Mainstream Students

Regarding mainstream peers, only two are reported to have some negative feelings about their transition to secondary school. Five of them do not have such feelings, according to their parents. Therefore, the majority of mainstream students do not have negative feelings about this forthcoming change, while all students with

C.D. have some worries about going to secondary school, as this was reported by their parents.

► Parents' answers to the following question: "Can you describe what the negative feelings of your child regarding secondary school seem to be?"

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

According to their parents, the negative feelings of students with C.D. regarding their transition to secondary school are associated with the following:

- Change of familiar environment (mentioned twice)
- Change of teachers/ children (mentioned twice)
- Getting lost (mentioned once)
- Workload (mentioned once)
- Bullying (mentioned once)

Parents of Mainstream Students

Parents of 5 mainstream students had already answered beforehand that their children did not have any negative feelings in relation to their transition to secondary school. Therefore, in this question there were answers about 2 mainstream students. In the view of their parents, these students were worried about the following:

- bullying (mentioned once) and
- new teachers (mentioned once)

► Parents' answers to the following question: "Do you believe that these negative feelings of your child regarding secondary school are well founded?"

Parents' exact answers can be found in 32.

Parents of Students with Communication Difficulties

Four parents replied that the negative feelings of their children regarding secondary school are well founded. The answer about Crane is very characteristic: "Yes, I feel CRA will fall through the system like as in the past.". Bailey's mother did not reply in a direct way; she suggested a solution about her child's concern: "can be resolved by obtaining map/timetable". Casey's mother did not give any answer at all.

Parents of Mainstream Students

Regarding 4 mainstream students this question was not pertinent, because their parents had already answered previously that their child does not seem to have any negative feelings about going to secondary school. There are not any data by parents whose children had stopped taking part. Blair's mother did not reply to this question. Consequently, only the parents of 2 children answered to this question: the mother of Alexis replied that the negative feelings of her child regarding secondary school are well founded; more specifically she stated; *"I recognize that it can be very daunting and how cruel children can be towards each other"*. On the other hand the mother of Brett answered that her child's concerns in relation to secondary school are not well founded.

4.4.3 Practitioners' Perspectives

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "To what extent does your pupil usually find changes easy or difficult?"

Table 4.5 Practitioners' answer to the following question: "To what extent does your pupil usually find changes easy or difficult? (Show by choosing one of the following numbers)"

Easy					Difficult
	1	2	3	4	5

	Teacher of:	Answer
Students with C.D.	Ashley (ASH)	5
	Bailey (BAI)	2
	Cameron (CAM)	3
	Casey (CAS)	3
	Crane (CRA)	5
	Drew (DRE)	3
	Wen (WEN)	5
Mainstream peers	Addison (ADD)	1
	Alexis (ALE)	4
	Blair (BLA)	1
	Brett (BRE)	1
	Brody (BRO)	1
	Coby (COB)	1
	Jamie (JAM)	1
	Jerry (JER)	1
	Taylor (TAY)	1
	Teagan (TEA)	1
	Wylie (WYL)	1
	Zaiden (ZAI)	1

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

For 3 students with C.D. practitioners selected number 5 (Table 4.5). For other 3 students with C.D. number 3 was being chosen. Number 2 was selected only for Bailey.

Regarding Mainstream Students

It is remarkable that apart from Alexis, for all other mainstream students practitioners selected number 1 (Table 4.5). It is also worthy of attention that number 4 was selected for one mainstream student.

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Which are the areas where your pupil seems to have the greatest difficulty coping with changes?"

Table 4.6 Practitioners’ answer to the following question: “Which are the areas where your pupil seems to have the greatest difficulty coping with changes? (Show by choosing a number about the extent of difficulty where 1= Less Difficulty & 5= More Difficulty)”

	Teacher of:	Answer					
		Sensory stimuli	Daily programme	Change of people	Change of objects	Change of places	Transitional school periods
Students with C.D.	Ashley (ASH)	4	5	2	5	2	2
	Bailey (BAI)	2	1	1	2	1	1
	Cameron (CAM)	1	1	1	1	4	1
	Casey (CAS)	5	2	2	2	2	2
	Crane (CRA)	4	4	2	5	2	2
	Drew (DRE)	3					
	Wen (WEN)	4	4	5	4	4	1
Mainstream peers	Addison (ADD)	1					
	Alexis (ALE)	4	3	3	4	1	1
	Blair (BLA)	1					
	Brett (BRE)						
	Brody (BRO)						
	Coby (COB)						
	Jamie (JAM)						
	Jerry (JER)						
	Taylor (TAY)						
	Teagan (TEA)						
	Wylie (WYL)						
	Zaiden (ZAI)						

Comments

Again there is clear difference between the 2 subgroups (Table 4.6). Rather serious concern about Alexis (a mainstream child) is related to changes about sensory stimuli, daily programme, change of people and change of objects.

Additional Data

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

There are additional data about 5 students with CD: Ashley, Cameron, Casey, Crane and Wen (Table 4.6).

Ashley can be distracted by noise and by changes in Ashley's timetable. ASH is also irritated a lot, if other persons leave their books on Ashley's desk.

Cameron's teacher expressed her concern about her student being "*very intense*" (in 'other areas of concern').

Casey can be very disturbed by noise or touch. In relation to changes in the child's daily programme, CAS "*can cope with verbal changes from an adult*". CAS doesn't appear to become upset by "*changes in classroom assistant*". CAS can also encounter changes of places, "*as long as CAS has been told about them or is with adults.*" In these cases, CAS feels secure.

Similarly with Ashley, Crane can be inattentive because of noise in the environment or due to alterations in Crane's timetable. Moreover, CRA becomes agitated, when "*other people move Casey's belongings.*"

According to Wen's teacher, her student can be distracted by noise levels and change of places. Changes in the daily programme of this student "*can put Wen off task*". Wen is upset, if Wen's "*belongings are moved*". What worries Wen above all is the change of people. Another area of concern as stated by Wen's teacher is Wen's "*inappropriate social interaction.*"

Regarding Mainstream Students

Additional data have been reported only about one mainstream child, Alexis (Table 4.6). The teacher of this child mentioned that Alexis can be distracted by noise. Furthermore, the teacher of Alexis made the remark that change of people "*can cause less effort in work*". Change of objects can have a worse effect: "*if ALE*

can't find what ALE needs, ALE won't do anything." The teacher of Alexis also expressed his concern about Alexis's social interaction; he referred to "*built up frustration*".

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "What are the changes that your pupil seems to look forward to with excitement/ enthusiasm?"

Practitioners' exact answers can be found in 33.

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

In the view of their teachers, students with C.D. seemed to be excited about the following changes:

- Computing (mentioned 3 times)
- Social Art Group (mentioned twice)
- Physical Education (mentioned once)
- Art lessons (mentioned once)
- Activities in the Communication Unit (mentioned once)
- School holidays (1)
- Interval/ lunchtime (1)
- Going to "S.F.L" (1)

Regarding Mainstream Students

Mainstream students appeared to be eager for the following changes, as this was reported by their teachers:

- Daily timetable changes (mentioned 10 times)
- Challenge of secondary school (mentioned once)
- Making new friends (mentioned once)
- "Seasons for growth" * (mentioned once)
- Social Art Group (mentioned once)

* 'Seasons for growth' is a loss and grief peer-group education programme. Source: <http://seasonsforgrowth.co.uk/>

In the case of Alexis, the forthcoming changes which are perceived as positive by the child are associated with the child's participation in 2 peer-group programmes ('Seasons for growth' and SAG), according to the answer of Alexis's teacher.

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Why do you believe that your pupil looks forward to these specific changes with excitement/ enthusiasm?"

Practitioners' exact comments can be found in Appendix 34.

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

Practitioners made some suggestions about the reasons their pupils were feeling excitement about the following:

- Computing → Child enjoys this activity (mentioned 3 times)
- Social Art Group → Child enjoys this activity/ is looking forward to it (mentioned twice)
- Physical Education → Child enjoys this activity (mentioned once)
- Art lessons → Child enjoys drawing (mentioned once)

- Activities in the Communication Unit → Child prefers the smaller school and familiar faces (mentioned once)
- Interval/ lunchtime → Child having mixed feelings, because there is the desire to be involved with others on a social basis but once in situation finds social interactions with peers difficult. (mentioned once)

Regarding Mainstream Students

Practitioners gave the following explanations about the reasons their mainstream students appeared to be more enthusiastic about the following changes:

- Daily timetable changes → Changes increase motivation (mentioned 6 times), changes increase students' participation (mentioned 3 times)
- Challenge of secondary school → Child being ready for this challenge (mentioned once)
- "Seasons for growth" → Child is able to express feelings and thoughts there (mentioned once)

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Do you feel positive about your pupil's transition to secondary school?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

For the majority of students (5/7) the reply of their practitioners was that they do not feel positive about the transition of their students to secondary school. The answer of Crane's teacher revealed rather mixed feelings. On the other hand Casey's teacher was optimistic about the transition of her student to secondary school.

Regarding Mainstream Students

For almost all mainstream students the reply was positive. The only exception was Alexis.

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Could you describe any personal positive expectations about your pupil's transition to secondary school?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

Drew's teacher did not reply. The positive expectations of practitioners about their pupils' transition to secondary school are the following:

- Having a liking for new building/ new materials (mentioned twice)
- Improvement of social skills (mentioned once)
- Having added input from guidance/pupil support staff (mentioned once)
- Learning how to become more independent (mentioned once)

Regarding Mainstream Students

In this case there were data about all mainstream students. The positive expectations of teachers regarding their students' transition to secondary school were the following:

- Readiness to face challenges of secondary school (mentioned 10 times)
- Making new friendships (mentioned 7 times)
- Readiness to face intellectual challenges of secondary school (mentioned once)
- Having added input from guidance/pupil support staff (mentioned once)

Especially the final remark was suggested about Alexis.

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Do you have any concerns about your pupil's transition to secondary school?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

All teachers of students with C.D. reported that they have concerns about their pupils' transition to secondary school.

Regarding Mainstream Students

There were not any concerns regarding the majority of mainstream students, as this was reported by their teachers. However, the teacher of Alexis replied that he was worried about his student's transition to secondary school.

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "If you have concerns (social or academic), what are they?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

Overall the following concerns were reported in relation to transition to secondary school:

Social concerns

- Social interaction with peers (3 times)
- Bullying (2 times)
- Forming new friendships (2 times)
- Changes (social, staff) (2 times)

Academic concerns

- Coping with the curriculum (2 times)
- Changes (curricular, staff) (2 times)
- Homework (1 time)
- Not listening to teacher's instructions (1 time)

Regarding Mainstream Students

For the majority of mainstream students (11/12) this question was not pertinent, because it had already been reported by their teachers that they did not have any concerns about the transition of these pupils to secondary school.

Therefore data were provided only about one mainstream child, Alexis. Concerns about this child are related to the following:

- Social interaction/ forming new friendships
- Staff changes
- Motivation/ stimulation

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Does your pupil seem to have positive feelings about going to secondary school?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

Five students seem to have positive feelings about going to secondary school, according to their teachers. Conversely two students' feelings do not appear to be positive about their transition to secondary school, as this is reported by their teachers.

Regarding Mainstream Students

All mainstream students seem to have positive feelings about going to secondary school, according to the views of their teachers.

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Can you describe the positive expectations of your pupil regarding transition to secondary school?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

For 2 students with C.D. this question is not applicable.

According to practitioners' perspectives, the positive expectations of the other 5 students with C.D. are related to the following:

- New school building (mentioned twice)
- Meeting new children/ making new friends (mentioned twice)
- New subjects (mentioned once)
- Art activities (mentioned once)

Being at the same school as big brother (mentioned once)

- Proud to be an older school boy (mentioned once)

Regarding Mainstream Students

In this case there were data about all mainstream students. Regarding 4 mainstream students it was reported that they were feeling excited/ enthusiastic in relation to their transition to secondary school.

In the view of their teachers, positive expectations of mainstream students were associated with the following:

- New school building (mentioned 7 times)
- New friendships (mentioned 7 times)
- New challenges (mentioned once)

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "How would you explain your pupil's positive attitude?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

For 2 students with C.D. (Ashley and Crane) this question is not applicable, because their teachers had already answered previously that both of them did not appear to have positive feelings about their transition to secondary school. On the other hand the positive attitude of 3 students with C.D. about their transition to secondary school was attributed to discussion with adults. Wen's mother highlighted another explanatory factor regarding her daughter's positive attitude: the support that she was going to have by the secondary staff during her transition to secondary school. Cameron's teacher did not reply to this question.

Regarding Mainstream Students

Overall the following explanatory factors were suggested:

- Discussion about transition in an optimistic way (6 times)
- Support from secondary school (3 times)
- Discussion about transition with peers in an optimistic way (1 time)
- Welcome visits from secondary school (1 time)
- Being excited about it (1 time)

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Does your pupil seem to have any negative feelings about going to secondary school?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

According to their teachers, all students with C.D. seem to have some negative feelings about going to secondary school.

Regarding Mainstream Students

Most mainstream students (10/12) appear to have mixed feelings about their transition to secondary school, as this is reported by their teachers. Alexis seems to be rather worried about his transition to secondary school, according to his teacher. On the contrary, Brett's teacher answered that he appears not to have any negative feelings about his transition to secondary school.

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Can you describe the concerns of your pupil regarding transition to secondary school?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

According to their teachers, all students with C.D. were feeling worried about their transition to secondary school. However, there were not any more specific data about 5 of them. The reply given by Casey's teacher about her student is rather characteristic. As reasons of concern the following were reported:

- Getting lost (mentioned twice)
- Homework (mentioned twice)
- Losing touch with friends (mentioned once)
- Making friends (mentioned once)

Regarding Mainstream Students

Apart from Brett, all other mainstream students appeared to be worried about some things in relation to their transition to secondary school, according to the view of their teachers.

More specifically mainstream students seemed to be worried about the following:

- Getting lost (mentioned 11 times)
- Homework (mentioned 10 times)

- Making new friends (mentioned 5 times)
- Not being in a class with friends (mentioned once)
- Losing touch with old friends (mentioned once)

► Practitioners' answer to the following question: "Do you believe that these negative feelings are well founded?"

Regarding Students with Communication Difficulties

Regarding 6 students with C.D. their teachers replied that their negative feelings are well founded. Only Wen's teacher expressed the opinion that perhaps her negative feelings are not well-founded.

Regarding Mainstream Students

For 5 students their teachers replied that their negative feelings are well founded. For 3 students exactly the opposite opinion was expressed; according to their teachers, their negative feelings are not well founded. For Blair it was stated that probably he does not need to worry about his transition to secondary school.