## Implementation Story: A Research Project on Children’s Transition Into Reception

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## **What We Set Out to Do**

Our aim was to understand and strengthen the transition of children entering Reception, particularly focusing on how well families felt supported and how smoothly children settled into new routines. Although many of our incoming pupils attend our on-site nursery, we wanted to ensure that our transition processes were supportive and accessible for all children, including those newly joining us.

As part of the assessment phase in our action plan, we shared baseline questionnaires for both parents and pupils to capture early perceptions, identify anxieties, and highlight areas where children or families might need additional support.

Unfortunately, we only gained one formal response by questionnaire, but despite this, we set out to observe the effectiveness of our transition activities, reflect on staff, parent and pupil experiences, and evaluate the impact of the children's settling-in period.

## **What We Did**

We provided welcome packs to support families with practical information and routines.

Early in the summer term, we held a parent information session to introduce the Reception team, outline expectations, and answer questions.

Following this, we scheduled some settling in visits and a welcome picnic. We provided opportunities for children and families to meet staff informally and become familiar with the learning environment.

Finally, we held 1:1 meetings with the class teacher, which allowed teachers to gain important knowledge about each child.

The EYFS lead and SENCo attended a transition event to meet with local feeder nurseries and childminders to share key information about pupils who would be joining us in September. They also visited staff and met with children in their familiar setting, developing personalised transition support plans for those who needed it.

## All staff completed a reflective activity during a CPD session ‘What works well & Even better if’ focusing on transition procedures. A key insight from this was that our systems are strong for September starters, but less structured for children arriving mid-year.

## **What We Noticed**

Overall, the transition went well, largely because a high proportion of children had already attended our nursery and were familiar with staff, routines, and environment.

However, we identified practical skill gaps for several children, most notably around lunchtime independence, with some children not yet used to feeding themselves without adult assistance. Our nursery class attended for mornings only, so had not experienced lunchtimes in school until now.

Informally, parents reported feeling welcomed and reassured by home visits and information sessions.

Staff felt confident in the transition offer for most children. One pupil with an SSPP surprised us with how well they settled following a strong transition plan between settings. His previous nursery held photos of the school on their wall which they referred to with them throughout the day (images of the school, key staff and school uniform).

## **Reflections and Next Steps**

This year we have introduced parent ‘school ready’ support sessions in the Autumn term, focused on supporting independence; developing communication & language skills; and practical skills such as using cutlery and feeding independently. This was advertised within other local nurseries and has been open to all to attend.

We will continue to develop these parent partnerships and explore ways to reach families who may be less engaged.

We will also look at ways to strengthen transition for pupils arriving mid year across the school. For all new arrivals, we have a ‘new starter’ information sharing page and check list of baseline assessments and a menu of things to have in place to help them to settle in.