

Case Study 1: An Evidence-Based Practice Review Report

Theme: School based interventions for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN)

What do pupils, parents and staff think helps the transition to mainstream secondary school for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)?

Summary

This systematic literature review aims to explore useful strategies for the transition of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) through the views' of pupils, parents and staff. Pupils with ASD may struggle more with transition due to their resistance to change and difficulties in communication. Currently there is variation in the support pupils with ASD receive during transition. This is due to schools interpreting the guidance available to them differently and not using a universal approach. Using Gough's (2007) weight of evidence (WoE) framework and Brantlinger et al.'s, (2005) protocol for qualitative designs seven studies were reviewed. The findings were meta-aggregated (Lockwood et al., 2015) into five themes which overlap between types of participants. The differences between participants and themes are discussed alongside implications for practice and future research.

Introduction

Transition and change is a natural part of life. Pupils experience a significant transition between primary and secondary school, with many viewing it as a challenge and possible threat (Sirsch, 2003). During this time pupils will usually move from a small self-contained environment where they have the same teacher in the same classroom to a much larger, busier environment where they are expected to navigate between lessons, teachers and classrooms (Coffey, 2013). To help with this process transition support is usually implemented in the final year of primary school preparing pupils for this change through universal and specific approaches (Neal et al., 2016).

A successful transition into secondary school relies on many factors and it has been highlighted that there are vulnerable groups, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), that require extra support with the transition process (Bailey & Baines, 2012; Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012; Neal et al., 2016). Currently there is no specific transition programme for pupils with SEND; however, guidance states that schools should plan and prepare for transitions through sharing information between schools with the agreement of parents and pupils (DfE & DH, 2015). Research has shown that the methods used for all pupils are sometimes not applicable to those with SEND and therefore a more specific and individualised approach is needed (Neal et al., 2016). As a result, each school employs different strategies leaving variability in the support received.

Within SEND there are certain groups which will find transition naturally more difficult. One such group are pupils who struggle with communication and

interaction including those with ASD. ASD is often summarised by having impairments within three areas, language/communication, social awareness and interaction and lack of imagination with rigidity of thought. These impairments can often be seen with a resistance to change and limited interaction with unfamiliar people which are key features of transition to a new school (Ali & Frederickson, 2006; Frederickson & Cline, 2009).

Transition difficulties for pupils with ASD have been associated with higher rates of anxiety (Hannah & Topping, 2012) and lower school connectedness (Hebron, 2017) for some pupils. However, successful transitions have also been documented with no increase of psychopathology and decreased bullying incidents (Mandy et al., 2016). Positive support interventions have been shown to increase successful transitions such as the STEP-ASD programme (Mandy et al., 2016) and the transfer support team (TST) has been demonstrated to support pupils with SEND (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012).

With the heterogeneity of the ASD community and the differences in support provided it is hard to know what does and doesn't work for these pupils. With the general consensus that a diagnosis of ASD is increasing (Ali & Frederickson, 2006), it is a growing area of need. This category of need accounts for 25.9% of education health and care plans (EHCP) and 4.7% of pupils on SEN support (DfE, 2016). As all pupils have a right to a mainstream education it is essential that the transition into secondary school is successful and a positive experience for all.

The current review aims to look at the transition provision being provided across England for pupils with ASD who are transitioning into a mainstream secondary school. The study will address the views' of pupils, parents and staff from schools in England and what they have found to be effective or what they would like to be put in place to support transition.

Review Question

What do pupils, parents and staff think helps the transition to mainstream secondary school for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)?

Critical Review of the Evidence Base

Literature Search

Comprehensive literature searches were carried out on 29th December 2017 through databases that focus on psychological research (i.e. PsycINFO), or databases relevant to education (ERIC and the British Education Index (BEI)). The results were systematically combined and evaluated (Figure 1) against the inclusion/exclusion criteria outlined in Table 1. This resulted in seven papers (Table 2) being analysed (Appendix A).

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
1. Participant	Participants have a diagnosis of ASD	Pupils do not have a diagnosis of ASD	Looking for factors which support pupils with ASD
2. Type of intervention	Support strategies put in place during year 6 (final year of primary school)	No support strategies implemented or implemented prior to year 6 or following year 6	Support strategies are typically implemented for all pupils during year 6 so to be comparable support strategies need to be implemented during the same period of time
3. Location	Schools in England	Schools in any other country	To ensure all transitions are happening at the same point in time in the child's life to ensure they are comparable
4. Methodology	Qualitative methodology	Quantitative methodology	Interested in the views of participants and this is best expressed through qualitative methods
5. Journal type	Peer review journal	Non peer review journal	To increase credibility of studies reviewed
6. Type of provision	Mainstream pupils in primary school transferring to mainstream secondary school	Pupils attending schools that are not mainstream, e.g. special schools	Interested in the support pupils receive transferring to mainstream schools

Table 2

Included Studies

Full Reference

Fortuna, R. (2014). The social and emotional functioning of students with an autistic spectrum disorder during the transition between primary and secondary schools. *Support for Learning, 29*(2), 177–191. Retrieved from <http://10.0.4.87/1467-9604.12056>

Dann, R. (2011, September). Secondary transition experiences for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASCs). *Educational Psychology in Practice*. United Kingdom. Retrieved from <http://10.0.4.56/02667363.2011.603534>

Tobin, H., Staunton, S., Mandy, W., Skuse, D., Hellriegel, J., Baykaner, O., ... Murin, M. (2012). A qualitative examination of parental experiences of the transition to mainstream secondary school for children with an autism spectrum disorder. *Educational & Child Psychology, 29*(1), 75–85. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=bri&AN=76480125&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

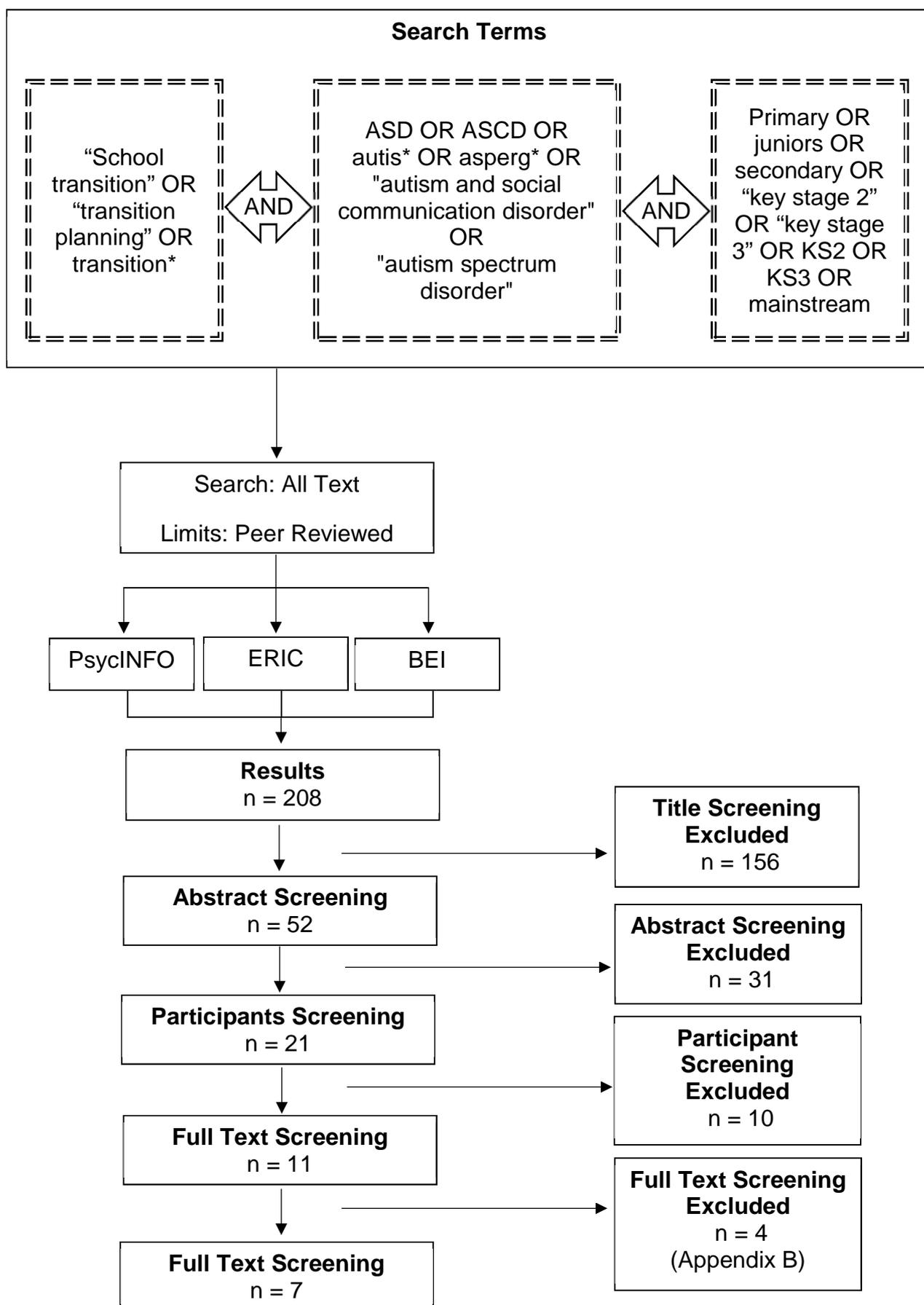
Peters, R., & Brooks, R. (2016). Parental perspectives on the transition to secondary school for students with Asperger syndrome and high-functioning autism: a pilot survey study. *British Journal of Special Education, 43*(1), 75–91. Retrieved from <http://10.0.4.87/1467-8578.12125>

Dillon, G. V., & Underwood, J. D. M. (2012). Parental Perspectives of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders Transitioning from Primary to Secondary School in the United Kingdom. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 27*(2), 111–121. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=eric&AN=EJ969708&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Foulder-Hughes, L., & Prior, C. (2014). Supporting pupils with DCD and ASD with the transition to secondary school. *Research in Education, 92*(1), 79–92. Retrieved from <http://10.0.28.59/RIE.0011>

Neal, S., & Frederickson, N. (2016). ASD transition to mainstream secondary: a positive experience? *Educational Psychology in Practice, 32*(4), 355–373. Retrieved from <http://10.0.4.56/02667363.2016.1193478>

Figure 1 – Flowchart of Procedure



Weight of Evidence (WoE)

Using Gough's (2007) WoE framework each paper was assessed and its overall WoE D was calculated. The WoE D (Table 3) is the average of the components below:

WoE A –studies methodological quality compared using an adapted version of Brantlinger et al., (2005) coding protocol (Appendix C)

WoE B –relevance of the design (Appendix D)

WoE C – relevance to the review question (Appendix D)

Table 3

Summary of WoE A, B, C and D

Weak – 0-1.4, Medium – 1.5-2.4, Strong – 2.5-3

Study	WoE A	WoE B	WoE C	Overall WoE D
Fortuna, 2014	Weak (0.7)	Medium (1.5)	Strong (3)	Medium (1.7)
Dann, 2011	Medium (2.0)	Strong (3)	Strong (3)	Strong (2.7)
Tobin et al., 2012	Medium (2.3)	Strong (3)	Weak (1)	Medium (2.1)
Peters & Brooks, 2016	Weak (1.2)	Weak (1)	Weak (1)	Weak (1.1)
Dillon & Underwood, 2012	Medium (1.7)	Medium (2)	Weak (1)	Medium (1.6)
Foulder- Hughes & Prior, 2014	Weak (1.4)	Medium (2)	Medium (2)	Medium (1.8)
Neal & Frederickson, 2016	Strong (2.6)	Medium (2)	Medium (2)	Medium (2.2)

Comparison of Included Studies

Participants

The participants in each study varied, table 4 outlines some of the sample characteristics including gender and ethnicity.

Table 4

Sample Characteristics of each study

Study	Total	Gender			Ethnicity
		Pupils	Parents	Staff	
Fortuna, 2014	5 pupils Parents and staff not reported	3 male 2 female	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
Dann, 2011	6 pupils 6 parents 18 staff	5 male 1 female	6 parents Not reported	18 members of staff	Not reported
Tobin et al., 2012	7 parents		2 male 5 female		Not reported
Peters & Brooks, 2016	17 parents		2 male 12 female 3 not stated		Not reported
Dillon & Underwood, 2012	15 parents		1 male 14 female		White British

Study	Total	Gender			Ethnicity
		Pupils	Parents	Staff	
Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014	5 pupils	4 male 1 female			Not reported
Neal & Frederickson, 2016	6 pupils	5 male 1 female			White British
Total	22 pupils 45 parents 18 staff	17 male 5 female	5 male 31 female 9 parents	Not stated	

The pupil participants (Table 4) are representative of the ASD community which typically has a 4:1 ratio of males to females (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). The parent category is heavily dominated by mothers and therefore there is an underrepresentation of fathers within this category. Only Dann (2011) reported the number of staff participants and noted their roles (special educational needs coordinators, inclusion coordinator, specialist provision lead, class teachers and support staff) but not gender.

Only two studies (Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Neal & Frederickson, 2016) reported the ethnicity of participants and as all were white British there is not a true reflection of the community as prevalence of ASD doesn't differ between ethnic minorities (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). The sample is underrepresenting gender within the parental category and ethnicity across all studies, these results should be interpreted with caution due to this.

The WoE C rating reflects the difference in participants. Studies including pupils, parents and staff received the highest rating of 3 (Dann, 2011; Fortuna, 2014) compared to just looking at the parents' views and receiving a score of 1 (Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Peters & Brooks, 2016; Tobin et al., 2012). A rating of 2 was awarded if they only interviewed pupils (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016) as this held more weight than parents due to them actually experiencing the transition.

Recruitment and Sampling

Dann (2011) and Fortuna (2014) do not state how they recruited or sampled their participants.

The three studies examining parent views advertised for voluntary participants through either a gatekeeper (Peters & Brooks, 2016) or websites and local community groups that support parents of children with ASD (Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Tobin et al., 2012). This method of recruitment is commonly used when working with ethnic minorities or communities which are harder to reach (McAreavey & Das, 2013) such as the ASD community. However, not all of the community will access this information which may have resulted in a sample that is not representative of the whole community which limits the transferability of their findings.

Foulder-Hughes and Prior (2014) used a convenience sample within a local school that is known to have high proportions of students with SEN where Neal and Frederickson (2016) recruited from a wider study they were also involved in and sampled until saturation. Sampling until saturation adds confidence that all pupils reported similar ideas and there was nothing more

to be gained from further participants. These differences are reflected within aspects of WoE A ratings.

Methods

All studies looked to address a gap in the literature through collective case study designs with either specific prior questions (Fortuna, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016) or exploratory designs (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Peters & Brooks, 2016; Tobin et al., 2012).

The data collection methods varied with some being more robust than others. This was reflected in the WoE ratings. Peters and Brooks (2016) used just a questionnaire and received a WoE B rating of 1 for this. All other studies used face to face contact (interviews or focus groups) at a minimum of one time point. The amount of time points varied across the studies, some had a single time point either before transition (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014) or post transition (Neal & Frederickson, 2016) receiving a rating of 2 and the others had multiple time points with face to face contact earning them a rating of 3 (Dann, 2011; Tobin et al., 2012). Face to face contact methods allow for elaboration on points and clarification of understanding.

Analysis of Data

All seven studies analysed the data to produce themes. Participant quotes were used to varying degrees within analysis to support their themes, this is reflected in their WoE A rating. Fortuna (2014) is the only paper which doesn't outline their methods for analysis of the data. Thematic analysis was undertaken by three of the papers (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal &

Frederickson, 2016; Tobin et al., 2012), whilst Peters and Brooks (2016) undertook pattern based analysis as they felt full thematic analysis would not have been appropriate for their data. Four of the studies explicitly stated that within their approaches they extracted their initial codes from the data by taking a grounded theory approach (Dillon & Underwood, 2012), using NVivo (Tobin et al., 2012) or an inductive approach (Neal & Frederickson, 2016) avoiding priori assumptions (Dann, 2011). Using this approach helps to eliminate pre-conceptions and allows them to present all findings including ones they didn't expect to find. This supports the exploratory nature of the research they were conducting, which is also reflected in ratings of WoE A.

Findings

An adapted version of Lockwood et al.'s, (2015) meta-aggregation approach was used to synthesise the data. This allowed the studies' own defined themes to be used to collate similar ideas (Boland et al., 2014). Each study was analysed and under the predefined themes findings with evidence (quote or explanation were extracted) and collated into synthesised findings for pupil, parents and staff (Appendix E). Studies with more evidence to support their themes had more findings extracted to contribute to the synthesised findings compared to those with less evidence. Studies with more participants and robust data collection (Dann 2011) also contributed more findings as they had evidence for all types of participant compared to studies which only had evidence for one type of participant. The synthesised findings were compared and grouped into themes across all participants, Table 5, and a pictorial representation of the themes was created (Figure 2).

The majority of the papers gained a medium WoE D suggesting their evidence is of similar relevance and importance. Fortuna (2014) gained a weak rating and Dann (2011) gained a strong rating, which is reflected in the amount of findings they have contributed to the synthesised findings.

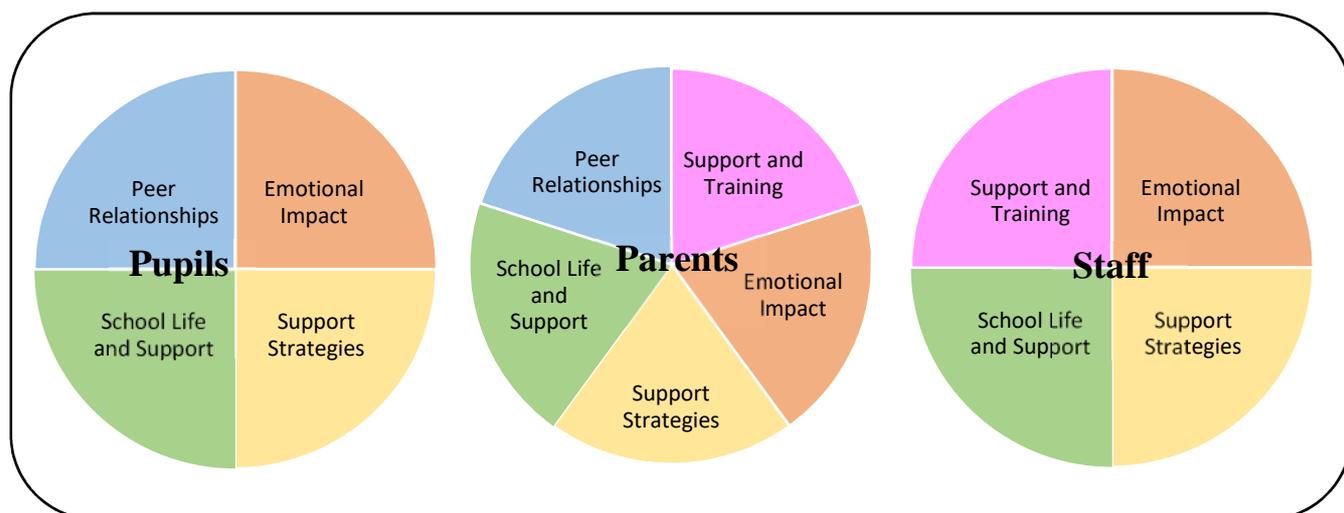
Table 5

Synthesised findings and overall themes

Participant Type	Synthesised Finding	Overall Theme
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils have varying levels and types of emotions around transition into secondary school 	Emotional Impact
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Experiences • Parental Views and Emotions 	
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Experiences • Emotional Impact • Positive Experiences 	
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environment of the school is important both before and after transition 	School Life and Support
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons, learning and teachers 	
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching, Learning and Environment • Individualisation for learning and support 	
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support strategies for the transition to secondary school 	Support strategies
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support strategies for the transition to secondary school 	
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication to support transition • Support strategies for the transition to secondary school including communication 	
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of peer relationships 	Peer Relationships
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of peer relationships 	
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for teachers 	Support and Training
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for adults working with pupils 	

Figure 2

Pictorial representation of the Themes highlighted by each type of participant



Five grouped themes were identified, three of them crossed all participants (School Life and Support, Support Strategies and Emotional Impact), while two groups of participants contributed to the others (Peer Relationships for parents and pupils and Support and Training for parents and teachers).

School Life and Support

Day to day school life (lessons, teaching and learning) was raised by pupils, parents and staff but was discussed in different ways. Pupils were more concerned with the practical aspects of school such as knowing the school environment (Dann, 2011; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014), understanding rules (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016) and getting to know multiple teachers (Dann, 2011; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal

& Frederickson, 2016). All studies highlighted that pupils' had their own views and there wasn't a homogenous view. Some pupils highlighted that they liked being treated as individuals, having more choice over what they did (Dann, 2011) and ensuring the support they got was right for them (Neal & Frederickson, 2016).

Parents discussed the demands that school life brought to their children and their ability to cope. They recognised that their children struggled with concentration and academic ability but almost half felt that teachers didn't alter their teaching style to suit their needs (Peters & Brooks, 2016). They know that their children have their own strategies to support them throughout the school day (Peters & Brooks, 2016) and note these sometimes have to be negotiated with the school (Dillon & Underwood, 2012). They want small issues to be quickly addressed so their child feels safe in school as some feel their child doesn't have this security (Dillon & Underwood, 2012).

Staff considered the way they contribute to the child's learning. They discussed how support must be individualised, ongoing and throughout the year and continually adapted (Dann, 2011). Staff made comparisons, noting all children struggle with transition and it is not unique to ASD (Dann, 2011).

Peer Relationships

The importance of peer relationships was identified by both parents (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Peters & Brooks, 2016) and pupils (Dann, 2011; Fortuna, 2014; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014). The pupils focused on making new friends (Dann, 2011; Fortuna, 2014; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014) and knowing how to fit in with peers (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014),

this was also highlighted by parents (Dann, 2011; Peters & Brooks, 2016). Concerns about bullying and people not being nice were raised unanimously across all parents and pupils (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Fortuna, 2014; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014). Some parents identified that their children had made friends (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012) and that there was an increased interest in social interaction (Dann, 2011).

Parents were able to describe the importance of peer relationships. They made connections to support networks and how this could support their child's transition into school (Dillon & Underwood, 2012). They felt that if there was no support the transition would be unsuccessful. Peters and Brooks (2016) highlighted that for most of the children they spent time either alone during social times or in a specially designated area for children with SEND. Parents feel that it is important for their children to be familiar and comfortable with the social environment (Dann, 2011).

Support and Training

Parents feel that secondary schools do not have knowledge of ASD (Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Tobin et al., 2012) and that teachers do not employ effective strategies (Tobin et al., 2012). Parents and staff both want more training and support around teaching strategies to enable them to be more effective at supporting children with ASD (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Peters & Brooks, 2016). Some parents feel that the training provided in school is too rigid and doesn't allow for in-depth knowledge (Dillon & Underwood, 2012). Staff also raised that whole staff training is difficult to arrange but informal support is important as it is relevant to the teacher and

pupil (Dann, 2011). Staff also raised the importance of information being shared and that it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure inclusion is happening (Dann, 2011).

Parents raised two aspects of support, individual teachers and the whole school ethos. Dillon and Underwood (2012) discussed the implications of one negative teacher experience affecting the success of the transition. Peters and Brooks (2016) echoed this through parents feeling that teachers need to understand their child is unique. Parents felt a good understanding was demonstrated through the communication they received (Tobin et al., 2012) and their child fitting into school when understanding a child's needs and ASD is echoed within school ethos and the support provided (Dillon & Underwood, 2012).

Support Strategies

Parents felt that strategies to support transition were generally used (Dillon & Underwood, 2012) but that they sometimes had to initiate this themselves (Peters & Brooks, 2016). All three groups identified practical strategies which they believed would aid in transition such as extra visits, peer buddy systems and maps/pictures (Dann, 2011; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Tobin et al., 2012). Pupils preferred advice that was practical and had a point to it such as discussions and assemblies as some found that they received irrelevant information (Neal & Frederickson, 2016). However, not all pupils agreed on the strategies that they liked or disliked which was echoed with the parents' views of their child is an individual (Tobin

et al., 2012) and through staff discussing having to get to know the pupil (Dann, 2011).

Parents highlighted that good communication was essential whilst transitioning (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Tobin et al., 2012).

Parents value being told the plan as they cannot always gain this information from their child (Dann, 2011) and they highlighted that there are many networks of communication and if one of them isn't working then the transition will not be successful (Tobin et al., 2012). There were split views around communication. Some parents feel they were unable to contact the school and their information was not valued whereas other parents would like the school to be less reliant as they feel it highlights their child's differences (Dillon & Underwood, 2012). Good communication is also important to school staff (Dann, 2011) but it did not appear to play as important a role.

Even though parents valued the strategies used whilst their child transitioned between schools (Dann, 2011) there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction in the service they were provided. Parents want more visits and opportunities to go into the new school (Peters & Brooks, 2016) and feel that the process should start earlier and with an individual meeting (Tobin et al., 2012). Both parents and staff recognise that schools share information about the child prior to their arrival (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012). Parents feel that they take time and effort choosing a school, which can be difficult and daunting, but the reasons they choose it are not passed onto the school (Tobin et al., 2012). Parents know that their child has a right to a mainstream education but feel in the process of choosing the school they have to weigh

up the importance of academic outcomes and the importance of inclusion (Tobin et al., 2012). They feel that the support they get from the local authority and schools is currently not adequate.

Emotional Impact

All four of the previous theme's feed into the emotional impact of the transition process. For pupils this is conveyed through their worries and anxieties about secondary school (Dann, 2011; Fortuna, 2014; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016) and for some through their excitement (Dann, 2011; Neal & Frederickson, 2016). For staff emotional impact tends to look more at their own internal feelings and the emotional stress of working with a child with ASD (Dann, 2011). Parents expressed a mixture of the two with worries about how their child will cope (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Tobin et al., 2012) but also the impact raising a child with ASD can have on them. Parents feel they have to fight for their child and have to adjust their expectations for the future (Tobin et al., 2012).

Considering their past experience of transitions parents believed that this one would be traumatic (Dillon & Underwood, 2012); however, following the transition process all three groups found positive experiences to talk about (Dann, 2011; Neal & Frederickson, 2016) but this was not the case for all pupils. All parents think that their situation and child is unique and individual approaches need to be adopted for a successful transition (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Peters & Brooks, 2016; Tobin et al., 2012).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Due to the limitations of the review it is hard to draw concrete conclusions; however, there is practical application which can be drawn on for future support and research.

Transition to secondary school is an important time with a mixture of anxiety and excitement which is no different pupils with ASD (Dann, 2011; Fortuna, 2014; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016). The transition process impacts the child, parents and staff that are supporting them in different ways; however, they seem to all have similar concerns and areas that they find important to them which all feed into the overall emotional impact of the transition process. For pupils this manifests itself in worries about practical aspects of the school day such as where everything is and what will it be like in lessons (Dann, 2011; Fortuna, 2014; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016). This has also been documented in the levels of anxiety pupils experience around the transition process (Hannah & Topping, 2012).

A limitation of this study is around the representativeness of the participants and in particular the over representation of mothers within the parent category and the limit that only one study (Dann, 2011) contributed towards staff views. The pupil category was most representative of their wider community in terms of gender but not ethnicity. Their views should be interpreted with caution due to this representation and not transferred to the whole community.

Support strategies were discussed by all participants, as there is no specific package to support pupils with ASD many useful strategies are being employed such as extra visits, meetings and maps/pictures provided (Dann, 2011; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Tobin et al., 2012). Pupils particularly value practical strategies which is in line with their worries about the structure of the day and how things will be done (Dann, 2011; Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014; Neal & Frederickson, 2016). This is in line with ASD traits as they like routine and structure and do not like change and flexibility (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). Parents put an emphasis on communication and how this is one of the most important aspects of the transition process, noting that if this isn't good then the transition will not be a success (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Tobin et al., 2012) which was supported by staff (Dann, 2011). This has been shown for all parents not just those of children with SEND (Coffey, 2013).

Parents highlighted how their child is an individual and that this should be taken into account when considering any support around transition which was supported by teachers (Dann, 2011; Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Tobin et al., 2012). Pupils addressed individualisation around having control to make decisions and being happy the support is right for them (Dann, 2011). Using an individualised approach with tailored support for specific vulnerable pupils can be beneficial (Neal et al., 2016) and is highlighted as important when working with pupils with ASD (Bailey & Baines, 2012; Hannah & Topping, 2012). The heterogeneous nature of the community is a limitation to all research. Findings cannot be transferred to the whole community as they all feel their situation is unique and support cannot be a one-size fits all

approach. Ideas for support and how to work with pupils and families around transition can be gained from this study.

Parents would like more support from both the local authority and schools during the transition period. This is an area in which educational psychologists (EPs) could become more involved in setting up and supporting transition meetings between schools. There is a current emphasis on preparation for adulthood for pupils with SEND (DfE & DH, 2015); however, for a child with ASD change is a known difficulty and this may be the first time they have had to manage such a large scale change. It is important to consider the impact that the transition into secondary school may have on future transitions and planning for the future (Dillon & Underwood, 2012) as if a pupil experiences a successful transition then this could support future ones.

Overall parents want their children to attend mainstream and believe that with the right individualised support they can settle in and be supported. The transition process isn't smooth for all children but there is good practice as all groups talked about positive experiences with transition. This is an area that needs to be further investigated to discover which approaches best support a smooth transition into secondary schools by measuring in both a qualitative and quantitative way. This area can be supported by EPs who are in a good position to help schools find and share good practice.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Full Summary of Studies Analysed (Mapping the Field)

Appendix B – Excluded studies

Appendix C – WoE A criteria, example and overview

Appendix D – WoE B and C criteria and overview

Appendix E – Full syntheses of findings for pupils, parents and staff

Appendix A – Summary of all Studies (Mapping the Field)

Study	Aims	Design	Methods/ Analysis	Location	Sample	Sample Characteristics			WoE D
						Gender	Ethnicity	School Year	
Fortuna, 2014	Does the social and emotional well-being of students with ASD change during the transition from Primary to Secondary school? Pupils, parents and teachers views.	Collective Case Study with specific questions	Phase 1 and 2 SDQ Rate my Diaries Questionnaires Phase 3 SDQ Rate my Diaries Questionnaires Semi-Structured Interviews Themes identified but doesn't explain how.	East Midlands	5 pupils Parents and staff numbers unknown Recruitment of participants not stated	Pupils: 3 male 2 female	Not stated	Phase 1 Year 6 Phase 2 and 3 Year 7	1.7
Dann, 2011	To address gap in the literature	Collective Case Study (Exploratory)	Semi-Structured Interviews Focus Groups	South East England	6 pupils 6 parents 18 members of staff	Pupils: 5 male 1 female	Not stated	Year 6 first time point Year 7 Second	2.7

Study	Aims	Design	Methods/ Analysis	Location	Sample	Sample Characteristics			WoE D
						Gender	Ethnicity	School Year	
			Analysed by Fredrickson et al. (2004) procedures. Inductive approach avoiding priori assumptions		Recruitment of participants not stated	Parents and staff unknown		time point	
Tobin et al., 2012	Explore parents experiences of transition for their children with ASD	Collective Case Study (Exploratory)	Focus group time 1 Telephone interview time 2 Thematic analysis (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). NVivo (2010) approach used in initial stages	North-East England to South-East England	Focus Group 7 parents to 6 children Follow up interview 4 parents Volunteered for study following advertisement of study using relevant websites	Focus Group: 5 Mothers 2 Fathers Interviews 4 Mothers	Not stated	Year 6 then 18 months following	2.1
Peters & Brooks, 2016	Use parent perspectives to explore pupil	Collective Case Study (Exploratory)	Questionnaire	North England	17 parents to 14 pupils	Adults: 12 mothers 2 fathers	Not disclosed	Pupils currently	1.1

Study	Aims	Design	Methods/ Analysis	Location	Sample	Sample Characteristics			WoE D
						Gender	Ethnicity	School Year	
	transition to secondary school		Analysed with pattern based analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013)		Recruitment through gatekeeper organisations. Participants were provided with the information and could choose to take part or not	3 parents Pupils: 14 male 3 female		in year 7 or 8	
Dillon & Underwood, 2012	To explore the concerns raised by parents around transition. To identify key factors which led to a successful transition	Collective Case Study (Exploratory)	Semi structured focus group Semi structured Interviews Qualitative grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)	England	15 parents Recruitment through known groups. Participants volunteered for the research	1 male 14 female	White British	Pre transition group Year 6 - year 7 Post transition group at least year 8	1.6

Study	Aims	Design	Methods/ Analysis	Location	Sample	Sample Characteristics			WoE D
						Gender	Ethnicity	School Year	
Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014	How do pupils with ASD feel about the transition to secondary school	Collective Case Study (Exploratory)	Face to Face interviews in a 1:1 setting with a semi-structured questionnaire Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006). Codes from data	South West England	5 pupils Convenience sample of pupils from one school	4 male 1 female	Not stated	Year 6	1.8
Neal & Frederickson, 2016	Extend literature using a strengths based approach allowing pupils to share experience of moving to secondary and discuss factors which helped them	Collective Case Study with specific questions	Semi-structured interview SCARED scales SDQ Analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage model of thematic	England	6 pupils Recruited through schools taking part in wider study. Criterion sampling approach	5 male 1 female	White British	Year 7	2.2

Study	Aims	Design	Methods/ Analysis	Location	Sample	Sample Characteristics			
						Gender	Ethnicity	School Year	WoE D
			analysis, used inductive approach						

Appendix B – Excluded Studies

Full Reference	Reason
<p>Mandy, W., Murin, M., Baykaner, O., Staunton, S., Cobb, R., Hellriegel, J., ... Skuse, D. (2016). Easing the transition to secondary education for children with autism spectrum disorder: An evaluation of the Systemic Transition in Education Programme for Autism Spectrum Disorder (STEP-ASD). <i>Autism: The International Journal of Research & Practice</i>, 20(5), 580–590. Retrieved from http://10.0.4.153/1362361315598892</p>	<p>Criterion 4 Methodology</p>
<p>Mandy, W., Murin, M., Baykaner, O., Staunton, S., Hellriegel, J., Anderson, S., & Skuse, D. (2016). The transition from primary to secondary school in mainstream education for children with autism spectrum disorder. <i>Autism: The International Journal of Research & Practice</i>, 20(1), 5–13. Retrieved from http://10.0.4.153/1362361314562616</p>	<p>Criterion 4 Methodology</p>
<p>Deacy, E., Jennings, F., & O’Halloran, A. (2015). Transition of students with autistic spectrum disorders from primary to post-primary school: a framework for success. <i>Support for Learning</i>, 30(4), 292–304. Retrieved from http://10.0.4.87/1467-9604.12102</p>	<p>Criterion 3 Location</p>
<p>Hebron, J. S. (2017). School connectedness and the primary to secondary school transition for young people with autism spectrum conditions. <i>British Journal of Educational Psychology</i>, No-Specified. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12190</p>	<p>Criterion 4 Methodology</p>

Appendix C – WoE A

Criteria

An adapted version of Brantlinger et al., (2005) coding protocol was used to code and calculate WoE A for each study. The WoE A has been calculated by averaging the credibility measures and quality indicators that Brantlinger et al. (2005) discuss. The credibility measures and quality indicators are made up of a number of sub criteria's. Table 1 provides each criterion's name, explanation and coding criteria and table 2 shows the overview of each study and the scores they received in each section and the overall WoE A. The following sections from Brantlinger et al., (2005) were not included as they were not relevant to the studies:

Credibility measures – prolonged field engagement

Quality Indicators – Observation studies and Document Analysis

Table 1 - Included criteria with explanation and coding Criteria

Criteria Name	Explanation from Brantlinger et al., (2005) (pg 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
Triangulation	<p>Search for convergence of, or consistency among, evidence from multiple and varied data sources (observations/interviews; one participant and another; interviews/documents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Data triangulation-use of varied data sources in a study. * Investigator triangulation-use of several researchers, evaluators, peer debriefers. * Theory triangulation-use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data. * Methodological triangulation-use of multiple methods to study a single problem. 	<p>If the paper states about triangulation for a type then it receives a tick.</p> <p>0 ticks – rating of 0 (No evidence) 1 tick – rating of 1 (Weak evidence) 2/3 ticks – rating of 2 (Promising evidence) 4 ticks – rating of 3 (Strong Evidence)</p>
Disconfirming Evidence	<p>After establishing preliminary themes/categories, the researcher looks for evidence inconsistent with these themes (outliers); also known as negative or discrepant case analysis.</p>	<p>0 – only presents views which agree 1 – showing not all views agreed e.g. 3 out of 6 parents said ... 2 – showing not all agreed with explanation (no direct quotes) 3 – showing not all views agreed with explanation and quotes to illustrate</p>
Researcher reflexivity	<p>Researchers attempt to understand and self-disclose their assumptions, beliefs, values, and biases (i.e., being forthright about position/perspective).</p>	<p>0 – no evidence of own views/reflective 1 – say methods of being reflective but not that they were used/minimising their views e.g. researchers all looked at the transcripts 2 – make reference to methods of being reflective/minimising their views e.g. researchers looked at transcripts and discussed findings</p>

Criteria Name	Explanation from Brantlinger et al., (2005) (pg 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
Checks	<p>Member checks-having participants review and confirm the accuracy (or inaccuracy) of interview transcriptions or observational field notes.</p> <p>* First level-taking transcriptions to participants prior to analyses and interpretations of results.</p> <p>* Second level-taking analyses and interpretations of data to participants (prior to publication) for validation of (or support for) researchers' conclusions.</p>	<p>3 – explicitly state how they were reflective/minimised their views impacting e.g. researchers look at transcripts and discussed and collated findings and agreed on final outcomes. During analysis themes emerged from data and not prior knowledge</p> <hr/> <p>0 – not discussed 1 – stated it did not happen 2 – stated it happened with small explanation 3 – stated with reason and explanation of how</p>
Collaborative work	<p>Involving multiple researchers in designing a study or concurring about conclusions to ensure that analyses and interpretations are not idiosyncratic and/or biased; could involve interrater reliability checks on the observations made or the coding of data. (The notion that persons working together will get reliable results is dependent on the 'truth claim' assumption that one can get accurate descriptions of situational realities.)</p>	<p>0 – not discussed 1 – stated that multiple researchers were used 2 – stated multiple researchers were used and in which sections 3 – stated multiple researchers are used and includes discussion about interrater reliability</p>
External auditors	<p>Using outsiders (to the research) to examine if, and confirm that, a researcher's inferences are logical and grounded in findings.</p>	<p>0 – not discussed 1 – stated they used external auditors 2 – stated used and who they were 3 – stated they were used, who they were and outcomes</p>

Criteria Name	Explanation from Brantlinger et al., (2005) (pg 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
Peer debriefing	Having a colleague or someone familiar with phenomena being studied review and provide critical feedback on descriptions, analyses, and interpretations or a study's results.	0 – not discussed 1 – mention of multiple researchers 2 – stated used and who they were 3 – stated they were used, who they were and outcomes
Audit trail	Keeping track of interviews conducted and/or specific times and dates spent observing as well as who was observed on each occasion; used to document and substantiate that sufficient time was spent in the field to claim dependable and confirmable results.	0 – not discussed 1 – talks about making notes of the process but not calling it an audit trail 2 – stated they used and audit trail 3 – stated they used audit trail, why and purpose of it
Detailed Descriptions (Quotes)	Sufficient quotes and field note descriptions to provide evidence for researchers' interpretations and conclusions.	0 – no quotes used 1 – 1 or less quote used for each theme or short quotes (1-3 words) 2 – full quotes used for each theme 3 – multiple quotes used for each theme from different participants
Particularisability	Documenting cases with thick description so that readers can determine the degree of transferability to their own situations.	0 – no evidence of situation discussed 1 – limited details about the participants and context or not representative of the outside world e.g. transferred from a mainstream primary to a mainstream secondary 2 – extended details about the transition e.g. town centre mainstream school 3 – explicit details of transition e.g. large town centre school with attached SEN unit
WoE Credibility Measures	Average of Triangulation, Disconfirming Evidence, Researcher reflexivity, Checks, Collaborative work, External	Average of the scores for each category.

Criteria Name	Explanation from Brantlinger et al., (2005) (pg 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
Appropriate participants	<p>auditors, Peer debriefing, Audit trail, Detailed Descriptions (Quotes) and Particularisability.</p> <p>Selected (purposefully identified, effectively recruited, adequate number, representative of population of interest).</p>	<p>0 – pupils who did not fit the criteria of ASD</p> <p>1 – states who participants are e.g. 15 participants, 10 male 5 female</p> <p>2 – details of participants explained and recruitment process e.g. 10 participants from south west England all with a diagnosis of ASD</p> <p>3 – details of participants and recruitment process explained which fully fit criteria e.g. not a convenience sample or opportunity sample</p>
Reasonable Questions	<p>Interview questions are reasonable (clearly worded, not leading, appropriate and sufficient for exploring domains of interest).</p>	<p>0 – not discussed</p> <p>1 – explain types of questions but no examples e.g. open and closed questioning used</p> <p>2 – explain types of question and sample of the ones used</p> <p>3 – explain questions and full list of questions asked supplied</p>
Mechanism to Record	<p>Adequate mechanisms are used to record and transcribe interviews.</p>	<p>0 – not discussed</p> <p>1 – stated recording and transcription happened</p> <p>2 – methods for recording or transcription stated</p> <p>3 – explicitly stated methods for recording and transcription</p>
Representation of Participants	<p>Participants are represented sensitively and fairly in the report</p>	<p>0 – not discussed</p> <p>1 – only a few participants represented through the analysis with quotes and generalised statements</p> <p>2 – around half of participants represented through quotes or all represented as a collective</p>

Criteria Name	Explanation from Brantlinger et al., (2005) (pg 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
Confidentiality	Sound measures are used to ensure confidentiality.	<p>3 – majority of participants represented through quotes</p> <p>0 – no evidence of confidentiality</p> <p>1 – participants are ‘labelled’ e.g. participant 1</p> <p>2 – participants are labelled and researchers state they have done this e.g. names are pseudonyms</p> <p>3 – explained the confidentiality used in the report and for storing their data</p>
Coding of Information	Results are sorted and coded in a systematic and meaningful way	<p>0 – not discussed</p> <p>1 – state they are coded e.g. transcripts are coded</p> <p>2 – stated they are coded and protocol used</p> <p>3 – stated they are coded, protocol used and explanation of their steps outlined</p>
Rationale	Sufficient rationale is provided for what was (or was not) included in the report.	<p>0 – not discussed</p> <p>1 – no discussion around how or what was included; however, you can see there are participants answers missing</p> <p>2 – states if participants were missing but no reason</p> <p>3 – full explanation, where themes came from and any participants not in the results</p>
Trustworthiness	Documentation of methods used to establish trustworthiness and credibility are clear.	<p>0 – not discussed</p> <p>1 – taken steps for trustworthiness but not explained and limited evidence within the report e.g. few quotes for results and no peer/colleagues checking</p> <p>2 – taken and explained steps to show results can be trusted e.g. worked collaboratively to eliminate</p>

Criteria Name	Explanation from Brantlinger et al., (2005) (pg 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
Personal Perspectives	Reflection about researchers' personal position/perspectives are provided.	bias and quotes are used to highlight points they are making 3 – explicitly explained how they identified as trustworthy 0 – no evidence of own views/reflective 1 – say methods of being reflective but not that they were used/minimising their views e.g. researches all looked at the transcripts 2 – make reference to methods of being reflective/minimising their views e.g. researchers looked at transcripts and discussed findings. 3 – explicitly state how they were reflective/minimised their views impacting e.g. researchers look at transcripts and discussed and collated findings and agreed on final outcomes. During analysis themes emerged from data and not prior knowledge
Quotes from Participants	Conclusions are substantiated by sufficient quotations from participants, field notes of observations, and evidence of documentation inspection.	0 – no quotes used 1 – 1 or less quote used for each theme or short quotes (1-3 words) 2 – full quotes used for each theme 3 – multiple quotes used for each theme from different participants
Related Research	Connections are made with related research.	0 – no evidence 1 – few connections made, more discussion of own results 2 – connections made to supportive research

Criteria Name	Explanation from Brantlinger et al., (2005) (pg 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
		3 – connection explicitly stated to relevant research and counter research where appropriate
WoE Quality Indicators	Average of Appropriate participants, Reasonable Questions, Mechanism to Record, Representation of Participants, Confidentiality, Coding of Information, Rationale, Trustworthiness, Personal Perspectives, Quotes from Participants and Related Research	Average of the scores for each category.
Overall WoE A	Average of WoE Credibility Measures and WoE Quality Indicators	Average of the scores for each category.

Table 2 – Overview of each Study

Study	Credibility Measures													Quality Indicators													
	Triangulation													Interview Criteria					Data Analysis								
	Data	Investigator	Theory	Methodological	Overall	Disconfirming Evidence	Researcher reflexivity	Checks	Collaborative Work	External Auditors	Peer Debriefing	Audit Trail	Detailed Description (Quotes)	Particularisability	WoE Credibility Measures	Appropriate Participants	Reasonable Questions	Mechanisms to Record	Representation of Participants	Confidentiality	Coding of Information	Rationale	Trustworthiness	Personal Perspectives	Quotes from Participants	Related Research	WoE Quality Indicators
Fortuna, 2014	✓			✓	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.6	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0.7	0.7
Dann, 2011	✓			✓	2	3	3	0	3	0	1	0	3	2	1.7	2	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	2.3	2.0
Tobin et al., 2012		✓		✓	2	3	3	1	2	2	1	3	2	2.1	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	3	3	2	3	2.4	2.3
Peters & Brooks, 2016					0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.5	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	1	3	1.9	1.2
Dillon & Underwood, 2012		✓		✓	2	3	3	0	2	0	1	0	1	1.4	2	3	1	2	1	3	3	1	3	1	1	1.9	1.7
Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014		✓			1	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	1.1	2	1	0	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	1.6	1.4
Neal & Frederickson, 2016		✓		✓	2	3	3	0	3	3	3	0	3	2.3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2.8	2.6

Appendix D – WoE B and C

Criteria

Rating	WoE B Criteria	WoE C Criteria
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only survey methods used for all data collection including multiple time points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single type of participant (not pupil) used to gain views - just teachers' or just parents'
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single time point for information gathering with face to face interview Data collected at two or more time points with interviews/focus groups only at one time point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just pupils' views gained Pupils' and one other type of participant views gained
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected at two or more time points – interviews/focus groups at all-time points and all participants' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils' along with at least 2 other types of participants' views gained

Each study was rated separately for both WoE B and WoE C using the above criteria. WoE B looks at how the data was collected from participants, in some of the studies (Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Fortuna, 2014) this altered between types of participants. In these cases each type of participant was rated separately and then averaged to give an overall score for the study, this can be seen in the summary table below.

Summary

Study	WoE B	WoE C
Fortuna, 2014	Parents and Teachers 1 Pupils 2 Overall 1.5	3
Dann, 2011	3	3
Tobin et al., 2012	3	1
Peters & Brooks, 2016	1	1
Dillon & Underwood, 2012	Pre transition group 3 Post transition group 1 Overall 2	1
Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014	2	2
Neal & Frederickson, 2016	2	2

Appendix E – Full syntheses of findings for pupils, parents and staff

Study	Findings for Pupils	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Fortuna, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous negative experiences of primary school impact on how they view transition 	Pupil well-being over the transition period changes	Pupils have varying levels and types of emotions around transition into secondary school (Emotion Impact)
(Dann, 2011) (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils cannot see the positives prior to transition • Some look forward to aspects of transition such as new lessons • Might get lost within the school and not know where to find things • Pupils have worries about the school environment, lessons, friendships 	Anxiety or worries prior to transition is increased	
(Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are anxious prior to transition because of the uncertainty • Pupils are worried they will miss their primary • Pupils worry about possible bullying, teachers being strict • Some pupils are excited for the change 	Emotional burden of transition	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils missed parts of their primary school life • Pupils feel they didn't have a long time to settle in 	Missing primary school	
(Fortuna, 2014) (Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning new routines and getting used to a much larger population • Being comfortable within the environment and being familiar with it, including all the new people 	Pupils worry about different parts of the physical environment that they are moving too	
(Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning where everything is in the new school and what everything looks like • Getting lost within the new school • Looking after all personal belongings and how to use lockers in their secondary school 		
(Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of people within the school, more opportunity to meet people and make friends • Still get lost as it is a much larger place than primary school • More space to enjoy during social times • There are more resources to help foster interests such as a large library 	Post transition pupils can identify aspects of their environment that are good and some that are still a challenge	

Study	Findings for Pupils	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Dann, 2011) (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the lessons going to be like and how much support will there be • Learning about the new teachers and getting to know them • Will the teachers be strict • Getting to know all the teachers and having lots of different teachers 	What is learning and lessons going to be like, thoughts prior to transition	
(Dann, 2011) (Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a safe space to go to during lunch time and during lessons, the importance of this safe space not being a place where 'naughty' children go • There are more rules in secondary school, some feel they are unfair and others find them good • Increased amounts of homework from the teachers and getting it done worries some students • Pupils can identify good nice teachers • Pupils have mixed views about having multiple teachers throughout the day • The lessons are harder than the ones they had in primary school but there is more variety and opportunities for them • Some pupils like their timetable and structure 	Post transition pupils talk about their lessons and learning	Lessons, learning and teachers
(Dann, 2011) (Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having choices over aspects of the day such as break time and where to go and what to eat • Making sure the amount of support for them was right and not being part of too many interventions 	Being treated like an individual	
(Fortuna, 2014) (Dann, 2011) (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils worry about maintaining friends and making new ones • Ability to make new friends and friends from primary attending the same school • Making new friends but worries about not knowing anyone and missing old friends • Knowing how to fit in with peers and will they fit in with peers 	Impact peer relationships have on a transition	The importance of peer relationships

Study	Findings for Pupils	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Fortuna, 2014) (Dann, 2011) (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss negative experiences around bullying/being picked on • People being mean and issues around bullying • Worried they might be bullied 	Concerns and experiences of 'bullying' behaviour	
(Dann, 2011) (Foulder-Hughes & Prior, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra visits to get to know the school • Pupils felt they would like a peer mentor to help them get to know the school • Maps and pictures of the school prior to moving would help the children get to know the school 	Support strategies identified	
(Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits to the school and meeting teachers • Primary school making changes to their structure, making it more like secondary school • Discussions and assemblies around secondary school which included practical advice • Booster interventions to support learning of pupils who were below peers • Written advice from staff and pupils at the secondary school • Support from family 	Practical advice which was seen to be useful	Support strategies for the transition to secondary school
(Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptions to the primary school environment such as more homework • Irrelevant information being given in discussions about secondary school and discussions which had no purposes 	Support strategies which were seen as un-useful	
(Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family have previous knowledge of a school so they know the systems previously and it is good to have siblings already at the school • Parents sharing their concerns around bullying with their children 	Using family as a support	

Study	Findings for Pupils	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Neal & Frederickson, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils expressed they like and preference their secondary school now they have transitions Pupils expressed they like their teachers and the support they get in the school 	Overall positive experiences	Positive experiences

Study	Findings for Parents	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for children to be comfortable and familiar within the school social environment 	Knowing school Environment	The importance of peer relationships
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties still persist socially for some pupils Parents feel their children are more interested in the social interaction Some friendships are able to develop Some have negative experiences with older children 	Social Interaction	
(Peters & Brooks, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low involvement of school clubs Generally spend social times either on their own in a specifically designated area for pupils with SEN Making friends is difficult and the quality of these friendships vary from acquaintance to good friends 	Social Participation	
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents expressed the importance of peer support when making the transition to secondary school. If they have a network of peers to support them this can aid a good transition Poor transitions are seen with pupils with no peer support Some pupils have been able to make new friends within the secondary environment Some pupils experience problems with peers including bullying 	Peer Support	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students experience difficulties with change and this needs to be thought about and planned for 	Prepared for Change	

Study	Findings for Parents	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety around change in structure and how they will cope with this, support needs to focus on coping with change • Structure and routines need to be put in place including buddy systems and extra visits • Predictability needs to be established • Parents appreciate being told what will happen instead of trying to find this out themselves • Parents value good communication from staff who have experience and qualifications, if this isn't happening parents desire this • Parents value support that is on offer and want a safe space for their child if they do not have one 	Transition Support and School approaches	Support strategies for the transition to secondary school
(Peters & Brooks, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured planning is used with primary schools generally initiating • Support includes extra visits and meetings and whole school year 6 visit days but would like more of this • Some parents (29%) had to initiate transition planning • Parents feel transition went well when they had the support, no support left for a poor transition • Parent worry about the routines, environment and relationships their children will need to develop 		
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like more visits and opportunities to be in school e.g. camps • Extra support is typical of transition, only 1 family did not have support • Secondary schools are informed by primary schools about the child's needs • Parents feel the support the LA and school provide is not adequate 		
(Tobin et al., 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel that not enough time is available to put in a good transition plan. They would like this to start in year 5. Sometimes the process is delayed as they do not know which school their child will be attending • Choosing the correct school for their child is extremely important which can be daunting for some parents 	Preparation for Transition	

Study	Findings for Parents	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Tobin et al., 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel they have to weigh up the importance of inclusion and academic outcomes; however, they all want their children to attend mainstream • Each child is individual but this is not always considered when schools are allocated. Parents have specific reasons for choosing schools but feel this is not conveyed to that school 	Schools Role	Parental Views and Emotions
(Dann, 2011) (Tobin et al., 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally to individually tailor a plan to meet their child's needs • Parents recognise that there is a lack of resources and training available • Parents feel their child has a right to a mainstream education but want the school to recognised their needs • Parents feel secondary schools should initiate the transition process beginning with a meeting • Parents feel they should have extra support through extra visits, ASD friendly open days, maps of the school, timetables and pictures • All staff should be made aware of their child's needs 	Anxieties	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried about how their child will cope in school • Worried their child will be unhappy in school • Worried their child might have difficulties with bullying • Worry about the amount of school work and pressure on their children • Concerned about the social demands school brings to their children 	Emotional Impact of Parents	
(Tobin et al., 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents felt they have to fight for their child as it is the only way they will be heard • Parents identify as a carer to their child which they feel impacts in all areas of their life and defines them • All believe their situation is unique 	Parental Role	

Study	Findings for Parents	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have to adjust their expectations for the future of their child • Secondary schools can highlight difficulties which they hadn't expected 	Hopes/Concerns	
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a mixture of hopes and concerns from parents, they do not all share the same view • Some are worried about the future for their children • Parents use their primary school experience to help base their ideas for secondary school inclusion • All parents feel the transition will be traumatic • Once the transition has taken place parents are able to see more positive past experiences and how they have impacted their child 	Past Experiences	
(Dann, 2011) (Tobin et al., 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to know what is happening in school as children cannot always tell them • Multiple networks for communication identified and if one isn't working then the transition will be unsuccessful • Head teachers attitude and knowledge of ASD is important to parents. If the head teacher is seen to be unaccommodating then a parent may not choose the school • Understand they also have a part to play in the communication • Very important for transition to be a success 	Home school liaison/communication	Communication to support transition
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel that if their child has a statement of SEN then they have better chance of good communication • Parents feel they cannot contact the school and if they do the information isn't used • Some parents feel they are continuously 'on call'. They appreciate being consulted but feel that the school shouldn't be so reliant on them • Parents feel there is a focus on problem's and not on achievement. They feel this highlights their child's differences and places responsibility on them to solve the problem 	Home school liaison/communication	Communication to support transition

Study	Findings for Parents	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Tobin et al., 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel secondary schools do not understand ASD and do not have appropriate strategies • Parents feel schools have good understanding when they receive good communication and feel heard by the school 	Knowledge and Understanding of ASD	Support for Teachers
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the transition period some parents feel that schools have some knowledge, certain staff have this knowledge • Pre transition they feel that schools have no knowledge • Feel that their children take up to a year to fully settle into the secondary school and a supporting factor is the schools ethos around ASD • Feel when schools understand ASD and provide correct support then their children will fit in 		
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside whole school ethos individual teachers need to understand their children • Feel training in school is too rigid and doesn't provide in depth knowledge of ASD • If 1 member of staff doesn't understand ASD or the child then this can have a detrimental effect 	Problems with members of Staff	
(Peters & Brooks, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers need to understand their child is unique • Training needs to be provided to teachers to give effective support to their children 	Support for Teachers	
(Peters & Brooks, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils continue to struggle with concentration, academic ability, relationships and anxiety in school • The worst part of the day is social times (breaks/lunchtime) and the lesson change over period • Use individual strategies to support themselves like quiet space and time out • 44% of parents feel that teachers do not alter their teaching style to meet their children's needs 	School Life	Teaching, Learning and Environment

Study	Findings for Parents	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have their own coping strategies and these need to be negotiated with the school The pupils own expectations of what school will be like can impact on how they view their transition 	Coping Strategies	
(Dillon & Underwood, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 parents felt that their child didn't feel safe in the school environment as it was too large Environment is not always suitable for the child e.g. too distracting and disorientating Ensuring these small issues are addressed alongside sensory issues is important for a successful transition 	Sensory Needs and Environment	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are individuals and not all the same Their experience is similar to other pupils 	Individuals	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some pupils are now happier to attend school and have proved some parents wrong in their belief they would not cope Not all children experience a positive change Some parents feel confident in their choice of school prior to transition 	Positive Experiences	Positive Experiences
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process hasn't finished yet and more time is needed to fully transition and settle into secondary school This good experience may not last 	Early Days	

Study	Findings for Staff	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support needs to be individualised and adapted as the child's needs change 	Support for learning	Individualisation for learning and support
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition is difficult for all pupil not just ones with added needs 	Individualisation	

Study	Findings for Staff	Theme	Synthesised Finding
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support needs to continue throughout the school as there are more transitions e.g. from year to year 	Early days in the school life	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction with elder pupils can be difficult 	Social Interaction	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools need to proactively plan for changes Share information to all staff prior to the arrival of the pupil 	Preparing for Change	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure and routines put in place so predictability is able to be created Support strategies of buddies and extra visits Good communication with parents is important, being able to talk to them easily Getting to know the student well as an individual and building positive relationships 	Things that Support the Transition	Support strategies for the transition to secondary school, including communication
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns that the pupils will not cope well in the new school environment 	Anxiety around transition	Emotional Impact
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The emotional stress on adults who are caring for these pupils during the school day 	Emotional impact on adults	
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can be challenging for adults working with pupils with ASD It is harder to organise support in a secondary school than in a primary school Very important to share information about the pupil with all who will teach/support them All staff need to take responsibility for pupils with ASD to ensure inclusion is happening Training is needed to help staff be effective Whole school training can be difficult to organise but informal support is important as it is relevant to a teacher and pupil School should have a 'no blame' approach 	Support for Teachers	Support for Adults working with Pupils
(Dann, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students settle in well with the support of an SEN base 	Positive Experience	Positive Experiences

Finding Extraction Example from Foulder-Hughes and Prior (2014)

Theme	Finding	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might get lost within the school and not know where to find things • Pupils have worries about the school environment, lessons, friendships 	<p>Anxiety or worries prior to transition is increased</p>	<p>Theme – Worries</p> <p>“All of the children generated worries and anxieties related with how they would make the transition to secondary school and the sort of support that they would receive. The sub-themes that emerged in relation to their worries were PE, getting lost, using a locker, new teachers, organisation of personal belongings and peer relationships.” (pg 85)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting lost within the new school • Looking after all personal belongings and how to use lockers in their secondary school 	<p>Pupils worry about different parts of the physical environment that they are moving too</p>	<p>Sub-theme 2 – getting lost</p> <p>“The sub-theme of getting ‘lost’ was directly cited as a cause for concern by five out of the six children.” (pg 86)</p> <p>“For Child C this appeared to be ‘Not familiar with buildings so being late for lessons if you get lost’.” (pg 86)</p> <p>Sub-theme 3 – Use of lockers</p> <p>“This theme seemed to be a concern for three of the children all of whom directly cited the use of lockers as a personal cause of worry for them in relation to the storage of personal belongings.” (pg 86)</p>

Theme	Finding	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the teachers be strict • Getting to know all the teachers and having lots of different teachers 	<p>What is learning and lessons going to be like, thoughts prior to transition</p>	<p>“Equally Child E was able to provide a detailed account related to losing personal belongings, ‘I might get a locker to put my stuff in so I could keep my books in it, but then I might lose the key, but what if it’s a code one? What if I lose the code?’” (pg 86)</p> <p>Sub-theme 3 – New teachers</p> <p>“This sub-theme also appeared to be a common worry for five of the six children.” (pg 86)</p> <p>“Child E also voiced concerns over new teachers, ‘Knowing teachers’ names and faces’.” (pg 86)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making new friends but worries about not knowing anyone and missing old friends • Knowing how to fit in with peers and will they fit in with peers 	<p>Impact peer relationships have on a transition</p>	<p>Sub-theme 5 – Peer relationships</p> <p>“The final sub theme in relation to worries focused on anxieties around personal relationships and friendship.” (pg 87)</p> <p>“Both Child B and F explicitly stated that they were concerned about ‘Making new friends’. Whilst Child C expressed that he was concerned about ‘Missing my friend . . . not knowing anyone’.” (pg 87)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils felt they would like a peer mentor to help them get to know the school • Maps and pictures of the school prior to moving would help the children get to know the school 	<p>Support strategies identified</p>	<p>Theme 2 – Support Strategies</p> <p>“The next main theme to emerge focused on support strategies that children could utilise in order to assist the transition to secondary school.” (pg 87)</p>

Theme	Finding	Evidence
		<p data-bbox="1077 379 2049 411">Sub-theme 1 – older mentor</p> <p data-bbox="1077 448 2049 592">“Having a significantly older mentor was expressed by three children in order to help them become orientated with the physical building and also the general routine of the school.” (pg 87)</p> <p data-bbox="1077 632 2049 703">“For Child C it was ‘Maybe someone to help but only if they were older’.” (pg 87)</p> <p data-bbox="1077 743 2049 775">Sub-theme 2 – maps and pictures</p> <p data-bbox="1077 807 2049 919">“The use of maps and/or pictures were explicitly stated by all of the children as a means of being helpful in terms of orientation and in familiarisation with their new surroundings” (pg 87)</p> <p data-bbox="1077 951 2049 1102">“Child D suggested to ‘Go on the website to see pictures and get a map’. Child E felt that ‘Lots of pictures’ would be helpful. Child F stated ‘Pictures and maybe a map’.” (pg 87)</p>
