School-Home Support

Transforming young lives for 25 years

School-Home Support builds bridges between the home and school to enable children and young people to make the most of their education.

School-Home Support

Transforming young lives for 25 years

Successful transition for children and young people - alleviating common transfer fears

Julia Burns

Head of Learning and Development

School-Home Support

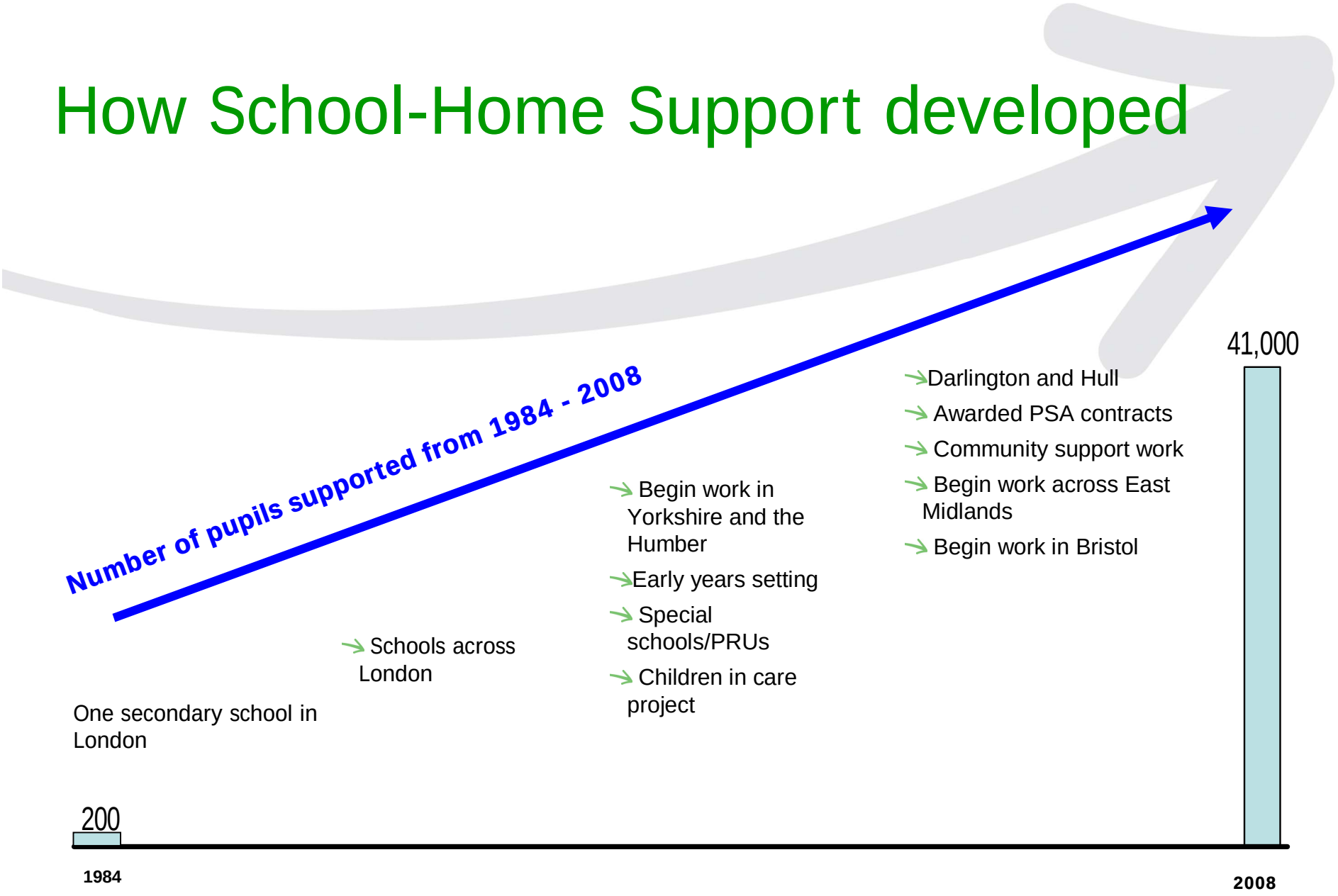
1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

About School-Home Support...

- registered charity established in 1984 in Tower Hamlets, East London
- leading independent provider of highly-trained school home support staff (including Parent Support Advisers)
- operate in over 170 educational settings from early years through to sixth forms, including special schools and PRUs
- based in London, North of England, East Midlands and South West

School-Home Support
1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

How School-Home Support developed



Our approach

- **Early intervention** - trying to resolve an issue before it develops into a crisis
- **Child centred** - putting the needs of the child or young person first in all interventions
- **Parental empowerment** - giving parents and carers the support they need to help their children to thrive
- **Collaborative** – we believe the best outcomes are achieved by working together with children, young people and their families, schools and other supporting agencies

Children's Plan : Guiding principles

- Parents bring up children, not government, but parents need help and support to do their job
- All children have the potential to succeed and should go as far as their talents can take them
- Children and young people need to be safe, healthy and enjoy their childhood as well as grow up prepared for adult life
- All children and families deserve services that work together for them, and meet their individual needs
- It is always better to prevent a failure than tackle a crisis later

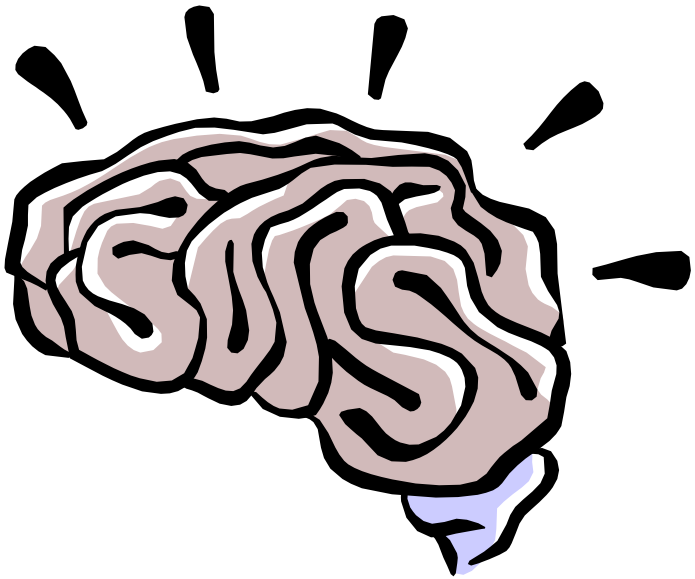
School-Home Support
1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

Why transition ?

Social & emotional networks

Different environment

On the brink of adolescence



Changes in Pedagogy

Management and structure of learning

School-Home Support

1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

FACTS: Secondary transition & children's well being

- That secondary transition is a stage when some pupils first seriously disengage from the education process (Templeton & Hood 2002)
- ‘Successful optimistic learners’ at primary become ‘self confessed failures’ at secondary. (Hargreaves 2008)
- 65% of children at primary school rated their experience as positive, why only 27% did at secondary school (Measor 2005)
- 1/3 of 1000 secondary school children were so miserable that they were vulnerable to depression (Nic Marks 2004)
- This slump in well being was most dramatic when children started secondary school and it didn’t change once they settle in. (Nic Marks 2004)

School-Home Support

1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

Who’s most at risk?

No one single factor but a combination of factors

- Less parental support
- Less confident and mature
- Less academic
- More likely to be from poorer socio economic backgrounds
  - Poor health
  - Poor housing conditions
  - Material deprivation

- Already identified as having attendance, behavioural and/ or emotional issues

Why is parental involvement so important?

- There is no evidence that directly links home-school link work to improvements in educational achievement

- However research shows that parental engagement has a far more significant impact on children's achievement than parents/carers' social class or level of education.

The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education in Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A literature review Professor Charles Desforges with Alberto Abouchaar, DFES Research Report 433, 2003

What do parents/carers want from us ?

- The best education for their child
- To have their needs taken seriously
- To receive services and support that reflect their needs
- To be treated like adults
- To participate in two way conversation
- To be partners in finding solutions to problems
- Fast and responsive professionals

Parents/carers are very committed to retaining their independence

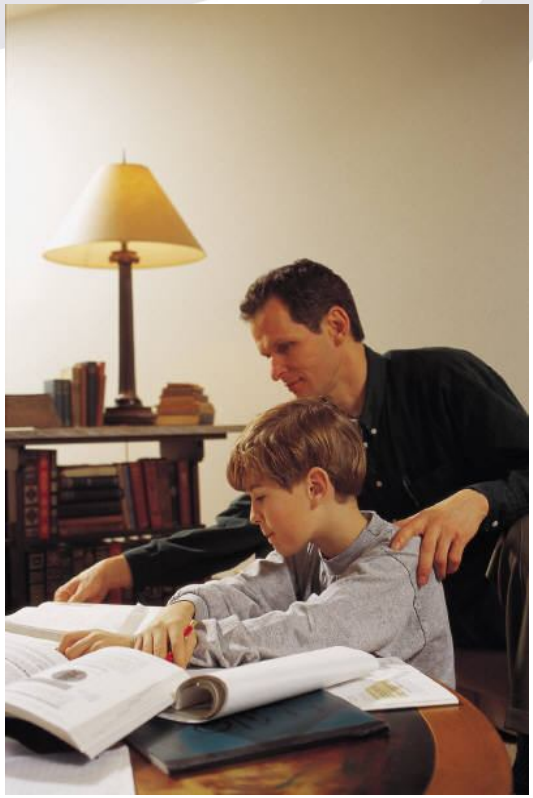
What do parents want from secondary schools?

- to know that their child will be safe
- their child to make friends and be happy
- their child to be supported by teaching staff
- to be contacted early if there is a problem
- to know who to talk to about their child
- to know how to support their child's learning
- to know about the practicalities and procedures
- their child to receive a good education

What do parents/carers fear about secondary transfer ?

1. When applying for schools ?

2. Once their child has started the new school?



School-Home Support

1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

What do parent/carers fear about transfer?

When applying to secondary schools:

- Complicated applications, catchments and procedures
- They won't get the school that they prefer
- parents/carers may have had poor experiences of secondary school themselves
- Complicated new school systems and the jargon of secondary education
- Poor services in the past lead to suspicions of the support offered
- Loss of primary school network and sense of community

“It was so upset! I always assumed we’d get the same school for my second child as my first! Now I have to deal with two different schools. Nightmare!”

What do parents /carers fear about transfers?

Once they get there, they worry that their child will:

- Get lost on the way or lost in new school
- Be introduced to anti social behaviour, smoking, alcohol and drugs
- Peer pressure to skip school
- Be at risk from violence, gangs, etc (media coverage)
- Be more independent and that as a parent, they won't be able to let go

And that their child will not:

- Have the right things for secondary school
- New friends
- Fit in or will be the victim of bullying
- Have support available to them from teaching staff
- Have the right support for Special Education Needs

“The practical and social issues were much more important to me than educational achievement.

I only started thinking about GCSEs and things once my child had started at secondary school”

Are their feelings the same as their children ?

WORRIES

- “What if I get lost”
- “I’m not sure where the toilets are.”
- “What happens if you bring the wrong books to class”
- “What if I miss my bus & I’m late”
- “Is £1.50 enough for lunch ?’
- “We were the oldest now we the youngest “
- “Do we get homework every night for all subjects”

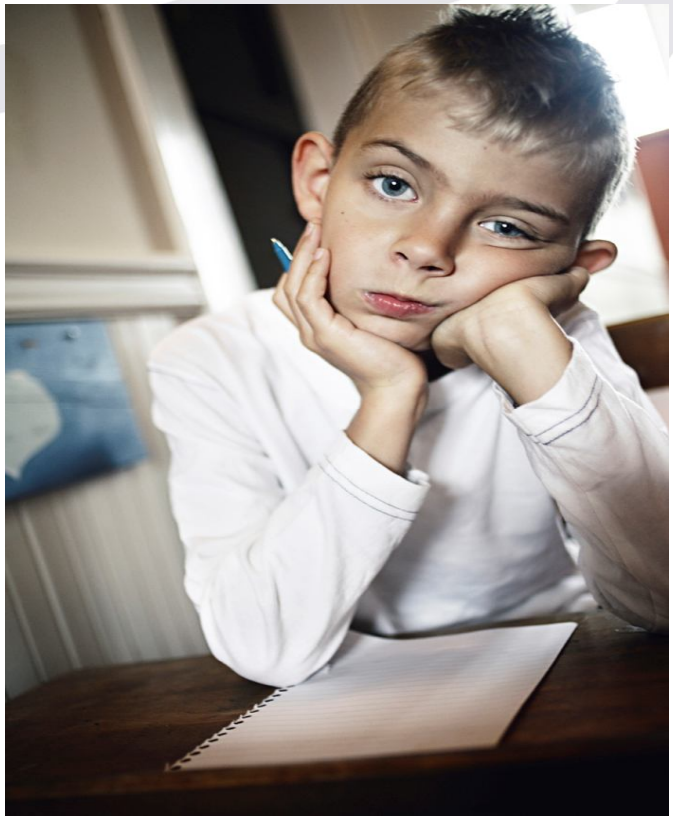
School-Home Support

1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

Fears ?

Fears

- “Will I be bullied”
- Will students carry knives”
- “What if someone jack my stuff”
- “I might be put in the bottom set”
- “ Not being in the same class as my friends”
- Will I pressured to do things I don’t want to do”
- “I might not be cool enough”



School-Home Support

1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

Timeline for secondary transfer

September
- Pupils/parents visit secondary school

October
- All forms handed to Local Authority

December
- Latest date for late applications

January
- Verbal and non reasoning testing

March
- Decision letters sent to parents
- Parents confirm their acceptance
- Closing dates for appeals

May
- Appeals begin

July
- Taster days

What can we do ?

To support the parents to help their child

Consider:

Three Groups

1. **Planning**: think outside of the parameters set in the timeline
2. **Information**: for parents/carers about secondary schools
3. **Support**: working with new parents/carers

School-Home Support

1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

Planning: improve secondary – primary links

Purpose of joint teacher initiatives:

- Involvement from secondary school teachers and commitment from both sides
- Understanding of each others different professional ‘worlds’
- More recognition of different expectations of transfer between primary and secondary

Joint inset arrangements:

- Involve one secondary with key feeder schools
- Value current good practice and focus on link arrangements that need improvement
- Share resources and tools on transition

From the National Literacy Trust

http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/secondary/prisecsuggestions.html

Planning for parent support

Community links…

- Invite feeder school parents to extended services within secondary school
- Make use of existing community links and activities used by local parents/carers, including neighbourhood learning, healthy living etc.
- Secondary teachers visit feeder schools during parent events, coffee mornings, adult learning activities, etc.
- Opportunities for primary school parents to meet year seven parents
- Take guidance from parenting organisations e.g. www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Information for parents/carers

- Guidance distributed to year five parents/carers in the summer term
- Information about academic transfer and curriculum links should be available to parents/carers as early as possible
- Information evenings organised jointly by one secondary school with all of its feeder primary schools
- Information available online as well as in paper formats
- Secondary information evenings in autumn term for year six parents/carers should also be open to year five parents/carers
- Arrange visits to secondary schools for vulnerable year five pupils with their parents/carers

Support for parents

- At the heart of this work is recognition that some parents/carers need more support than others.

- There is a need to distinguish between supporting parents/carers and support for parenting which may need to be provided separately

Support – Relationships are at the heart of support

- A parent will accept support if they feel that there is a balance of give and take in the relationship.

- Different sources of support:
  - Support from family and friends (informal support)
  - Support from community and self-help organisations (semi-formal support)
  - Support from services with special expertise (formal support)*

- Diversity and flexibility are important to parents/carers

- Parents/carers are the best organisers of their own informal support

**From: Supporting parents/carers edited David Quinton 2004 Jessica*

A partnership approach

When working with parents/carers remember…

- The professional is not the expert on that individual's child
- Active participation of the parent is paramount
- Professional shares power and decision-making
- Goals are agreed together
- Negotiate
- Communicate clearly and consistently
- Build trust and respect

SHS approach

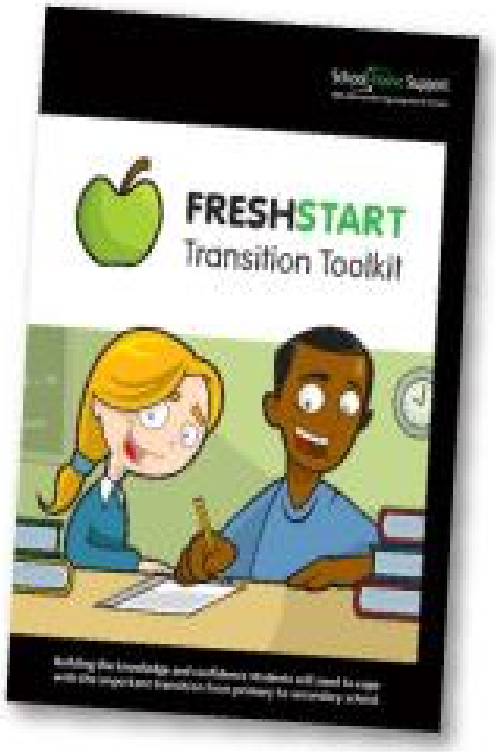
Case Studies:

- Secondary transfer
- Farhana
- Rosa
- Supporting a young person with a disability through transition

School-Home Support

1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

Working with the child



- Toolkit developed by 3 SHS practitioners working with Yr 7 struggling to adapt to change
- Aim: build the knowledge and confidence young people need to cope with the transition from primary to secondary school.
- Six modules based on 1 hour weekly sessions
- Examining the common problems and exploring strategies to equip children to handle change

School-Home Support
1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years

For more information

Please visit our website: www.schoolhomesupport.org.uk

Or contact:

Julia Burns
Head of Learning and Development
julia.burns@schoolhomesupport.org.uk

O207 4265032

School-Home Support
1984-2009: transforming young lives for 25 years