

Transition Project

Year Group: Year 6/7



Four Lewisham schools joined together to take part in an exciting ICT transition project during the summer term. Realising that transition from primary to secondary school can be stressful and traumatic for a number of pupils the aim of the schools taking part was to ease this process. The project involved one secondary school, Crofton, and three feeder primaries: Lewisham Bridge, Stillness Junior and Gordonbrock.

It was important that commitment to the project and to each other was established at the outset so, before the start of the project, a planning meeting was organised for key teachers from each school. These teachers were chosen carefully as they needed to be confident users of ICT and also keen to embrace new technologies. In two of the primaries they were year 6 teachers, one of whom was also the ICT co-ordinator. In the third primary school it was the Deputy Head who also line managed ICT. The teacher in the secondary school was the Head of Science who ran a science club for selected year 7 pupils and also had some responsibility for transition projects. This teacher had already been involved in science transition activities with some of the primary schools.

Ten year 7 pupils who regularly attended the Science Club were selected to be the buddies for approximately 25 primary school pupils who were due to transfer to Crofton in September. Each year 7 pupil was assigned two or three year 6 pupils to 'buddy'.

It was decided to make use of facilities within the London Grid for Learning (LGfL) web portal as this is accessible from all Lewisham schools. Each pupil and teacher involved had their own account and was made a member of the Crofton Transition community within the Crofton LGfL portal. Each teacher was given an individual introduction to using the portal for email and live discussion.

First communications were by email, with the primary pupils posing questions or voicing concerns about secondary school. The year 7 pupils responded directly to their own buddies.

The emails were followed by a live discussion forum which, due to timetable constraints, had to be held during lunchtime. This required quite a feat of organisation as lunchtime in the four schools varied. It was very motivating for pupils to receive an instant response to their questions and illuminating for them to read that other children were voicing similar concerns to their own.

The final communication between the four schools was by video conference. To facilitate this the secondary school used some of its transition funding to buy a web cam for each school. The Local Authority's curriculum technicians installed these for the primary schools and ensured that they were functioning correctly. Each teacher was then given one to one training on using the video conferencing facility within the LGfL portal.

The video conferencing section of the project was the most motivating for all of the pupils. For one year 6 pupil it was the height of excitement to be able to see his cousin who attended another primary school a mile down the road.

During the six weeks of the project it was also planned that the primary pupils would upload selected materials into their own individual area of the portal. They would then be able to access these and show them to other pupils in their new class on the day that the new intake made their preliminary visit to Crofton. This was less successful due to time constraints.

The general feeling amongst the staff and pupils who took part was that the project was very worthwhile and one that they would be keen to repeat. The primary school pupils looked forward to their move to secondary school with increased confidence. Pupils destined for other secondary schools commented that they wished their prospective schools had engaged in a similar project.

If the project was repeated it would be even more effective if it spanned two or three terms and was broken into mini projects. As a starter year 7 pupils at the secondary school could create presentations/leaflets to email to the year 6 at their former primary schools to tell them about their new school. They could then take part in focussed email correspondence and e-discussions on topics which are relevant to them. In the final term a video conference could take place. Pupils could also upload work into the community area of the portal [images, samples of work etc] to access and include in their presentations in their first half term in year 7.

The image displays two screenshots of the 'Transition Project' web portal. The top screenshot shows the 'Stillness Junior Transition Area' with a sidebar of icons for Video Conferencing Facility, Live Discussion, and Resources Stall. The bottom screenshot shows the main portal interface with sections for Transition Project Links, Welcome to our school, Images, and Transition Project E-mail Discussion.