

New-Bridge Integrated College and Bridge Integrated Primary School Case Study

Introduction

New-Bridge Integrated College in Loughbrickland has a wide catchment area that includes Banbridge, Newry, Scarva, Tandragee and Moira. It has thirty-seven feeder primary schools, the biggest of which is *Bridge Integrated Primary School* in Banbridge.

Ways of working together

New-Bridge Integrated College (New-Bridge) and Bridge Integrated Primary School (Bridge) have developed a good working partnership over a number of years. The principals and teachers from both schools said that constructive working relationships based on professionalism, trust and co-operation were central to developing collaborative working. The schools are committed to developing links and working together to make the transitional period as smooth and stress-free as possible for pupils.



A senior teacher and science teacher from New-Bridge college planning Year 8 science classes and links to the primary science curriculum in Bridge primary school.

Communicating and meeting

There is regular communication between designated staff from Bridge and New-Bridge. The principal of the school and a senior teacher from the college, with responsibility for developing school links, communicate regularly throughout the year on an informal basis. This helps to ensure that both schools can share background, academic and other information about pupils effectively.

At the start of June, Year 7 teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) from the primary school hold a series of meetings with the head of Year 8 and the SENCO from the college. At these meetings, teachers discuss how best to meet the needs of individual pupils transferring to the college.

Raising awareness about the transition to New-Bridge school

Teachers in the primary school raise Year 7 pupils' awareness of going to the post-primary school and prepare them for coping with changes. Pupils in Year 7 attend a residential course, which develops their independence and prepares them to deal with change. The residential course gives pupils opportunities to participate in team building and problem-solving activities. They work together to solve problems in new and unfamiliar contexts.

Teachers in the primary school use Personal Development lessons to discuss issues such as making new friends, bullying and dealing with changing school. They also promote and make the links with New-Bridge visible. For example, when teachers and pupils visit the primary school they introduce themselves to pupils. This gives teachers and pupils from both schools a chance to talk about what is happening in New-Bridge.



Pupils from Bridge primary school visit New-Bridge for a STEM event.

Pupil work placements

New-Bridge pupils complete work placements in Bridge. Year 12 pupils gain experience by working for a week with a Year 6 or Year 7 class. As part of their Early Years and Childcare courses, sixth form pupils also work with groups of primary pupils.

Induction events

As part of the transition arrangements, New-Bridge holds a range of events for primary pupils. Before the open day in January, New-Bridge hosts an event called the New-Bridge Experience for Year 7 pupils to try taster subjects. Pupils follow a carousel timetable. They experience Year 8 activities in subjects such as home economics, technology, science, drama, art and ICT.

Sixth form and senior pupils help teachers to organise and deliver activities. They also act as tour guides. Pupils evaluate their experience after the open day. The senior leadership team uses the pupil evaluation to plan future events.

In June, New-Bridge holds a parents' information evening and an induction day. At the parents' evening, the principal, vice-principal, senior teachers, head of year and Year 8 form tutors hold an information session and address parents' questions or issues.

During the induction day, sixth form mentors from the prefect team give Year 7 pupils a guided tour of the college. During their visit, pupils participate in group work in drama and art activities. Year 7 pupils who require learning support meet their classroom assistants and SENCOs. Pupils are also given transition booklets with practical information about the school such as routines, homework or pastoral care. Form teachers provide more detail about school routines and homework when pupils arrive in September. They also give the pupils opportunities to participate in team building activities, allowing them to meet, make friends and build relationships.

Teachers from both schools work collaboratively to arrange a STEM day in March. The STEM day highlights the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils and their parents. This has been successful in raising awareness of the career opportunities these subjects offer. This event also gives pupils from both schools an opportunity to work together and to get to know each other. The school invites parents to attend so that they too can build relationships with teachers and other parents.

New-Bridge invites Year 6 and Year 7 pupils from Bridge to a range of events. These include peace assemblies, carol services, concerts, sports day, Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) activities and connected learning projects.



Pupils from Bridge and New-Bridge at a STEM event, working together to build a rocket.



Sharing assessment and other information

Bridge shares its information with New-Bridge both electronically and as hard copy. This information can be:

- SIMS data transferred by the Common Transfer File on C2K;
- the Year 7 end of year report, including information about end of Key Stage 2 levels in Communication and Using Mathematics and results from PiE (Progress in English) and PiM (Progress in Mathematics); and
- each pupil's Record of Achievement.

As well as the quantitative assessment data, the principal and staff from Bridge also gather and share qualitative information about individual pupils with their colleagues in New-Bridge.

Teachers base the qualitative information on their knowledge of their pupils. This information provides an insight into each pupil's attitude to learning and their ability, attainment, behaviour, personal circumstances and any potential barriers to learning. Those involved in transition use this information to plan progression in learning. Teachers share this information at teacher meetings in June.

A senior teacher at New-Bridge is responsible for sharing this information with staff, as appropriate. This includes sharing targets and strategies with learning support assistants so that they can use the information with pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. New-Bridge staff can also contact the principal of Bridge to discuss any concerns they may have about a new pupil.

At the point of transition, Bridge passes paper copies of pupils' end of Key Stage 2 reports on to New-Bridge. These reports include a record of the statutory levels that pupils have attained in the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication and Using Mathematics and their scores in PiE and PiM.

Staff from both schools meet to share and discuss non-statutory assessment information about pupils. Bridge uses this information, including standardised scores for PiE and PiMs, to identify low achievers and underachievers in English (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) and gifted and talented pupils. Bridge then passes this information as well as Individual Educational Plans on to New-Bridge.

During an induction day at New-Bridge in June, incoming Year 8 pupils complete MiDYIS (Middle Years Information System) tests. A strategy group in New-Bridge, made up of members of the senior leadership team including a vice-principal and teachers, considers this assessment data and the information that Bridge provides.

Using information

New-Bridge shares the information gathered from Bridge at a whole school level, discussing it with staff as part of an INSET day in August. A senior teacher with responsibility for using data effectively leads the discussion. Teachers use this information to monitor pupil progression in literacy and numeracy throughout Year 8 and beyond. New-Bridge continues to use PiE and PiMs at the end of Years 8, 9 and 10.

Curriculum planning and sharing best practice

New-Bridge and Bridge are both committed to developing a planned approach to curriculum provision in Year 7 and Year 8. Staff from both schools meet in June to review their curriculum provision in English, mathematics, science and using ICT. The main purpose of the meetings is for New-Bridge teachers to build on pupils' prior learning in Bridge and to avoid repetition of content.

Primary teachers share Year 7 planners and invite New-Bridge teachers to observe lessons in Year 6 and Year 7 classes. This shows the level of trust between staff at the two schools. This approach to sharing expertise has generated professional dialogue around various educational topics such as differentiated teaching and learning and teaching skills, including problem solving and peer assessment.



Pupils from Bridge and New-Bridge investigating chemical reactions.



Working together to enhance pastoral provision

Teachers from Bridge meet with their colleagues in New-Bridge to share information about the backgrounds and abilities of individual pupils moving into the post-primary school. This takes place in meetings in June. The primary teacher shares and discusses information about each pupil, for example their behaviour, attitude and aptitude for learning, what motivates and what stresses them, their family circumstances and bereavement or family issues.

The SENCO at Bridge and the senior teacher responsible for inclusion in New-Bridge work together to share information and arrange for pupils with statements of special educational needs from Bridge to visit New-Bridge's Learning Support Centre. They also give pupils with SEN, and others who may find change difficult, a transition booklet. This helps to alleviate some of the concerns pupils may have about moving to a new environment and meeting new teachers.

In June, incoming pupils attend an induction day at New-Bridge where they meet their form tutor, SENCO and head of year. Before this, parents meet with teachers at New-Bridge. This gives teachers an opportunity to gather more information about pupils and to build good teacher–parent relations. Teachers give parents an outline of the Year 8 programme. This helps to reassure parents about their child's move to New-Bridge.

To ease transition throughout Year 8, New-Bridge assigns two sixth form mentors to each Year 8 form class. These mentors help teaching staff by providing ongoing, day-to-day contact and reassurance for the Year 8 pupils.

Pupil views about the transition process

As part of their evaluation of the transition process, New-Bridge uses ongoing discussions, written feedback and online surveys to gather Year 8 pupils' views. Generally, pupils were excited about attending a new school. They enjoyed the open day and meeting staff, working with sixth form mentors and making new friends. Some pupils were worried about being new, leaving their old friends from primary school and getting used to their new school. Some pupils talked about how their primary teacher helped them to prepare for transferring to New-Bridge. Pupils said that being able to talk about their worries and what it would be like to go to New-Bridge helped to reassure them. They also said that the teachers and pupils at New-Bridge helped them to settle in and get used to new routines and school work.

The Future

The principals from New-Bridge college and Bridge school are keen to build on the links they have established. They intend to develop the cross-phase work already undertaken by the head of mathematics in New-Bridge and Year 7 teachers from Bridge. Teachers from New-Bridge plan to work collaboratively with teachers from Bridge to extend their work placement programme. New-Bridge will encourage more Year 14 students to work with primary pupils and to share their experiences of post-primary school. Teachers from both schools will collaborate on sharing New-Bridge's ICT media resources and facilities.



Pupils from Bridge and New-Bridge meet each other to participate in STEM activities.