

# What can we learn from the pupils?

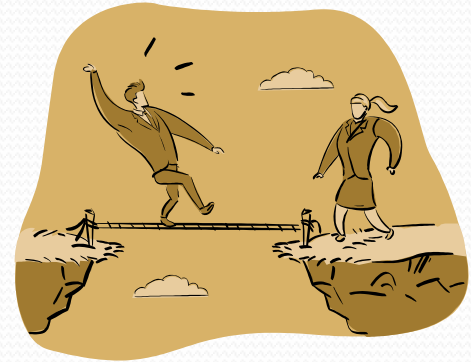
## Pupils' perceptions of languages at the KS2-3 transition

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# Pupils' perceptions of languages at the KS2-3 transition

- Background
- The issue of transition (for languages)
- The study:
  - the complexity of the KS2-3 transition
  - range of experience
  - enjoyment
  - continuity and progression
  - perceived difficulty
  - self-efficacy
  - perceived value of languages
- A Case of effective transition?
- Conclusions, discussion and questions.

# A new issue?

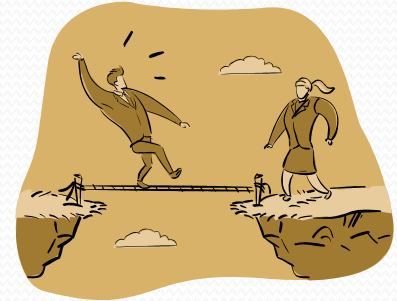


- Challenges well-documented nationally and internationally (Galton et al. 1999, 2003; Nash, 1973; Nisbet and Entwistle, 1969)

Key issues of the primary-secondary school transition (all areas/subjects)?



# The issue of transition



- Key issues: motivation, progression, curriculum continuity and the (dis)continuity of pedagogy
- Pupil performance: **up to 40%** experienced a drop in motivation and a hiatus in progress in the year following their transfer (Galton et al., 1999)

# Transition in languages

- 95% teaching languages at KS2 (Board and Tinsley, 2014)
- Diversity of pupil experience
- Teacher subject knowledge and confidence (Board and Tinsley, 2014; Cable et al., 2010; Driscoll et al., 2004; Wade et al., 2009)
- Subject status
- Level of liaison: (Board and Tinsley, 2014:54)
  - 46% of primaries had no contact with secondary schools (level of contact appears to be falling)
  - Only 18% secondaries reported contact with all feeder primaries (23% reported none)

# Transition in languages

- Transfer of information

*“[...] only 11 per cent of state secondary schools report[ed] that they receive or request data on pupil achievements in Key Stage 2.”* (Board and Tinsley, 2014:6).

- Assessment
- Appropriate pedagogy (phase and subject) (Driscoll et al., 2004b)
- ‘Two tribes’ of teachers (Sutherland et al. 2010:62)

# The study

- Multiple case study: 4 cases of KS2-3 transition
- Selection of schools – key feeder schools, teaching languages across KS2
- Pupil questionnaires (335) and group interviews
- 3 data collection points:
  - Summer Year 6 (244 questionnaires/ 8 interviews)
  - Autumn Year 7 (90 questionnaires/ 4 interviews)
  - Summer Year 7 (98 questionnaires/ 4 interviews)



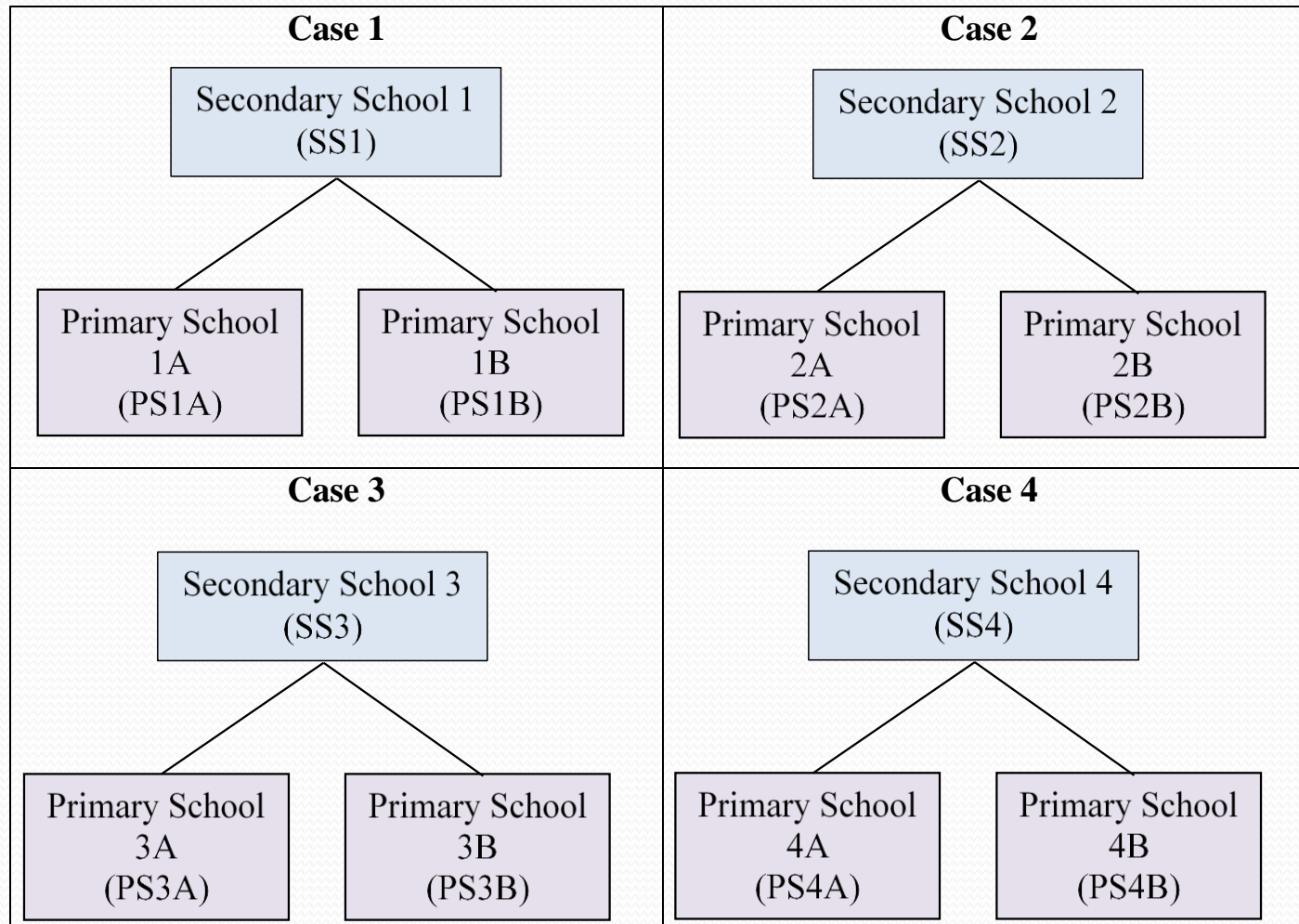


Figure 1: Overview of the case study design.



# Complexity of the KS2-3 transition

- Pupil tracking
- Complex web of feeder primaries/receiving secondaries
- Secondaries receiving from a wide range of primaries  
(Dearing and King, 2007 and Galton et al., 2003)
- Variation in pupils' prior experience:

# Range of experience

- Language provision (e.g. Case 2)
- Length and frequency of lessons
- Status of languages
- Language(s) taught
- Teacher – who teaches language lessons
- Teacher confidence and subject knowledge

# Who is teaching Y6 languages?

- Role (class teacher, PL co-ordinator, language specialist, TA, parent,
- Language experience and qualifications
- Language taught

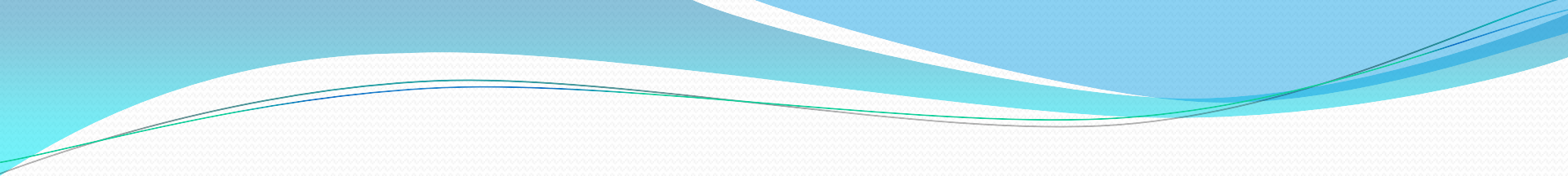
# Enjoyment of language lessons

	Y6 autumn	Y7 autumn	Y7 summer
Enjoyment of language lessons	61% (149/244)	72.2% (69/90)	55.1% (54/98)

% pupils agreeing with statement: 'I enjoy language lessons'.

# Continuity and progression

- Enjoyment lowest end Y7 and highest Y7 autumn
- ‘Novelty’ (Schumann, 2001 cited in Dörnyei, 2003)
- Most pupils began a new language in Y7
- Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  pupils would prefer to begin a new language in Y7
- Progression within KS2 emerged as an issue:

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- *“In primary school... all you learn is like 'bonjour' throughout the whole of Key Stage 2.”*  
[Year 6 pupil, PS4B]

*"We've counted to 12 a hundred and fifty times! Every single year you never finish it [counting], so you have to keep starting again"* [Year 6 pupil, PS4A].

# Positives too!

“It's better than other [lessons] because you don't know what you're going to do, like in maths you think you might do your times tables, but in MFL you might be learning a story or different words or sentences, so it sort of keeps you guessing” [Y6 pupil, PS1A].

“We see the culture as well - not just the words.” [Y6 pupil, PS1B]

“I like French because we do games and group work.” [Y6 pupil, PS3B]

# Y7 (autumn)

“I like French because we are learning a new subject so it’s interesting.” [Y7 pupil (autumn), SS1]

"I thought they'd be quite boring but they're exciting, so I'm quite surprised". [Y7 pupil (autumn), SS2A]

"We're doing all different games and my teacher, helps us a lot and is quite funny." [Y7 pupil, SS2A]

“I like the group work because you're not speaking in front of the whole class, just a smaller group". [Y7 pupil (autumn), SS4]



# Y7 (summer)

“I don't like it when we learn things that I already know from years 3 and 4.” [Y7 pupil, SS3]

"It's the same old, same old ... We always have to do repeating, speaking and then a sheet or writing. Then we get homework on whatever topic we're on. it would be nice if we could do something else.” [Y7 pupil, SS1]

# Cognitive challenge (primary)

"In languages, you're just learning words, and you're not really doing anything with your brain". [Y6 pupil, PS4B]

"In other lessons we usually get on with working in our books and trying to figure things out but in Spanish you get told everything - and then you have to repeat it". [Y6 pupil, PS1B]

"It is harder than Primary school and you get lots of homework." [Y7 pupil (summer), SS4]

# Self-efficacy

## What is it?

“the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations.” (Bandura, 1986)

- our belief in our ability to succeed in specific situations

## Why does it matter?

Perceptions of success in languages and expectations of ability affect performance (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Breen, 2001)

# Self-efficacy

	Y6 summer	Y7 autumn	Y7 summer
Self-efficacy for languages	53.3% (130/244)	64.5% (58/90)	65.2% (62/98)

% pupils agreeing with the statements: 'I am good at languages'.

"I can't pronounce the words and I don't understand French"[Year 6 pupil, PS<sub>3</sub>B].

# Self-efficacy

“I don’t enjoy French because I’m not very good at it. I like subjects I feel good at.” [Y7 pupil (summer), SS3]

“I’ll probably not [continue to study French]. I just don't think I’m very good at languages” [Year 6 pupil, PS4B]

- Motivation for future language learning, enjoyment, achievement
- **Promoting self-efficacy:** take a longer-term view of their learning, breaking down the learning into manageable chunks (Dörnyei ‘proximal sub-goals’, 2001:128), celebrating achievement, resilience/persisting with aspects perceived as being less relevant, less enjoyable or difficult?
- Positive beliefs can support pupils to overcome barriers to learning (Kern, 1995; Oh, 1996)

# Support for language learning

- Strong support for compulsory languages at KS2:
- Language learning valued (and perceived as useful):  
“All children should know another language.” [Y7 pupil (summer), SS3]

“If you start early then you will learn more of it. A different language is useful when you go to a different place.” [Y7 pupil (autumn), SS3]

“It helps you later in life.” [Y7 pupil (autumn), SS2]

# Support for language learning

- Choice of language (personal connection)

"I'd like to speak Turkish because I've been to Turkey about five, six times." [Y6 pupil, PS1A]

"Some of my family live in Germany and it would be good to learn". [Y7 pupil (summer), SS4]

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- Praised the valiant efforts of their primary teachers
  - Need to develop teacher SK:

“Not all pupils have a teacher [who] can speak the language they are teaching” [Y6 pupil]

“The teachers here know French. This makes a difference to lessons because you're not sure if you're actually learning French if the teachers don't really know it.” [Y7 pupil (summer), SS2]



# Case 2: a case of successful transition?

- Self-efficacy higher:
- *‘Most people in my language class are better than me at languages’:*
  - all cases: 44.9% (48/98) disagreed;
  - SS2: 73% (19/26) disagreed – higher self-efficacy
- Perceived difficulty in Year 7 summer:  
77.6% (76/98) (all cases) 72.2% (18/26) (SS2)
- Higher motivation for future language learning

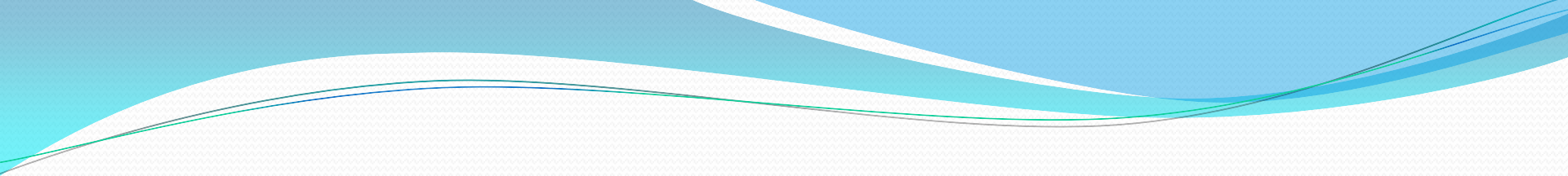
“I like that my teacher gives us work we understand. I am quite confident I think.” [Y7 pupil (autumn), SS2]

“ As well as French, we have learnt a bit about France.”  
[Y7 pupil (autumn), SS2]

- Transition activity: liaison, teaching, language conference, Y5 work, transfer day focus (art, cooking), Y7 .

# Conclusions

- Limitations of study
- **Complex, concerns** (progression, self-efficacy, enjoyment, teacher SK and confidence, liaison)
- Positives – value, successful KS2-3 transition
- Support for teachers of KS2 languages and for transition in both phases. Professional development.
- Conceptualise as continuum requiring a joint response from all parties?



*“Transition is an aspect of primary languages development which could be a serious hindrance to successful longer-term implementation and continued sustainability.”*  
(Hunt et al., 2008:17).



# Any questions?

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