

Afasic Primary Secondary Transition:

Opportunities for Summer Courses 2019 - 2020

Afasic is a charity which represents parents, families and carers of a child affected by the hidden disability of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), operating for almost 50 years.

Around 6-7% of children starting school have SLCN, an average of 2 in every classroom¹ a total of over 1 million², with 1 child in 500 experiencing a severe, long-term difficulty, likely to affect their development and limit social and economic opportunities, throughout their lives³.

Secondary Starters Transition Course

Afasic has developed an effective model of support for transition, including a programme of activities and resources specifically tailored to Year 6 pupils with persistent speech, language and communication needs.

This is usually a week-long, non-residential summer holiday course, delivered by local Speech and Language Therapist (SLT), supported by Teaching Assistants (TA) and Afasic volunteers. The approach has been refined over thirteen years, by working closely with Therapists, SENCO's, pupils and parents.

Since 2005, funding has been received to roll out courses within inner city and rural locations across the UK. Afasic offers a tried and tested model, with supportive resources and evaluation tools. Our course is supported by research from City, IOE UCL and Newcastle University, and has been delivered for 13 years. Over **1,565** children have benefited through **115** Afasic Transition courses, in the last six years.

Please find out more and see our photo gallery at <https://www.afasic.org.uk/resources/workshops-and-learning> and watch this short film produced by the SLT's running Greenwich Oxleas transition courses: http://www.oxleas.nhs.uk/video/-29/?clip=/site-media/videos/transitionlearning_2.flv

Grant Funding and Opportunities for Summers 2019-20

We have some capacity to provide matched funding to develop these specialist transition courses, in partnership with schools and Speech and Language Therapists and welcome enquiries.

Background: Context of Pupils' needs at Transition to Secondary School

There has been considerable research about the effects of primary/secondary transfer on children. The steep rise in academic and emotional demands of secondary school, coupled with long summer holidays, compound difficulties. Pupils with speech and language impairments, especially boys (identified with communication difficulties 3:1 to girls) experience challenges across secondary school life, including:

- Amount of orally delivered teaching, plus new advanced vocabulary – listening and processing
- Number of different teachers – adjusting to different voices, accents, styles
- Pace of learning required – and potential difficulties with literacy
- Organisational skills – different equipment, recording homework, new rules and discipline
- Spatial awareness & independent travel - moving between different classrooms, commuting

Objectives of the Course, to:

Address pupils' concerns about starting secondary school

Prepare for differences and skills required in secondary school environments

Improve listening, communication and social skills

Provide some strategies for problem-solving: dealing with bullying

¹ Law J, Boyle J, Harris F, Harkness A and Nye C, *Prevalence and natural history of primary speech and language delay: findings from a systematic review of the literature*, International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders, 2000

² Law J, Garrett Z, Nye C. *Speech and language therapy interventions for children with primary speech and language delay or disorder*. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2003, edited 2010.

³ Hall David and Elliman David, *Health for all Children*, Revised Fourth Edition, OUP 2010

Improve confidence, self-management and independence

Structure of the **Secondary Starters Transition Course**

The week-long course covers a range of skills and topics in ways that are fun but also provide concrete strategies and practice, to introduce features of secondary school such as using timetables, finding rooms.

- Pupils plan a trip out or social 'event' on the last day. This includes finding information from different sources: internet, telephone, checking costs, looking at travel routes, discussing personal safety.
- A secondary pupil from a previous course, answers questions about what secondary school is like.

A Model of Provision: Practical and Emotional Help

Afasic offers a model of skills and strategies to facilitate transition from primary to secondary school:

- Making and keeping friends: starting, developing and repairing conversations
- Reading and following timetables & using homework diaries effectively
- Finding your way around, using school and local maps
- Understanding the need for school rules – avoiding detentions

- Organisational skills, e.g. managing writing tasks; planning a trip
- Dealing with bullying: how and when to interrupt a teacher appropriately in class
- Identifying which staff to ask for help (e.g. LSA's) and finding places to unwind in school
- Individual stress factors, relaxation strategies, awareness of sensory needs

Positive Evaluation

Course evaluation over 15 years, shows pupils are much more confident and better prepared to start at secondary, which can lay a more successful foundation for their school life. Pupils' appreciate meeting others with similar challenges, sharing and learning practical strategies to help them to cope better.

Therapists and secondary schools report significant improvements in identifying pupil's needs and gaining detailed information about children's' requirements. Therapists running transition courses, get to know pupils and gain a much better idea of how they will cope and what support they will need to succeed.

*Examples of feedback from recent **Secondary Starters** courses include:*

Children:

- "I learnt how to make friends and have conversations"
- "Now I know who to tell if people bullied me"

Parents:

- "It made my son feel much better about moving up to secondary school and I think Summer school is an excellent scheme, that is a huge benefit to children lucky enough to use it "
- "I have seen her confidence grow as the week progresses"

Further Information to develop your **Secondary Starters Transition Course**

We look forward to hearing from you. Please call with any questions or ideas to explore:

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Contact our Helpline for free specialist support, 10.30 - 3.30 Monday & Wednesday Tel: 0300 666 9410

Visit: www.afasic.org.uk

