

Stack, Gerard, 2001, *A Study of the Transition from Primary to Post-Primary School from the Primary School Perspective.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The transition from primary to post-primary school is a landmark event in the life of any child. It marks the end of the first phase of a child's educational career and the beginning of a new one. Many observers also view it as the end of the childhood years and the beginning of adolescence. It is a move from the known to the unknown and can be traumatic for many children. While many pupils will be stimulated and excited by this new challenge many more will suffer anxiety at this time.

Irish pupils spend eight formative years in primary school and grow accustomed to their surroundings and their daily routine. There is a feeling of security within the school due to the relationship with one class teacher each year. The child-centered curriculum enables most children to cope academically and socially in the primary school. Despite changes in recent years, the transfer pupil is still confronted with a far more exam-driven curriculum than he is used to. The transfer to secondary school entails a complete change in the pupil's daily routine and introduces a new set of circumstances to his life.

The post primary school is a far more complex institution than the primary school and the pupil has to learn to adapt quickly to his new situation. The student has to cope with a new building, new subjects, new teachers and a new peer group. New rules, regulations and disciplinary procedures will require considerable personal adjustment by the pupil. Having enjoyed an exalted position as one of the older group in primary school the pupil now faces a situation where he is among the youngest in the school. This is major change of status and may add to the trauma felt by pupils at transition.

This dissertation was undertaken to explore the causes of anxiety about transition during sixth class in the primary school. The study sets out to identify the chief sources of anxiety in the context of the writers' own school. It aims to compare and contrast the attitudes of pupils before and after transition. Strategies to help minimise the worries of pupils as they prepare for entry to secondary school will also be proposed.