

**Sandford, Lisa, 2013, *The Relationship between Peer Mentor Programme Participation and Successful Transition to Secondary School: An Evaluation of two Programmes in the Republic of Ireland.***

## **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

The dissertation sets out to assess the correlation between peer mentor programme participation and the successful transition into secondary school from primary school through the evaluation of two different mentoring programmes in the Republic of Ireland. The project is set in two different schools. School A is a Voluntary Educational Community School set in an urban area. School B is based in a rural setting with approximately 9 primary feeder schools and is also non-denominational and co-educational

A review of the literature pertaining to peer mentoring is presented. The impact of peer mentoring programmes as components of the induction programme on the transition from primary school to secondary school is considered and evaluated. Two programmes, one internationally recognised and highly structured *Big Brothers and Big Sisters Schools Programme* and an in-house adapted model currently running in Ireland are evaluated.

The research design involved a student, self-report questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire was administered to the first year pupils in both schools who had participated in the mentoring programmes during the third week of September and again during the last week of April of first year. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two coordinators of the programmes, one from each school and the two Deputy Principals of each school in order to acquire depth of understanding of the research focus and to triangulate the data in the interest of research validity.

It is concluded from the findings of the survey that participation in peer mentoring programmes does aid in the transition from primary school to secondary school.

The study evaluates two programmes that are currently in use in Ireland to determine what are the attributes that are characteristic of an effective programme.