

Furlong, James, 1996, *Transition from Primary to Post-Primary schools, with special reference to the Irish experience*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation deals with the area of transition from primary to post—primary school, with particular reference to the Irish experience. The historic separation of the primary and post—primary levels of education in Ireland has been responsible, in good measure, for the difficulties experienced by pupils at transition. An overview of the historical evolution of both levels of education is presented in Chapter One. While recognising that the area of curriculum continuity between primary and post—primary schooling is one of major concern, this dissertation is particularly concerned with the pastoral dimension of transition.

Transition always contains the possibility of crisis. The pupils experience various worries, anxieties and concerns at transfer. The aim of the educator, in particular, should be to help the pupils to make the transition as smoothly as possible and to cope with the demands and challenges of their new school. The concerns of pupils, the response of various schools, and proposals both to ease transfer and to alleviate problems associated with it, are reflected in the literature. Chapter Two focuses on the literature on transition both in Britain and in Ireland. Chapter Three is concerned with a local response to the challenge of transition. St. Aidan's Community College, originally in conjunction with its neighbouring primary feeder school, *Scoil Oilibheir*, developed a Transition Programme in 1986. Over the years some changes to the programme have been made. However, the programme was never formally evaluated.

Chapter Four examines the effectiveness of the programme from the pupils' perspective; reporting on the findings of a pupil questionnaire and with reference to the literature. While the overall response to the programme is very positive, constant monitoring, evaluation and renewal are necessary to ensure an effective programme.

In Chapter Five the overall conclusions are drawn together and recommendations for action and further investigation are made.