
Handbook for Early Years practitioners working with children transitioning from Nursery to Reception.

(Source: Human Development and Growth, no date)



“The first five years have everything to do with how the next 80 turn out” – Fields (2020)

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Introduction

This handbook is targeted at early years keyworkers such as teachers who are assisting children during the transition from nursery to reception and will give guidance supported by evidence that will enable these practitioners to understand the process of transitions in depth.

Rationale of the Handbook

Link (2017) states that the rationale is to develop the understanding and knowledge of a practitioner during child development, with emphasis on the children's development aged 3 - 4 years old. The attention in this handbook will also be directed at the transitioning periods. Link (2017) states the importance of the reader's attention when it comes to the cognitive, social and emotional development of a child.

How the handbook can be used in practice

This handbook can be used by keyworkers, early years practitioners, parents and guardians to widen their knowledge and understanding of a child's transitioning period. The aim of this handbook is to ensure practitioners have a good understanding of transitions for children and how they work. Particularly in the flying start stage, with children aged 3 - 4 transitioning from a nursery setting to reception with an educational setting. This handbook will offer information for practitioners to refer to when in practice to ensure the appropriate steps are taken for a child to have the best possible transition. This handbook contains key information which must be used during the transition period.

Link (2017) states the aims of a practitioner's handbook is to equip keyworkers with the psychological knowledge to help a child's behaviour and to understand how to create environments. Link (2017) outlines the idea of all children being different depending on a range of things.



Source: Janzer 2019)

What is a transition?

Transitions within early years is the development of babies through to adults. Parent Zone (2020) states that transitions happen as infants develop into toddlers, who grow into children, and then they develop into teenagers and so on until adulthood is met. Throughout a child's life, they will make these transitions from home, to a setting of learning and childcare, for example a nursery. As they grow up, they will then transition from nursery, to a primary school setting and as they grow up the years, they will eventually transition to secondary education which will then allow them to move on to further education and beyond.

Parent Zone (2020) also states that transitions are a part of everybody's lives. Many children enjoy the process of growing up and moving forward. Transitions can be challenging at times and so it is important for parents and staff to support children so these transitions can be made as easy and smooth as possible to enable the child to have the best start to a new beginning.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

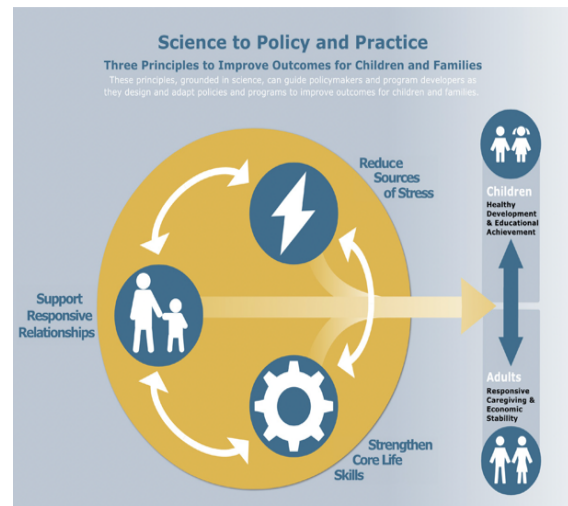
Transitions are all about change. Langston (2020) states that the importance of adjusting to this change can have an effect on the experience. The way in which change is successful is to encourage a child to forget it happened. During the process of a child moving from nursery to school, they will experience a dramatic change in their lives because they have moved from a setting of play to a setting of education.



(Source: Brill, A. 2018)

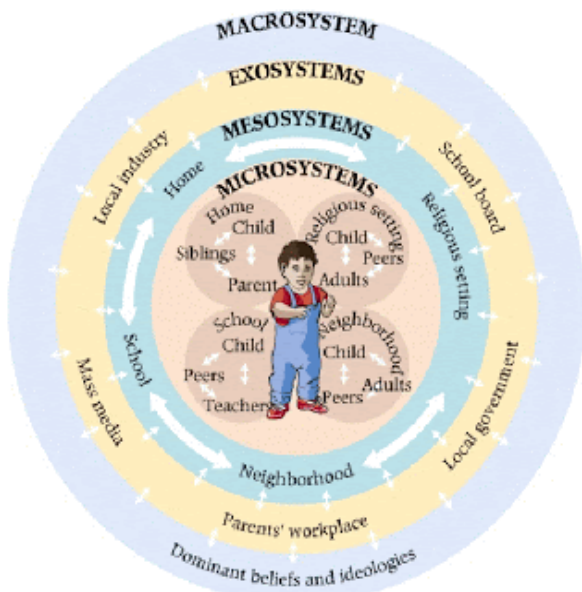
Langston (2020) also suggests that it is important for adults who are accepting this change for a child to have knowledge of what this change will mean for them. Langston (2020) explains adults will often not put thought into change for a child, which can result in the parent being unable to recognise everything involved in the transition.

For the transition from nursery to primary school to be a success, the child's formulation must begin early so that the communication between parent, teacher and child is good. This communication must be considered carefully by parents and teachers. Through carrying out good communication, they can come to the conclusion as to the best method to support the transition process for the child.



(Source: Harvard University 2020)

Harvard University (2020) suggests in their diagram above, the important of policy and practice. It shows how the support from teachers and good relationships within a family setting can reduce stress during the transition. It also states how important this can be when strengthening core skills that a child needs when developing into an adult.



(Source: Children's Imaginative Play 2020)

One of the most important considerations of this study is that the children who have come from these negative environments may find transitioning more difficult than a child who has come from a positive environment, and so it is important for teachers and parents to understand this so they can prepare for the transition to be as beneficial for that particular child as possible.

Outcomes for the age group of the children

The Welsh Government (2020) states the age of a child for transitioning for Nursery to Reception is 3 – 4 years old. It is important to identify the age group to ensure the outcome for the child is relevant.

Oxfordshire County Council (2017) suggests there are stages to achieve the best outcome for the child. Oxfordshire County Council (2017) states that if an early year's practitioner follows these stages in depth, the child should experience a smooth and enjoyable transition from nursery to reception and they will have a positive outlook on transitioning up the years. This will encourage children to look forward to the transitions in the future.

Stage 1: Unique Child

To begin with, Oxfordshire County Council (2017) states the first and foremost stage to ensuring a positive outcome is met is to recognise the child, as often children are vulnerable during these changing times. It is important to take into consideration the child's needs, and those who may have additional needs. Some children may need flexible support and so a keyworker must ensure this is available.

Following this, Oxfordshire County Council (2017) suggests parents, guardians and teachers must prepare these children for change and ensure they are aware of what is happening and that they are filled with positive outlooks to the change. By using appropriate preparation, children are more likely to feel secure, and it will help them settle into their new environments.

Stage 2 - Positive Relationships

Moreover, Oxfordshire County Council (2017) maintains the idea that transitions can be made easier for a child by careful planning between the early year's key workers. It is important for these practitioners to listen to one another and acknowledge the importance of their roles. They must work together and understand the aims, purpose and philosophy of the transitions these children are going to make, to ensure the outcome is a positive experience for the child.

Oxfordshire County Council (2017) suggests a good way of achieving the desired outcome for the child is to offer a number of opportunities for parents and carers to attend interventions such as open days, information events, consultations and newsletters to widen their knowledge on the transition for a child to give the best

chance of a good outcome for the age group of 3 – 4 year olds transitioning from nursery to reception.

Stage 3 - Enabling Environments

Oxfordshire County Council (2017) believes children react better to transitions when the conditions are similar, and communication between parents and teachers and between peers is uplifting. Oxfordshire County Council (2017) also states the importance of time, and that change happens over time and so it is important to allow this time so that children can adapt. Oxfordshire County Council (2017) explains that a child's emotions during change can be handled well if the environment/school has a clear and welcoming procedure and if this is carried out, the outcome will be met.

Stage 4 - Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates

The fourth and final stage that Oxfordshire County Council (2017) demonstrates is to ensure practitioners take into consideration the holistic needs of a child. It is important for these practitioners to ensure continuity during the children's experiences and ensure all aspects of their care and learning enable them to transition and have a positive outcome at the end. Every child is different, which means the way they learn and develop will be different, some may take longer than others.

The role of the adult

Adults have a varied role when it comes to transitions. It is important for an adult to identify the category they fall into because this will have an effect on the role, they play within the child development and transition. For example, a teacher's role would be different to a parent or guardians' role. The role of an adults can be identified in a number of ways, and there are theory's behind what is right and what is wrong, and what you choose to believe.

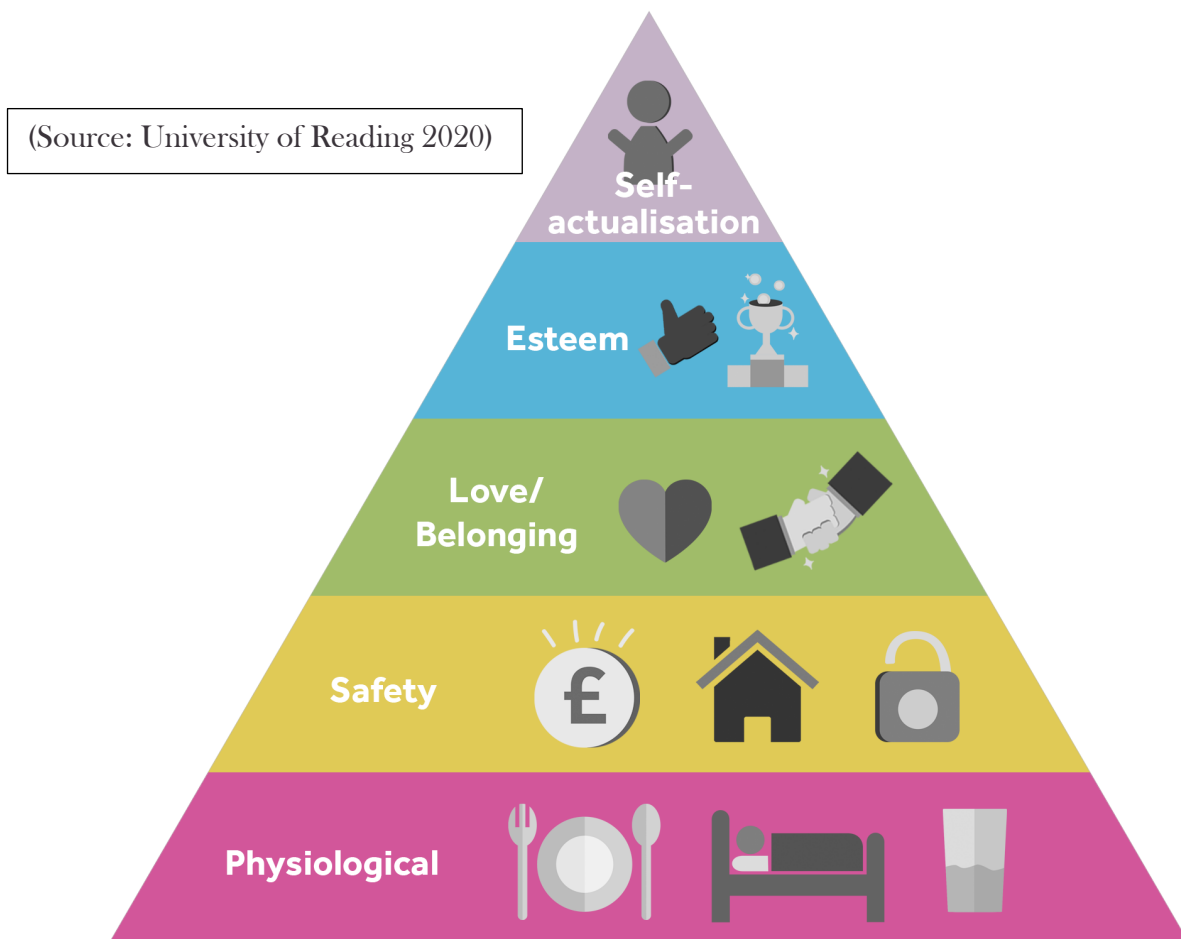
Montessori's theory on the role of an adult

Montessori (2011) suggests the role of an adult is to be existent in the life of their child. This is mentally, emotionally and physically. This role aids a child development in many ways. Montessori (2011) states that a practitioner should be organised and educated on how the child develops and their needs.

The theorist Montessori (2011) suggests that the practitioner must be passive when a child makes a discovery and active when a child is in need. There is an added importance in being able to tell the difference between the two. The adult will be a model to a child, and a child will positively imitate. According to Montessori (2011), the role of the adult is to guide a child through life however it is equally as important for an adult to allow a child to be able to develop their own ideas and independence. Montessori (2011) explains that it is important for the adult to be consistent which gives a child the sense of security, love and routine.

The Needs of the Child

Children have many different needs that need to be met in order for them to develop fully. Abraham Maslow has a theory in which describes the basic needs of a child.



University of Reading (2020) states that according to Maslow's theory, in order for a child to develop successfully, they must eat well, sleep well, feel safe and be confident. Maslow's theory focuses on the needs for a child to be successful and

he explains there are 5 needs for a child; physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation. Maslow uses a pyramid to explain them.

According to the University of Reading 2020, Maslow organised the needs of a child based on what would happen next. He started with the basic needs which are physiological, and safety and he progressed to reach the top of the pyramid where self-actualisation can be found, this refers to a child reaching their full potential as a human being.

University of Reading 2020 explains Maslow's theory by using a breakdown of each stage:

1. Physiological

Maslow states that the physiological needs of any child is having access to the correct nutrition, water, rest and excess to fresh air where they are able to get enough exercise.

2. Safety

The safety needs of a child are also about them feeling safe. Maslow explains that both physically and emotionally a child must be secure. A child needs to have shelter and a home in order for them to have a stable life.

3. Love

A child must feel like they belong somewhere, and they must feel loved. Maslow argues the importance of child feeling connected, loved and included in order to develop and be successful.

4. Esteem

Maslow states that a child must have feelings of achievement, and they must feel recognised for doing so. Maslow states that esteem is all about children being different to one another.

5. Self-Actualisation

Lastly, Maslow suggests that the self-actualisation is about a child reaching their full potential and being creative. Maslow states it is important for a child to feel special in themselves.

It is important for a practitioner to understand these principles when it comes to a child transitions as it will give them more understanding of the child's basic needs.

Partnerships

UK Essays (2003) suggests parents should be in partnership with practitioner's during transitions because parents a child's most influential educator. UK Essays (2003) states working together with the practitioner will have long term benefits for the child and can impact the child's development and learning experiences. It is important for parents to feel encouraged towards supporting the child's school. It is understood that through parent/guardian and teacher having a good partnership, the child will imitate and believe themselves that the transition is going to be a positive experience.



(Source: O'Sullivan, J. 2020)

Bronfenbrenner's Microsystem

Tannenbaum (2018) explains Bronfenbrenner's theory on child development revolves around the child and their needs. The first stage to his theory is called a microsystem, which is the stage in his theory that can be used during transitions. The microsystem is the child's immediate environment. This could be anything from their school to their home.

Benjamin (2015) states Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of microsystems emphasises on the relationship between home and school, which will help with the child's development which encourages their learning.

Benjamin (2015) states he has collected data from 6 parent and 6 teacher interviews from three different early years settings, investigating the importance of relationships during transitions, and he suggests the findings support the theory behind Bronfenbrenner's microsystem. Benjamin states that these results highlighted the importance of parent teacher relationships during a child's development. Benjamin (2015)'s findings suggest the connections associated with a child's academic skills and a teacher's education and training have an increased impact on the child's development through transitions.

This study outlines the idea of home learning which means that the partnership between parent and teacher enable them to work together to encourage learning and development at home as well as in the classroom. The study from Benjamin (2015) states that the home learning will increase the overall academic success for a child.

Sharing information

Leeds Safeguarding Children and Partnership (2020) states that in order to achieve the best possible outcome for a child's development, it important to promote their welfare and safeguard them from impairment. A child's needs revolve around their circumstances which is why it is important for teachers and parents to share information about the child with agencies because they have a speciality in dealing with certain situations and can offer their service to ensure the child's best interests are met. By agencies and guardians working collaboratively, they will be able to achieve a holistic assessment of the environment and community to ensure their needs are met. Agencies can also be a good way of understanding a child's needs especially those with additional learning needs. Agencies can offer a wide range of help and information to help practitioners understand the needs of a child, and the additional needs of those who need it.

Interventions

Early Intervention Foundation (2020) states early interventions are affective and work to prevent possible issues occurring. Interventions help to ensure any concerns or issues are delt with immediately. Interventions helps with a child's skills and strengths which will benefit them as they grow up.

Early Intervention Foundation (2020) suggests interventions for children transitioning from Nursery to Receptions can be presented in different forms. Interventions can be anything form home visiting programmes to support vulnerable parent to different types of programmes within the school directed at the children to improve their social and emotional skills.

Home Visits

Home visits enable parents to provide a safe, supported home for their children, and over time, home visits from professionals build up a strong relationship that lasts and benefits the entire family.

Elms (2016) states there is a number of positive aspects to home visits. Both the parent and child can feel relaxed in their environment and it can be a good way for the parents to talk to the practitioner during a 1-1 tutorial. Elms (2016) also suggests home visits will develop a strong relationship between parents and key workers.

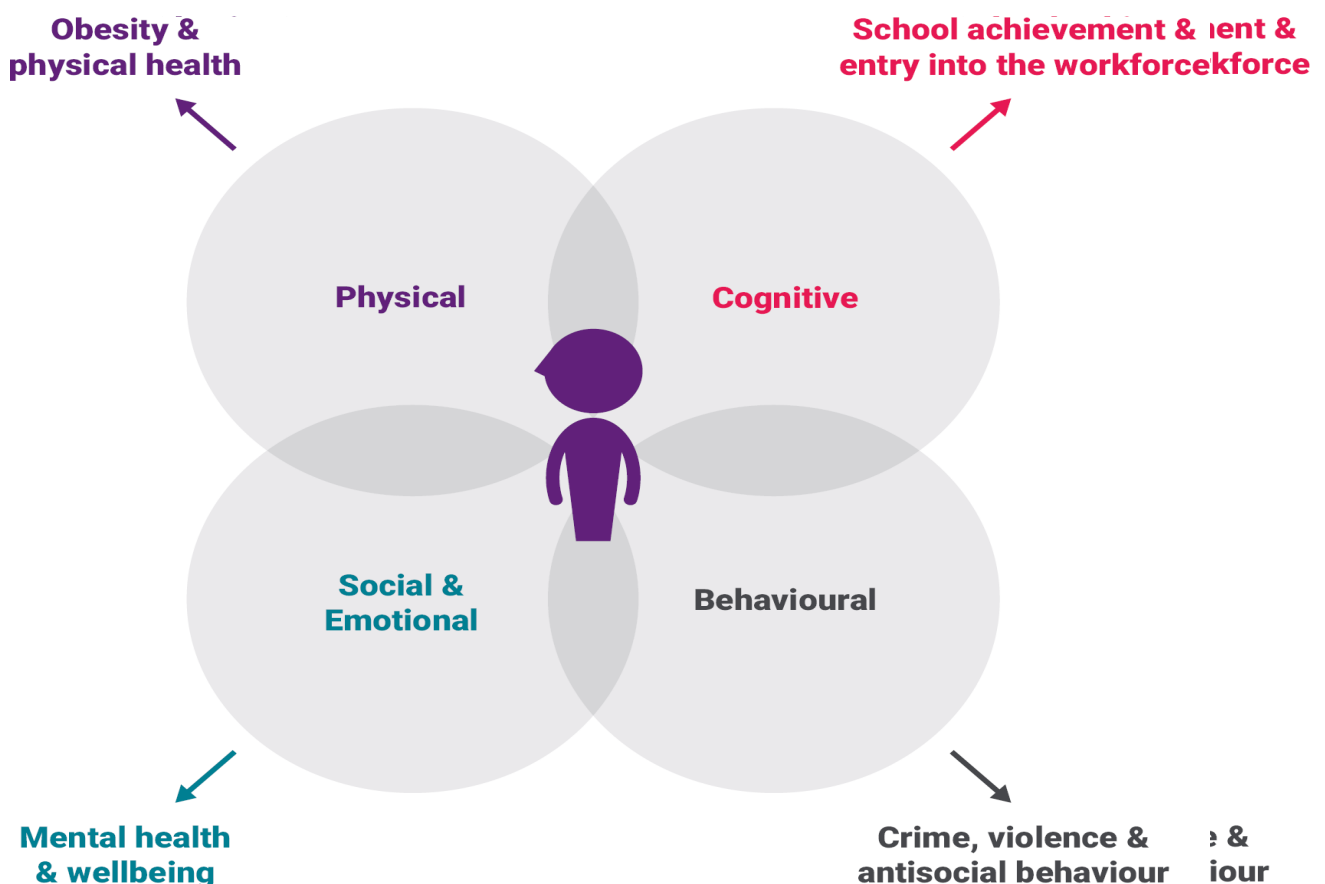
Elms (2016) explains these interventions will also benefit practitioners as well as parents and will allow them to gain awareness about the different culture's families may believe in and their history. It is important for practitioners to recognise all families have different beliefs and to value each family the same.

Lastly, Elms (2016) suggests by using home visits for a child, it will make the transition easier for a child, knowing they already have a relationship with a practitioner who they are familiar with.

What can early intervention achieve?

Early Intervention Foundation (2020) states early years intervention helps to focus on the four key aspects to a child development. These being their physical, cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional development. This is where interventions can make the most beneficial change to a child's life.

Source: Early Intervention Foundation (2020)



Different types of interventions through a child life



Source: Early Intervention Foundation (2020)

Proposed Outcomes

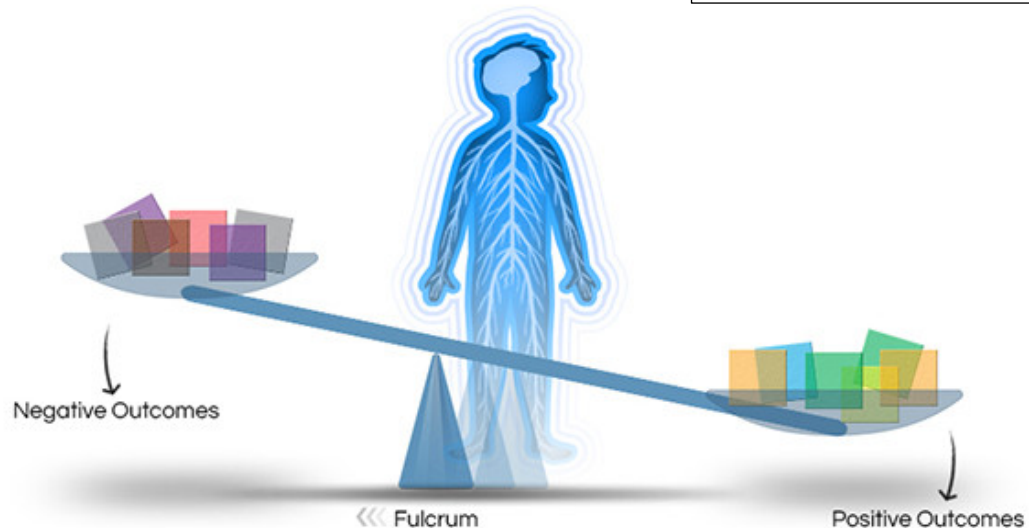
Vygotsky (1934) believes that children are curious, and that it is important for them to actively be involved in their own ability and they must learn, discover and develop the new. Vygotsky (1934) placed his prominence on the collective contribution to the process of child development.

The proposed outcome for the child is that they are understood by the practitioner. By this, the child's needs must be met, the adult must understand their role and the must also understand the way the child develops and what they require in order to be successful.

Another important outcome is for a child to develop sustained shared thinking. Brodie (2014) suggests it appears when a child is thinking critically which focuses on their thinking skills. It helps them develop ideas and create links using strategies to solve problems. Brodie (2014) also states sustained shared thinking means children are doing more when they play until than just playing. Brodie (2014) states children are exploring and concentrating and developing their play to the next level. Children are inquisitive and will constantly be problem solving during the day.

Brodie (2014) states that sustained shared thinking is core to a child developing their language and communication skills. Brodie (2014) suggest sustained shared thinking can be process between two people and practitioners will develop skills from the child as well as other adults.

(Source: Harvard University 2020)



A proposed outcome is to know that the child is doing well during their transition. Edusite (2020) states If a child has an undesirable experience during their transition, they can feel anxious and stressed.

This will follow on and affect a child's emotional development and also their behavioural development which will have an impact on a child's intellectual and physiological development. During a transition, this is the kind of experience practitioners wish to diminish and should a child experience this, it means they have not had a smooth transition. If these experiences are avoided, and a child is presented happy, relaxed and engaged, it is clear they have had a successful transition from nursery to primary school.

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