



## ASK THE EXPERT

# 'This year's long transition'

GL Assessment's Crispin Chatterton considers some of the post-COVID challenges currently affecting student transitions out of KS2 and between year groups at KS3

### 1 Why is the KS2 to KS3 transition a particular challenge this year?

Transition is always difficult for students and schools alike, but September's Y7s won't have been in school full-time since Y4. The absence of any national data from KS2 SATs only complicates an already confused picture. In many cases, schools won't have a complete data profile of their new intake, and thanks to serial lockdowns, students won't have had all the support and interventions they would have normally received.

### 2 How can secondaries and primaries support each other to ensure smoother transitions?

Organise a solid handover of data. The more comprehensive the student data schools can share with each other – wellbeing assessments, as well as progress and attainment scores – the better. Triangulating datasets can be useful for getting a more complete picture of an individual child. Reading ages, for instance, can be a good indication of academic performance across the curriculum, not just in literacy. Of course, it also helps if primaries and secondaries are familiar with the same types of assessment.

### 3 How have transitions between year groups at KS3 been complicated by the pandemic?

KS3 has always been problematic, sandwiched as it is between high stakes assessments in the years immediately before and afterwards. But the disruption caused by the pandemic means that new Y10s starting their GCSE courses in September won't have had a normal school year since Y7. It's probably more accurate to think of these students as part of a 'long transition', with all the academic and wellbeing support that entails. Formative, standardised assessments can help here – not least because they can provide valuable national benchmarks in this second year, without KS2 SATs.



#### EXPERT PROFILE

**NAME:**  
Crispin Chatterton

**JOB TITLE:**  
Director of Education

**AREA OF EXPERTISE:**  
Developing assessments that anticipate schools' needs

**BEST PART OF MY JOB:**  
Knowing that we're providing teachers with high quality tools to support them in their vital work of educating our young people

### 4 In the absence of national data, what can schools do to reliably monitor students' progress throughout KS3?

Establish a baseline from which you can benchmark progress. Some primary schools will have conducted assessments such as New Group Reading Test (NGRT) or the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) – information from which could be shared as students move into KS3. Schools can otherwise use CAT4 and FFT Aspire to set targets and establish a baseline in Y7; CAT4 also provides retrospective KS2 indicators. With that baseline in place, schools can combine standardised assessments and day-to-day assessments – but a robust baseline is critical.

### 5 What behavioural issues should schools be mindful of, given students' relative social isolation over the past year?

The overriding priority for many schools as students returned after lockdown was to reinforce classroom behaviours. In most cases that didn't take long, but teachers have reported that lingering issues – notably relationships with their peers and home lives – often remain. Students have generally been keen to re-engage with school life, but preliminary findings from our Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) assessment suggest that students' perceived capabilities and self-regard as learners may be fragile – which is perhaps unsurprising, given the disruption they've had to cope with. These should be tackled as soon as possible.

## GL ASSESSMENT – HERE TO HELP YOU...

**PREPARE AHEAD OF TRANSITION** at every level with the **Cognitive Abilities Test** and **New Group Reading Test**

**IDENTIFY GAPS** to aid curriculum planning and pinpoint individual support with the **Progress Test Series**

**MONITOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**, and address any issues straight away, with the **Pupil Attitudes to Self and School** assessment

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