



**An evaluation of a
'transition to secondary school'
project run by the
National Pyramid Trust**

**Undertaken by the
Trust for the Study of Adolescence (TSA)**

**Funded by a grant
from the Department of Health**

Julie Shepherd and Debi Roker

April 2005

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2.0 EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

3.0 RESULTS (1): CHILDREN'S DATA

4.0 RESULTS (2): PARENTS' DATA

**5.0 RESULTS (3): SCHOOL STAFF AND PROJECT
WORKERS' DATA**

6.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REFERENCES

APPENDIX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND AIMS

Practitioners, policy-makers and researchers have identified the transition to secondary school as a key moment in children's lives. Whilst many children make a smooth transition, some find this change very difficult. A children's charity – the National Pyramid Trust (NPT) – have developed an intervention to support withdrawn and vulnerable children at this time, on the basis that this group may find the move to secondary school particularly difficult.

TSA was commissioned by the Department of Health to evaluate NPT's pilot project, which took place in eight London primary schools during 2004. In total 80 Year 6 children were selected (based on certain criteria) to take part in 'Pyramid Clubs', which took place for one and a half hours per week for 10 weeks. These Clubs involved groupwork activities and exercises, designed to build self-confidence, develop interpersonal skills, and help children deal with difficult situations. A number of the children then attended follow-up Clubs that were run in secondary schools in the area, in the first term of the new school year.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTED

A range of data was collected in the evaluation. This included:

Children's data

Focus group discussions with 20 children
120 questionnaires completed by children
Feedback forms completed by 40 children

Parents' data

21 telephone interviews conducted with parents

Teachers' data

Feedback forms completed by eight teachers
Teachers' comments about 49 children

NPT Project Workers and volunteer Club leaders' data

Telephone interviews with the two NPT Project Workers
Club leaders' comments about 49 children
NPT feedback forms completed by seven volunteer club leaders
TSA designed questionnaires completed by five volunteers.

It should be noted that the original design of the study involved having a control group of non-Club children, to compare with the Club children. Because of time

pressures in the schools concerned, this data was not collected. The information reported in the evaluation therefore relates to Club children alone.

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

Children's views and experiences

- The children who took part in the Clubs were very positive about them. They liked the Club Leaders, enjoyed the range of activities on offer, had fun, made new friends and developed social skills. Many of the children reported increases in their self-confidence. Some of the children described changes in their behaviour, attitude, and in some cases improvements in their school work, as a result of attending the Club.
- Before starting the Clubs, children had a wide range of concerns about the transition to secondary school. These included being bullied, getting lost, and making new friends. After the Clubs, most of the children said they did not have any specific fears or worries about going to secondary school.
- There was a mixed response from the children as to whether taking part in the Pyramid Clubs, was seen as 'cool' or 'uncool'. Some felt stigmatized as a result of taking part, whilst others felt envied.
- The data suggests that the Pyramid Clubs had a positive impact on a range of factors, including how the children felt about going to secondary school, how they felt about their life at the time, how easy they thought it would be to settle into secondary school and how scared they were about being bullied in secondary school.

Parents' views

- The parents were very positive about their child's experience of attending the Pyramid Clubs. They felt they had been well informed about the Clubs' aims and activities.
- Parents described how much their child enjoyed the Clubs, and reported increased levels of confidence in their child as a result. Most parents felt that attendance at the Clubs helped their child to settle into secondary school.
- Parents' worries about their child's transition were mainly in relation to friendships and bullying, and their child's shyness and lack of confidence. Despite their child's attendance at the Clubs, these concerns persisted until the children had settled into secondary school. Most of the parents

felt, in fact, that their child was happy at secondary school, and had settled in well.

- Most parents were very positive about the NPT project in general, and pleased that their child had attended the Clubs. Some thought it would be useful to receive feedback about their child's progress during the Clubs.

Teachers' feedback

- Teachers were generally positive about the process for selecting children to take part in the Clubs. There were some criticisms about the amount of paperwork involved in the project.
- The teachers were very positive about the impact of the Clubs on the children. They cited benefits to children such as making new friends, gaining in confidence, 'belonging to something good', and being more prepared for secondary school.

Volunteer Club leaders' feedback

- The volunteer Club leaders believed the children benefited greatly from the Clubs. Increased self-confidence in children was cited as the main impact.
- There were mixed views about whether the volunteer training prepared the Club leaders well enough, and there were suggestions for improvements.
- The Club leaders were very positive about their experiences of being involved in the Club, and felt they benefited personally and professionally.

NPT Project Workers' feedback

- Both Project Workers considered the Clubs to be a great success for the children, particularly in relation to confidence building.
- Project Workers believe that training for the volunteer Club leaders is generally successful, although they had some suggestions for improving it. However, they mentioned that not all volunteer club leaders took part in the full training. They believe that what is available is good, although they are not always able to deliver it as they would like.
- The Project Workers considered that some improvements could be made to achieve the aims of the project. These included improving the administration and paperwork for schools, developing better ways of working with the secondary schools, and extending the training and support provided for volunteer club leaders.

- Project Workers experienced difficulties in being able to offer follow-up support to all children in the secondary schools. This was mainly due to the large numbers of secondary schools in the two boroughs and the fact that the Wandsworth, Project Worker's post was only half-time.
- Attendance at the Pyramid Clubs run in the secondary schools was low. The Project Workers believed this was due to a number of factors; girls in particular did not want to walk home on their own in the dark, children had other activities they preferred to take part in on those days, playing with new friends, Year 7 Clubs were regarded as 'babyish' (given their link to primary school) and some children were unable to attend because the Clubs coincided with Ramadan.
- The NPT Project Manager believed that in order for schools to take the evaluation seriously in relation to ensuring that children complete the pre and post measures they need to see the benefits themselves. They would therefore like to work more closely with teachers to develop measures which teachers could use.
- The Project Workers proposed three new models to offer transitions support :
 - Year 6 Clubs as a 'stand alone', without Club follow-ups in the secondary school
 - A summer holiday Club at secondary schools, but offered to children in the primary feeder schools, then follow-up these children at secondary school
 - Work with secondary schools to identify children who are having difficulty settling in, and offer them Pyramid Clubs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made, as a result of the evaluation of the pilot project described in this report:

- *The selection of children* – it is recommended that NPT review the use of the long version of the CISS selection scales. These are lengthy and time-consuming, and many schools did not feel able to administer them in full. If NPT is to continue with this version, then the administration process needs to start earlier.
- *The role of parents* – it is recommended that NPT consider developing the ways in which it relates to and involves parents in the project. This may include encouraging more parents to attend the pre Club meetings, and/or running support groups for parents. It might also involve giving parents

regular updates on their child's progress, and enabling them to support the learning and development that is taking place each week at the Clubs.

- *Training of volunteers* – a number of issues are detailed in the report, in relation to the training and support provided for volunteers. It is recommended that NPT consider making these changes to this aspect of the project.
- *Links to secondary schools* – if NPT continue to use transitions models which involve following-up children into secondary schools, this process could be improved upon. Whilst it is appreciated that the primary children go to a large number of secondary schools, and that school staff are extremely busy, links between NPT and the secondary schools need to be strengthened, to ensure that feedback on children's progress is received. Where progress is not considered to be satisfactory, then arrangements can then be made to offer the child follow-up support.
- *Involvement of schools in the evaluation* – NPT to work closely with the schools to develop pre and post measures which are meaningful for the school, so that they find the results useful and this then becomes an incentive for them to ensure that they are completed. If this takes place for all schools, NPT would have better evidence of the effects of the Pyramid Clubs on a whole range of attitudinal and behaviour indicators.
- *Relationship with BiP workers* – it is recommended that if NPT continue to work with Wandsworth, then they hold discussions with the BiP team, in relation to the involvement of workers in the project, to discuss what could be improved.
- *Pre and post data* – it is recommended that NPT continue to administer the pre and post smiley faces measures. However, they should adopt a 5 point scale, rather than 3 point. This would provide a more robust measurement.
- *Consideration of other models* – NPT have suggested a number of alternative models for Pyramid Clubs which are described in the report, such as running summer Clubs for children going to the same secondary school. It is recommended that NPT consider running further pilot projects based on these models
- *Evaluating future projects* – If new models, such as those described above, are implemented, they must be fully evaluated. In particular, it is important to have more funding and time to enable the evaluators to work with all the schools involved, to get pre and post intervention data for Club children and a control group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the following people for their contribution to this evaluation:

- Christina Guest, the Hillingdon Project Worker and overall Project Manager and Suleyman Huseyin, the Wandsworth Project Worker, for enabling TSA to gain access to children, parents and volunteer club leaders taking part in the research
- All of the Pyramid children who took part in the focus group discussions and/or filled in feedback forms
- Parents of Pyramid children who took part in the telephone interviews
- Teachers and volunteer club leaders who completed questionnaires
- The primary and secondary schools who arranged for us to conduct focus groups
- Amanda Costello and Morna Lane at TSA for their administrative support and
- The Department of Health for funding this evaluation.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the following topics:

- background to the evaluation
- the National Pyramid Trust's 'Pyramid Clubs'
- evaluation objectives and design
- evaluation timetable and key milestones.

1.1 Background to the evaluation

Children's transition from primary to secondary school is a key issue for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. A growing body of literature is now available, which demonstrates the wide range of new experiences that children face at this time. Children go from being the oldest to the youngest in their school, move around for lessons, have a number of different teachers instead of one, and start to be given increased amounts of homework. The literature also shows that, whilst for many children the transition is a smooth one, many other children find it difficult and problematic. Further, many practitioners identify the transition to secondary school as a key intervention point, with a link to later risk-taking and exclusion. (A detailed review of the literature is outside the scope of this evaluation report. For further details of the literature in this area, readers are referred to Anderson et al (2000), Galton et al (2000), Lucey and Reay (2002), Pratt and George (2005), Zeedyk et al (2003)).

At the end of 2003, TSA was contracted to undertake an evaluation of a new pilot programme being run by the National Pyramid Trust (NPT). This children's charity had established a pilot project, to help support vulnerable and withdrawn children through the transition from primary to secondary school. The pilot project started in 2003 and then ran again in 2004. This pilot programme provides 'Pyramid Clubs' to vulnerable Year 6 children, to support them during the transition to secondary school. NPT have cited literature that highlights a range of specific difficulties that shy and withdrawn young people may face, which can be compounded by a difficult transition to secondary school.

The project is based around a one session a week after-school 'Pyramid Club', lasting for ten weeks and attended by approximately 10 children from each of the schools involved. The project that we evaluated ran during 2004 at eight primary schools, four each in the London boroughs of Hillingdon and Wandsworth. The

pilot involved following some children up once they had moved to secondary school. Further information about the project is given in section 1.2 below.

The evaluation was funded by a grant to TSA from the Department of Health.

1.2 The National Pyramid Trust's 'Pyramid Clubs'

Aims of the National Pyramid Trust

The National Pyramid Trust (NPT) is a charity that works in primary schools across the UK. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for every child in the school to have a check carried out on his or her emotional development. Early social and emotional difficulties can contribute to a child's chances of developing more severe difficulties in secondary school and in later life. Problems that are often in the public eye include mental health issues, truancy, exclusion from school, early pregnancy, drug and alcohol misuse, unemployment or unemployability and involvement in crime. Children who are likely to have such difficulties can often be identified at primary school. Much is now understood about the risk factors that point to later difficulties: self-esteem and resilience are important issues.

NPT works with local partners to screen every child at a certain age (traditionally Year 3), and to identify those children who are causing concern to their teachers and parents. Each child is then discussed at a multi-disciplinary meeting involving agencies like school nursing, education psychology, education welfare, behaviour advisors, special educational needs, and a range of voluntary organisations that work with young carers and other groups with particular needs. Some of the children discussed will be put forward for a Pyramid Club: others may have other solutions offered to them, including medical checks, assessments for special educational needs or psychological support, special responsibilities within the school etc.

The children selected for the Pyramid Club will tend to be the quieter, shy, more withdrawn children who are having problems making friends. They often have poorly developed social skills and are unhappy at school and sometimes at home; they tend to be overlooked in favour of noisier and more demanding children. The aim of the Pyramid Club is to build the child's self-esteem and resilience; to help them find their own voice, which is often easier to do in the smaller group; to help them to make friendships that will support them in school and outside of school; and to give them an optimism and hope derived from a totally enjoyable experience that they can treasure for years to come. At the end of the Club the child's needs are reassessed and any further help that is needed can then be provided by the school, the parents or other agencies.

History of NPT's transition work

From the early days of NPT, there has been an interest in transition work. NPT's founder, Kay Fitzherbert, saw some of the issues with Primary Secondary transfer in the 1970s, and this prompted the first clubs in primary school. As an education social worker working in a secondary school in Ealing, she was concerned to find that some of the difficulties experienced by secondary-age children had been predicted by their primary school teachers. However, the primary school teachers had nothing to offer those children in the way of preventive strategies, and there was little communication between the primary and secondary schools to enable the secondary schools to engage most effectively with the pupils.

When the National Pyramid Trust was established as a charity, the main focus was on Year 3 students. Over the years, however, the need has arisen to expand to other age groups. Children's circumstances change and these changes can have an effect on their social and emotional well-being. A child who is doing well one year may be a cause for concern a year later if, for example, they experience bullying or lose a family member. One of the major changes in a child's life which can affect their emotional and social well-being is the transfer from Primary to Secondary school.

In 2003 the NPT began to pilot a Transition Project in the London boroughs of Hillingdon and Wandsworth, working with children in Year 6 who are anxious about the move to the next phase in their education. Like those in the Year 3 Clubs, these tend to be the quieter, more withdrawn children who do not have supportive groups of friends. Pyramid Transition clubs follow the same sort of model as the Clubs with 7-9 year olds, but with some more direct teaching and discussion on the issues that bother the older children such as bullying, finding their way, managing their workload etc.

As stated above, the pilot project currently underway is being run by NPT in eight London primary schools. This section gives further information about how the project is run at these schools. Note that Christina Guest is the Project Manager for the transitions project, and the Project Worker for the Hillingdon part of the pilot. Suleyman Huseyin is the Project Worker for Wandsworth.

Selection of schools

The process of selecting schools to take part in the pilot was different for the two London boroughs. The Hillingdon NPT Year 3 Coordinator, NPT's transitions Project Manager and a LEA representative were involved in the selection of primary schools. All Hillingdon schools that were selected had successfully been involved in the Year 3 project. For Wandsworth, the borough's Behaviour Improvement Programme Team (BiP) selected the schools. This was based on

geographical location and an assessment of which other services schools offered eg some schools got Pyramid Clubs whereas other schools were allocated different interventions. All of the Wandsworth schools had also been involved in a Year 3 NPT programme.

Selection of children for the Clubs

Children are selected to take part in the Pyramid Club based on information gathered from parents, children and teachers. There were three types of data collection, as follows:

First, teachers are asked to complete a CISS scale (Coping in Schools Scale) for each child. This is a scale which has been developed by Jane McSherry of the Wandsworth BiP team. The CISS scale covers information about self management of behaviour, self awareness, self confidence, self organisation, attitude, learning skills, literacy skills and 'self and others'. The Hillingdon schools took part in a shortened version of this scale (The Transition Project Rating Sheet), with fewer items under similar headings, as above. This was developed by the transitions Project Manager Christina Guest with the help of Jane McSherry.

The shortened version of the scale was used in the Hillingdon schools in order that comparable data would be available for the evaluation in both boroughs.

Second, parents complete a set of questions. The parents' self-completion form asks about the child's friendships, whether the parent thinks the child is doing well enough at school, responds appropriately to adults, is keen to go to school and whether he or she appears very shy or withdrawn. Parents are also asked on a scale of 1 to 10 how they think their child will find the move to secondary school, in terms of being very easy or very difficult.

Third, children fill in a form, consisting of three different faces to describe how they feel and they select one of these in response to the question. The children's form covers information about friendships, relationships with adults, enjoyment of school, talking in groups, how easy children think it will be to fit in at secondary school and how scared they are about being bullied (see Appendix 1).

The Year 6 teachers and link teacher at the school then meet with a member of NPT staff, and other school staff familiar with the children such as the learning mentor, school nurse, teaching assistant or head teacher. This meeting, called an interdisciplinary meeting (ID meeting) is used to go through the various information collected and for these people to discuss the children most likely to benefit. The purpose of the ID meeting is to identify ten children who the school would like to offer a Club place to. In many cases more than ten children are

discussed and where appropriate, those not offered a place may be offered alternative support, such as a learning mentor or referral to another agency. Once selected, children are invited to participate in the Clubs. Parents, on behalf of their children, or the children themselves, always have the right to say no. However, refusals by children or parents are rare. Children and parents are then informed and are invited to a pre Club meeting, to ask questions and find out more about the Clubs.

Training of staff and preparation for Club sessions

During the above stage, volunteer Club leaders are recruited and receive training. Each Club has between 2 and 4 volunteer Club leaders. The Club leaders come from a range of backgrounds; school staff, students, and local parents. On one of the courses, for example, a police officer trained to be a volunteer. In 6 of the 8 Clubs, Christina Guest or Suleyman Huseyin participated as Club leaders.

There is typically between two and four days of training. A range of topics are covered in the training including background information about NPT, background to the Clubs, theories of group work, health and safety, first aid, confidentiality and child protection, self esteem and positive talk, behaviour management and transitions activities. Not all volunteer Club leaders received the full training. For Wandsworth, volunteer Club Leaders received one day's less training than Hillingdon volunteers, given difficulties with the venue and volunteers' availability.

There are approximately 10 Club sessions altogether. Each lasts one and a half hours and is held immediately after school on school property. Children are involved in a range of activities, including arts and crafts, cooking, cooperative games, and circle time where they talk about their feelings, particularly in relation to secondary school. At the end of each Club session the Club Leader fills in a form about each child's involvement and behaviour in that particular session.

After the final Club session (ie week 10), a number of people are asked to give feedback. The Club Leader fills in a form about each child, covering things like interaction with peers and Club leaders, participation in Club activities, successes and achievements, and any aspects of concern. There is an additional section on this form for the class teacher to fill in their comments. The children are asked to fill in a questionnaire about their experiences of the Club. Parents are also asked to fill in a questionnaire after the Clubs.

Pyramid Clubs run in 2004

Pyramid Clubs were run in eight primary schools altogether. Six of these started in the summer term, and two started in the spring term. NPT wanted to try two

earlier Clubs to see how these worked. All the parents were also asked for their permission for themselves and their children to take part in the evaluation. Six parents/children altogether declined to take part at this stage.

Secondary school Pyramid Clubs were run in three Wandsworth secondary schools and three Hillingdon secondary schools. Each Club consisted of four, weekly after-school Clubs. These ran in the autumn term of 2004. The aim of these was to provide follow-up support for the Pyramid Club children into the first term of secondary school. They involved 16 Pyramid children from Hillingdon and 7 Pyramid children from Wandsworth.

Hillingdon and Wandsworth are two ethnically and culturally diverse London boroughs. This diversity is reflected in the ethnic make-up of the children within the Pyramid Clubs. Of the 40 Hillingdon children, 27 were White British, 10 were Asian, 1 was African Caribbean, 1 was Turkish and 1 was dual heritage (White and Asian). For the Wandsworth children, 12 were White British, 12 African Caribbean, 3 Asian, 2 Turkish, 2 Chinese, 1 Somali, 1 Portuguese and 4 undisclosed. It is considered by NPT staff that the ethnicity of the children was generally representative of the overall ethnic make-up in the boroughs.

In relation to gender, there was a fairly even distribution of girls and boys. In Hillingdon 21 were male and 19 female and in Wandsworth, 18 were male and 19 female. NPT and the schools deliberately try to have an equal balance of boys and girls participating in the Clubs.

1.3 Evaluation objectives and design

The aim of the project was to evaluate the National Pyramid Trust's transitions pilot, described above. The specific aims were to:

- (a) identify whether Pyramid Clubs help vulnerable children to make a smooth transition to secondary school
- (b) understand the processes involved in running a transitions scheme using the Pyramid model, and make recommendations for further change and development.

The aim was to conduct the evaluation by undertaking research with all those involved – children, parents, school staff, Club volunteers, and NPT staff. Where possible, the aim was to include pre and post Club measures, in order to identify change over time. The actual data collected, and the process of the research, is detailed in Chapter 2.

1.4 Evaluation timetable

The main events that took place in the evaluation were undertaken as follows:

Date	Event
December 2003	Initial project meeting with Allan Watson (NPT), Debi Roker and Julie Shepherd (TSA)
January 2004	Project meeting with Christina Guest, Project Manager (NPT)
March 2004	Meeting between Julie Shepherd and Suleyman Huseyin – NPT's Wandsworth Project Worker Julie attended an ID meeting at a Wandsworth primary school
April 2004	Julie observed a full day training session for Wandsworth volunteer Club leaders
May 2004	Julie observed a Hillingdon Club session
May – June 2004	Telephone interviews with Hillingdon parents
Early June 2004	Project meeting between Julie and Christina
June 2004	Focus groups with Hillingdon Club children
End June 2004	Project meeting between Julie and Christina
July 2004	Focus group with Wandsworth Club children
July/August 2004	Questionnaires sent out to all volunteer Club leaders
End August/early Sept 2004	Telephone interviews with Wandsworth parents
Sept 2004	Project meeting between Julie and Christina
Early October 2004	Focus groups with Hillingdon secondary school children
Early November 2004	Focus groups with Wandsworth secondary school children
End November/early December 2004	Telephone interviews with Wandsworth and Hillingdon parents
December 2004	Telephone interview with Christina Guest, Project Manager
January 2005	Telephone interview with Suleyman Huseyin, Wandsworth's Project Worker
January – March 2005	Data analysed and report written

The following chapter details the design of the evaluation, and the data collected.

CHAPTER 2:

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter covers the following:

- design of the evaluation, including methods used
- data collected.

2.1 Design of the evaluation

The evaluation was designed to collect data from children, parents, school staff and NPT Project Workers including volunteer Club leaders. Some data was to be collected from all eight participating primary schools. Other data was collected from children at one school only in each borough, for example focus group discussions with children and telephone interviews with parents. One school was selected from Hillingdon, and one from Wandsworth.

The initial research design was very ambitious. We hoped that we could collect pre and post data from all Year 6 children in all eight of the schools, as well as from parents and teachers. This would have enabled the outcomes for Pyramid Club children to be compared with a control group who did not attend the Club. However, for a number of reasons this was not possible. The main reason was that the schools did not get children to complete the relevant questionnaires that NPT had asked them to do. NPT staff felt that this was largely due to difficulties with timing, in that school staff are increasingly busy towards the end of the summer term and do not have time to complete additional paperwork. In addition, for one of the schools which started the Clubs earlier, NPT was too late in getting the pre Club measures to them prior to the first Club session. The implications of this are discussed further in the Discussion chapter.

2.2 Data collected

This section details the data actually collected, from children, parents, and Project Workers.

2.2.1 The views of children – focus groups

Primary school focus groups (post club)

Focus group discussions took place at two primary schools as planned, one in Hillingdon and one in Wandsworth. For the Hillingdon focus group discussions, two groups of four children took part; for Wandsworth, there was one focus group comprising five children. The children who did not take part were absent from school on that particular day.

Secondary school focus groups

Seven children took part in secondary school focus groups; three in one group and four in another. One was held in a Hillingdon secondary school and another in a Wandsworth secondary school. Both were held with children attending the Pyramid Club that had been set up at that secondary school.

2.2.2 Children's pre and post Club measures

The pre and post Club measures are referred to in this report as 'Club smileys'. This consists of a range of questions to which children respond by circling either a happy, sad or neutral face. In addition there are two scale questions where children place a cross on a line to indicate their response on a scale of 1 to 10.

Altogether 29 children completed both pre and post Club smileys. Twelve of these children also completed secondary school smileys and scale questions. The smileys and scale questions ask questions about children's friendships, their relationships with teachers and adults generally, how much they enjoy school, how they feel about talking in groups, how they feel about their life at the time, how easy they think it will be to settle into secondary school and how scared they are about being bullied in secondary school.

Whilst the sample is relatively small in relation to the number of children who took part in the Pyramid Clubs, the data does give an indication of possible change over time.

In addition, 40 children completed feedback forms at the end of the Club, representing five of the eight schools. Information collected included children's views on what they liked best about the Club, improvements that could be made to the Clubs, what they liked best about the Club leaders, how the Clubs have helped them and how the Clubs have helped them to prepare for secondary school. A selection of data from the children's feedback forms are included in the evaluation, from two of the schools.

2.2.3 The views of parents - telephone interviews

Post Club telephone interviews

The first round of telephone interviews with parents was planned for after the Club sessions had finished in July. This was the case for the Hillingdon parents, of which there were six. The telephone interviews with Wandsworth parents took place in the first week of September, because the contact details of the Wandsworth parents were not received until this time. This meant that some of the parents' children had either just started secondary school or were just about to. Four parents from the Wandsworth school were interviewed. Thus ten parents were interviewed altogether.

Secondary school telephone interviews

The secondary school telephone interviews took place with 11 parents, eight of whom had been interviewed originally. The additional three parents had not been available during the first round of interviews but on contact wanted to be interviewed at this stage. All of the secondary school interviews took place at the end of November 2004.

2.2.4 The views of school staff

In the original evaluation plan it was anticipated that the pre and post CISS scales completed by the teachers would be analysed. However, too few were completed at the post stage for this to be viable.

Teachers' feedback forms were completed by eight teachers altogether, from five of the schools. Information collected included teachers' views about the selection process for the Clubs, views about Club leaders, their views about making arrangements for the Clubs, the impact of the Clubs on the children as a group and improvements that could be made to the project. We also have teachers' comments on the individual observation sheets for 49 of the 80 children. A selection of these is included in the evaluation, from two schools. These schools were selected at random from the five schools that had this data.

2.2.5 The views of Project Workers and volunteer Club leaders

Project Workers' data includes telephone interviews with NPT staff Christina Guest and Suleyman Huseyin. In addition, data from feedback forms administered by NPT to their volunteer Club leaders is included for seven volunteers. Data from questionnaires administered by TSA for five volunteer Club leaders out of a possible 19 is also included. However, 6 of these 19

volunteer Club leaders were teachers and may have completed the teachers' feedback forms rather than the form for volunteer Club leaders.

As is demonstrated above, variable levels of success were achieved in securing the desired data. At the end of the study, we only had pre and post Club data for 29 of the 80 children. In addition, we did not have a control group of non-Club children, as we had hoped. However, there was still a valuable amount of data collected in the study. It is considered that the data collected does enable some clear conclusions to be drawn about the use of Pyramid Clubs as a form of transition support. This data is presented in the next three chapters. The three results chapters report the data for children, parents, and Club volunteers and NPT staff.

CHAPTER 3:

RESULTS (1) – CHILDREN’S DATA

This chapter presents the children’s experiences of the Clubs, and the quantitative data collected via self-completion forms. It includes:

- Results of the focus group discussions
- Results of the children’s smileys and scale questions
- Results of the children’s feedback forms.

3.1 Results of focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were held with children after the Pyramid Club had finished, and when children were at secondary school. These results are presented below:

3.1.1 Results of focus group discussions after the Club

The views of 13 children from two schools are represented below.

The activities that children liked best

The children talked about a whole range of activities that they really enjoyed at the Pyramid Clubs. These included games, making food together, outings, an Easter egg hunt, painting t-shirts, thinking up a name for the group, and circle time.

What children were worried about in relation to going to secondary school, before taking part in Pyramid Clubs

There were a wide range of worries that children had about going to secondary school, prior to starting the Pyramid Clubs. The main ones were being bullied, making new friends and leaving old friends behind, getting lost in the new school or being late for lessons and getting told off, being offered drugs, not being liked and, for one girl who had not been allocated a school yet, that no school would want her.

Children's worries about secondary school after taking part in the Pyramid Clubs

After attending the Clubs, most of the children said they did not have any particular worries about secondary school. They felt much happier and confident about going there. There were still some concerns – for example one of the girls said she was worried that teachers would be rude to her, and another girl was still a little bit worried about being bullied, as she had been bullied in primary school. However, in general the children said they felt positive about the move.

How Pyramid Club helped these children

All of the children reported very positive experiences of taking part in the Clubs. Gaining confidence, having fun, getting to know other children and learning new things were the main things mentioned by the children. Learning ways to deal with bullying was something else that was mentioned by one of the girls. The quotes below show what children found really helpful about the Clubs.

“When I was feeling negative they helped me turn it around to see the positives”

“Talking to the teacher and leaders about things really helped”

“Watching other children and learning to interact more with boys was good. Just really getting to know other people has helped”

“Helping you to be more kind to each other. It made me want to share more”

The effects that the Pyramid Club had on children

All of the children talked about the positive effects the Club had on them, as the following quotes demonstrate:

“When I used to say something I used to be shy, now I don't feel shy”

“Before Pyramid Club I felt stupid, particularly at maths. They taught us that you're not stupid and 'don't give up'. It's given me more confidence in my work”

“I got more confident. Seeing other people having fun and joining in gave me more confidence”

“We learnt how to be friends with children and how to be cool”

“I'm not scared about going to secondary school now”.

Children's views of the Club leaders

The children were asked to rate the Club leaders on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest/most negative rating and 10 being the highest/most positive rating. The overall average was 9.4. Clearly the children thought the Club leaders were very good, as the quotations below demonstrate:

"They were really kind and encouraged you"

"They listened to our feelings in circle time and didn't laugh at us"

"They showed us respect and never told us off".

Other children's reaction to Pyramid Club members

In two of the groups the children talked about other children's reaction to them attending Pyramid Club. The responses were quite different. In the Wandsworth group the children said that other children in their class were jealous, and felt that it was not fair, particularly that the Pyramid Club children went on a bowling trip. The group said that it made them feel special, but a little bit sad for the other children who were not invited to this 'special' group. By contrast the children in one of the Hillingdon focus groups said that other children in their class made fun of them for going to the Pyramid Club. Apparently a Pyramid Club letter had been given to the selected children in front of all the other children, and some children in the class had started laughing about it.

How the Club children would describe the Pyramid Clubs to new Year 6 children

The children said they would describe the Pyramid Club to others in a very positive way. For example:

"You'll have a lot of fun and it will be a new experience for you, especially meeting new adults"

"You'll enjoy yourself, play games and go on trips"

"It's a lot of fun and doesn't make you feel scared anymore".

3.1.2 Results of focus group discussions at secondary school

Two focus group discussions were held with children in October and November 2004, which involved seven children. The results were as follows:

How the primary school Pyramid Club helped the children to settle into secondary school

Most of the young people said it took between one and two weeks to settle into secondary school. In general they were very positive about how taking part in the Year 6 Pyramid Club had helped them to settle into secondary school, as the following quotes show:

“The Club taught us how to make friends quickly”

“By working as a team it helped you to stand up for yourself. We did drama performances and shared ideas with each other”

“They talked to us about what it was like at secondary school”.

Two of the young people said they really enjoyed the Pyramid Club experience, but were less sure that it had helped them actually settle into secondary school. For example:

“I enjoyed it but I don’t know how much it helped me but I am glad we’ve got it again now we’re here”.

Other things that helped the children settle into secondary school

Only one of the groups talked about this issue. For the Hillingdon group all three knew each other from their primary school, and this was considered to help. Support from teachers was also seen as a key factor in settling in. The children felt that if they got lost getting to class, they would not get into trouble as a result of it. This made them feel less worried.

The differences between primary and secondary school for the young people

A number of differences between primary and secondary school were mentioned. At secondary school the young people get more homework, many different teachers, different classes and different subjects. Two children talked about secondary school making them feel more independent. This had implications for what they were allowed to do after school, as one boy stated:

“If you want to stay out for longer (in the street) – parents let you stay out a bit longer. You’re treated more mature by parents and by the school”.

What young people didn’t like about secondary school

There were some less positive aspects of secondary school mentioned, which included homework, missing friends and the Year 10 students who dominated the Year 7’s part of the school hall, and sometimes pushed and shoved the

younger students. Certain teachers and certain subjects were also mentioned as things the young people didn't like about secondary school. One person was particularly negative about her experience at secondary school, as the following quote shows:

"I wasn't really that prepared for it. It was totally different to what I expected. I thought it was going to be compact but its massive. I get detention if I don't get my homework in and I have to have a note to get out of detention. It's much tougher than primary school".

Despite this, she and all of the other people said they like being at secondary school more than primary school.

Why the young people attended the Year 7 Pyramid Club

The young people were generally very positive about why they had chosen to attend the Year 7 (secondary school) Pyramid Club. For most of them, it was because they had enjoyed the Year 6 Pyramid Club so much. For two of the young people it was because their mum had made them come, but they said they also wanted to come themselves.

What the young people got out of the Year 6 Pyramid Club

Looking back to Year 6, the young people were very positive about what they got out of the Year 6 Pyramid Club. For example:

"It's fun and it makes you feel more relaxed about going to secondary school"

"You get to go on trips and play lots of games. It made me feel more comfortable"

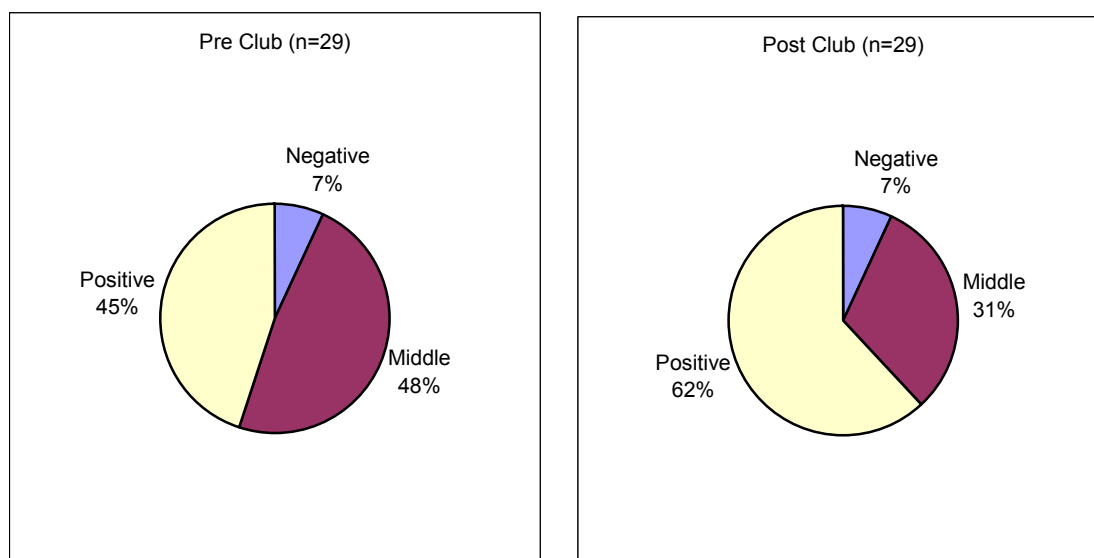
"There are lots of fun things to do and you get to feel more relaxed at the end of the day".

3.2 Results of children's smileys and scale questions

As mentioned in the previous chapter, smileys and scale questions were completed by children at the pre, post and secondary school stages. These were completed by the same 29 children at the pre and post stage and 12 of these children also completed them at the secondary school stage.

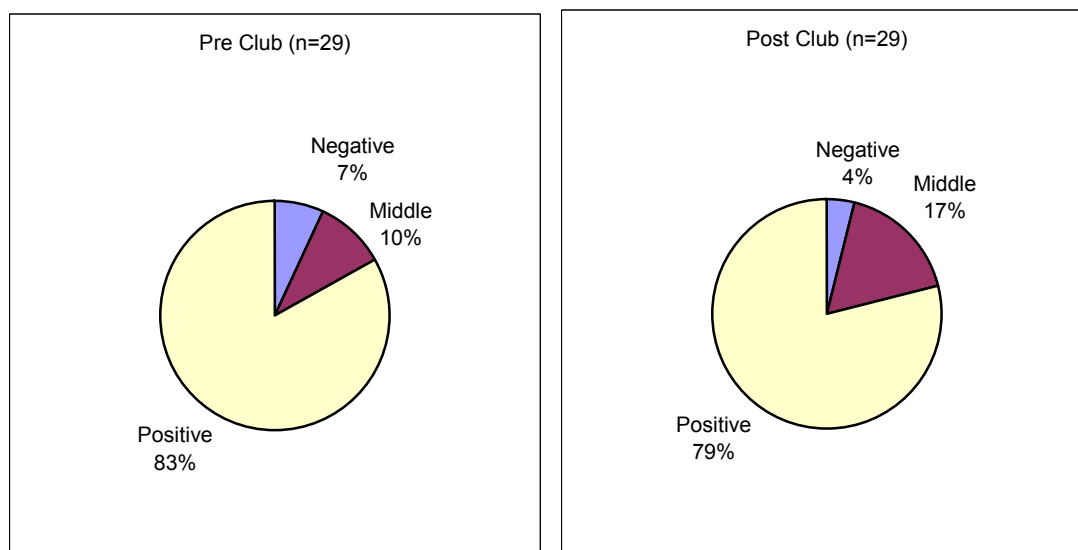
3.2.1 Differences between pre and post Club smileys and scale questions

Do you find it easy to make friends?



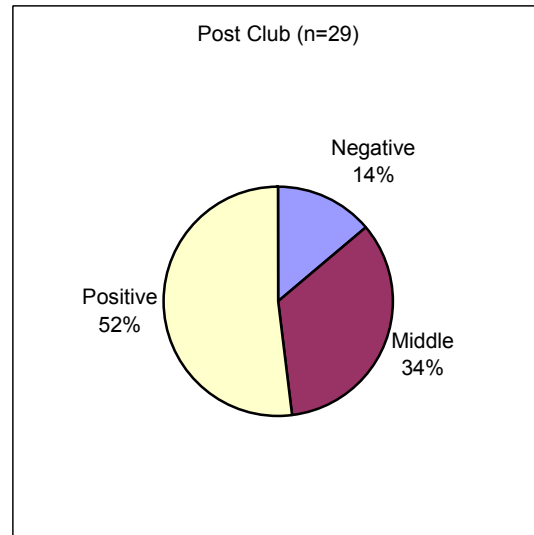
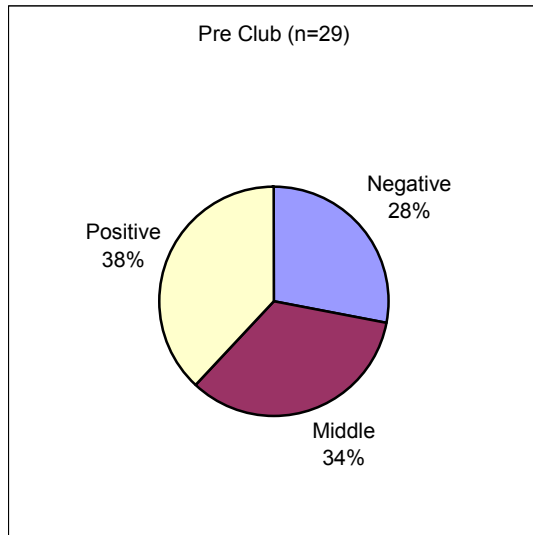
At post Club data collection, 18% more children were positive about finding it easier to make friends than at the pre Club stage.

How do you feel about the friends you have?



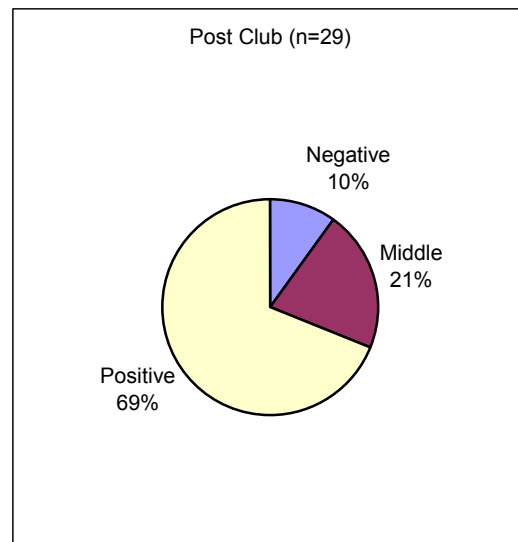
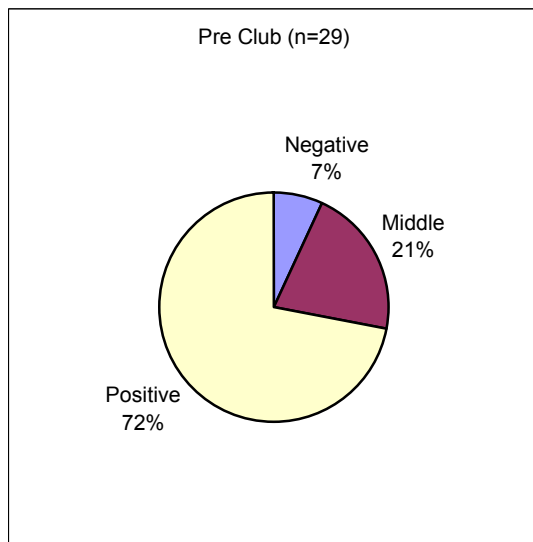
There was very little difference between the children's responses at pre and post Club stages.

Do you find it easy to ask for help?



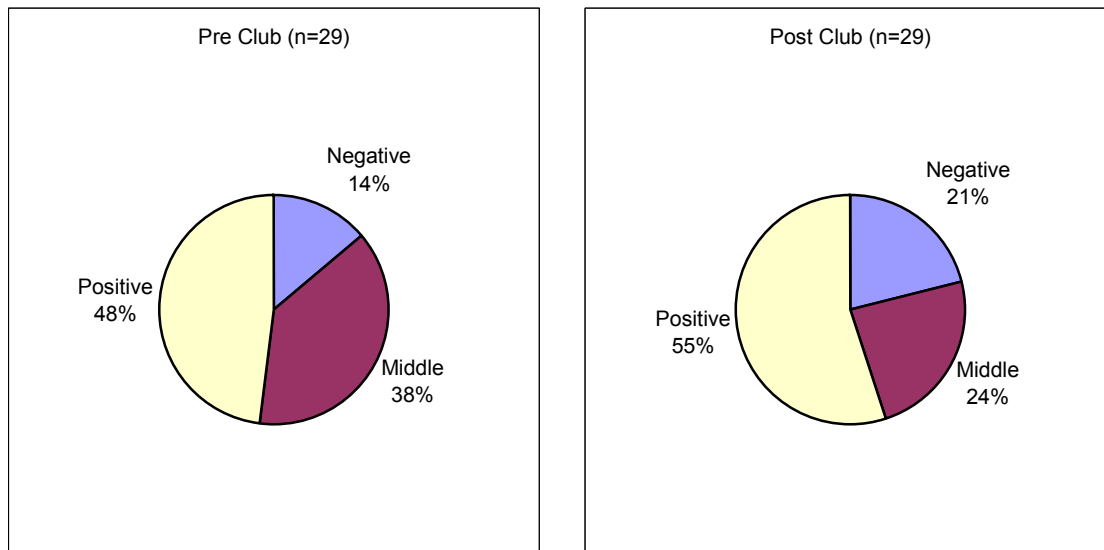
At the post Club stage 14% more children were positive about finding it easy to ask for help than at the pre Club stage.

Do your teachers like you?



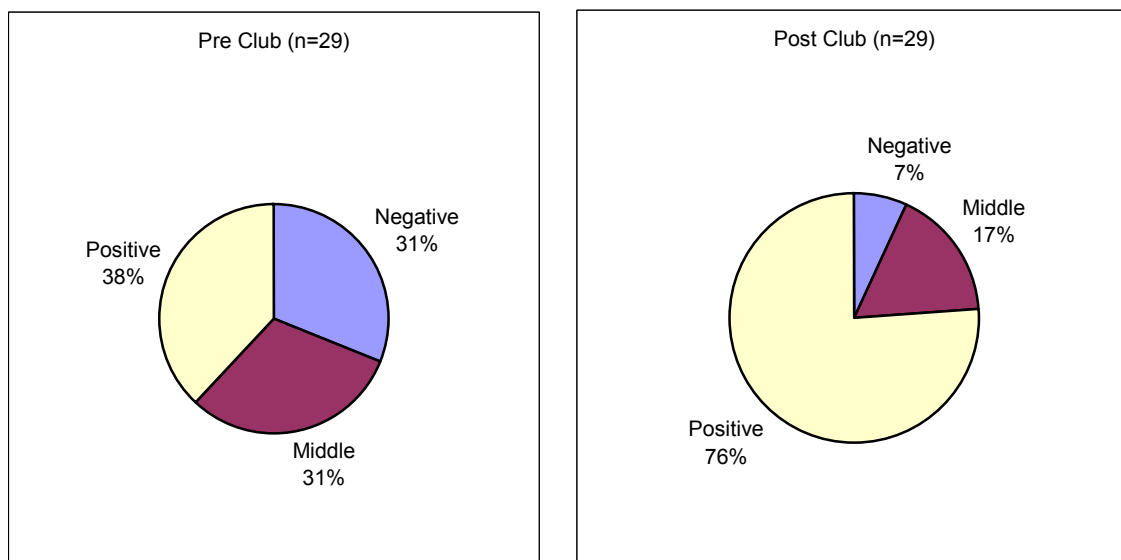
There was very little difference between the children's responses at the pre and post Club stages.

Do you enjoy going to school?



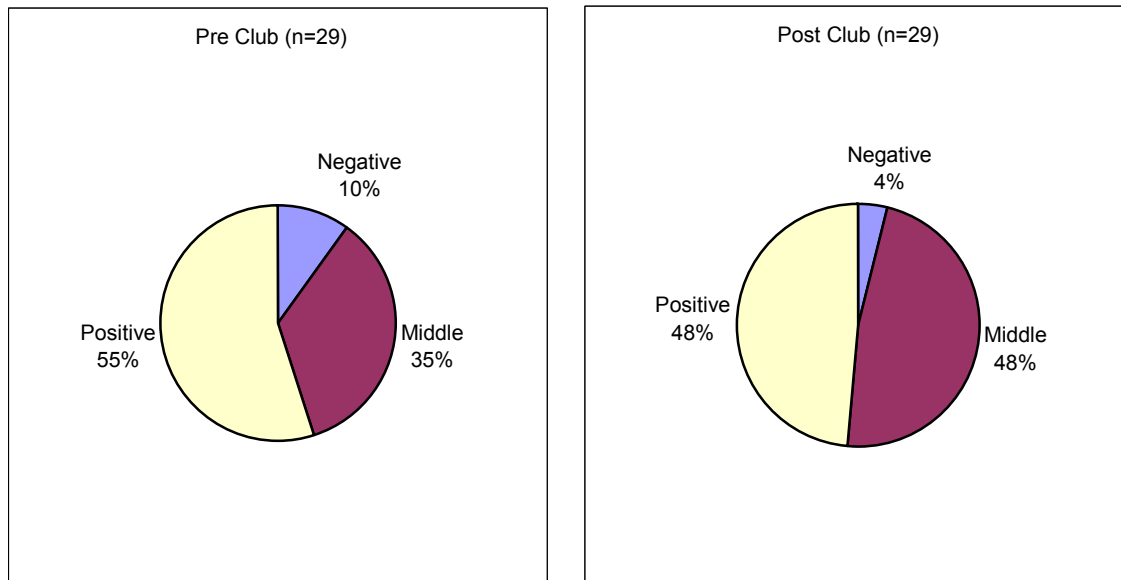
There was very little difference between the children's responses at the pre and post Club stages.

How do you feel about going to secondary school this year?



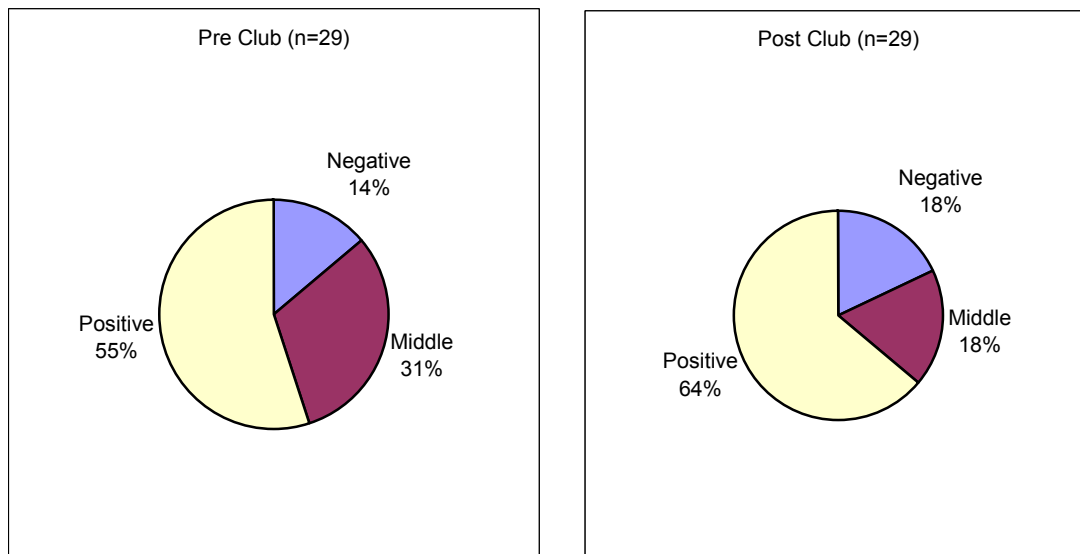
At the post Club stage 38% more children were positive about how they felt about going to secondary school, than at the pre Club stage. These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

Do other children like you?



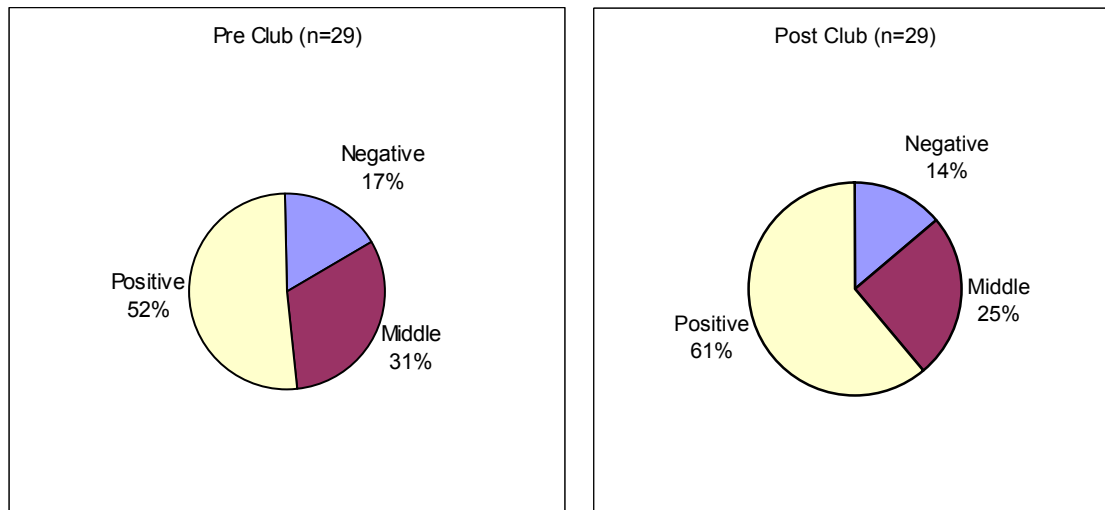
There was very little difference between the children's responses at pre and post Club stages.

How do you feel about talking in groups?



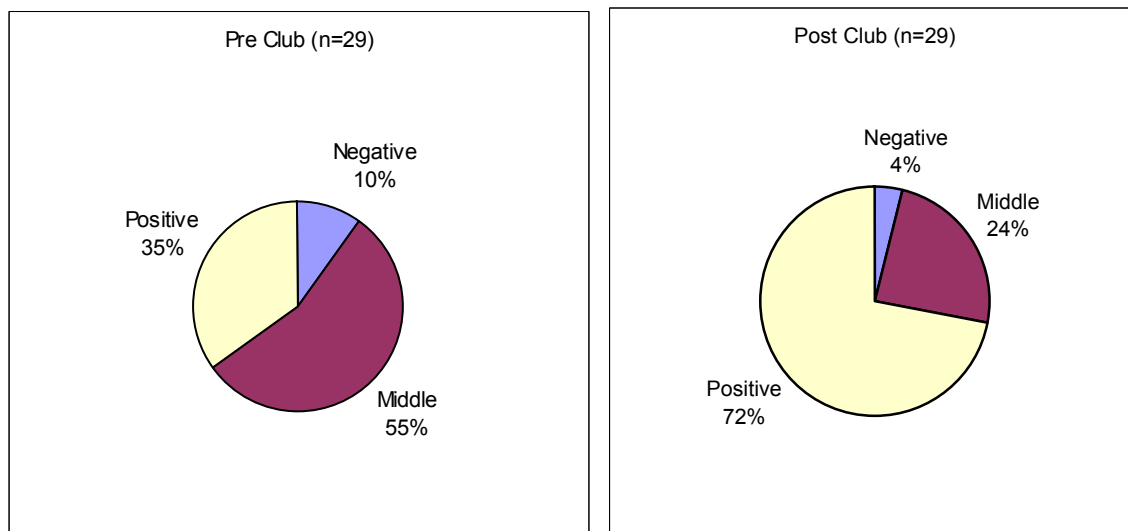
There was a slight difference between children's responses at pre and post Club stages. As the chart shows, 9% more children at the post Club stage were positive about talking in groups than at the pre Club stage.

Do you like chatting to adults?



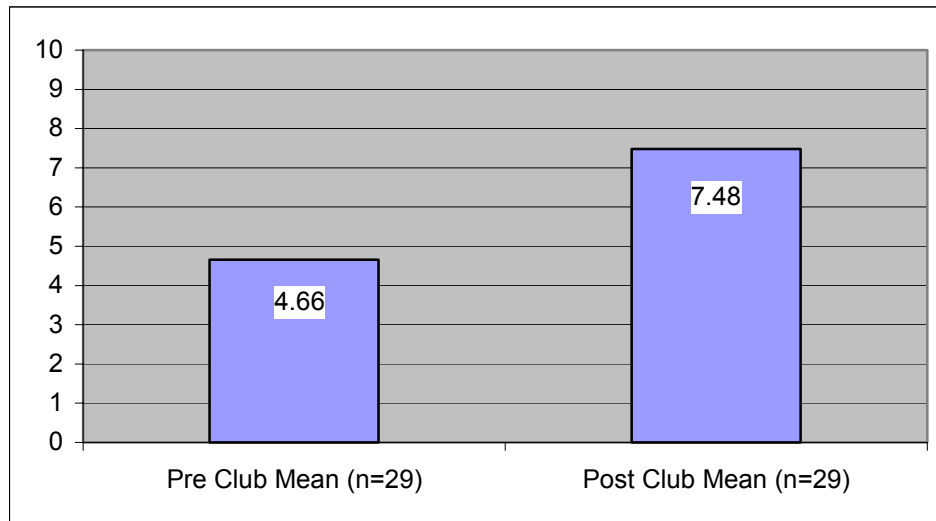
There was a slight difference between children's responses at pre and post Club stages. As the chart shows, 9% more children were positive about chatting to adults at the post Club stage, than at the pre Club stage.

How do you feel about your life at the moment?



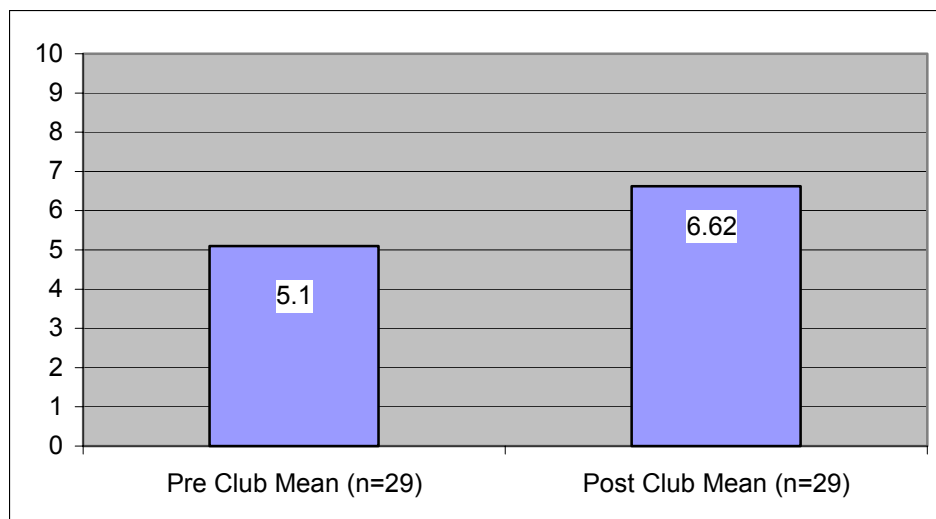
At the post Club stage, 37% more children were positive about how they felt about their life at the time, than at the pre Club stage. These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

How easy do you think you will find it to settle into secondary school?
1 = very difficult 10 = very easy



There were statistically significant differences for children's responses at the pre and post Club stages. As the graph shows, the mean averages show that children rated themselves more positively in relation to finding it easy to settle into secondary school, at the post Club stage ($p < 0.01$).

How scared are you that you will be bullied in secondary school?
1 = very scared 10 = not very scared



There were statistically significant differences for children's responses at the pre and post stage. As the mean averages show, the children rated themselves more

positively, in relation to how scared they were about being bullied in secondary school, at the post Club data collection stage ($p < 0.05$).

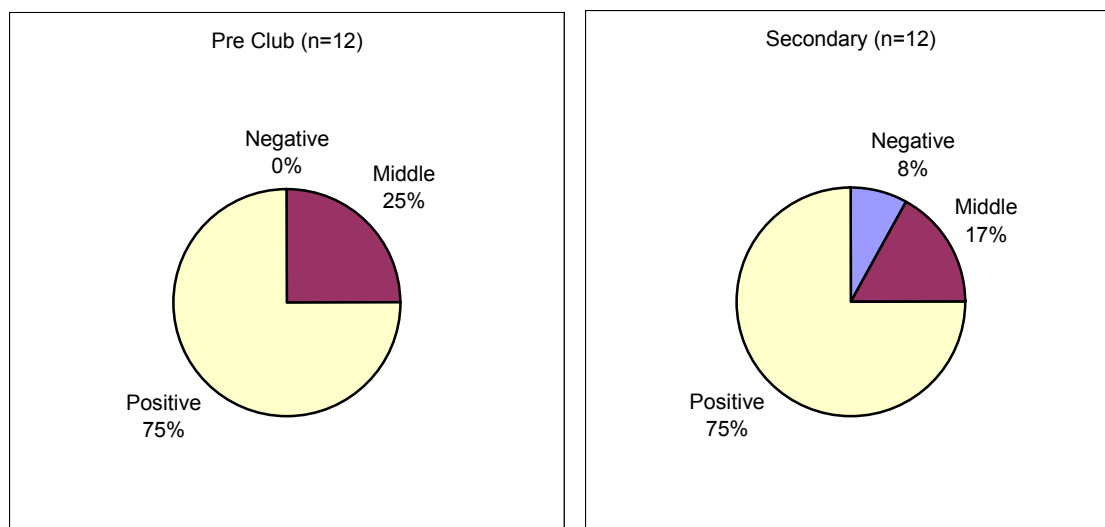
As the data shows, there were statistically significant differences on several factors in the pre and post Club data. This suggests that the Pyramid Club had a positive impact on the following:

- How the children felt about going to secondary school
- How the children felt about their life at the time
- How easy they thought it would be to settle into secondary school
- How scared the children were about being bullied at secondary school

As the graphs show, there were also some other differences in the pre and post data, although these were not statistically significant. These were all positive changes at the post Club stage; 18% more children were positive about finding it easy to make friends at the post Club stage, 14% more children were positive about finding it easy to ask for help at this stage and 9% were more positive about talking in groups at the post Club stage. Furthermore, 9% more children at post Club stage were positive about chatting to adults than at the pre Club stage.

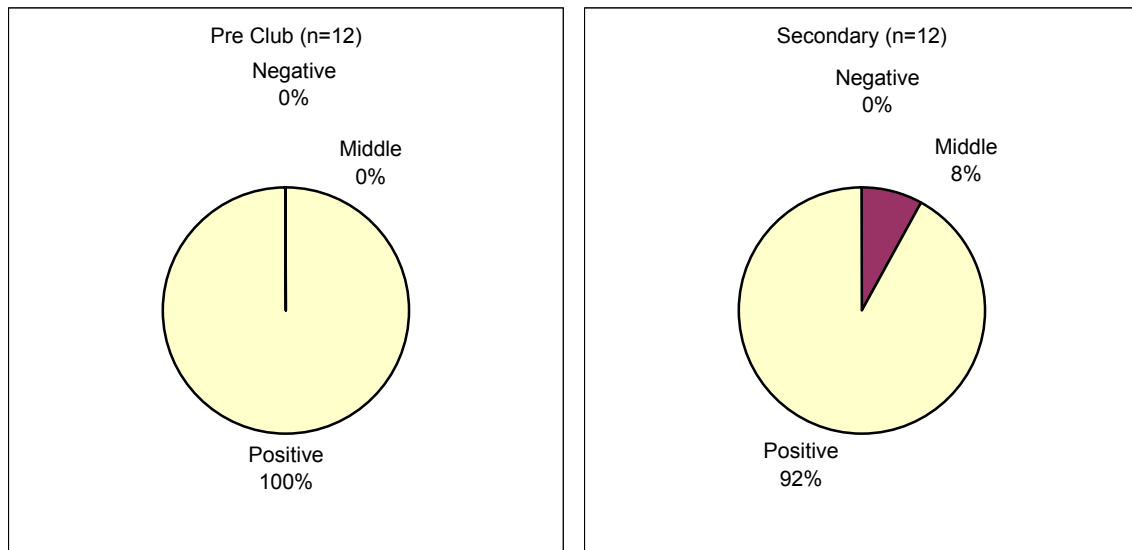
3.2.2 Differences between pre Club and secondary school smileys and scale questions

Do you find it easy to make friends?



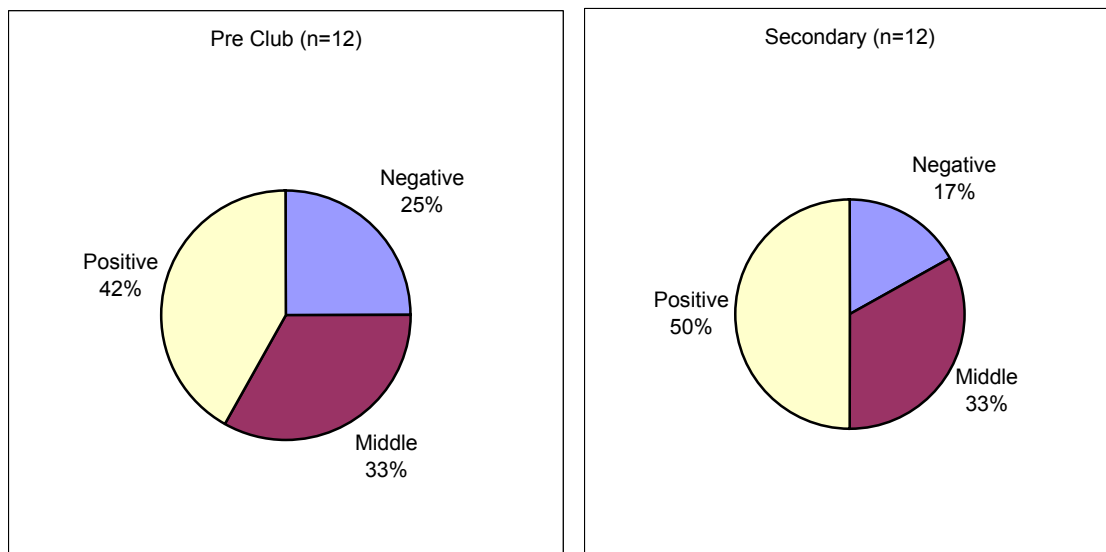
There were slight differences between the pre Club and secondary school responses. At the secondary school stage, 8% children felt negative about finding it easy to make friends at secondary school compared to none at the pre Club stage.

How do you feel about the friends you have?



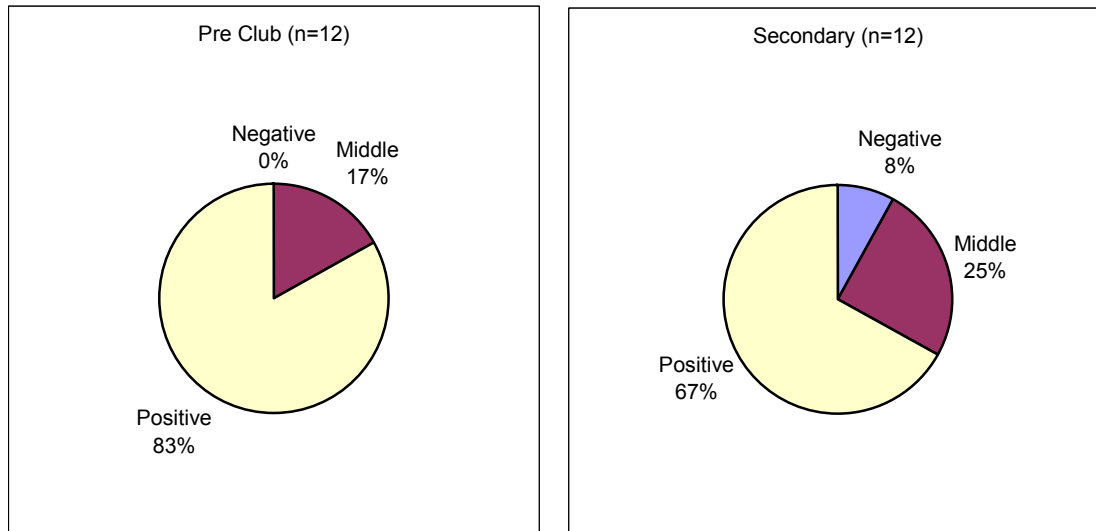
There were slight differences in relation to how children felt about the friends they had. All children were positive about the friends they had at the pre Club stage compared to 92% of children at the secondary school stage.

Do you find it easy to ask for help?



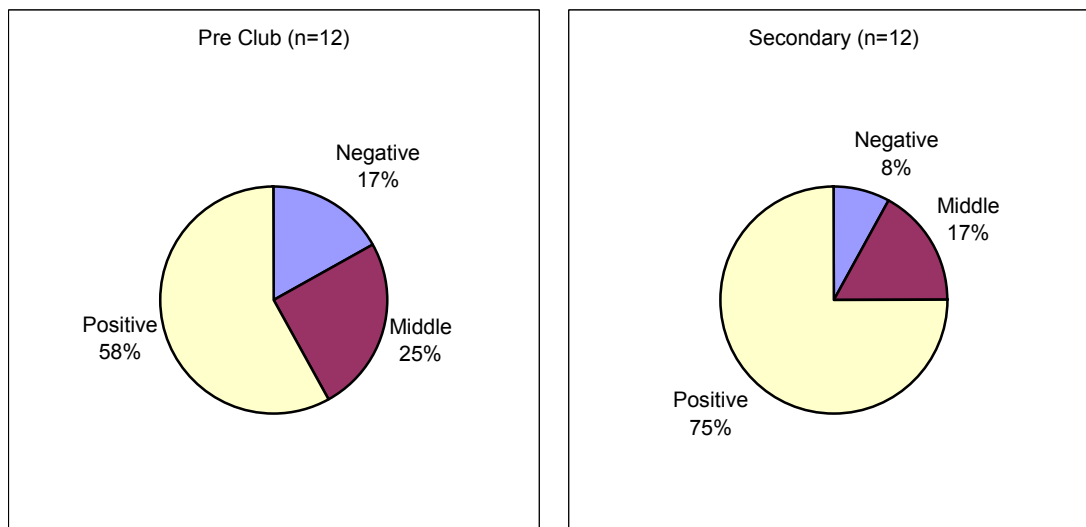
Slightly more children (8%) were positive about finding it easy to ask for help at the secondary school stage than at the pre-Club stage.

Do your teachers like you?



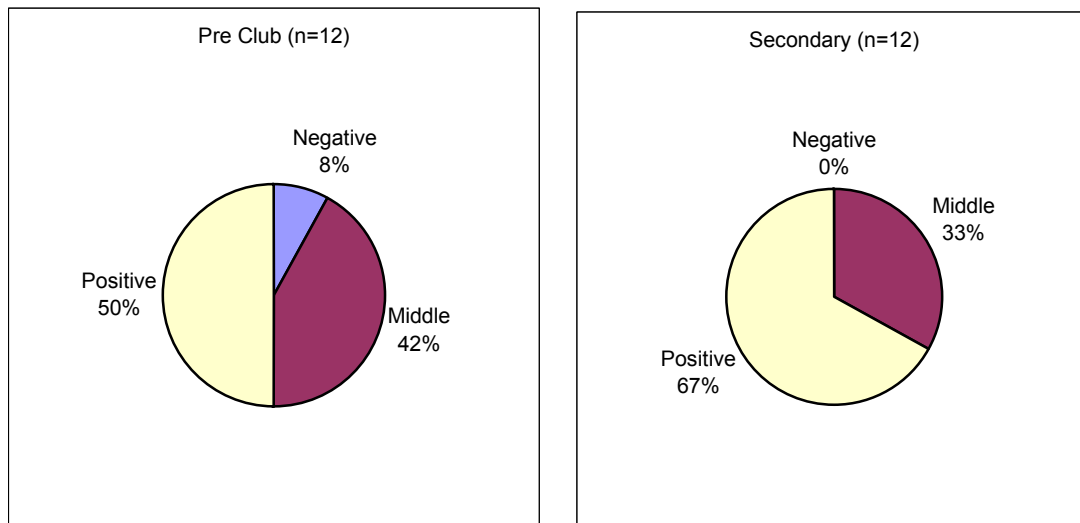
There was a negative change in children's responses to whether they thought teachers liked them. At the secondary school stage 16% less children were positive about this than at the pre Club stage. Furthermore, 8% more children were negative about this at the secondary school stage, than at the pre-Club stage.

Do you enjoy going to school?



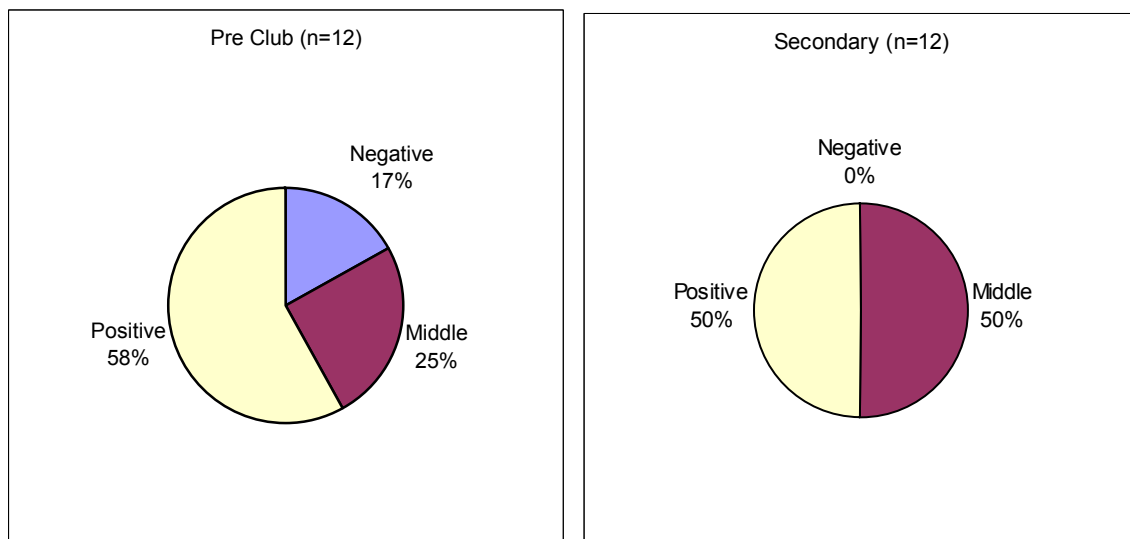
There was some change in children's responses to enjoying going to school. At the secondary school stage 17% more children were positive about enjoying going to school than at the pre Club stage.

How do you feel about going to secondary school this year?



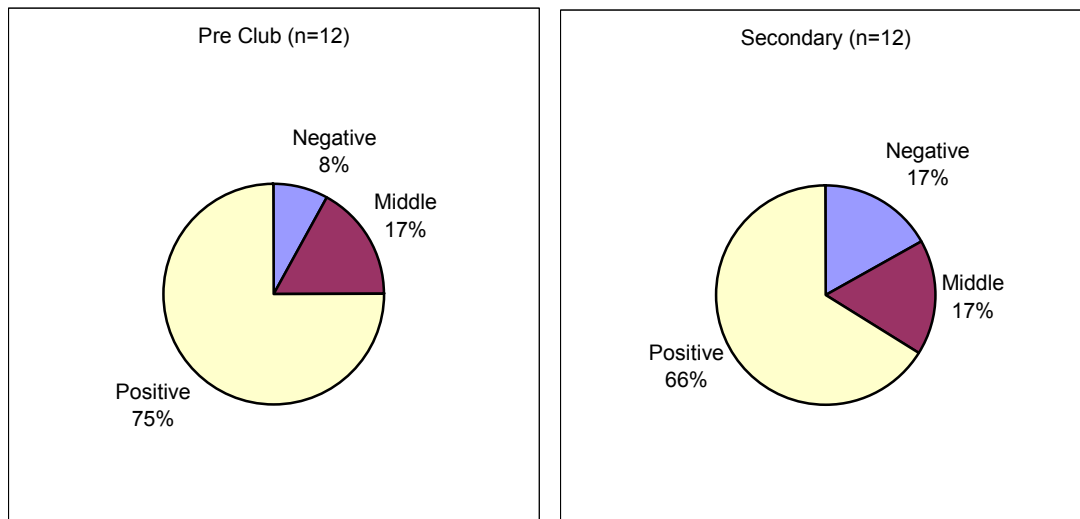
There was some change in children's responses about going to secondary school. At the secondary school stage, 17% more children were positive about going to secondary school than at the pre Club stage. Furthermore, none of the children were negative about this at the secondary school stage, compared to 8% at the pre Club stage.

Do other children like you?



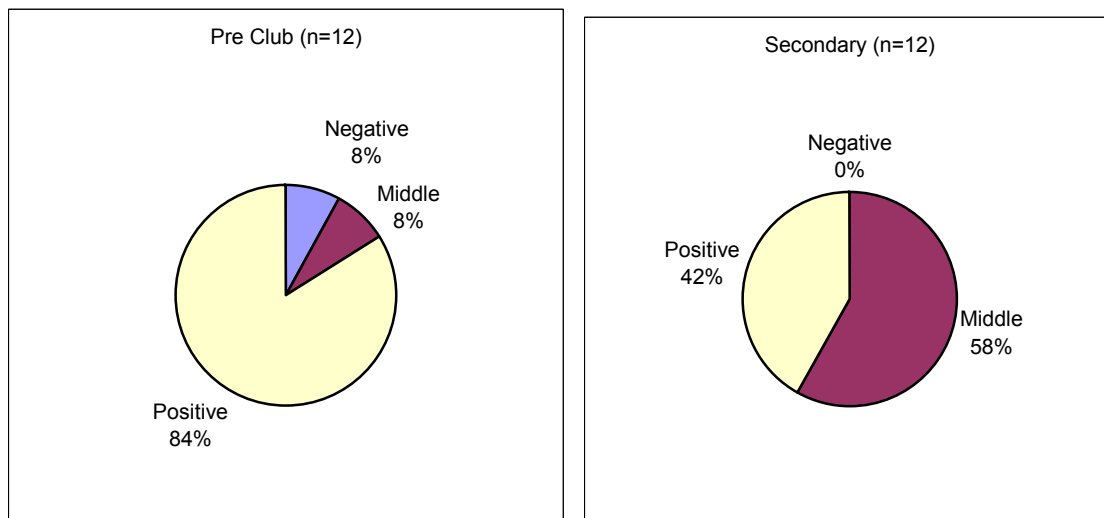
There was a slight difference in children's responses as to whether other children liked them. Slightly less children (8%) were positive about this at the secondary school stage. However, none of the children at the secondary school stage were negative about this, compared to 17% at the pre Club stage.

How do you feel about talking in groups?



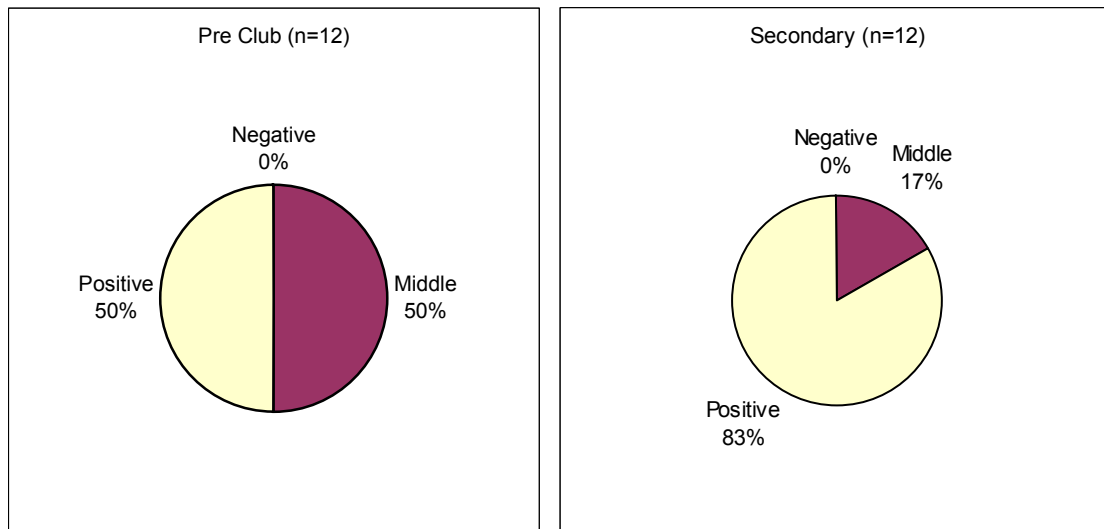
There were slight differences in children's responses about how they felt about talking in groups. At the secondary school stage, 9% more children were negative about this than at the pre Club stage. Conversely 9% less children were positive about this at the secondary school stage.

Do you like chatting to adults?



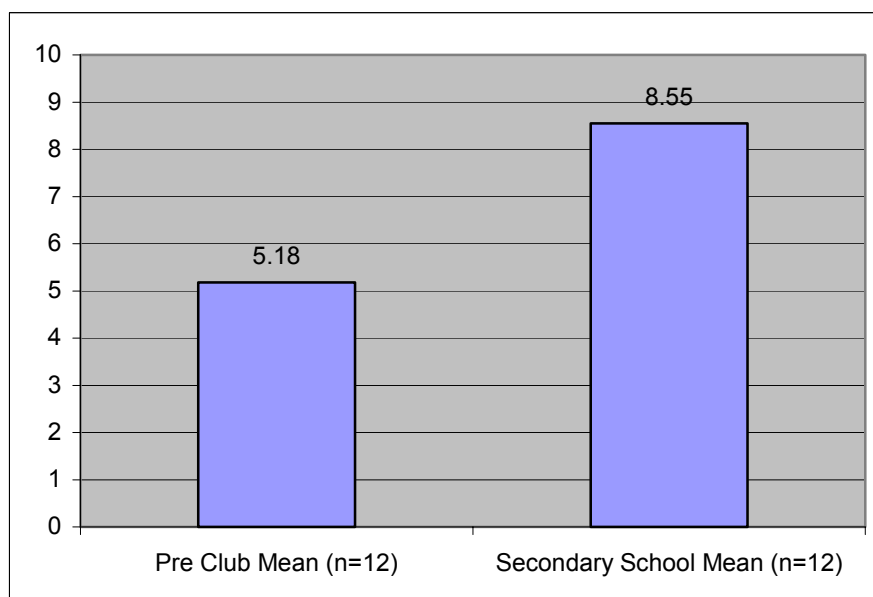
There was a change in children's responses to whether they liked chatting to adults. 42% of children at secondary school stage were less positive about this than at pre Club stage. 50% more children were in the middle about their views on this at secondary school, compared to 8% at pre Club stage.

How do you feel about your life at the moment?



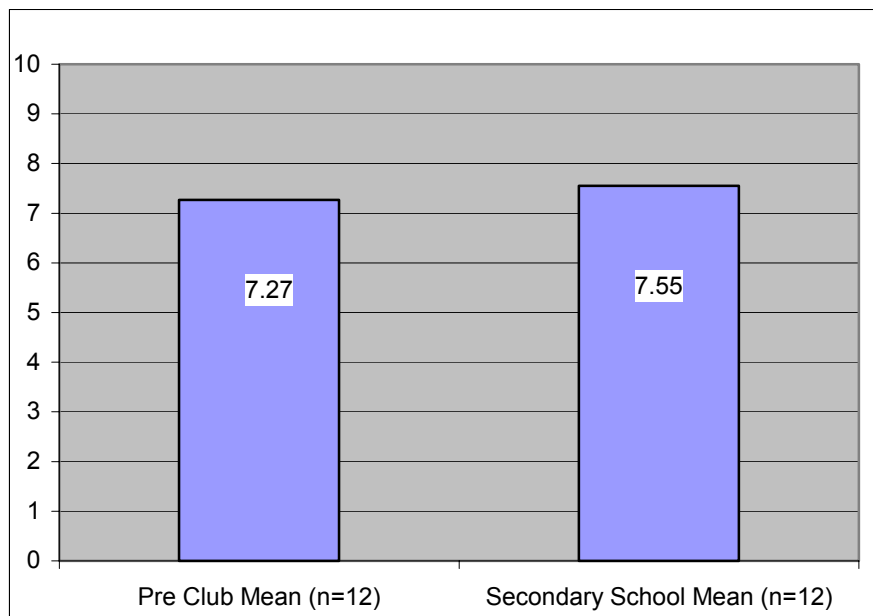
There were statistically significant differences in the children's responses to how they felt about their life at the moment. At both stages, none of the children responded negatively to this question. However, the differences were that 33% more children felt positive about this at secondary school stage than at the pre Club stage ($p < 0.05$).

How easy do you think you will find it to settle into secondary school? 1 = very difficult 10 = very easy



There were statistically significant differences for children's responses between the pre and secondary school stage. As the graph shows, the mean averages show that children rated themselves more positively in relation to settling into secondary school, at the secondary school stage ($p < 0.05$).

How scared are you that you will be bullied in secondary school?
1 = very scared 10 = not very scared



As the graph shows, there were some differences between the two stages. The children were slightly less scared about being bullied at the secondary school stage than at the pre Club stage. The differences were not statistically significant.

Given such a small sample size, we had not expected the data to produce any statistically significant results. However, as shown above there were some statistical significant differences between the pre Club and secondary school data collection in relation to the following:

- How children felt about their life at the time
- How easy they thought it would be to settle into secondary school

This data suggests that the Clubs had a positive impact on children in relation to these three factors. In addition, there were other differences between the results at these time points, which were not statistically significant, but still worth mentioning; 16% fewer children were positive at the secondary school stage about whether their teachers liked them, than at the pre Club stage, and 8%

more children were negative about this. However, 17% more children were positive about enjoying going to school at the secondary school stage than at the pre Club stage. Furthermore, 17% more children were positive about how they felt about going to secondary school, than they were when asked at the pre Club stage. In addition, none of them were negative about this.

The only area where there was a negative difference between the pre Club and secondary school responses was to the question 'do you like chatting to adults'? There was a change in children's responses to whether they liked chatting to adults. Just under half (42%) of children at secondary school stage were less positive about this than at pre Club stage. 50% more children were in the middle about their views on this at secondary school, compared to 8% at pre Club stage.

However, as with any pre and post data comparisons, it is difficult to attribute changes directly to the intervention. Again, it would have been useful to have a control group of non-Club children to compare their responses at pre, post and secondary school stages.

3.3 Results of children's feedback forms

NPT asked all the children to complete a feedback form at the end of the final Club session. The children used this to make a range of comments about their experiences of the Clubs. A selection of feedback from children at two of the schools is included below:

The best things about the Club were

"Getting to know more about secondary school"

"Making friends"

"Going bowling and making pizza"

"Everything"

"It's fun, we did all sorts of different things"

I think the Clubs could be improved by

"Having the Club everyday and children will learn more"

"More games"

"By talking about secondary school"

"Club members to listen more carefully to leaders. Also if we had a sheet to tell"

"What we were doing that week"

"Nothing because it was perfect!"

The best things about the Club leaders were

"Being so kind to us"

"Their smiles"

"They were really caring"

"They are nice and friendly"

The Clubs have helped me to ...

"Improve how to make friends"

"Be nice"

"Control my temper"

"Be more confident"

"Talk more and not be so shy"

The Clubs have helped to prepare me for secondary school by ...

"Not being scared of bullies"

"Making friends"

"Not be scared"

"Talking to us about it more".

The following chapter details the results of data collected from parents.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS (2) – PARENTS’ DATA

This chapter details the results for the information collected from parents. This includes:

- Results of interviews with parents after the Clubs
- Results of interviews with parents in the autumn term.

4.1 Results of interviews with parents after the Clubs

Ten parents were interviewed over the telephone once the Pyramid Club had come to an end. The results were as follows:

How has your child’s time at primary school been?

Parents were generally very positive about what their child’s time had been like at primary school. There was a general view that their child was happy at primary school. Note, however, that this contrasted with a question further on, about why they thought their child had been selected to take part in the Pyramid Club.

How is your child feeling about going to secondary school?

There was a mixed response from parents about how their child was feeling about going to secondary school. Half of the parents thought that their child had positive feelings about going there - this ranged from parents saying their child was ‘quite happy’, ‘very happy’ or ‘very excited’. For the other parents the responses were less positive – one child did not want to go there, another was ‘generally ok but a bit apprehensive’, another was ‘really nervous but also a bit excited’ and for another it was ‘mixed feelings particularly about leaving some friends behind’, and another parent said her child ‘cried at first but now feels happy about it’.

What do you think will be the main differences between primary and secondary school for your child?

In response to this question parents highlighted a number of issues. This included the size of the school, learning more, and more of a focus on education including coursework, homework and new subjects. They also mentioned it being stricter than primary school, and having to be more organised and becoming more independent and responsible, for example going to school by bus on their own.

Do you think your relationship with them will change in the next year, once they've started at secondary school?

Several parents said they hoped the relationship would not change between themselves and their child. Some parents did not think that the relationship would change, although there was some concern about their child 'getting in with the wrong crowd'. Others noted that changes were already taking place, such as 'he's already standing up for himself more' and 'she's a bit more mouthy and answers back'. Several parents were also quite positive about any changes which might happen, especially in relation to their child becoming more independent.

Before your child starting going to the Club, on a scale of 1 to 5 how worried were you about your child starting secondary school? (1=not very worried and 5=very worried)

Parents were asked on a scale of 1 to 5 how worried they were about their child starting secondary school (1 being not very worried and 5 being very worried). Two parents rated their level of worry as a 1, four as a 3, one as a 4 and three as a 5. The average rating for parents being a 3. These findings reflected the parents' views above.

What are your main worries or concerns about his/her move to secondary school?

Parents' worries fell into two categories – education, and social and emotional well-being. For one parent whose child was dyslexic there was a worry that he would 'slip through the net'. For another parent the worry was that the school had a bad reputation, and this made him worry about the quality of education there. Seven of the ten parents' concerns focused on the social and emotional well-being of their child, such as making friends, getting in with a bad crowd or being bullied. Parents also felt that their child lacked confidence, or that the child was scared that teachers would be strict. One parent was worried about the child actually getting to the school, which was much farther away than the primary school. One parent did not have any worries at all.

How satisfied were you about the information you received about the Club? (1=not very satisfied and 5=very satisfied)

Most parents rated the information they received about the Pyramid Club at a 5, ie very positive. A couple of parents rated it a 3 or 4, so the average was 4.7. It can be concluded that parents were extremely satisfied with the information they received about the Pyramid Club.

Did you attend the pre Club meeting?

Six of the ten parents attended the pre Club meeting. Of those who did attend, the general view was that it was very useful, as the following quotes demonstrate:

"It was brilliant. It made it sound so exciting. I could tell he (child) would like it"

"I really liked the idea of them bringing the children together and making them more confident"

"I didn't have many questions – they covered everything!"

"The teacher gave us the information we needed and we can always speak to the teacher about things if we need to".

One parent was not particularly positive about it. She said

"I wasn't very impressed. It was very low key – there wasn't much enthusiasm generated by staff. The information on the night was the same as what was written".

What did you think they were trying to do in the Clubs?

Parents were asked what they thought the aim of the Pyramid Club was. Seven of the ten parents interviewed described how they thought it was set up to improve and build children's confidence. Their ability to socialise with peers was mentioned by a few parents, and helping children to prepare for secondary school was mentioned by one parent.

What would you say the main reasons were for your child being picked to take part in the Club?

Parents were asked why they thought their child had been selected to take part in the Pyramid Clubs. Most parents mentioned that their child was either shy, quiet, nervous, lacked confidence, or lacked social skills and the ability to make new friends.

What would you say your child liked most about the Club?

All parents were extremely positive about their child's experiences of the Club. The following quotes show some of the parents' responses:

"She loved it – loved making things, the trips out and was very pleased to go every week. She was really disappointed for it to end"

"He liked not having to sit down and write. It was relaxed and non-school like"

"He liked everything and was really happy when I came to pick him up"

"Cooking, the trip, the people (other kids and the adults) she just really enjoyed it".

When asked if there was anything their child did not like about the Club, none of the parents could think of anything their child had not liked.

Since your child has been going to the Club, has your child changed at all? If yes, in what way?

Seven of the ten parents described positive changes in their child, as the following quotes demonstrate:

"He is more confident in his studies and when he speaks to other people he's more confident now"

"Yes, he definitely has come out of his shell. He talks a lot more and asks a lot more positive questions. It's all as a direct result of going to the Club"

"It gave her more confidence to be herself even when she decided to go to (a different school). It gave her more self belief"

"Yes he's really happy. The more you praise him, the more confident he gets".

Three of the parents were less forthright about possible changes in their child. One child had only attended three of the Club sessions, so the parent said she did not think he had changed. Another said the child had not changed at all and was still the same, and the third parent said their child had changed a little but had still not mastered the art of making friends.

Did the class teacher or any of the other Club leaders give you any feedback about how your child has been getting on at the Club? If no, would you have liked this?

Eight parents had not received any feedback about how their child was getting on at the Club. Two parents said they had received good feedback about their child's general progress at school. Several parents said they thought getting feedback from the Club would be useful.

Now that your child has been going to the Club, how worried are you about him/her moving to secondary school? (1=not worried at all, 5=very worried)

Some of the parents were still very worried about their child moving to secondary school. Overall the average rating for the ten parents was 2.7. This is slightly lower than the average of 3 when parents were asked generally how worried they were. One parent said “I’m less worried about it because he’s been going to the Club”.

If you do have worries (about your child going to secondary school), what sort of things are you worried about?

Most parents were still worried about their child’s move to secondary school. The main issues were bullying, the secondary school having a bad reputation, mixing with other children, travel to school and safety, whether the child would be able to stand up for themselves and for the child moving out of the area, being in another environment and being shy.

How prepared do you think your child is for the move, having now attended the Club? (1=not very prepared and 5=very prepared)

Most parents rated their child’s level of preparedness for the move since attending the Club as a 3, 4 or 5. One parent rated it a 1 as she felt that her daughter was still not prepared enough. Another parent (of a boy who only attended three sessions) could not provide a rating because his attendance had been limited. The average rating was 3.7.

Have there been any benefits to you/your relationship, as a result of your child attending the Club?

All parents (except the boy’s mum who only attended 3 sessions) reported benefits to their relationship as a result of their child attending the Club. Parents said such things as

“Yes, he’s much more confident now and speaks to us much better”

“He’s more willing to do things – jobs around the house. He’s more alert and aware and more interested in the news etc.”

“She’s able to think for herself and has more confidence”

“To me she’s got more confident – she’s doing more activities, socialising more and generally got more confidence”.

It was mentioned specifically by several parents, that seeing their child more confident and happy, made them happy.

Overall, what would you say your child got out of going to be Clubs?

All parents had something very positive to say about what their child got out of the Clubs. Increased confidence was a central theme, as was mixing with other children. For example:

“She got more independent – she thoroughly enjoyed it overall – it’s done her ever so much good”

“Confidence really, that’s what he didn’t have before”

“Maybe talking more with other kids in his class – he’s more integrated now”

“Overall it built on her confidence and self belief which has enabled her to move forward in her life”.

The following section details the results of the interviews with parents, once their child was at secondary school.

4.2 Results of interviews with parents, when their children were at secondary school

On a scale of 1 to 5 how happy was your child about going to secondary school? (1 = not very happy and 5=very happy)

Overall parents reported that their child was happy to be going to the secondary school that it attended. The average rating that parents gave was 4.5.

On a scale of 1 to 5 how smooth do you think your child’s transition to secondary school was? (1=not very smooth, 5=very smooth)

All parents except one rated their child’s transition as a 3, 4 or 5 indicating that the transition was either fairly smooth or very smooth. One parent rated it a 2, as her daughter had been beaten up twice since being at the secondary school. The mean average rating for the group of parents was 3.9.

On a scale of 1 to 5 how settled into secondary school do you think your child is? (1=not very settled , 5=very settled).

When asked how settled their children were now, eight out of the ten parents rated their child a 4 or 5, thus indicating that they were very settled into secondary school. One parent rated her daughter a 2 and one parent did not

answer the question. In terms of how long it took to settle in, four of the eleven parents said 'straight away', two said one week, and four parents gave responses ranging between 2/3 weeks and two months. One parent said her daughter had still not settled in.

What do you think has helped them to settle in?

There were a number of different things that parents mentioned, that they thought had helped their child to settle in. The most popular response was friendships, either existing friendships from primary school, being in the same class with children they already knew such as friends or neighbours, and making new friends in their class. Specific things the school had done had also been mentioned, such as the importance of an induction day.

Are there any things that your child has found difficult about secondary school?

Three parents said their child had not found anything difficult about secondary school. Two parents mentioned bullying. Both of their children were currently experiencing bullying. One parent mentioned that their child was still very shy and was having difficulty asking for help about homework, another was concerned about organising his workload due to his dyslexia, another was concerned about the amount of homework, another was scared by the older Year 9 and Year 10 children and one boy found it difficult to carry his PE kit around, as there are no lockers.

If they've had difficulty settling in is there anything that could be done to help them settle in more?

Most parents didn't have any suggestions in relation to this question. For the two children who were experiencing being bullied, the police were already involved in one of these situations and the parent in the other case was going to contact the school. A number of parents wanted more support from teachers around learning and special needs.

What does your child like about secondary school?

Being more grown up and being independent were mentioned by many parents as things that children liked. Particular reference was made to certain things such as having lockers, travelling on their own to school, and having more freedom to go out with friends. Other issues mentioned were learning new and different subjects and having new hobbies. Making new friends was also mentioned by several parents.

What difference do you think attending the Pyramid Club has made to your child settling into secondary school? (1=made no difference, 5=made lots of difference) and why?

The response to this question was very positive with most parents (8 out of 10 who answered the question) rating it a 4 or a 5. The mean average rating for this question was 4.2.

Increased confidence was the most popular response here, mentioned specifically by five parents. Other responses included help with the child's studies, generally learning more, and doing things with other children at Pyramid Club, such as making food. One parent said "It gave her a lot more confidence – in everything – even at home". Another parent said "She was really anxious about attending Pyramid Club, she was really worried that she wouldn't fit in. They went on outings which was great and the size of the group really helped".

Some of the schools are running Pyramid Club sessions for the children this term. Does your child attend these?

Only two parents said their child was attending Pyramid Clubs in their secondary school. One father said his son would have liked to continue with the Pyramid Clubs into the secondary school, however, his school was not running them. One parent said that an NPT Project Worker came to see her daughter to see how she was getting on, and offered contact with him if she needed additional support.

Thinking back to what you were worried about when your child was coming up to secondary school, what would you say were your main worries?

The main themes were: friendships in terms of either leaving friends behind, making new friends and getting in with the wrong crowd, being bullied, and how they would cope with course work and homework and lastly getting to and from school.

Now that your child has been at the secondary school for a couple of months, how do you feel about any of those things?

For ten of the 11 parents, their initial worries were unfounded. They felt that their child was generally happy, had settled in and had made new friends, and was coping with the school work. One parent said she still felt the same as her son was very easily led. Another parent said her original worries were unfounded but that her daughter was now being bullied.

Have you noticed any changes in your child, and if so what?

The general view from parents was that their children were growing up, physically and were becoming more mature and independent. Several parents also mentioned that their young people had become more rude, 'lippy', 'gobby' and had more 'attitude'. In general the changes were seen as positive and 'normal'.

Have they made any new friends, or taken up new hobbies?

Some parents mentioned that their child had developed new hobbies, but virtually all said that their child had made new friends at secondary school. One parent said her child had kept the same friends from primary school.

How do you think your relationship with your child will change in the next year or so, now that they've started at secondary school?

When asked how parents thought their relationship with their teenager might change in the following year or so, there were some mixed responses. Most parents were aware their child was changing but did not know how this would affect their relationship. Some parents were unsure and said they hoped it would stay the same as it was. The following quotes reflect the mixed responses:

"I haven't really thought about it. He's very close to me and tells me what's bothering him"

"She's growing up – it's hard. She gets so rude sometimes I get to the end of my tether with her. But we get on okay. We're more like sisters than mum and daughter"

"I don't think it will change. I still have to coach him for him to settle well eg getting in with bad groups and stuff like that"

"I'm dreading it, I don't know what it'll be like".

What do you like best about your child being at secondary school?

Most parents were very positive about their child being at secondary school. Becoming independent was mentioned by several parents as something that they particularly liked about their child being at secondary school. Getting on well at school was mentioned by a few others. One parent said "I'm happy for her that she's fitted in" and another said "I like him having the independence, growing up, prioritising his homework, he goes to school and comes back on his own and he now has his own key".

Additional comments/suggestions from parents

One of the children has dyslexia and the parent was concerned about him getting appropriate support at the secondary school. It was not until 6-7 weeks into the secondary school autumn term that information from the primary school's SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) about her son's dyslexia had filtered through to the secondary school. The mother contacted the form tutor to discuss the issue.

One parent thought NPT should follow up all the children into secondary school to check which other children they were mixing with.

One parent mentioned her son's induction to the secondary school which involved a whole day at the new school, where he met other classmates. She said this made him feel much more confident about starting in September.

One parent thought that NPT could provide information about funding bodies for grants for bus fares, as Wandsworth no longer provide these.

The following - and final - results chapter, details the results for school staff and NPT Project Workers.

CHAPTER 5:

RESULTS (3) - SCHOOL STAFF AND PROJECT WORKERS' DATA

This chapter details the results for teachers, Club leaders and Project Workers. It includes:

- Results of teacher feedback on Clubs
- Results of Club leaders' and teachers' feedback on individual children
- Results of volunteer Club leaders' feedback
- Results of NPT Project Workers.

5.1 Results of teacher feedback on Clubs

At the end of the Club sessions teachers completed feedback forms. This covered their views about the selection process for the Clubs, arrangements for the Clubs, their views of the Club leaders, the impact they thought the Clubs had on the children as a whole group, and any improvement they thought could be made to the project. In total eight teachers completed forms.

Teachers' views of the selection process for the Clubs

The overall view from teachers was that the selection process worked well, was very thorough, and generally targeted the right children. Some teachers liked the fact that careful consideration is given to all children, and that the process takes into account parents', teachers' and children's views. There was some criticism of the CISS forms - one teacher thought the forms were too long, and another said that teachers knew automatically who the Club is suitable for without the need to complete the CISS forms.

Views about the Club leaders

All teachers were very positive about the Club leaders, as the following quotes show:

"They were lots of fun"

"Were good, helpful and friendly"

"Interacted well with children and had a very positive approach".

One teacher, whilst very positive about the leaders, thought that they would benefit from more training about appropriate activities and boundaries for this age group.

How teachers found making arrangements for the Clubs

There were very contrasting views to this question. Some teachers found it difficult particularly in relation to other commitments, whilst others found the process very straightforward and efficient.

The impact of the Clubs on the children as a group

All of the teachers had positive views about the impact of the Clubs on the children as a group. For example:

“It gave them a new identity, they belonged to something good and this made them feel good”

“The children involved have enjoyed the sessions and gained in confidence and making new friends”

“More positive and prepared for secondary school. Children have made a good circle of friends”.

“It brought a group of shy, quiet, unconfident children together, made them work as a team and helped them move to secondary school with a bit more ease”

“I think the children learned to cope with a specific group setting. They also challenged their own perceptions of the group”.

Improvements that could be made to the project

Five of the eight teachers mentioned improvements they thought could be made to the NPT project. Two related to the project's relationship with parents. One teacher thought there should be better links with parents and another said the parents' meeting needed to be more organised, with parents being encouraged to talk more to each other and have questions ready. Another teacher thought there should be more active and sporting activities, as s/he had noticed that many of the Pyramid Club children were overweight. Another suggestion from a teacher was for the project to start earlier in the year, so that children do not become restless toward the end of term. More training for Club leaders around appropriate activities and boundaries for this age group was also mentioned.

5.2 Results of Club leaders' and teachers' feedback on individual children

As stated previously, individual observation sheets were completed for each child by a Club leader. These included teachers' observations following the post Club meeting, where children's progress was discussed between NPT Project Workers and school staff. Detailed below are a selection of Club leaders' and teachers' feedback for children at one Hillingdon school and one Wandsworth school. As the quotes demonstrate, most of the comments are very positive about the children, citing specific changes in their behaviour or attitude. In a few of the cases teachers and Club leaders express concern, or have negative comments about the child's behaviour.

5.2.1 Club leader/teacher's observations – Wandsworth school

Club leader: *"He had ups and downs during the Club, but became more enthusiastic and talkative in the last few weeks".*

Teacher: *"Gained in confidence. Happier about secondary school".*

Club leader: *"He was a very enthusiastic member of the group and was one of the leaders in the group. He sometimes took the role of 'father' and policed xxxx".*

Teacher: *"Really nice to be part of a gentler group. Always found a reason to speak to the link teacher on the Pyramid Day. Smiles more and his attendance has improved".*

Club leader: *"She grew in confidence. She was laid back in the group – but could take the lead in certain activities".*

Teacher: *"Definitely happier. Probably the only positive time she gets outside of school. Attendance for Clubs good for her. Really grateful. Worried about secondary school".*

Club leader: *"She began to initiate conversations with Club leaders. Still quiet, but less so. More confident speaking in groups".*

Teacher: *"Very artistic – amazing imagination. Less depressed. Responded well to positive attention. Positive sign that she attended 9 of the 10".*

Club leader: *"Noticed the biggest difference in her. Voice louder. Starting to give more in friendships".*

Teacher: *"Wants to be loved – very happy to be in Club. Happier. Really blossomed. Gave Link Teacher a picture and badge. Not in trouble anymore".*

5.2.2 Club leader/teacher's observations (Hillingdon)

Club leader: *"She remained quiet throughout but began to smile more".*

Teacher: *"Quiet still but noticed some change in confidence".*

Club leader: *"(name of child) was disruptive throughout, though generally manageable with a few words".*

Teacher: *"Felt he wasted the opportunity".*

Club leader: *"She started to smile in Clubs, seemed happier and grew in confidence".*

Teacher: *"Club was great for her. More positive about herself. Started at bottom in maths and finished at the top".*

Club leader: *"He may have found it difficult to find his place in the group. He tended to pair with xxxx, which could get him into trouble. Was absent 3 weeks in a row".*

Teacher: *"Behaviour got worse, but was salvageable with supervision and good choices".*

Club leader: *"She appeared to become more confident during Clubs".*

Teacher: *"Has come out of shell, quiet confidence. Passed SATs although not expected to. Can now stand up for herself".*

Club Leader: *"He displayed attention seeking behaviours, but it did improve throughout".*

Teacher: *"Still has no friends, prime candidate for bullying. Improved throughout".*

5.3 Results of volunteer Club leaders' feedback

Two sets of data were provided by the volunteer Club leaders – forms provided by NPT, and those designed by TSA. The results of these are given below:

5.3.1 NPT feedback forms

Seven volunteer Club leaders completed NPT's Club leader feedback forms. They were asked about their overall impression of the Transition project, their view of the training, what they thought children got out of the Clubs, other things that could be included in the Clubs and what they themselves got out of the Clubs and the training.

Volunteer Club leaders' overall impressions of the transition project

Six out of the seven volunteer Club leaders were extremely positive about the project, as this selection of quotes below demonstrates:

"A great initiative and experience, both the training and the Club itself"

"Excellent, well run with excellent staff and support"

"I think the children 'gelled' as a group, they became much more friendly towards each other and seemed happier at the prospect of senior school".

Two volunteer Club leaders thought the project was a good idea, although they had some concerns:

"A fairly good idea but needed more structure in what exactly was required during the project"

"Very good system which is effective, but could have been better organised".

Whether the training prepared volunteer Club leaders enough for them to run the Clubs

There were mixed views about whether the training prepared the volunteer Club leaders. Some people felt that the training had prepared them, whilst several thought that it hadn't. A couple of people missed the full training. Suggestions for improving the training included more sessions in relation to planning generally and trip planning, specific issues to talk about with the children during the sessions, and more understanding of children with behavioural problems.

What volunteer Club leaders thought the children got out of the Clubs

All of the volunteer Club leaders were extremely positive about what they thought the children got out of the Clubs. This included helping them prepare for secondary school, building their confidence, learning to interact with other children, increased self esteem, making new friends, meeting new 'grown ups', having fun, new opportunities and time just for them. One quote in particular stands out:

"I think that it was so essential to those 'Pyramid children'. I thought it really brought them out of their shell and encouraged them to get involved and have a good time".

Other things/activities volunteer Club leaders thought could be covered in the Clubs

Volunteer Club leaders suggested a wide range of different activities or issues that could be covered in the Clubs. These included discussion about the dangers of drugs and sex, PSHE subjects including hygiene, more discussion about secondary school and what it might be like. Activities mentioned were more 'calming' activities such as art, and more team activities so that children could learn to work together. Another suggestion was to let each child suggest and organise an activity during a session, if the children wanted to do so.

What volunteer Club leaders got out of the Clubs and training

All volunteer Club leaders reported that taking part in the Clubs was a valuable experience for them, as a selection of quotes demonstrate:

"It helped me have a better understanding of children and the interaction between the children within the group"

"So much valuable experience and memories, it was really enjoyable and I would love to do it again".

"More understanding of the children and great satisfaction seeing them blossom as the sessions progressed".

5.3.2 Feedback from the TSA questionnaire

Five volunteer Club leaders completed the TSA questionnaire that was distributed after the Clubs. This was anonymous, therefore it is not known if this was completed by the same volunteer Club leaders who completed NPT's feedback forms.

Once you started volunteering at a Club, on a scale of 1 to 5 can you rate how prepared the training made you feel? (1=not very prepared, 5=very prepared)

The volunteer Club leaders rated their level of being prepared as either a 3 or a 4. The average rating was 3.4.

From your experience what activities do you think were particularly beneficial to the children?

There were a range of responses to this question, including making things, team activities, group work, role play, trips out, and the party at the end of the Clubs.

On a scale of 1 to 5 how satisfied were you with the support before and after each session (1=not very satisfied, 5=very satisfied).

One volunteer Club leader only attended a few sessions and said she did not receive a de-brief at the end of the Club sessions. The others provided a rating, which on average was 3.5. The responses to their levels of satisfaction were mixed. One person said that the leader always explained what would happen in the sessions and they discussed things after, another person was given a ten week plan and another mentioned that sometimes there wasn't time at the end of the sessions for de-briefs.

What was most challenging about working at the Club?

Each volunteer Club leader gave an entirely different response to this question. The responses were as follows:

- Getting children to be quiet and respect each other
- Remembering all the children's names
- Dealing with disruptive children (in particular those with ADHD) and ensuring they did not spoil sessions for other children
- Attending to each and every one of the children
- Bringing issues to the children in an easy to understand way.

On a scale of 1 to 5 how happy were you with the way the sessions were organised (1=not very happy, 5=very happy)?

One person rated this a 5 and the others rated it a 3, giving an overall average of 3.4

How happy were you with the amount of input you had in terms of planning and organisation?

Volunteer Club leaders had different levels of input within their Club in relation to planning and organisation. Most of the volunteer Club leaders were happy with the amount of input they had; one volunteer said they would have liked more input.

What could NPT do to improve the training for volunteer Club leaders?

Only three of the respondents made suggestions, as follows:

- For new volunteer Club leaders to visit an existing Club, or meet with existing leaders, or invite existing leaders to a training session
- More understanding of children with behavioural problems
- More relevant specific ways of dealing with issues raised in the transition Club.

What could NPT do to improve information and support for volunteer Club leaders?

All volunteer Club leaders, made recommendations of how volunteer Club leaders could be provided with information and support. This included:

- More relevant information about how to deal with children who are shy and with low self esteem
- Clear guidelines about what is required from each of the volunteer Club leaders in terms of time and input so that there is an equal division of tasks
- Feedback from teachers and parents about the volunteer Club leaders
- Ensure that procedures are carried through ie being shown around the school, fire exits, also travel expenses
- A list of activities and ideas.

What do you think children got out of taking part in the Club?

The volunteer Club leaders had some very positive views about what the children got out of taking part in the Club, as the following quotes demonstrate:

“They felt part of a group and able to gain a bit more confidence”

“Confidence, better self esteem and fun”

“They seemed to have gelled as a group and have made friends and also talked more happily about going to senior school”

“They gained in confidence, became part of a team – camaraderie, loyalty, a sense of ownership”.

What volunteer Club leaders got out of being a Club volunteer

The volunteer Club leaders were very positive about their experiences of what they got out of being a volunteer, as the following quotes demonstrate:

“It was fun and I made new friends and enjoyed working with the children”

“It was so rewarding to see children begin to relate to other children and have them confide in us, which they would not have done when we first met them”

“More experience of working with children”

“An enjoyable experience working with some great kids”

“Seeing the children get excited about the Club and watching them smile”.

5.4 NPT Project Workers

Christina Guest and Suleyman Huseyin, the Project Workers at NPT were asked a range of questions. The data is presented below in terms of their views on what worked and what did not work in the project, what could be improved, what they enjoyed about the Clubs, and the future for the transitions work at NPT.

5.4.1 What worked well

Five main issues were identified by the two workers, as follows:

Relationship with the schools

Relationships with the primary schools were generally considered to be good, particularly for those schools who understood best what Pyramid Clubs aimed to do. The ID meeting process also worked well. In relation to the secondary schools that were approached to hold Clubs, these were generally very helpful. One Hillingdon school chose not to get involved, but three others agreed as did three in Wandsworth.

Parents’ pre Club meeting

Whilst there was low attendance at the parents’ pre Club meetings (between 20-25% overall) it was felt that the parents who had attended, had benefited. Therefore it was considered to be successful for those parents.

Primary school Clubs

The Project Workers found that the children that they thought would make a smooth transition, once they’d taken part in the Clubs, had done so, and those they had concerns about had actually found it more difficult. NPT staff concluded that this meant that “the major benefits were happening in the primary school work rather than the secondary school work”.

Training and support of volunteer Club leaders

The Project Manager's view was that the training offered was very good and that the volunteer Club leaders gave very positive feedback about it. However, the training that was offered could not always be delivered in the time frame. Note that one of the training days for Wandsworth did not take place because of difficulties with the venue and availability of the volunteer Club leaders. There are plans for the training to be extended from 3 days to 4-5 days and for it to be accredited by the Open University. However, NPT recognise that it may be difficult realistically to deliver this amount of training.

In relation to support for the volunteer Club Leaders, the Project Manager recognises that supervision of volunteer Club Leaders, at the end of sessions, can be difficult, particularly for the Clubs where herself and the Project Worker Suleyman Huseyin are not directly involved in that Club.

Impact of the Clubs on the children

Both Project Workers considered the Clubs to be a great success for the children, particularly in relation to the group work and a sense of team building and confidence building. Generally they could see confidence levels rising, see children playing together and doing activities together, having the opportunity to speak about their feelings, and identify how to deal with bullying.

5.4.2 What was difficult and did not work so well

Three main problematic areas were identified by the Project Workers:

CISS forms

The CISS forms were considered to be rather 'long-winded'. The shortened versions worked better for the Hillingdon schools. For the Wandsworth schools, there was a lot of reluctance to fill in the forms. However, all the Wandsworth schools and 3 of the 4 Hillingdon schools completed these at the pre stage. Fewer schools completed them at the post stage; only 1 Wandsworth school and two Hillingdon schools completed them.

Follow up into secondary school

The Project Workers spoke about the difficulties they experienced in following up children into the secondary schools. For Hillingdon, the 40 Club children moved to a total of 10 different secondary schools. For Wandsworth this was even more

difficult, where there were 17 different secondary schools that the 37 Club children attend.

All of the Wandsworth and Hillingdon Club children were invited to take part in a secondary school Club. However, for the vast majority of children this was not practical, as in most cases the children went to a different secondary school to that offering the Club. Two children did attend from other secondary schools.

However, it was important for NPT to know how well the Club children were settling in. A range of methods were used to follow these children up. Of the 40 Hillingdon children, 13 attended a secondary school Club, 6 took part in a group discussion about how they were getting on, information was received about 7 children and there were plans to visit 9 at one of the secondary schools. Five children out of the 40 had not been followed up either because they had moved out of the borough or were at a school that NPT could not access. NPT therefore knew how 85% of the Hillingdon Club children were settling in.

For Wandsworth the situation was more difficult. NPT had information about over half of the Club children (57%) either through their attendance at Clubs, from their teachers, parents or themselves. For 16 children (43%) information had not yet been received about how they were settling in. This was either because children had moved out of borough or because the school had not got back in touch with NPT. This situation was worsened by the time constraints on the Project Worker, given that this was only a half-time post. Following up the children into secondary school was identified as a key issue for the future.

Attendance at the secondary school Clubs

Attendance at the secondary school Clubs had not been particularly good. The Project Workers believed this was due to a number of factors; girls in particular did not want to walk home on their own in the dark, children had other activities they preferred to take part in on those days, playing with new friends, Year 7 Clubs were regarded as 'babyish' given their link to primary school and some children were unable to attend because the Clubs coincided with Ramadan.

5.4.3 What could be improved

This next section looks at what Project Workers would like to improve, and suggestions for how this could be done.

Relationships with the BiP Team

The Wandsworth Project Worker felt that it was important to have more contact with the BiP team. He felt that someone from the BiP team could have attended the ID meetings at the schools and supported the project more.

Paperwork for schools to complete

To improve the administration of the project, the Wandsworth Project Worker thought it would be good for schools to have a checklist of what they had done, and what they still had to do in relation to data.

The Project Manager thought that the paperwork process needed to start earlier with the schools, particularly Wandsworth if they were to continue using the CISS scales.

Involving children in the selection process

The Project Manager was particularly keen to involve children more in the selection process. One of the ways she suggested for doing this is to use computerized forms that children can complete themselves on a laptop computer.

Working with the secondary schools

To improve working with secondary schools the Project Manager thought NPT needed to approach secondary schools in a different way to that of the primary schools:

“The secondary schools are a new way of working for us, so there’s lots to improve upon. Secondary schools are really enthusiastic we just need to find a secondary school way of dealing with things”.

The Wandsworth Project Worker thought that more publicity/information for the secondary schools about the work of NPT, from within the borough was needed. He felt that this might increase the likelihood of secondary schools returning his telephone calls.

Training and support for volunteers

It has been agreed within NPT that the training for volunteers will be changed from a three day course to a 4-5 day course. The Wandsworth Project Worker was particularly keen to include more training for volunteer Club leaders around planning activities and more information about child protection. This is something that NPT are planning to include in the new training.

Developing different models for Transitions Pyramid Clubs

The Project Manager outlined NPT's plans to develop different models for transitions support. Three options are being considered, as follows:

1. Year 6 Clubs as a 'stand alone' without Club follow-ups in the secondary school
2. Set up a summer Club in secondary schools. Once children are offered a secondary school, work with the feeder primaries schools to identify children to take part in these Clubs at their secondary school. Then do a follow-up in the secondary school for the first five weeks of term.
3. Work with secondary schools to identify who is having difficulty settling in, and provide Pyramid Clubs for those children.

According to the Project Manager, NPT plan to work with other Local Authorities to diversify the transitions work, and will use a range of models for this.

5.4.4 What Project Workers have enjoyed most about being involved in this project

The Project Workers were overwhelmingly positive about the Transitions project and what children get out of it. The aspects they said they most valued were:

"Seeing the kids grow and seeing them in both settings ie primary and secondary schools"

"Seeing the shy ones settling into secondary school and even having 'attitude' was fantastic" .

The following chapter discusses the findings from the evaluation, and makes recommendations for developments in the project.

CHAPTER 6:

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final section of the report discusses the results of the project, and makes recommendations for future work. It covers the following topics:

- Reminder of the aims of the study
- Summary of main findings
- Discussion
- Recommendations.

6.1 Reminder of the aims of the study

The aims of the evaluation were to:

- (a) identify whether Pyramid Clubs assist vulnerable children to make a smooth transition to secondary school
- (b) to understand the processes involved in running a transitions scheme using the Pyramid model.

6.2 Summary of main findings

The main findings of the project were as follows:

Children's views and experiences

- The children who took part in the Clubs were very positive about them. They liked the Club Leaders, enjoyed the range of activities on offer, had fun, made new friends and developed social skills. Many of the children reported increases in their self-confidence. Some of the children described changes in their behaviour, attitude, and in some cases improvements in their school work, as a result of attending the Club.
- Before starting the Clubs, children had a wide range of concerns about the transition to secondary school. These included being bullied, getting lost, and making new friends. After the Clubs, most of the children said they did not have any specific fears or worries about going to secondary school.

- There was a mixed response from the children as to whether taking part in the Pyramid Clubs, was seen as 'cool' or 'uncool'. Some felt stigmatized as a result of taking part, whilst others felt envied.
- The data suggests that the Pyramid Clubs had a positive impact on a range of factors, including how the children felt about going to secondary school, how they felt about their life at the time, how easy they thought it would be to settle into secondary school and how scared they were about being bullied in secondary school.

Parents' views

- The parents were very positive about their child's experience of attending the Pyramid Clubs. They felt they had been well informed about the Clubs' aims and activities.
- Parents described how much their child enjoyed the Clubs, and reported increased levels of confidence in their child as a result. Most parents felt that attendance at the Clubs helped their child to settle into secondary school.
- Parents' worries about their child's transition were mainly in relation to friendships and bullying, and their child's shyness and lack of confidence. Despite their child's attendance at the Clubs, these concerns persisted until the children had settled into secondary school. Most of the parents felt, in fact, that their child was happy at secondary school, and had settled in well.
- Most parents were very positive about the NPT project in general, and pleased that their child had attended the Clubs. Some thought it would be useful to receive feedback about their child's progress during the Clubs.

Teachers' feedback

- Teachers were generally positive about the process for selecting children to take part in the Clubs. There were some criticisms about the amount of paperwork involved in the project.
- The teachers were very positive about the impact of the Clubs on the children. They cited benefits to children such as making new friends, gaining in confidence, 'belonging to something good', and being more prepared for secondary school.

Volunteer Club leaders' feedback

- The volunteer Club leaders believed the children benefited greatly from the Clubs. Increased self-confidence in children was cited as the main impact.
- There were mixed views about whether the volunteer training prepared the Club leaders well enough, and there were suggestions for improvements.
- The Club leaders were very positive about their experiences of being involved in the Club, and felt they benefited personally and professionally.

NPT Project Workers' feedback

- Both Project Workers considered the Clubs to be a great success for the children, particularly in relation to confidence building.
- Project Workers believe that training for the volunteer Club leaders is generally successful, although they had some suggestions for improving it. However, they mentioned that not all volunteer club leaders took part in the full training. They believe that what is available is good, although they are not always able to deliver it as they would like.
- The Project Workers considered that some improvements could be made to achieve the aims of the project. These included improving the administration and paperwork for schools, developing better ways of working with the secondary schools, and extending the training and support provided for volunteer club leaders.
- Project Workers experienced difficulties in being able to offer follow-up support to all children in the secondary schools. This was mainly due to the large numbers of secondary schools in the two boroughs and the fact that the Wandsworth, Project Worker's post was only half-time.
- Attendance at the Pyramid Clubs run in the secondary schools was low. The Project Workers believed this was due to a number of factors; girls in particular did not want to walk home on their own in the dark, children had other activities they preferred to take part in on those days, playing with new friends, Year 7 Clubs were regarded as 'babyish' (given their link to primary school) and some children were unable to attend because the Clubs coincided with Ramadan.
- The NPT Project Manager believed that in order for schools to take the evaluation seriously in relation to ensuring that children complete the pre and post measures they need to see the benefits themselves. They would

therefore like to work more closely with teachers to develop measures which teachers could use.

- The Project Workers proposed three new models to offer transitions support :
 - Year 6 Clubs as a 'stand alone', without Club follow-ups in the secondary school
 - A summer holiday Club at secondary schools, but offered to children in the primary feeder schools, then follow-up these children at secondary school
 - Work with secondary schools to identify children who are having difficulty settling in, and offer them Pyramid Clubs.

6.3 Discussion

This section considers the positive impact of Pyramid Clubs, running the Clubs and issues arising.

6.3.1 Positive impact of Pyramid Clubs

The results of this study suggest that Pyramid Clubs had a positive impact on the children who took part in them. This is indicated by the children themselves, their parents, school staff, NPT Project Workers and volunteer Club leaders. The views and experiences of these different groups are explored below:

Children's views and experiences

The majority of the children were very positive about their experiences at the Pyramid Clubs. They described being less shy, more talkative, having more friends, being less scared about secondary school and generally feeling more self-confident. The ingredients for creating these positive outcomes for children were a combination of the activities on offer, the size of the group, and the skills and personality of the Club leaders.

The children talked about how much fun they had in activities such as cooking, arts and crafts and going on trips. Some children mentioned that they learnt to join in more, and make friends. Others mentioned the importance of working in groups, and talking in front of other children about their worries and concerns. The kindness of the Club leaders was also mentioned by many of the children.

The whole ethos of the Clubs focuses on being kind to others, playing games that are cooperative, sharing information with each other, and having fun. This combination of group size, group ethos, good Club leaders, and a range of enjoyable activities, all had a positive impact on the children. These seem to

create the right environment to enable quiet, shy and withdrawn children to participate.

Overall, the statistically significant pre and post Club data suggest that Pyramid Clubs have a positive impact upon the following:

- How the children felt about going to secondary school
- How the children felt about their life at the time
- How easy they thought it would be to settle into secondary school
- How scared they were about being bullied at secondary school

In addition, there were two areas, where the differences in responses at pre Club and secondary school stage were statistically significant:

- How the children felt about their life at the time
- How easy they thought it would be/was to settle into secondary school

The data we have from the focus groups undertaken at secondary school also suggest that the Pyramid Clubs had a positive impact on helping these children to settle in to secondary school.

Parents' views

The parents interviewed were generally very positive about the impact that the Club had on their children. Parents talked about how much their child enjoyed the Club. They talked about specific activities their child enjoyed, how much they enjoyed the relaxed feel of the group, and how happy their child was when the parent collected him/her. Many parents noticed increases in their child's self-confidence as a result of attending the Clubs. Generally parents felt that their child's transition to secondary school had been fairly smooth. Most parents also thought their child had settled in fairly quickly. Parents believed that their child's attendance at the Pyramid Club had made a difference to them settling in to secondary school. When asked what it was about the Clubs that had contributed to this, the most popular reason given was increased self-confidence.

The data collected from parents therefore suggests that the Pyramid Clubs did meet the aim of supporting vulnerable and withdrawn children.

Teachers' views

One of the main areas that teachers mentioned in their feedback was that they had also noticed positive changes in the Pyramid children's level of self-confidence. Teachers were extremely positive about the impact that the Clubs had on the children. For some children this translated into enhanced school performance, improvements in their behaviour, increases in self confidence,

ability to make friends, and working as part of a team. This affirmed a new identity for these children.

Volunteer Club leaders' views

The volunteer Club leaders had very positive things to say about what they thought children got out of the Club. They mentioned increased confidence, feeling part of a group, enjoying themselves, making new friends and also feeling happier about going to secondary school. However, they also identified issues in relation to their training, and the level of support they received during the Clubs. These issues are returned to later.

6.3.2 Running the Clubs and issues arising

A number of issues arose in relation to running the Clubs. These were as follows:

Selecting primary schools

The process was different for Wandsworth and Hillingdon. For the Hillingdon schools the primary schools selected were ones that had successfully had Year 3 input from NPT. These therefore understood the process and the aims of NPT and had experience of previous success for the children involved. For Wandsworth, the primary schools were selected by the BiP team. Difficulties were experienced with one of the schools, and NPT would have preferred to have more input in selecting the schools. This is an issue that needs to be addressed in the future.

Paperwork for the schools including the CISS scales

The CISS scales were developed by Jane McSherry at Wandsworth, and a shortened version was made available for Hillingdon schools. The CISS scales, which are completed by the Year 6 class teachers, form an integral part of the selection process for children. The teachers are then asked to complete the scales at the end of the Clubs, so that the child's progress can be measured against the initial scales. Only one Wandsworth School and two Hillingdon schools completed these measures after the Clubs. Therefore the progress of individual children was not able to be measured, either as part of the evaluation, or separately by NPT. In addition, a few schools used earlier versions of the scales.

Having pre and post intervention measures is essential, if any changes in outcomes are to be properly recorded and identified. It need not be the CISS scales themselves that form part of this measure. As NPT themselves have

suggested, it would be better for them to work with schools to develop pre and post measures that are directly relevant to teachers. This is more likely to act as an incentive for teachers to ensure that they are completed.

It has been recognised by NPT staff that schools involved in Pyramid programmes have difficulty completing all the necessary paperwork. The pre Club paperwork seems to be completed, but once the children have attended the Clubs, then it is more difficult to get teachers to fill in forms. This is particularly the case close to the end of the summer term. The Wandsworth Project Worker suggested that to improve administration and data collection, schools could be given a checklist of what needs to be done and by when. The Project Manager also suggested that the paperwork process needed to start earlier. This is another issue that needs to be addressed for the future.

Relationship with BiP and LEA's

From the teachers' feedback, the ID process seemed to be successful. Whilst the process for Wandsworth and Hillingdon was fairly similar, the relationship with the LEA was different; Liaison took place with the Hillingdon NPT coordinator to select schools to take part, whereas the BiP team itself selected the Wandsworth schools. Given the BiP team's involvement in the project, the Wandsworth NPT Project Worker thought that a member of the BiP team could attend the ID meetings at the Wandsworth schools.

Communication with parents

The interviews with parents show that they were extremely satisfied with the information they received about the Pyramid Club. When asked what they thought the Clubs were aiming to do, they all mentioned increasing the confidence of the children, and helping them to make an easier transition to secondary school. Equally they were all very aware of why their child had been selected to take part in the Clubs.

In relation to the pre Club meetings, few parents attended these - the Project Manager estimated it to be around 20-25% of parents in total. However, despite such low attendance it was felt that those who did attend benefited, and therefore NPT would continue to run these sessions. This was reiterated by the parents themselves who attended the pre Club meeting. Apart from one who did not find it particularly useful, the others were very complimentary about it. The Wandsworth Project Worker believed that many of the children's parents had Pyramid 'characteristics' themselves, ie were shy and quiet, and therefore was not surprised that attendance at a group meeting was low. He wondered if NPT could develop ways of working with parents to encourage more parents to attend these sessions. On the other hand, it may be that parents do not attend the pre

Club meetings because they feel they have enough information. Further work is needed to address the issue of parents' attendance at the pre Club meetings.

In terms of communicating with parents about their child's progress and involvement at the Club, there is currently no formal feedback process for parents. During the interviews with parents, many said they would find this useful. Again, it is recommended that this issue is addressed in the future. In particular, it may enable parents to encourage and support the activities undertaken by the children at the Club.

Whilst the parents were very positive about their child's attendance at the Clubs, their own worries about their child attending secondary school did not change as a result of their child attending the Clubs. It was not until their child had actually started secondary school that parents' considered that their fears were unfounded. Developing work with parents, possibly offering a group or one-to-one to support to discuss their worries and concerns, may benefit parents and their children.

Volunteer Club leaders - training and support

Data from volunteer Club leaders was fairly limited. Five out of 19 completed TSA's questionnaire and seven completed feedback forms for NPT. We deliberately kept the questionnaire anonymised, so that Club leaders felt they could be entirely honest when giving feedback. However, this made it quite difficult to 'chase up' those who had not sent back questionnaires. It also made it difficult to tell whether the five Club leaders who had filled in NPT's feedback forms were the same people who had completed the TSA ones. Another issue was that not all of the volunteers took part in all of the training

However, from the data that was collected, volunteer Club leaders were extremely positive about the Pyramid Clubs and their involvement in them. They certainly felt they benefited from the experience. A few volunteers however did not feel entirely prepared for the task of volunteering in the Clubs, despite the training they received. The suggestions for improvements to the training included: planning generally and trip planning, specific issues to talk about with the children during the sessions, and more understanding of children with behavioural problems. They also suggested that volunteer Club leaders should visit an existing Club, or meet with existing leaders. One of the teachers thought there should be more volunteer training around appropriate activities and boundaries for this age group.

In addition, volunteer Club leaders considered they needed improved information about how to deal with children who are shy and have low self-esteem, and clear guidelines about what is required of volunteer Club leaders. They also wanted to ensure that procedures are carried through ie being shown around the school,

location of fire exits and travel expenses and finally a list of activities and ideas that can be used with the children. It is of note that NPT are already planning to address many of these issues, and propose to extend the length of the training to support this.

Follow up into secondary school

Follow up of the children into secondary school was problematic. Whilst most of the Hillingdon children were followed up, only half of the Wandsworth children were. There were a number of reasons for this; the sheer number of secondary schools in that borough, a lack of existing links with many of the secondary schools and finally, that the Project Worker's post was half-time. For the Wandsworth children one to one support was offered for those experiencing difficulty. However, again, the sheer number of secondary schools involved makes it very difficult to support such large numbers of children.

Developing different models

The NPT Project Workers were particularly keen to develop different models to offer transitions support to children. The suggested models were:

1. Year 6 Clubs as a 'stand alone' without Club follow-ups in the secondary school
2. Work with secondary schools and their primary feeder schools, and set up summer holiday Pyramid Clubs. Then a follow-up Pyramid Club could be provided during the first five weeks of secondary school.
3. Work with secondary schools to identify who is having difficulty settling in, and provide Pyramid Clubs for those children.

The second model (above) is considered to have particular promise. This is because one of the strengths of the Clubs is that children develop skills in friendship building. However, with the current model, it is likely many of the primary Club children will be going to different secondary schools to the children in their Club. The attraction of the second model above is that the children can develop new friendships with other children who they can continue to have these friendships with into secondary school.

Pre and post Club measures

Club smileys were used for children to describe how they felt about various aspects of the Club. The present form provides three options for children to select; a happy face, a sad face and a 'neutral' face. It would be better for

children to have more than three options for this. NPT could develop a bigger, range, such as five faces or use a numerical scale – a scale of 1 to 5, or 1 to 10. This would enable a greater distinction to be made in the children's views.

6.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made, as a result of the evaluation of the pilot project described in this report:

- *The selection of children* – it is recommended that NPT review the use of the long version of the CISS selection scales. These are lengthy and time-consuming, and many schools did not feel able to administer them in full. If NPT is to continue with this version, then the administration process needs to start earlier.
- *The role of parents* – it is recommended that NPT consider developing the ways in which it relates to and involves parents in the project. This may include encouraging more parents to attend the pre Club meetings, and/or running support groups for parents. It might also involve giving parents regular updates on their child's progress, and enabling them to support the learning and development that is taking place each week at the Clubs.
- *Training of volunteers* – a number of issues are detailed in the report, in relation to the training and support provided for volunteers. It is recommended that NPT consider making these changes to this aspect of the project.
- *Links to secondary schools* – if NPT continue to use transitions models which involve following-up children into secondary schools, this process could be improved upon. Whilst it is appreciated that the primary children go to a large number of secondary schools, and that school staff are extremely busy, links between NPT and the secondary schools need to be strengthened, to ensure that feedback on children's progress is received. Where progress is not considered to be satisfactory, then arrangements can then be made to offer the child follow-up support.
- *Involvement of schools in the evaluation* – NPT to work closely with the schools to develop pre and post measures which are meaningful for the school, so that they find the results useful and this then becomes an incentive for them to ensure that they are completed. If this takes place for all schools, NPT would have better evidence of the effects of the Pyramid Clubs on a whole range of attitudinal and behaviour indicators.
- *Relationship with BiP workers* – it is recommended that if NPT continue to work with Wandsworth, then they hold discussions with the BiP team, in

relation to the involvement of workers in the project, to discuss what could be improved.

- *Pre and post data* – it is recommended that NPT continue to administer the pre and post smiley faces measures. However, they should adopt a 5 point scale, rather than 3 point. This would provide a more robust measurement.
- *Consideration of other models* – NPT have suggested a number of alternative models for Pyramid Clubs which are described in the report, such as running summer Clubs for children going to the same secondary school. It is recommended that NPT consider running further pilot projects based on these models
- *Evaluating future projects* – If new models, such as those described above, are implemented, they must be fully evaluated. In particular, it is important to have more funding and time to enable the evaluators to work with all the schools involved, to get pre and post intervention data for Club children and a control group.

REFERENCES

Anderson, L.W., Jacobs, J., Schramm, S., & Splittgerber, F. (2000). School Transitions: Beginning of the End or a New Beginning? *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 325-339.

Galton, M., Morrison, I., & Pell, T. (2000). Transfer and Transition in English Schools: Reviewing the Evidence. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 340-363.

Lucey, H., & Reay, D. (2002). Carrying the Beacon of Excellence: Social Class Differentiation and Anxiety at a time of Transition. *Journal of Education Policy*, 17 (3), 321-336.

Pratt, S. & George, R. (2005). Transferring Friendships: Girls' and Boys' Friendships in the Transition from Primary to Secondary School. *Children and Society*, 19, 16-26.

Zeedyk, S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B., & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the Transition from Primary to Secondary School: Perceptions of Pupils, Parents and Teachers. *School Psychology International*, 24 (1), 67-79.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Child Smileys and scale questions