

Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions

An action research project to improve
breaktime experiences for S1 pupils

Evaluation Report

August - November 2021

**GET
INTO
SUMMER**



Introduction

The **Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions** action research project aimed to **improve the play experiences** for S1 pupils in a number of secondary schools. The project gathered evidence to highlight the benefits of this co-design approach to roll out to other schools to support positive transitions from Primary to Secondary School throughout Scotland.

As Primary 7 pupils transition into Secondary school the affordance and opportunity for play reduces significantly. Play happens when children and young people follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way, and for their own reasons. This is one of the major changes children experience as they move into their new school. Research shows that play provides opportunities for **social interaction** and **physical activity**, and can **reduce children's stress** and **promote wellbeing**. During childhood and adolescence, social and emotional skills develop rapidly. This development relies on children interacting and playing with their peers and being exposed to broad and diverse experiences.

The Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project is the early steps in the journey to improve the experiences and wellbeing of secondary school pupils in Scotland. Beyond this pilot project, schools are invited to build on momentum created around play, breaktimes and transition themes.

This project showed that there is an appetite to explore further the potential of play in Secondary school settings amongst pupils, school staff, Council education staff, and project partners. By working together in this way, and particularly by listening to the young people themselves, will we make Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions a reality.



Matt Robinson
Learning through Landscapes
Scotland Director



Marguerite Hunter Blair
CEO Play Scotland

1. Background

Play Scotland was commissioned to deliver **seven projects** in 2021 as part of the Scottish Government's **Get into Summer** initiative, including **Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions**. This investment is part of Scottish Government's post-pandemic social recovery agenda. With a focus on promoting the wellbeing of children and young people, and wider investment in education recovery, a key priority is to help address negative impacts associated with extended periods of isolation and lack of participation in normal activities during the pandemic.

Get into Summer has provided opportunities for pupils to socialise and reconnect with peers and others. It has integrated approaches that promote and realise a broad range of children's rights, including the right to play.

As a short action research project, Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions aims were set out as:

- Improve play experiences for S1 pupils in all secondary schools in the Falkirk Council area.
- Understand the benefits a better break time brings – for pupils and schools.
- Highlight the potential of the role of play to support positive transitions from Primary to Secondary school.
- Gather evidence, highlight benefits and share with schools nationally, local authorities and Scottish Government.



1.1 Key partners, roles

Play Scotland is the lead organisation for the development and promotion of children and young people's play in Scotland. Play Scotland works strategically to make the child's right to play a reality so that all children can reach their full potential and be able to confidently inhabit an inclusive public realm, as well as help shape child friendly communities. In this project Play Scotland provided oversight and support during evaluation.

Learning through Landscapes (LTL) is the leading school grounds charity with over 30 years' experience in transforming outdoor learning and play in school grounds. Delivery partner. Learning through Landscapes was the delivery partner in this project, working directly with school staff and management to facilitate sessions and co-produce development plans with students and educators.

Falkirk Council supported access to Secondary schools within its region. Falkirk Council has a strong commitment to outdoor learning and play, and has well established links with lead partners.

These partners are well placed to identify a rationale and approach for play provision in relation to Primary to Secondary school transition, and explore ways to improve breaktime experiences for S1 pupils.

1.2 Guiding principles for Get into Summer initiatives

- Providing **opportunities to (re)connect** with friends, peers, wider community, the outdoors and nature, as well as with trusted adults.
- Providing **opportunities for children and young people to play, be active and enjoy themselves**; to provide key learning opportunities and help support children's return to school by boosting wellbeing and confidence; to offer wide ranging and inclusive positive experiences to cover all interests, backgrounds and circumstances and shaped around themes of fun and play; activities may include sports, expressive arts, crafts, outdoor learning, trips and visits, as well as opportunities to connect digitally. Time outdoors should be optimised.
- **Co-creation with children, young people, and families**, responding creatively to what children and young people want.
- **Building on existing services, assets and knowledge of what works** to enhance and learn from existing good practice, improve coordination of existing provision, fill gaps and create new opportunities, led by local knowledge and experience.
- **Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation** to help inform future policy and practice.

2. What's the issue/need?

The transition from Primary to Secondary school is a significant life change for 10-11 year-olds; a decline in 'play' is recognised as one of the major changes experienced. In 2020-21 this has combined with extended periods of isolation by young people, lack of participation in normal activities, disruptions and disconnections.

How might this be improved, post-pandemic? And do we have sufficiently robust research to inform and support this?

With a significant amount of childhood and youth spent in school, it's a setting that offers many opportunities to ensure equitable and beneficial play experiences. As Primary 7 pupils transition into Secondary school the affordance ('what the environment offers the individual') and opportunity for play reduces significantly.

In particular:

- The experience of Learning through Landscapes staff, and feedback from Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions, highlights that the play experience for new pupils at breaktimes is radically different at Secondary school.

"I never really thought about the way students play in Secondary before. When I'm working in Primary schools the play is so different, it does change a lot from S1."

Teacher, Graeme High School

- Play traction and rich play experiences in Early Years and Primary education stalls, and appears less valued, in Secondary school settings - in policy contexts, funding, and the culture of how 'play' is communicated.

A [survey](#) of 'School and Pre-school Teaching, Learning, and Play in the Outdoors Provision in Scotland' shows that between 2006-2014 Secondary schools "provided more residential experience but there were fewer events in the school grounds and in local areas".

As such, pupils in Secondary schools miss out on the many benefits of play.

Research

A 2019 [literature review](#) of Primary to Secondary school transition concludes that there is "fairly robust evidence that pupils' educational outcomes decline after they move to secondary school" though it's not clear how much this is as a direct result of the transition from Primary school. It highlights important gaps and methodological limitations. Whilst drawing insights to support a Scottish context mainly from international sources, the review notes "very few Scottish studies".

However the available studies "suggest that transition is associated with lower educational and wellbeing outcomes"; that there is "evidence of a negative impact of transitions on wellbeing, a decline in feelings of school belongingness and connectedness, poorer social and emotional health, and higher levels of depression and anxiety"; and that these issues have a direct impact on pupil attainment.

Recommendations relevant to Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions include supporting a sense of school belonging, supporting pupils to develop strong peer networks, and ensuring continuity of pedagogical approaches. References to physical space throughout the review include only the school building and moving between class, not breaktimes or outdoor spaces.



3. What solution was offered?

All nine secondary schools within the Falkirk Council region were invited to be part of the Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project; seven responded and six took up the offer. A bespoke intervention was tailored for each participating school by Learning through Landscape staff, aiming to enhance opportunities and improve the outdoor play environment.

Rather than a 'one size fits all' programme, co-design and consultative approaches with pupils and teachers at each school led to a unique combination of inputs. A small grant enabled schools to act on recommendations and buy resources to develop the play provision in their outdoor space.

3.1 Methodology - planned process, outputs, outcomes

Exploring suitable approaches and tools to improve play provision and affordance in Secondary school settings was at the heart of Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions. Consultations and proposals focused on non-permanent installations and resources, training/workshops for teachers and pupils, in a context of relevant aspects of school, regional and national play policy.

Process: Offer to each participating school

A relationship was established with a key contact and the following elements provided:

- Initial visit with relevant staff and pupil representatives - potentially including a combination of Head Teacher, teaching staff, S1 pupils, S2 pupils (for school grounds perspectives), Janitor/Caretaker, Parent Council - to introduce the project and gather initial information.

- Up to 3 days of in-school professional support, co-ordinated by Learning through Landscapes, including consultation exercises, workshops, training inputs and guidance on how to best create and implement outdoor play opportunities.
- A grant of up to £1,500 towards school grounds/play-related equipment or staff inputs.
- A school-specific summary report of inputs and recommendations.

Project outputs

- A summary/toolkit of relevant practice, findings, issues, resources and guidance arising from the Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project.
- Narrative including blogs, social media postings, case studies, published articles.
- A portfolio of S1 pupil/school play-related photographs.
- A report on the action research project and its findings.

Proposed project outcomes

In terms of 'bigger picture' outcomes, the Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project set out to identify contributors to, and evidence improvements, in:

- Engagement in break time play
- Engagement in formal learning
- Physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Teacher awareness of the value of play.

3.2 Pandemic Practicalities

It's worth noting some of the COVID-19 -related constraints on project delivery, including:

- Prioritisation of school management issues, including timetable and access restrictions.
- Staffing limitations due to isolation and shortages.
- Management of pupil absences.

- Illness and isolation requirements of key project delivery staff.
- Space restrictions within school grounds.
- Planned interactions with S2 students were compromised by their 2020-21 education experiences.

All of these impacted on dates available across all six schools, length of time available for workshops, and time taken to complete the project.

4. What happened?

Evidence, feedback and points of information were garnered from pupils, school staff, partners and contributors between August-November 2021 and considered in the context of Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project aims and Get into Summer principles.

4.1 Schools involved

All nine Secondary schools in Falkirk Council region were approached at the outset of the Autumn term with an initial email, phone call, and follow-up emails. Seven schools responded, with six fully participating:

Falkirk High School **Braes High School**
Larbert High School **Graeme High School**
Bo'ness Academy
Carrongrange High School (purpose-built special school for pupils with Moderate, Severe and Complex Additional Support Needs)



4.2 Play Practicalities & Interpretations for S1

Key to the approach taken was to ask **“What’s ‘Play’?”** and **“How is ‘Play’ relevant to S1 pupils and Secondary school settings?”**

Fundamentals of ‘Play’, for the purpose of Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions, were identified as:

- it’s something pupils choose to do, of their own volition; they’re not made to do it; it’s not curriculum activity
- it’s in pupils’ ‘own time’/down time
- it’s something they like to do/try
- it’s (often) sociable
- it’s enjoyable
- it’s flexible
- it can be non-productive, non-functional
- it’s creative.

Focus was maintained on how an activity, resource or input related to these play elements (rather than to curriculum outcomes, for example), on considering the value of play in Secondary settings, and on barriers to play – perceived and real.

4.3 Activity with schools

6 Focus Groups with 92 S1 pupils met weekly (on average) between September and November to undertake a series of workshop sessions with a focus on:

- Identifying what play means to S1 pupils.
- Discussing play experiences in P7 and S1, how this has changed and why.
- Identifying positives and negatives of current school grounds in terms of play (considering both space and practice).
- Developing a basic design plan for their own school for consultation with the wider S1 year group, highlighting potential improvements and suggested locations.
- Feedback of consultation outcomes, proposed improvements and decisions made to the wider S1 year group.

Focus groups in 2 schools presented consultation outcomes and priorities identified to senior management and/or the Parent Council.

Consultations with 281 S1 pupils

A paper-based school grounds plan, highlighting potential play-based improvements and associated locations, was developed by each school focus group and displayed in an indoor area identified by the group as a prime location for S1 footfall. S1 pupil feedback was requested via a QR code and Microsoft form, inviting responses via phone or laptop.

Focus groups collated consultation responses to offer interpretation and identify priorities favoured by S1 year groups as a whole.

30 Workshop sessions with the S1 focus groups (and school staff) explored relevant themes in a variety of ways including:

- Facilitated group discussions.
- Paper-based consultation activities (e.g. personal value continuums focussing on how relaxed/happy students feel outdoors at break and lunchtime, and views on school grounds; thought clouds focussing on what would make a better break outdoors and what makes a good outdoor social space).
- Walk and talk discussion groups outdoors.
- Creation of paper-based design ideas linked to grounds improvements to support play (displayed as a S1-wide consultation tool).
- Consolidation activities linked to consultation outcomes, e.g. pupil-led decisions about the type, style and material associated with new seating.
- Practical Loose Parts Play outdoor workshops with staff and S1 students at Carrongrange High School.

Example: Braes High School

Initial meeting to establish links with key contacts (Head Teacher, Facilities Manager, PE Specialism/Nurture – pupil support) and agree proposals for a series of workshops between end-August and early October.

Inputs

Workshop 1: Facilitated discussion with S1s focused on break and lunchtime play experiences in P7, descriptive words regarding school grounds, feedback on what S1s currently do and what they’d like to be able to do.

Workshop 2: Walk and talk outdoors focusing on current use of spaces and potential changes.

Workshop 3: Collation of improvement ideas, potential locations, and grounds plan creation – for a 1-week consultation with S1 year group. Students identified the wall of the Hub as a good space to attach plan, photos of grounds and play-related improvement ideas. Communication update with Chair of the Parent Council.

Workshop 4: Pulling together feedback (60 S1 students responded), identifying priorities, budget considerations, what can students achieve, what will we need external help, planning liaison with Mitie, planning liaison with Friends of Braes group. Pros and cons of each proposal discussed, with the aim of students being fully informed before making decisions and being comfortable with the process and outcomes.

Post-workshops

Improvement ideas presented to Mitie by Facilities Manager, approved within 1 week.

Presentation to the Friends of Braes Group (parents) by one S1 student from the focus group and request for an additional £1,000.

School-specific Report shared with key contacts.



4.4 Differences made, impact

The aims of this short action research project were set out as:

- **To improve play experiences for S1 pupils in the nine secondary schools in the Falkirk Council area.**
 - Six out of nine schools actively participated in Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions, in collaboration with Falkirk Council's education department.
 - A play-focused co-design consultation process has been carried out with S1 pupils at each school, liaising closely with teaching staff.
 - A summary of inputs, issues, proposals and actions to improve play experiences has been provided for each of the six participating schools, along with a small grant.
 - The full extent to which play experiences have been improved won't be evident until next year, as recommendations are acted on.
- **Understand the benefits a better breaktime brings, including what contributes to this – for pupils and schools.**
 - The role and potential of play in making breaktimes better is explored in a 'S1 Play Voices' summary/toolkit.

- Key points from S1 student workshops and consultation feedback are included in this report.
- **Demonstrate the potential of the role of play to support positive transitions from Primary to Secondary school S1 pupils.**
 - Focus groups, consultations and workshops for each school have highlighted barriers, challenges and opportunities relating to the transition from P7 to S1.
 - It's too soon in the project process outlined to be able to fully address this point in direct relation to a role for play.
- **Gather evidence to highlight benefits of this approach to share with other schools, local authorities and Scottish Government.**
 - This has been done for each participating school in the form of their own report.
 - Interpretation, analysis and evidence has been collated to share more widely.
 - A 'S1 Play Voices' summary/toolkit collates relevant themes, practice, findings, issues, resources and guidance arising from the Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project.

INDICATOR	NOTES/PROGRESS
9 schools successfully recruited	6 schools fully participated.
24 project days delivered in all schools .	See Participant Statistics for delivery details.
Quality evidence gained and recorded from pupils, from school staff and LtL Staff.	Report/recommendations compiled for each school. Pupil consultation findings consolidated.
Action Research findings presented in an attractive report.	Project Report, Summary. 'S1 Play Voices' Report.
80% of the project schools aim to maintain better break times.	Evaluation ongoing.
Online articles published on three websites.	Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions web hub created.
Print articles published in three sources.	Sharing, dissemination planned Jan-Feb 22.
Images created to illustrate the project.	Image bank of photos created. Short film, part of Get into Summer portfolio.

4.5 Focus groups, workshops and consultations - Participation Statistics, Summary

	FALKIRK HIGH SCHOOL	BRAES HIGH SCHOOL	LARBERT HIGH SCHOOL	GRAEME HIGH SCHOOL	BO'NESS ACADEMY	CARRONGRANGE HIGH SCHOOL	TOTAL
Schools	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Focus groups	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Focus group S1 students	16	10 (2 S2)	7	9	26 (Global Goals class)	24	92
Workshop sessions	5	5	5	5	5	5	30
S1 students consulted	79	60	29	32	57 (year group)	24	281
Direct staff engagement	2 DHT, Teacher	4 HT, PE Teacher, Facilities Mgr, Parent Council Chair	3 S1 Head, 2x Teachers/pupil support staff	5 DHT, 4x PE Teachers/ Probation	2 Principal Teacher, Teacher	23 HT, Teacher, Play Improv't Lead, 3x Teachers, 18x Support for Learning Assistants	39
Pro-photographer session with pupils/staff				1		1	2
Play Scotland filming session		1					1
Summary Report	1	1	1	1	1	1	6



4.5.1 Focus Group feedback

P7 Play experiences compared to S1

- Students identified a much broader range of play experiences, and a more varied and interesting outdoor landscape, in Primary school grounds compared to their Secondary school settings.
- Students highlighted the emphasis placed on creating varied play experiences outdoors by Primary school staff, compared to Secondary school.
- Pupils were often involved in making and maintaining changes in Primary school grounds e.g. planting willow domes and gardening. This wasn't the case in S1.
- Territorial aspects of Secondary school outdoor spaces has an impact on the breaktime and lunchtime experiences of S1 students.
- Almost without exception, descriptive words and phrases used about school grounds focussed on the space available rather than the play opportunities:

“There's lots of space.”

“It's a bit boring as it's just fields, and there's not much to do on fields.”

“There's loads of litter.”

- The most notable positive change from P7 to S1 was the opportunity to play sport, with some students highlighting how much better the sports facilities are in Secondary school.

“What does play mean to you?”

46 S1 students from 4 Secondary schools were asked.

Top 3 responses:

Walking and talking with my friends – 26

Sitting and talking with my friends – 25

Being outdoors – 21

Also:

Exploring and adventure

Being in nature and greenspace

Time alone

Art and being creative

Using my imagination

Playing sport

Being physical

Gaming

School grounds: ‘What would make a better breaktime experience outdoors?’

The majority of responses in facilitated discussions focussed on:

- more varied ‘play’ experiences
- more social seating for groups of students
- more play-enabling equipment such as parkour resources, outdoor basketball.
- more time. The relatively limited free time available to spend outdoors, specifically at lunchtime, was mentioned by students in all focus groups.
- more, different space. Students acknowledged the value of most schools’ large, open, often quite empty grass and tarmac spaces, but some preferred smaller and quieter areas outdoors away from others. It was noted as an opportunity that was missing. Those students who need space away from others would find their own ways to achieve this.

4.5.2 Consultations

Outcomes, proposed improvements and decisions arising from consultations with wider S1 year group

- responses have been collated and considered at each participating school.
- see S1 Play Voices for examples and co-design approaches.

4.6 What worked well, what could be improved

The Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project has in effect been a short-term pilot, conducted within a context of Covid restrictions in school settings. Communications with funders and partners have, from the outset, noted limitations including:

- a very tight timeframe to set up and deliver an action research project with broad, ambitious aims.
- starting a new project at the start of a school year with very little lead-in.
- mindsets (understandably) focused on covering basics of school life rather than new initiatives that explore and challenge current thinking.

4.6.1 Worked well

Engagement with six out of nine schools participating is a reasonable outcome in the circumstances noted. Involvement of the six schools and S1 focus groups offers a fair representation of student demographics present in the Falkirk Council region.

Different schools assigned different staff roles (including the Headteacher, Depute Headteacher, Head of Year, ‘Learning through Play’ Lead) as they felt appropriate to the nature of the project, their own needs and capacity. All lead staff were enthusiastic in their approach. Some had more of an interest in the benefits of play given their role e.g. PE staff and those with an ‘additional pupil support’ remit.

Schools with PFI management contracts have, on the whole, ensured that this has not been a barrier to exploring and implementing solutions.

Co-design relies on speaking and listening to young people before actively involving them in a design and creation process. A strong element of co-design was key to working relationships within all six schools. Through focus groups and consultations, views and ideas have been listened to and shared. Pupils have actively informed processes, plans and decisions; there has been a willingness in school settings to respond creatively to what pupils want. Parent Council representatives have been involved in a number of schools.

Grants

School responses to the offer of a small grant show a readiness to invest in play. They have been used to stimulate conversations across pupils, staff and Parent Councils, leveraging extra funding in the process. Decisions on spending £1500 per school have been pupil-led, and management processes haven't caused issues. Expertise and guidance in identifying suitable resources to meet needs and budgets, provided through Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions, has been valued.

Example: Braes High School support for a pupils’ priority to instal modular group seating leveraged £1,000 from the Friends of Braes Group and a commitment to fundraise an additional £5,655 – a five-fold increase on the £1500 grant.

It's worth noting that grant funding available per school is relatively limited in what it can achieve, given the additional costs associated with delivery and installation of new resources.

4.6.2 Challenges and areas for future development

School capacity – including time, priorities and staffing, as well as fluctuating pupil attendance has limited the extent to which activities outlined could be promoted and developed. Consultations, for example, could have been more focused and responses explored more fully with more time and energy available.

When asked about the obstacles to involvement in the Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project and scope to create improved opportunities for play outdoors, staff unanimously highlighted restrictions on time and limited funding.

“We can see the grounds could be better, but it’s a lack of time and resources.”

S1 Year Headteacher

Evaluation has not been built in as a formal element for this pilot (though informal feedback, learning and appraisal of project progress has). Factors in this approach have been a wish to avoid onerous expectations of teaching staff, and a focus on getting schools on board in a short timeframe.

Actions arising from interventions – results of consultations, equipment purchase, for example – are still being implemented. The project timeframe hasn’t enabled detailed analysis of outcomes to date.

Discussions with a formal evaluation partner organisation have been ongoing (and inconclusive) during the project delivery timeframe.

Themes identified, actions and findings emerging from Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions offer a strong basis for evaluation of the project itself and a fuller exploration of play in Secondary schools.

4.7 Links to policy outcomes

The Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project has shown clear links to policy intent at school, Council and national levels. This is explored in the S1 Play Voices report.

4.7.1 Schools

Policies relating to outdoor play opportunities and the value of place aren’t present in any of the six schools involved in Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions. In one school (Carronrange) the Learning through Play lead is included in the school Improvement Plan, with a commitment to explore how play can support curriculum, sharing, interacting, and creativity both indoors and outdoors.

4.7.2 Falkirk Council

Falkirk Council’s Outdoor Learning Strategy is informed by ‘Learning for Sustainability’ and ‘Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning’ policy and recognises that learning outside classroom settings is a key contributor to Scottish Government’s strategic objectives. It references play in relation to staff and school grounds, with strong endorsement from Council management. ‘Play is the Way’ is a Falkirk Council education commitment.

“We’re keen to ensure that this is ‘Play is ALL the Way’, for learners aged 3-18, and not just in Early Years. Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions is another step towards realising our ambition

that children and young people in Falkirk have play and experiential learning opportunities throughout their education.”

Rhona Jay, Education Lead, Falkirk Council.

The Strategy ‘demands’ a whole school approach to recognise the diverse range of activities and approaches that Outdoor Learning encompasses. It challenges education staff, among other things, to ensure that “All of our learners have access to stimulating and challenging outdoor spaces to play and learn”. School grounds are recognised as an essential component in providing regular and progressive learning experiences.

“We need to ensure that these spaces are as natural, stimulating, diverse and exciting as possible, offering opportunities for curriculum-based outdoor learning and creative play.”

Authority expectations include all establishments working towards spaces that:

- allow all learners to connect with nature on a daily basis
- provide opportunities for creative, self-directed play
- have seating and shelter
- provide choice
- use a variety of materials to provide a range of textures
- provide elements of risk and challenge.

It commits to support this through partnership work with Learning through Landscapes on the use of loose play materials, sharing good practice across the authority, and bespoke support for establishments.



4.7.3 National Policy

This project meets several of the aims of the [Progress Review of Scotland's Play Strategy 2021: Play in a COVID context](#), namely:

- Renew and develop the national and local commitment to outdoor play.
- Listen to children and young people and act on what they say.

- Ensure the inclusion of all children and young people.
- Ensure cross sectoral and inter professional approaches to play are in place.
- Maintain a focus on playful learning and play in schools.

More on how Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions meets National Policy aims can be found in "S1 Play Voices: Policy".

5. What next?

Positive involvement with Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions – during a time of significant challenge – suggests there is an appetite to explore further the potential of play in Secondary school settings amongst pupils, school staff, Council education staff, and project partners.

There is widespread acknowledgement that infrastructure, attitudes and activities can all be improved to better fulfil the potential of play in Secondary school settings.

With schools-based activity having concluded, sharing of Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions reports and resources will take place from January 2022.

5.1 Sharing

- **In-school S1 student Consultations** – there is ongoing exploration and implementation of proposals arising, at different stages across participating schools.
- **School Reports** – all six schools involved in Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions have their own report covering inputs, issues and suggested actions. These are at various stages

of consideration, with support available from Learning through Landscapes staff.

- **Grant spend, procurement** – support is being provided to make efficient and focused use of the small grants offered as part of the project.
- **Webinar** – invite participating schools to a session summarising Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions. Invite staff and pupils to share their activities and try ideas arising from others. This is planned for early 2022.
- **Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions** web pages – populate with reports, resources, media arising.
- A **'S1 Play Voices'** report captures - in a thematic way - a combination of Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions findings, feedback and information nuggets. It highlights issues, challenges and opportunities arising from this action research that's relevant to S1 pupils, to breaktimes and to adolescent play. For themes that emerged strongly it blends guidance, reference points and resource pointers with grassroots responses from pupils and teachers.

5.2 Recommendations

Schools

Besides acting on their tailored reports, schools are invited to consider information and resources arising from the Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions project – including information hosted at Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions web pages. These will be complete by Jan 2022.

Beyond this pilot project, schools are invited to build on momentum created around play, breaktimes and transition themes. Information and support are available from Learning through Landscapes, Play Scotland and Falkirk Council Education staff.

Evaluation

With further investment a possibility over the forthcoming years it is vitally important to integrate robust evaluation plans within supported activity to evidence impact, justify original spend, and support future, evidence-based, budgetary decisions.

'S1 Play Voices'

This resource explores and builds on themes emerging from this project. It can be used to stimulate discussion and develop thinking, action, policy. Feedback on its use will be used to inform a revision in June 2022.

Grounds, maintenance

Ways in which Council resources (e.g. maintenance, ranger service) and local volunteering services can be dovetailed to support a play agenda should be considered to maximise opportunities and avoid duplication of effort.

Research

Audit of the available (Scottish) literature and research that informs and supports play in Secondary settings and adolescent play; review its role in relation to breaktimes and transition from Primary school.

Policy

As a pilot project, Better Breaktimes, Better Transitions identifies a mismatch between policy aspiration and on the ground commitments. Policy for 'Adolescent Play', a role in Secondary settings, and breaktimes needs extra focus and support.

An audit of the [Progress Review of Scotland's Play Strategy 2021, Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy – Connecting People, Places and Learning](#) & associated publications should be undertaken to identify key points (policy, guidance, recommendations) relevant to S1/ adolescent play, breaktimes and transitions.

Play narrative and strategy speaks almost entirely to Children, to Early Years and Primary education. Re-state key information for Secondary and adolescent audiences.



6. Acknowledgements

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