

An online tracking system which aims to wipe out the transition effect is being pioneered in Caerphilly  
**Michael Shaw** reports

## Voyage becomes calmer

Children's first day in the big scary secondary world often marks the start of a slump in their educational achievement.

Their new teachers have dozens of names to learn and lack the in-depth knowledge primary school teachers built up of their strengths and foibles.

But this is beginning to change in Caerphilly, which has been trialling a system that allows primary teachers to share information online with secondary colleagues.

The Voyager system lets teachers upload detailed information on each child, including results, examples of the pupils' work and handwriting which they have scanned, and even personal comments.

Pupils in Year 6 can also sit informal online tests in subjects such as English, maths and history, which are marked automatically.

Mark Baker, a deputy head and maths teacher at Lewis school, Pengam, said the system meant he and other staff had a clearer understanding of pupils' skills.

"You can look at it and say, 'Right, this class can multiply 42 by four but they can't do long multiplication'," he said.

"Or if you're a history teacher you can very quickly know what percentage of your class can place historical events in chronological order. Teachers can avoid teaching pupils what they already know and concentrate on what they don't."

The idea came out of conversations between staff at Lewis school, one of its main feeder schools, Tir-y-berth primary, and Caerphilly council. It was then developed by the Cardiff-based IT company Lisol, which already provided many schools in the authority with electronic management systems and began testing the system a year and half ago.

By this summer, all 15 secondary and 79 primary schools in Caerphilly will be using the council-funded system to share data on pupils.

Christopher Howard, head of Lewis school, said the phasing out of compulsory key stage 2 tests had made it more important for secondaries to get reliable data from feeder primaries.

"We're glad we don't have the league tables, but unless Welsh schools are



Gotcha: Debbie Hartevelde and Mark Baker share data on primary pupils

sharing information and assessing students, they are going to come a cropper," he said.

Dr Howard said he expected it would

take time to eradicate the transition slump, but that he had been pleased by Estyn's report earlier this year which said the school "makes outstanding use of a well-developed and sophisticated computerised management system".

At Tir-y-berth primary, headteacher

**'Unless Welsh schools are sharing information they are going to come a cropper'**



ROGER DONOVAN

Debbie Hartevelde said it was reassuring that comments made by her staff would be read at the next school.

"It can be comments like 'Don't put him by that child - they don't get along', or 'Often forgets to bring his homework,'" she said. "Things as simple as 'Must wear

their glasses' can be important."

Stand C10 @ [www.lisol.co.uk](http://www.lisol.co.uk)



Marjorie Page, ACCAC subject officer, will talk about preparing the transition plan on Thursday, May 25 at 1.30pm