

SECTION 3 **Assisting Inclusion: managing transitions**

3.1 Ben's story (aged 11)

Ben is transferring from primary to secondary school. He had ongoing sensory problems with the school bell. He could tell the time and he had a watch. What follows illustrates the interaction between the two teachers (primary school teacher = blue, secondary school teacher = red) and the pupil (green).



I'm going to a new school in September.
I'm worried about the bell.
Will the bell be louder in my new school?

I don't actually know.
I'll be with you when we visit your new school.
Let's ask the headmaster when we get there.
It's not really the noise he's worried about.
It's the number of bells he will have to cope with.
I must tell Mrs Moore (secondary school teacher)
about Ben's fear of the bell ringing.
I wonder what we can do about this?



The two teachers meet

Ben has had a lot of problems getting
used to the school bell. It took him over two years
to become comfortable with it.



We'll try to schedule the visit so that
he arrives between bells and make sure
he's not in the corridor when the bell rings.

We'll also need to promise to warn him a few minutes
before the bell rings.

Ben visits his new school with Teacher 1 and meets Mrs Moore

Hello Ben, it's nice to see you.

Hello Mrs Moore. When's the bell going to ring?

It's going to ring at 11.30.

How loud is it going to be?

I remember when I was
in your school the bell sounded just the same
as the bell in my school.

We'll be inside the classroom when the bell rings.
It sounds quieter in there. We'll be with you.
We'll tell you when the bell is going to ring.

Will you really?

We promise!

We promise!

The bell was not a problem for Ben on this occasion but it was a continuing issue for the first few months at his new school. He continued to need reassurance that he would be told when the bell was going to ring. He would endeavour not to be in the corridor when a bell was likely to ring. Initially if he was inadvertently caught in the corridor, he would put his hands over his ears and run quickly to the home-room. Every time this happened Mrs Moore would talk to him about the bell and his reaction to it. Gradually he became more comfortable with the bell ringing and by the end of the first year he didn't mention it any more.

Key learning points from Ben's story

- In many situations faced by children with ASD, there is no 'quick fix'! Often the solution is quite a simple one, but it does not become clear until teachers have worked through a lengthy process of experiences and examined reactions to those experiences.

